



The **PILGRIM**

Vol. 15, No. 1

<http://www.geocities.com/pilgrimsfaith>

January 2004

The **PILGRIM** is a periodical from the **Pilgrims of Faith Marian Center (PFMC)**. The **PFMC** is a ministry of lay Catholic evangelization and healing through the intercession of the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

A PRAYER



Oh Lord, Jesus Christ, allow this Marian Center to act as an instrument of peace through use of all the healing gifts of the Holy Spirit. Help to restore health in each person that seeks help. Open up hearts that are closed or have become hardened due to the effects of sin. Let each volunteer that acts as Your instrument pour into each wounded child a sense of Your warmth and Your light of truth.

Oh Jesus, give us peace that we may be able to know we are under Your Blessed Virgin Mother's mantle. Help us to understand the greatness and importance of having peace in our hearts. Help us to spread this peace from our hearts to the whole world.

Lord, ask Your Blessed Virgin Mother, Mary, to continue to intercede for us before the You and the Father through her Spouse, the Holy Spirit. As Mary consecrates every child to her Immaculate Heart, she crushes the head of Satan and foils Satan's plans to destroy the family and world.

Strengthen all plans for peace, and help us to reconcile ourselves with brothers and sisters.

Let us offer our lives so that peace will reign in the whole world. Let us never be afraid to take on and enter into the attitude of sacrifice and union with Your Cross.
AMEN

(Kathleen prays from the heart for each issue.)

HAPPY NEW YEAR 2004

All the volunteers at the **PFMC** wish you and your family the best for this New Year of 2004. We thank you for your support and for all you have done for us in 2003 especially your prayers. Please pray for us using the prayer on page 21 of this issue.

(Kathleen, Keith, and all the PFMC Volunteers)

The **December** MESSAGE, alleged to be from GOSPA, Our Lady, Queen of Peace, to an alleged visionary from **Medjugorje, Bosnia-Hercegovina**, is presented beginning on page 12 (centerfold page) with REFLECTION and PRESS BULLETIN items.

MANY of YOU HAVE ASKED to KNOW MORE about URSULA "AUNTIE BABSIE" BLEASDELL

To begin to answer, we will quote from one of the many conference information sheets.

"**Ursula Bleasdell**, affectionately called "**Auntie Babsie**", at home and in many parts of the world, has been effectively used by God in many areas of the church. She is credited with formation of charismatic prayer groups throughout **Trinidad** and **Tobago**. She was elected Secretary of the first **Caribbean Service Team**. **Babsie** has now spoken at conferences and gatherings in **America**, the **Caribbean**, **Europe**, **Africa**, **Canada**, **Ireland**, and **England**. She is founder of **World of Life**



Prayer Community in Trinidad. Her outstanding gifts are teaching, preaching, and prophecy. She has written three books."

<http://www.servantsofjesus.org/shs/speakers.html>

The picture of Ursula "**Auntie Babsie**" Bleasdell on her March 1998 book "**Go Teach My People**" is one of the best we have seen because it shows her great attitude of joy. Those who read this book find out about her and can't wait to hear her speak.



Those who heard her at the **1995 PFMC RETREAT CONFERENCE** at the **Holiday Inn** in **Essington, PA**, and again at the **1996**

"The PILGRIM" for **January 2004** is dedicated to "**Mary, who consecrates the world to her Immaculate Heart.**" See page 3 for an "**IN THIS ISSUE . . .**" or **Table of Contents** listing.

PFMC RETREAT CONFERENCE, in **Cherry Hill, NJ**, will remember how **Babsie** captivated the audiences with her presentation of God's Word.

Even though she is now in her 80's **Babsie** shows her love and understanding of God as well as the gifts of the Holy Spirit particularly when working with His Spouse, Mary, the Blessed Virgin Jewish Mother of Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

(Kathleen and Keith Werner)

SISTER CLAIRE MARIE DE L'AMORE CRUCIFIE

Sister Claire Marie de l'amore Crucifie is a member of the *Communita Mariana Oasi della Paci* or Marian Community Oasis of Peace, hereafter referred to as the "Community." Before we speak about her, please review some comments about her Community.



The Community as Reported by Italian Passionist Priest Father Gianni Sgreva

The young people, who came together in the prayer groups that I followed, in the course of time felt the need for founding a community that would be based on the Medjugorje messages and would indeed thereby be a direct fruit of Medjugorje. I, on the contrary, avoided the very thought of some new community because I already had my way, my vocation, and my work as a professor. Meanwhile, the desire and insistence of the young people for the realization of their needs and goals, grew stronger every day. I made it all known to my spiritual director and my own provincial. They asked me to follow the development of events and I did that. The following question bothered me: how to establish and lead a community that is connected with a reality such as is Medjugorje where yet 'unapproved apparitions' are taking place? Before founding the community I spoke with Cardinal Ratzinger. He listened to everything attentively and instructed me what to do. For Medjugorje he told me, "Don't you worry about the tree, you worry about the fruits, the vocations, and Medjugorje is our concern." I spoke

also with the Holy Father. I talked to him about the community and the vocations connected with the experience of Medjugorje. The Holy Father listened to me, drew close to me and right in my ear said to me, reminding me not to forget: "DON'T YOU BE CONCERNED ABOUT MEDJUGORJE, BECAUSE I'M THINKING ABOUT MEDJUGORJE AND I PRAY FOR ITS SUCCESS EVERY DAY. YOU BE CONCERNED WITH THE VOCATIONS AND PRAY FOR ME EVERY DAY"

(<http://home.iprimus.com.au/newvisionet/reports.htm>)

Missionary Trip of Father Slavko Barbaric

In my search, I heard about Father Gianni and the "Oasis of Peace". I called him immediately. I told him that I was looking for an order for the shrine that would be pastorally active there and pray. He answered: 'Good. Give me two or three days for prayer and I will give you the answer.' And, in fact, on the third day, he agreed. The community "Oasis of Peace" now directs the newly-built Shrine of Our Lady of Sertao.' (The Marian Community "Oasis of Peace" came about because of an inspiration, which Father Gianni Sgreva, Passionist and professor of Patrologie, had on January 1, 1985. On this day, he heard in his heart a voice: 'Do you want to surrender to me completely?' Surprised by this experience and not sure what it meant, he returned to Verona, where he was working as a professor and teacher. Then many young people began to come to him. After talks with Cardinal Ratzinger and the Holy Father, he was given permission and began with the novitiate.)

(<http://www.medjugorje.org/mpb92.htm>)

Now that you have some background on the Community, we can share what we know about Sister Claire Marie. She was born and raised in Belgium. She came to the Franciscan University in Steubenville, Ohio, to teach French. She accompanied a group of pilgrims to Medjugorje in 1986 and felt a call to devote her life to Jesus through Mary. She heard of the Community and Father Gianni Sgreva during another pilgrimage from Steubenville to Medjugorje in 1987. She entered the Community in 1988.

We met her in 1990 during one of our early pilgrimages and were really impressed with the way she spoke about Our Lady's messages. She became

The volunteer Board of Directors and Staff of the PFMC recognize and accept that the final authority regarding the alleged apparitions, locutions and related messages at, and to the recipients from, Medjugorje, Bosnia-Herzegovina, as well as all other private revelations, rests with the Holy See, to whose judgment we willingly submit. We give total allegiance to our One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church and its Magisterium, particularly Our Holy Father, Pope John Paul II. See page 5 for additional PFMC information. While those presenters who work with the PFMC are selected for their personal qualifications and commitment to the Church, their comments and presentations are those of individual Catholics and no endorsement by ecclesiastical authority is to be presumed.

an early spokesperson for her community and is truly dedicated to Our Lady and the messages given for the world. Sister Claire Marie will talk about those messages at both the 2004 RC and the 3DX.

The picture of her was taken in front of the Chapel on the grounds of the Community in Medjugorje. She does not like to be singled out away from the Community even though her current assignment is to speak about the Community and the "Words from Heaven" published by "A Friend of Medjugorje."

(Kathleen and Keith Werner)

CONTACT with the PFMC

Most of you see a copy of "*The PILGRIM*" on a monthly basis but make no written contact with the **PFMC**. We need this contact on a regular basis to keep our mailing lists up to date. See NOTICE in the box on page 9 about a regular response to these mailings. The enclosed envelope has a form on which you can indicate your desires to continue or discontinue receiving "*The PILGRIM*" on a monthly basis. If you wish to be completely deleted from regular or annual contact by the **PFMC**, please let us know that as well. We do respond.

Contact us by any recordable means: phone, FAX, e-mail, Internet guest book, and/or regular mail. Please let us know you are getting "*The PILGRIM*" and enjoying it. Due to the fact that donations are not keeping up with monthly expenses we have begun to trim the bulk mail list down to those who regularly contact us. Just because we see you in church or at a prayer meeting does not mean that we remember to check off the regular contact box for the **PFMC**. PLEASE CONTACT US REGULARLY and AT LEAST ONCE PER YEAR.

Please include a donation for our ministries in your regular mail contact with the **PFMC**.

(Kathleen, Keith, and all the **PFMC** Volunteers)

FEED the HUNGRY

Consider helping the Campbell's® Chunky™ soup and the NFL™ in their Tackling Hunger™ effort! The Campbell's® Tackling Hunger™ campaign results in donations of up to a total of 5 million cans of a variety of Campbell's® soups on behalf of all 32 NFL™ teams. Click for Cans™ donations are made over the course of the year to a variety of hunger relief charities across the country, in NFL™ cities and in many other communities. Visit:

http://www.chunky.com/click_for_cans.asp

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When Keith last visited this page the Philadelphia Eagles were listed in 7th place with over 172,000 cans to be donated locally out of more than 4.6 million for 2003. Let's put this effort over the top with just a simple visit to this Internet Web site and a vote. You can visit and vote every day.

PLEASE MARK YOUR 2004 CALENDAR for PFMC EVENTS

See Conference Corner on page 23 as well as Bulletin Notices on pages 22 through 23. Most **PFMC** events will be preceded by their own **PFMC** information sheets with reservation forms. Many of these are included in this issue of "*The PILGRIM*."

February 2004

February 12, 2004, Thursday, at 7 PM: Father Bill Halbing celebrates Holy Mass followed by a Healing Service with anointing and laying on of hands at *Our Lady of Mount Carmel*, Berlin, NJ. See enclosed green color information sheet.

March 2004

March 5, 2004, Friday, 9 AM to 1 PM: We will host a Retreat in the Upper Room at Epiphany House

for **Assumption School Faculty**. This **Retreat** will be conducted by **Father Ed Namiotka**, Principal of **Sacred Heart High School, Vineland, NJ**.

Don't forget the **Annual PFMC Retreat Conference (RC) March 12 through March 14, 2004**, the concurrent **Youth and Young Adult Track (YT)** and the **3-Day Extension (3DX) March 15 through March 17, 2004**. See the yellow information packet with reservation forms for details.

March 24, 2004 to April 4, 2004, Father Thomas Kiely of Saint Lawrence Parish in Lindenwold, NJ will be the Spiritual Director for a **PFMC Pilgrimage to Medjugorje (PPM) via Prague**. We will spend 2 nights in **Prague** with city tour and visit to the **Infant Jesus of Prague**. Then we will enjoy 8 nights in **Medjugorje**. We will stay at **Bronco's House** behind the Pizza places very near to **Saint James Church**. The cost of this pilgrimage is **\$1399** plus **\$130** to cover air taxes, and includes round trip air fare, hotel in **Prague** (3-4 star), private home in **Medjugorje**, guides, land transfers, all breakfasts and suppers. Please call (856) 768-9228 and join us. A cherry color information sheet with reservation forms is enclosed in this issue of **"The PILGRIM."**

April 2004

April 26, 2004, Monday, 9 AM to 1 PM: "Medical Day of Recollection" with **Father John O'Leary**. This is for any kind of medical personnel including aides, RNs and LPNs, Medical Office Personnel, Student Nurses, Doctors, Lab and X-ray technicians or medical staff from other departmental areas. We also invite Physician Assistants, Orthopedic Technicians, Athletic Trainers, and Physical Therapists. Spend a few hours away from all the rushing and work. **Father John** is the Pastor of **Assumption** Parish, and has been a teacher at **Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital School of Nursing**. Donation for this Day of Recollection is **\$15**. Light breakfast will be provided at **8:30 AM**. Talks will begin PROMPTLY at **9 AM**.

May 2004

May 8, 2004, Saturday, Father Bill McCarthy of My Father's House will conduct a day retreat for **"Healing of Physical and Sexual Abuse."** If you are interested in this day of retreat and prayer, please call (856) 768-9228. Advance reservations must be made for this event. Donation for the day is **\$25** including a light lunch and snacks. Pray for **Father Bill**. He was hospitalized with Bacterial Pneumonia in the middle of **November** and is still struggling with Diabetes and Heart problems.

June 2004

June 27, 2004, Sunday, Keith and Kathleen will be celebrating their **40th Wedding Anniversary**, and will be away from **June 12 through June 28, 2004**. Many of the **PFMC** staff volunteers will be joining **Keith and Kathleen** from the **19th to the 26th**, so the **PFMC** will probably be closed during these days. If you have desires to use the library or visit the display rooms during this time, please call in advance.

August 2004

August is a busy time for Roman Catholics in the **New England / Mid-Atlantic States**. **God, The Father, Day**, is celebrated at the **National Shrine of Our Lady of Fatima in Washington, NJ** on the **First Sunday in August**. This will be **Sunday, 1 August 2004**. The **Scranton Charismatic Conference** will be on **Friday, 6 August 2004**, through **Sunday, 8 August 2004**. The **PFMC Annual Meeting and Pot Luck Picnic**, scheduled in our by-laws for the **First Sunday in August** may have to again be moved to accommodate those who wish to attend other meetings. How about either **Saturday, 31 July 2004**, or the **Sunday before Labor Day, 5 September 2004?** Let us have your vote on the best date, please.

August 1, 2004 through August 9, 2004, Father John Tino will lead a **PFMC Pilgrimage to Lourdes (PPL) via Paris**. Visit the **Grotto of Massabielle**, the **Rosary Basilica**, the **Stations of the Cross**, and much more. Bathe in the healing waters of **Lourdes**, and enjoy a daily full program of Holy Mass and healing prayer. In **Paris** you will visit the **Miraculous Medal Chapel on Rue de Bac**, where **Saint Catherine Laboure** lies incorrupt. You will enjoy seeing the **Sacre Coeur Basilica, Notre Dame**, as well as the **Eiffel Tower**, as well as dining in the **Latin Quarter**. The cost of this pilgrimage is **\$1999** plus **\$130** to cover air taxes. This includes air fare round trip, hotels, guides, land transfers, all breakfasts, and all but one supper while in **Paris**. In our planning for seeing more of **France**, we are evaluating the possibility of extensions with limited numbers of pilgrims for visiting areas to the southeast of **Paris (Ars, Paray le Monial, Taize, Nevers)** or the northwest of **Paris (Alencon, Lisieux, Pontmain, Mont San Michel, Chartres)**. Extension plan options will be sent to each pilgrim after sign-up for the main pilgrimage. A blue color information sheet with reservation forms is enclosed in this issue of **"The PILGRIM."** Please indicate your desires as you register for this pilgrimage.

October 2004

We have planned a **PFMC** pilgrimage to **Medjugorje (PPM) via Rome** for **Doctor Bob** and **Anita Rice** of

“*In His Omnipotent Presence (IHOP) Ministries*” with **Father Phil Sladicka** of **Olyphant, PA**. The desired dates have been adjusted to **Sunday, 10 October 2004**, through **Friday, 22 October 2004** in order to facilitate **2 days** in **Rome** with an opportunity for a **Wednesday** audience with the **Holy Father, Pope John Paul II**, and then **2 days** in **Rome** before coming home. An orchid color information sheet with reservation form is included in this issue of “**The PILGRIM**.” Fill out a reservation form and send it in with your deposit.

(Keith and Kathleen Werner and all the **PFMC** Volunteer Staff Members)

12-14 MARCH 2004 RETREAT CONFERENCE (RC) / YOUTH TRACK (YT) and 15-17 MARCH 2004 3-DAY EXTENSION (3DX)

The theme for 2004 is “**Behold, I am sending you like sheep in the midst of wolves**” (**Matthew 10:16 [NAB]**).

The Retreat Conference (RC) will feature **Father Bill Halbing** who will speak on **Friday night**. He will also celebrate the opening Holy Mass and give the Homily. We will so enjoy our dynamic speakers: **Babsie Bleasdell** from **Trinidad**, **Father Andrew Apostoli, CFR**, who appears on **EWTN**, **Father Michael Semana**, **Father John McFadden**, **Sister Claire Marie de l’amore Crucifie** of the **Marian Community Oasis of Peace**, our **EMCEE** and singer **Al Barbarino**, and music by **REFUGE**.

Father Robert DeGrandis, SSJ, has had to cancel his presence this year and we pray for his time of rest.

Make your hotel reservations at the **Hilton Hotel** in **Cherry Hill, NJ** IMMEDIATELY. Our block of rooms at the \$94 rate must be booked by 2/12/2004.

The dates for the RC and YT will be **Friday, 12 March 2004**, **Saturday, 13 March 2004**, and **Sunday, 14 March 2004**.

On **Saturday night** there will be a concert with **Father Michael Semana** and the **Gospel Singers** from the “**People of Praise Prayer Community**” of **Brooklyn, NY**. We have so enjoyed the music of **Father Michael** for our Gala Dinner Concert this last **November**, and we have gone to **Brooklyn** to pray with and sing with the “**People of Praise Prayer Community**.” You are in for a wonderful evening of prayer and music. The concert will be followed by a healing service with individual prayer and anointing.

Father John Hampsch, C.M.F., will conduct the 3DX on the “**Holy Spirit Alive in Your Life**” on **Monday, 15 March 2004**, **Tuesday, 16 March 2004**, and **Wednesday, 17 March 2004**. He will be accompanied by **Sister Claire Marie de l’amore Crucifie** from the **Marian Community, Oasis of Peace** headquartered in **Passo Corese, Italy**. **Sister Claire** will speak on the messages of **Our Lady**.

J. P. Kasperowicz, “**Ministry of the Single Hearted**” from **Saint Ignatius of Antioch Parish in Yardley, PA**, has agreed to lead the **Youth Track (YT)**. We need volunteers to assist with the **YT**. Please call (856) 768-9228 and sign up to help.

Please review the **YELLOW** information sheet enclosed in this and previous issues of “**The PILGRIM**,” fill out the reservation form or forms, and return them with your donation check or charge card information to the **PFMC** as soon as possible. If you do not have a form, please call (856) 768-9228 and we will send you one. You may use the Internet www.geocities.com/pilgrimsfaith/2004/04RET3CF.pdf.

Please make your **PFMC** RC, YT, and 3DX reservations using the forms provided by the **PFMC**.

Do not wait to make your **Hilton Hotel** reservations with the hotel via **1-800 HILTONS** or **(856) 665-6666**. **MANY WAIT UNTIL IT IS TOO LATE AND THEN CANNOT GET A ROOM IN THE HOTEL**. All sessions are held in the **Hilton Hotel**

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OFFICE HELP, ASSEMBLY, LABELS and MAILING: Too many wonderful pilgrims and volunteers to mention them all by name.

itself. Buffet style hot lunches will be available through advance reservations with the *PFMC*.

Consider giving reservations to this event as gifts.

Ask your family to support your desire to attend even if they will not attend with you.

PLEASE do not wait to register with the *PFMC* or reserve rooms at the **HILTON HOTEL**. Our block of rooms at the \$94 rate must be booked by 2/12/2004.

(Kathleen and the Reservation Volunteers)

PRAY FOR and SUPPORT the MILITARY PERSONNEL

Know that our prayers, particularly when joined with others, are heard and acted upon by the Holy Trinity, One God, in Three Persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Our military personnel have responded to the call. They are operating in harms way in both Afghanistan and Iraq. Our prayers have been answered in the capture of Saddam Hussein. Hopefully his answers to interrogation will lead to the intelligence needed to reach the goal of the coalition forces so that a peaceful solution to the situation in Iraq can be realized. Let us pray for the capture of Osama Bin Laden and a peaceful solution to the situation in Afghanistan.

As we attend Holy Mass in many dioceses particularly in the Eastern part of the United States, we have been plagued with thoughts and questions about the posture changes at Holy Mass. It might help our returning military men and women if we all embraced the new General Instruction of the Roman Missal (GIRM) and its new posture rules. We should welcome our returning military men and women with a uniform posture similar if not identical to what they have been asked to practice. Keith found the following posted on the Internet Web site of the Military Archdiocese, USA:

THE POSTURE of the PEOPLE at [HOLY] MASS in the ARCHDIOCESE for the MILITARY SERVICES, USA

From the beginning of Mass until the First Reading: STAND

From the First Reading until the Gospel Acclamation: SIT

From the Gospel Acclamation until the end of the Gospel: STAND

During the Homily: SIT

From the Profession of Faith until the end of the General Intercessions: STAND

From the Preparation of the Gifts to the [invitation, *Orate, fratres (Pray, brethren)*], in GIRM #43] completion of "Pray brethren...": SIT

From the [invitation, *Orate, fratres (Pray, brethren)*], in GIRM #43] beginning of the peoples' response "May the Lord..." through the end of the Sanctus: STAND

From the completion of the Sanctus until after the AMEN of the Eucharistic Prayer: KNEEL

From the beginning of the OUR FATHER until the completion of the LAMB OF GOD: STAND

From the completion of the LAMB OF GOD (at the "BEHOLD THE LAMB OF GOD") until the distribution of Holy Communion: KNEEL

During the Communion Rite (the Congregation): KNEEL

To receive Communion: STAND

During the sacred silence after the distribution of Holy Communion: SIT

From the beginning of the Prayer after Communion until the end of Mass: STAND

<http://www.milarch.org/docs/THEPOSTUREOFTHEPEOPLE.pdf>

(Kathleen and Keith Werner [responsible for inserts])

GOD IS LOVE

This simple yet complex statement is found only twice^{1, 2} in the Bible and is commonly presented out of context. It is generally misunderstood and often circulated in a fashion that leads many into Hell. The statement –while very easy to make and accept when presented in its undefined form– has a depth of reality far beyond what the average person wants to know even though such knowledge is critical to salvation. "Whoever is without love does not know God, for God is love." [1 John 4:8] "We have come to know and to believe in the love God has for us*. God is love, and whoever remains in love remains in God and God in him." [1 John 4:16]

* This usage of the term "us" refers only to men of faith. In the following important prelude to the above passages the term "if" is used five (5) times. Entry into eternal life must always be considered as conditional:

"Now this is the message that we have heard from him and proclaim to you: **God is light**, and in him there is no darkness at all. **If** we say, "We have fellowship with him," while we continue to walk in darkness, we lie and do not act in truth. But **if** we walk in the light as he is in the light, then we have

fellowship with one another, and the blood of his Son Jesus cleanses us from all sin. **If** we say, “We are without sin,” we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. **If** we acknowledge our sins,³ he is faithful and just and will forgive our sins and cleanse us from every wrongdoing. **If** we say, “We have not sinned,” we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.” [1 John 1:5-10]

“Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained.” [John 20:23] — This authority was given by Jesus to the eleven apostles—even though only ten were present at the time—and to their validly ordained successors on Easter Sunday during His first visitation with them. All validly ordained priests (*also known by the terms presbyters and elders*) have this authority even though not materially present during this visitation. NOTE: The references in the book of Hebrews to Jesus being **High Priest** should be seen as a clear statement that there were other priests serving under His authority. (Priests can only be ordained by someone with demonstrable authority from God to ordain. They can never be elected or self-appointed.)

It must be understood that true love reflects the totality of goodness. Absolute goodness resides in God alone and is shared by Him with those who have sincerely sought association with Him. When one honestly seeks out God one is looking for that fullness of truth found only in God. A fullness of truth that few have any real desire to put into practice. Those who eventually reach Heaven have all truth present to them and can utilize any truth they seek, but they remain incapable of possessing at any given time the totality of truth.

Goodness is dependent upon truth and truth leads to justice. Not only must one desire truth and make a sincere effort to acquire all of the spiritual truths that are available and within one’s capacity to understand, but one must also be willing to put them into practice as opportunities present themselves. Without truth their can be no understanding of goodness and goodness demands service to God and neighbor according to the teachings of Jesus, Son of Man/Son of God.

Justice is a cohort of goodness and has as its foundation the Word of God that is always truth. Justice is the exercise of works in the service of both positive and negative commands of God – what one must do and what one must not do to obtain eternal happiness. Good deeds are meritorious works (*witnesses to faith*), benefiting the Heavenly Kingdom, that are performed by those who still reside in this life.

While no quantity or quality of works can substitute for the salvific act accomplished once by Jesus on the cross – that allowed access to Heaven to those judged worthy (Matthew 25:32), they are necessary witnesses to that love of God which is required for one to enter Heaven. Again, the mercy of God has been made obtainable only through the redemptive act of Jesus. Prior to this act no one was permitted entry into Heaven no matter how worthy they might be deemed to have been including Able, Enoch, Abraham, Joseph, Moses and many others. The ultimate mercy –redemption from the sin of Adam that caused separation from God– is received only by those who have put the fullness of God’s Word (*commands - direct or implicit*) into practice by actions of faith.

Summarization: God is love and love is shed upon those who seek knowledge of required truths that lead to the practice of justice in respect for the goodness of God. A greater appreciation of God can be obtained by meditating upon the qualities or attributes of God.

Anyone who pursues truth and practices justice is loved by God, that is, comes under the umbrella of that love which can be received from God alone. For those who do not pursue goodness, through the seeking of truth and the practice of justice, God is for them anger, hatred and wrath.

To be a recipient of salvation/mercy one must sincerely develop a full love of God and pursue Him through the practice of justice that can be understood only through the acquisition of spiritual truth. One must develop a sincere interest in God, listen –*accept and practice*– to His word, and grow in God’s love. God is love for those who love truth and practice justice and mercy –*Reference the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy*– according to His will. This is the true meaning of the phrase, “God is love.” One should never mistake the statement, “God is Love,” to mean that God does not condemn those who do not seek His love according to His (*God’s*) definition of love while sincerely seeking His mercy.

Those who ask for His mercy must be sincerely repentant, turn their lives around, and develop a humility that allows them to be of true service to the Lord through service in this life demonstrated in the form of good deeds/good works. Without the witness given by good works, any protestation that one loves God or has faith in God is meaningless. God’s mercy –*salvific act of redemption for people of active faith*– does not benefit those who culpably profess a false position of faith or love. In effect such people are lovers of evil and servants of Satan.

God is good. Goodness loves and associates with that which is good. Perfect goodness –which is the nature of God– is only able to associate with that which has

been made/becomes perfectly good. Perfection is not gratuitous.

Absolute perfection is necessary before one can enter the presence of God. If perfection is not achieved in this life by those not condemned to Hell, then it must be obtained through a purification process in an intermediate state of existence. In this state –referred to as Purgatory by those who accept Catholic doctrine (*mandatory for Catholics*)– one’s attachment to any imperfections, brought about by self-will, is gradually overcome.

The removal of attachment to sin –often a degree of denial relating to bad habit(s) not fully dealt with in this life– is facilitated through the application of that degree of encouragement (*pain*) that proves necessary over an extended period of time to make one accept the necessity of turning away from accumulated dysfunctional desires and activities that had been accepted by the spiritual mind. It should be understood that many opportunities (*much encouragement*) are presented while in this life to turn away from sin. Problems and sufferings in this life were meant to focus one’s attention and reliance upon the stated will of God. One must learn to accept what is universally good instead of that which is only self-serving.

In life one is given instructions and at times painful encouragement that is focused upon turning one away from sin and all attachment to it. Purgatory is for those who have only made a partial effort at turning away from association with sin.

Please keep in mind that there are no free rides into Heaven, for anyone. Further, there is no simple method for gaining perfection at the conclusion of life. After years of stubbornness relating to the retention of wrong doing one should not expect to be instantly made perfect. No one is gratuitously made perfect as this would limit that quality of free will which is necessary for one to effectively share with God in eternal life to the degree deserved through meritorious actions during life.

Those who are not redeemable (*unrepentant grave sinners*) through a process of purification are condemned to eternal suffering commonly referred to as Hell. Eternal suffering is necessary for incorrigible sinners. They have eternally living spirits that would be destructive to the harmony of Heaven if allowed freedom. Ceaseless pain keeps them from developing into a force that would be disruptive to those living in eternal happiness. When one fails to adhere to the commands of God –*statements of His will that are either positive or negative*– one is not in the love of God.

Everyone wants to be able to do things their own way. They want to consider their way as the right way. This is a product of egocentrism (*self-centeredness*). Most are not willing to accept that God’s way is the product of great wisdom known through the explicit true teachings of the one authorized and unified (*under supreme but controlled papal authority*) Church established by Jesus. The avenue of established truth does not often agree with one’s personal preferred way.

God is love, but He is also light, truth and justice. Mercy is a by product of justice and while necessary for salvation it is not gratuitous even though Jesus’ redemptive act was gratuitous. Mercy is not granted to those who do not have sincerity of repentance. Everyone must make a humble request for mercy that has been warranted as worthy of being granted through meritorious deeds. Depending upon circumstances such deeds can be either simple or complex.

SUMMARY:

God, being love, has the perfection of that love which is goodness. He sheds Light (*knowledge*) upon those who seek truth and then put the acquired truths into practice (*justice - good works versus misdeeds or indifference*). One who truly loves God will act in a way that demonstrates a sincere love of God. One must give God sincere worship and humble himself before Jesus. Service to Jesus is through placing into action spiritual knowledge that has been obtained. A major part of learning is focused upon love of neighbor. The simple way to accomplish this is to put into practice the Golden Rule, that is, “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.” The corporal and spiritual works of mercy are of major importance in relation to serving others in this life in the service of almighty God.

(Father David C. Trosch, Feast of Saint Callistus, 14 October 1999, <http://www.trosch.org/the/love.html>)

ANXIETY

The Lord loves those who search and find wisdom. How can I be wise, Lord? One needs what it can’t be defined, we need what it only comes from You in the most complete mystery. Lord, my human structure doesn’t let me go to You wishing and willingly. The anxiety dominates me, and one day, I go ahead and the next one I am stuck again.

How can I get rid of it?

This is something that confuses me and perhaps I can realize, that even with it, I can ask for Your wisdom.

Pray for it and count on it to resolve what the day brings.

Without wisdom everything is foolishness and hardships, we don't have the tools to resolve the unforeseen successfully. However, if we ask for wisdom, it will come, and it will act without us realizing.

There is a special protection when Wisdom is present in us. What will happen when we meet? what should I say? what words should I use?, what judgments should I emit without maybe causing harm or impediment?

Every day I realize, more and more, of the need to pray, and pray, to get the gift of wisdom and expect it with trust. I want it and I need it, to govern my actions and my attitudes so I can deliver with it something to the people that can give them trust and peace. That I can emit messages full of life to convince them, motivate them, and help them to change their ways and to live in harmony. When does wisdom come? "The Holy Spirit will make you know the future acts and He will be with you giving you protection and strength to face the difficulties". But...we must ask for it with perseverance, without dismay, despite of the coming and going of the day. Where are you? when are you coming? what would you say? and what should we do.?

I believe that wisdom is to realize that without it, we are nothing, and therefore we can do nothing. We must keep an attitude of permanent disposition and open ears..

Lord, thank You for this moment that I know is Yours and of the Virgin. However, will I fulfill? I appeal to Your mercy, because despite our indifference, You, by Your eternal love give us wisdom when we don't wish it and always when we need it the most. Thanks

(Gustavo Daniel Gopar Echeverría, psychologist with children and adults in Montevideo, Uruguay, <http://www.netgate.com.uy/~ggopar/prayers.html>)

FRUITS of SIN

But what comes out of a person, that is what defiles. From within people, from their hearts, come evil thoughts, unchastity, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, licentiousness, envy, blasphemy, arrogance, folly. All these evils come from within and they defile. [Mk 7:20-23]

He said, "Who are you, sir?" The reply came, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. Now get

up and go into the city and you will be told what you must do." [Acts 9:5-6]

Therefore, just as through one person sin entered the world, and through sin, death, and thus death came to all, inasmuch as all sinned for up to the time of the law, sin was in the world, though sin is not accounted when there is no law. But death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who did not sin after the pattern of the trespass of Adam, who is the type of the one who was to come. But the gift is not like the transgression. For if by that one person's transgression the many died, how much more did the grace of God and the gracious gift of the one person Jesus Christ overflow for the many.

And the gift is not like the result of the one person's sinning. For after one sin there was the judgment that brought condemnation; but the gift, after many transgressions, brought acquittal. [Rom 5:12-16]

For when we were in the flesh, our sinful passions, awakened by the law, worked in our members to bear fruit for death. [Romans 7:5]

I fed you milk, not solid food, because you were unable to take it. Indeed, you are still not able, even now, for you are still of the flesh. While there is jealousy and rivalry among you, are you not of the flesh, and behaving in an ordinary human way? [1 Cor 3:2-3]

Do you not know that the unjust will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators nor idolaters nor adulterers nor boy prostitutes nor practicing homosexuals nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor robbers will inherit the kingdom

PLEASE RESPOND to THIS NOTICE and STAY ON the BULK MAILING LIST

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If you know someone who would enjoy the "**The PILGRIM**," please ask them to contact us at the address printed in the box on page 5 or near the mailing label on the last page.

of God. That is what some of you used to be; but now you have had yourselves washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.
[1 Cor 6:9-11]

Make no mistake: God is not mocked, for a person will reap only what he sows, because the one who sows for his flesh will reap corruption from the flesh, but the one who sows for the spirit will reap eternal life from the spirit. [Gal 6:7-8]

For the time that has passed is sufficient for doing what the Gentiles like to do: living in debauchery, evil desires, drunkenness, orgies, carousing, and wanton idolatry. [1 Pet 4:3]

(Gustavo Daniel Gopar Echeverría, psychologist with children and adults in Montevideo, Uruguay, <http://www.netgate.com.uy/~ggopar/prayers.html> Scripture from New American Bible (NAB) 1991.)

NEVER DOUBT that JESUS LOVES EACH ONE of US

What would it be like to meet Jesus for the first time?

Recently, I received a remarkable letter from a woman. I will call her Grace because her letter itself was an instrument of grace for me. She told me she was physically abused as a child and psychologically abused as a wife. After a cruel divorce, she went wild, living through a series of relationships, which only added to her low self-esteem.

She took the time to tell me that a miracle of grace had happened to her, and she was free of her misery for the first time in many years.

Here is an excerpt from her letter:

“One day in February I was thinking what it must have been like when Jesus came to town. I pictured in my mind a dusty Israeli town, with Jesus and his group walking in and resting under a shady tree. I pictured him eating, looking around at the surroundings and noticing everything.”

“I saw myself off in a corner, alone and isolated, I pictured it because if I had been alive then, I would have been the town outcast. I would have been the sinful woman, whom no righteous person would talk to, one whom men would visit in the dark. That’s the kind of person I have been.”

“Yet, even as I thought that, suddenly Jesus was looking straight at me. I was embarrassed; it made

me nervous. I looked away, but Jesus stood up and walked toward me. My heart was pounding. Somehow I knew he would speak to me. I became terrified. There he was before me. I buried my face in my hands, afraid to look up, not knowing what to do. Then he spoke to me. ‘Grace, would you like to come and sit with us?’”

“I kept my eyes down, hoping he would go away. Please go away, I thought. But again he spoke my name. ‘Grace, come share some food with us.’”

“A group of learned men came walking up to Jesus at that very moment. I wanted to disappear. They spoke to him: ‘Do you not know she is a sinner? Do you not have any idea who she is?’”

“I was so ashamed. I knew they were right. This holy man should not talk to the likes of me. But then I felt a hand under my chin. Jesus lifted my face and looked squarely at me. Love poured out of him, and my soul was filled with joy. He looked deeply into my eyes and to that spot in my heart that has always been his. At that moment, none of the darkness of my past mattered. He knew it all, and it didn’t matter.”

“As he kept looking into my eyes, he answered those men: ‘Yes I know who she is.’ And he did.”

“Then he repeated his invitation, ‘Grace, will you come and sit beside me?’”

“He knew everything about me, yet he wanted me to be with him. I said, ‘Yes Lord. Yes! Yes! Yes!’ And I went to him. The learned men were shocked and dumbfounded.”

“It was then for the first time that I understood God’s love for me was real. It was as if I met Jesus in person. I felt as though he had actually been with me in my room that day. The memory of it still warms my soul. I feel so blessed. All my life I have longed for this kind of deep awareness of his love.”

(by Father John Catoir, Catholic News Service, The Monitor, September 18, 2003)

HEAVENLY FATHER - A PRAYER for HEALING

I call on You right now in a special way. It is through Your power that I was created. Every breath I take, every morning I wake, and every moment of every hour, I live under Your power.

Father, I ask You now to touch me with that same power. For if You created me from nothing, You can certainly recreate me. Fill me with the healing power of Your Spirit. Cast out anything that should not be in me. Mend what is broken. Root out any unproductive cells. Open any blocked arteries or

veins and rebuild any damaged areas. Remove all inflammation and cleanse any infection.

Let the warmth of Your healing love pass through my body to make new any unhealthy areas so that my body will function the way You created it to function.

And Father, restore me to full health in mind and body so that I may serve You the rest of my life.

I ask this through Christ our Lord. AMEN

(Father Larry J. Hess – on a prayer card)

POPE SEES CRUCIFIX as SYMBOL of “CIVILIZATION of LOVE”

Pope John Paul II said the image of Christ on the cross is a source of consolation, and he invited believers to be builders of the “civilization of love.”

The Pope’s words today were in response to the debate in Italy over a judge’s decision last Saturday to order the removal of a crucifix from a school, at the request of a Muslim fundamentalist party militant.

Addressing pilgrims at the general audience, the Holy Father urged them to be “builders of the civilization of love, of which the cross of Christ is an eloquent symbol, source of light, of consolation, and hope for the men of all times.”

Today’s Italian edition of “L’Osservatore Romano” published testimonies opposing the juridical order to remove the crucifix from public school classrooms in a town in the Aquila region, in central Italy. The testimonies were headlined: “We Will Not Let Them Take the Cross Away from Us.”

(VATICAN CITY, OCT. 29, 2003 ZE03102907
www.zenit.org/senglish/send_friend/index.phtml?sid=43654)

AFA IS ASSISTING IN SENDING LETTERS / E-MAIL on ISSUES

During the past few months we have discovered that the American Family Association (AFA) has posted a letter writing engine on their AFA Internet Web site through which we can reach not only members of Congress but many of those responsible for some of the media attacks on family values. We strongly recommend paying a visit to the AFA Internet Web site <http://capwiz.com/afanet/home/>. There you can send letters and/or e-mail on some of the listed issues. Here is the list of issues available in the middle of December 2003:

[“F” Word Used Again! This Time By FOX](#)

[Help Save Marriage! Massachusetts Supreme Court OKs Homosexual Marriage](#)

[Stop Democratic Filibusters of Pres. Bush’s Judicial Nominees!](#)

[Congress supporting vigorous enforcement of the Federal obscenity laws](#) Ask your Member of Congress to co-sponsor H. Con Res. 298

[Religious Liberties Restoration Act](#) Ask your senators to co-sponsor S. 1558

[“Scent to Bed’ Ad Campaign Targets Teens](#)

[Unborn Victims of Violence Act of 2003](#) Support S.146!

[Child Custody Protection Act](#) Support S. 851

[Pledge Protection Act of 2003](#) Support H.R. 2028

[Houses of Worship Free Speech Restoration Act](#) Support H.R. 235

Take some time and visit Internet Web sites where your effort can be multiplied many fold.

(Kathleen and Keith Werner)

FRIENDS of DOCTOR BOB and ANITA RICE – PLEASE RESPOND!

Doctor Bob and Anita Rice of *In His Omnipotent Presence (IHOP) Ministries* have been sending us names and addresses of those interested in a pilgrimage to Medjugorje via Rome which we are coordinating.

This pilgrimage from *Sunday, 10 October 2004*, through *Friday, 22 October 2004*, is detailed in the enclosed orchid color information sheet with reservation forms.

In addition to the *IHOP Ministries* newsletter, those addresses will be receiving “*The PILGRIM*” until individually cancelled.

If you are interested in this *IHOP* and *PFMC* pilgrimage to Medjugorje via Rome, please complete a reservation form, enclose the deposit, and sent it to the *PFMC*. Couples may use front and back of the same form.

(Kathleen, Keith, and all the *PFMC* Volunteers)

MESSAGE of 12/25/2003 via Maria Pavlovic Lunetti

Dear Children! Also today, I bless you all with my Son Jesus in my arms and I carry Him, who is the King of Peace, to you, that He grant you His peace. I am with you and I love you all, little children. Thank you for having responded to my call.

(The **PFMC** upholds the final decision of the Magisterium of the Roman Catholic Church led by the Holy Father, Pope John Paul II, as to the authenticity of messages to alleged visionaries from Medjugorje.)

REFLECTION on the MESSAGE of 12/25/03

I LOVE YOU ALL

The Blessed Virgin Mary, the Queen of Peace, tells us: *“Dear children! Also today...”* Also today, as during all these years for Christmas, the Mother of Peace comes to us carrying in her arms her Son Jesus, King of Peace. Also today, like the first day of the apparitions when the visionaries saw her for the first time on the hill called Crnica, Our Lady comes with the Child Jesus in her arms, as if she wanted to say: I bring Jesus to you and I lead you to Jesus. What do we need more? Let us desire the utmost; let us languish for that, because God does not want to give us a little but everything, not any kind of life but a life with Him, which begins already here.

Nobody could imagine how many hearts - during all these years - would make their experience of God, of a new birth and of a rebirth here; as at the beginning so today. We also cannot measure or imagine the power and the depth of the love of God and of his patience with us. God is patient with us; he waits until we finally trust him, so that He may give us nothing else but Himself. This is why, for Christmas, it is important to look forward to somebody and not to something. Here, the Virgin Mary does not bring something to us. Peace is not something but somebody. It is a person who has a name; it is the King of Peace - Jesus Christ, the Newborn Baby. Let us not be content with mediocrity, tepidity, traditions and customs that go along with Christmas, but let us desire the essence of Christmas. When we arrive to that, then everything has a meaning: feast day garments, food and drink and all decorations that accompany Christmas, according to the proverb: *“What is the use of speed if you do not have a goal?”* The same applies to our faith. What is the use of all external religious customs if we do not know their foundation, the core and the meaning of all that?

Christmas is a day that belongs to Jesus, and to us too. He is the one who has given us this solemnity, this feast. He, the King of Peace, did not come only to live with us but also to die for us to remain forever with

us, to remain Emmanuel - God with us. God did it for us and for our salvation.

Only the small and the humble ones discover God. So many of them discovered Jesus through Mary and through her presence here, among us. Only the humble ones see that the heart of child can see further than the heart of the adult. But the adults also can have a heart of child. The humble ones - those who have a heart of child - see that something incredible has happened among us, something that exceeds our intelligence, something majestic. Also for this Christmas, Jesus comes to tell us, that our sins are forgiven, that God has nothing against us, that He has come to lead us out of darkness, out of restlessness and out of confusion. He penetrated our tombs to lead us to life. He penetrated our hatred to introduce us to love. Jesus Christ - He is Christmas, indeed. God descended on our earth; He was conceived by the Holy Spirit in the womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Also today, He comes to us through Mary.

When we look at a child, including the Child Jesus in the manger, it seems to us so fragile, so weak and so incredible. Just like His Church: weak, too human, sinful and frail. However, under external appearances is hidden the invincible force of heaven, which wants to live in each one of us, if only we allow it to approach us. Mary, the Queen of Peace, tells us again and again: *“I am with you and I love you all.”* She loves us all, whether we want it or not; she loves us, whether we receive her or not. If we receive her, it will be for our salvation and for a new life for us and for our neighbor. Let us pray the Lord that it may happen.

(Father Ljubo Kurtović, OFM, December 26, 2003,
<http://www.medjugorje.hr/ulazakenstipe.htm>)

PRESS BULLETIN 193, 12/26/2003

WHO IS MY WAY?

As seekers of God, we are glad that Saint Thomas had asked: Lord, we do not know where you are going and which is your way... It is as if Thomas had expressed aloud, and in the name of all of us, the

reality of our lack of understanding of the plans of Christ, of his way, his goal... Where are you going? Jesus said to Thomas that he was the way, the truth and the life. (Cf. Jn 14,6) This is how Jesus presented himself.

If we want to arrive at any destination, we must know the way. A way is not just a road, a railway, an air corridor or similar. A way, it is also a possibility of an encounter. If we want to meet a person or a friend, we must cross a certain way – enter in touch, shake the hands, become friends. It is important to know the way, if not, we will get lost. How to find the way towards God, and how to walk on his ways - it is the fundamental question for all believers. To know the way that leads to the encounter with God is the capital duty not only of religious people but also of humanity in general. To meet our Creator, it is a must, to which each one must aim.

In a world without God, innumerable doctrines deny the existence of God and offer their own ways. Many succumb by ignorance. Stirred by this, the German theologian Hans Kueng said to an atheistic journalist: "You do not believe in God. Consequently, an endless and splendid world remains closed to you. You are like a deaf person who does not have access to the wonderful world of music". It is difficult to make something transparent to someone, as long as the person has not felt herself the beauty of the light. Thus, it is not so much important to prove the existence of God, but to help people to open the eyes of the heart and of the soul, so that they may see and understand for themselves. The Pope Paul VI said: "Let us not curse darkness, but light a candle!"

In Medjugorje, through Gospa, God has lit his lamp in the darkness of a world, which was at the time still communist. Thus the Apparition Hill became the city located on the mount, the light that shines in the night of so many hearts. This light, like the Morning Star in the night of Bethlehem, shows distinctly and illuminates the way that leads to Jesus. It is precisely here, on Apparition Hill, that our contemporaries repeat in front of Our Lady the question of Saint Thomas: Lord, where do you stay? Thus, Our Lady becomes the most beautiful indicator of the way, which leads out to Jesus. She does not want to be anything else. She does not lead people to herself, but towards the One who is the Way, the Truth and the Life. So, through Our Lady, the pilgrims of Medjugorje experience God and, with her, they find their own way. Thus, together with John the Baptist, Mary wants to tell us that our own experience of faith can become for others a pathway to Jesus.

Father Mario Knezovic

COMMUNIONS and CONCELEBRANTS

During the month of November, 33,000 received Holy Communion and 1149 priests from this country and abroad concelebrated Holy Mass in Medjugorje.

MONSIGNOR TARCISIO ZIYAYE, ARCHBISHOP of BLANTYRE (MALAWI, AFRICA) in MEDJUGORJE

Monsignor Tarcisio Ziyaye, Archbishop of Blantyre (Malawi, Africa), was in Medjugorje during the first week November 2003. He came with a group of 30 faithful from Malawi, including five priests and a religious sister, and with Mrs. Gabrielle Russel, who organized this journey with the help of numerous donors from all over the world: friends from Malawi, Medjugorje Center in Australia, Medjugorje-Mir office in Split, friends from Scotland, friends of the missionaries who work in Malawi... and Tony Smith from England, the benefactor who built the Medjugorje Cross in Malawi.

This is what Monsignor Tarcisio Ziyaye told us:

"I am here for the first time. I came with a group with five priests and a religious sister and lay faithful. I am very happy to be here.

I have heard about Medjugorje in 1989, when one of us came here with my own bishop at that time. I am more involved now than before, because in the Archdiocese of Blantyre, where I am now, we have built a replica of the cross that you have here on Cross Mountain.

I see that this is really a place of prayer. Indeed, we are very grateful to the visionaries who inspire us. One of them said that the idea of the coming to Medjugorje should not be to see them, but to pray and to deepen our spiritual life, to deepen our devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary.

I am also very grateful to the Parish. I think that they organize the program very well. They really help people to pray, to come before God individually, to be free, to be in touch with one's inner self. It is really good to be here!

We are taking home many, many rosaries! In Malawi, there are over 3 millions of Catholics out of about 11 millions of inhabitants. We want to share, because sharing is influencing our faith and the faith of others. I believe that if we put God first, if we fight against spiritual poverty, God will intervene for the material poverty. Sometimes we think that we can do it alone, but this is wrong. The spirit of sharing enriches everybody.

All of us – in Europe and in Africa – should preach without preaching. We should preach with our life."

JIM CAVIEZEL, WHO STARS in MEL GIBSON'S "THE PASSION of the CHRIST," CAME to MEDJUGORJE

Jim Caviezel, who stars in the most recent Mel Gibson's movie, "The Passion of the Christ", has arranged a private presentation of the unfinished version of this movie at "The Mother's Village" in Medjugorje, on Saturday, December 6th, 2003.

During the same weekend, the film was seen by members from the Vatican Secretariat of State, the Pontifical Council for Social Communications, and the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, the



group that oversees Catholic doctrinal questions. All of them expressed unanimous appreciation and approval of the film.

In the interview given to Father Mario Knezovic for Radio "Mir" Medjugorje, Jim and his wife Kerri spoke about the movie.

Here are some passages:

Jim Caviezel: I first heard about Medjugorje in 5th – 6th grade. They said that it was like the apparitions of Fatima, Guadeloupe, Lourdes, and they quickly said that the bishop said that it was false, so - as obedient catholic - I accepted what they were saying. Many years later, I met my wife, we got married, and after a few years she went to Medjugorje. While she was there, I was filming "The Count of Monte Cristo" in Ireland. She called me to Ireland, I felt that there was a change in her voice, but I wrote it off very quickly, thinking: "That's good for you, dear, who am I to take away from your spiritual experience?" She said that Ivan Dragicevic was coming to Ireland... I met with him a couple of times, and during an apparition, I felt a physical presence. Ivan told me two things that really hit me: "*Jim, man always makes time for what he loves*", and "*The reason man does not make time for God is that he does not love God*". Then, he talked to me about praying from the heart. That became like a beginning of a mission for me – to always pray from my heart.

Kerri Caviezel: I was in seventh grade and our priest showed us a film of the children during an apparition. We were told that it was true. We were from a mixed Catholic community – mostly Croatians and Italians. My grandmother is a 100% Croatian. It didn't seem hard to believe. I took me 15 years to come. When I came, I knew immediately - from what I was feeling in my heart - that it was real. I haven't seen signs or

anything, but - I have been a Catholic for my whole life and I had never felt in confession as I felt when I was here. It was a tremendous healing.

About the role of Jesus Christ, they said:

Jim Caviezel: The catharsis for me to play this role was through Medjugorje, through Gospa. In preparation, I used all that Medjugorje taught me. Mel Gibson and I were going every day for Mass together. Some days I couldn't go for Mass, but I was receiving the Eucharist. Somewhere along the line, I heard that the Pope was going for Confession every day, so I thought that I should go for Confession as often as possible. I didn't want the Lucifer to have any control over the performance. We have sins of commission, but also sins of omission. My sin of omission continuously is that I don't love enough. So, the Confession was the preparation for the Eucharist. Ivan Dragicevic and his wife Lorraine gave me a piece of the true cross. I kept this on me all the time. They made a special pocket in my clothes for it. I also had relics of [Saint] Padre Pio, Saint Anthony of Padua, Saint Maria Goretti, and Saint Denisius, the patron saint of actors. Another thing was fasting. I read many of the messages continuously. Every day everyone could see me with the Rosary in my hands.

Kerri Caviezel: The first time I saw the cross on him, when he had all the make-up, he didn't look like my husband, he looked like Christ. They have taken a picture of the Shroud of Turin, and they used the make-up to create that, exactly that face. It was so real, that people looked at him in the way that people must have reacted to Christ: some were full of reverence; some were indifferent, and some made fun of him. It struck both of us; we understand in a small way what it must have been like. It was personal in our lives; I think that he realized the weight of this role. There will never be a more important thing that he ever does.

ANNUAL APPARITION to JAKOV on DECEMBER 25TH 2003

At the last daily apparition to Jakov Colo on September 12th, 1998, Our Lady told him that henceforth he would have one apparition a year, every December 25th, on Christmas Day. This is also how it was this year. The apparition began at 3:15 pm and lasted 8 minutes.

Our Lady gave the following message:

Dear children! Today, when in a special way, Jesus desires to give you His peace, I call you to pray for peace in your hearts. Children, without peace in your hearts you

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cannot feel the love and joy of the birth of Jesus. Therefore, little children, today in a special way, open your hearts and begin to pray. Only through prayer and complete surrender, will your heart be filled with the love and peace of Jesus. I bless you with my motherly blessing.

(Published by: Information Center MIR - Shrine of the Queen of Peace, 88266 Medjugorje.
<http://www.medjugorje.hr/ulazakenstipe.htm>)

VOCATION DEPARTMENT

If you need vocation information and you do not find it in your local parish or diocese, please call Elizabeth Wisniewski at (856) 768-9228. She has been collecting vocation information for years and now provides that information willingly to friends of the PFMC. She has been acquiring pamphlets for distribution from religious communities, particularly those who have Perpetual Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament.

(Kathleen, Keith, Liz, and all the *PFMC* Volunteers)

NAZARETH HOUSE

A place of discernment and formation for men aspiring to priesthood in the Roman Catholic Church, Nazareth House is located on the campus of Camden Catholic High School in Cherry Hill.

It houses the Diocese of Camden formation program to help young men investigate whether God is calling them to a priestly vocation.

The mission of Nazareth House is to assist young men between the ages of 18-35 in the discernment and development of the seeds of a priestly vocation.

The staff provides them with the foundation for seminary theologate formation, through a shared community life of prayer and worship; human, spiritual and intellectual development; and pastoral service.

It now houses the Camden Diocese Office of Vocations.

FOR MORE INFORMATION or APPLICATION MATERIALS, CONTACT:

Director of Vocations, Diocese of Camden,
Father Cadmus Mazzarella,

mazzarella@camdendiocese.org,

or visit: <http://www.beapriest.org>, or

Nazareth House, 300 Cuthbert Boulevard, Cherry Hill,
NJ 08002 (856) 910-4930 or FAX: (856) 662-8917

CARDINAL RATZINGER on the MANDATE for PRIESTS

The mandate received by the Apostles persists up to this day through the gift of the Holy Spirit: The power that Christ gave to reconcile, to nourish, to teach, continues unchanged in his successors, but they are real successors only if, 'they remain faithful to the teachings of the apostles' (Acts 2:42)

In life and in priesthood it is fundamental that man be in intimate personal communion with Christ. The priest must be a man who knows Christ intimately, who follows Him and has learnt to love Him. The priest, therefore, must be a man of prayer, a man of real spirituality. Without a solid spiritual substance, he cannot last in his ministry.

He must also learn from the Mystery of Christ, not to look for himself, nor try to promote himself. He must learn to spend his life for Christ and for his herd. This style of life is exactly opposed to our natural inclinations, but little by little, it becomes clear to us that he who forgets himself is completely liberated. He will have no need to look for success and thus confide in himself. By working for the Lord, he leaves the result to the Lord, and with great joy he places his worries in the hands of the Lord.

Naturally, when we are in intimate communion with Christ the love for our fellow brothers is born in us too. He who knows Christ from within also wants to communicate the joy of his redemption that the Lord generated in him, to the others. Pastoral work is born from this communion of love. Christ is never alone, but comes in His Body to gather men, and it is inevitable that to the love for Christ, love for the Church is also added.

Saint Gregory I said, "What else could holy men be if not rivers? But they would dry up quickly if they did not promptly return, out of desire, to the place where they rose. But they always return to the heart out of

HOLY MASS TIMES

If you ever think you will miss Holy Mass because you don't know the times of Holy Mass or the locations of churches in the area that you are going to visit or are currently located, please call **1-410-676-6000**.

If you have access to the Internet and don't already have it book marked, type in the Uniform Resource Locator (URL) www.masstimes.org in the white box near the top of your browser.

You can find maps to the churches in addition to the times of Holy Mass celebrations.

love. And, what they pour out, do and speak before the people, they secretly attain from the Fountain of Love. In fact, they learn what they express in their teachings by loving.”

(Cardinal Ratzinger about the Priesthood at the Synod of Bishops at the meeting of Rimini, September 30, 1990, edited from Echo Nov. 1990 #10, Mantova, Italy)

TRIALS and GRATITUDE

The economic difficulties of the past year and more have resulted in many people becoming unemployed or underemployed. I recently had the opportunity to have a conversation with a man named John who lost his job over a year ago. I say he lost his job, but it was more than that. John’s work had been more like a vocation - his life’s calling. He found enormous fulfillment in what he did. Much of John’s social life was centered in his employment. The loss of his job seemed unfair. It had nothing to do with his performance. John was simply a casualty of bad economic times.

John’s sadness at losing what he considered to be his vocation was profound. It was clear how much he had poured himself into his work. He was having a hard time trying to find a new center for his life. There seems little hope that he will be able to find employment that will replicate or replace the deeply satisfying experience he had. I expected that John would be bitter about what had happened to him. It seemed to me to be a reasonable response. He was not. John explained to me that soon after he learned of the loss of his job he made a conscious decision not to be bitter. That decision allowed him to feel the pain of his loss without feeling hopeless or being trapped into rage.

I asked John if gratitude played a role in his being so balanced and hopeful. He said that gratitude was a key discipline in his daily living. He tries to take time every evening and sometimes during the day to be aware of the good that is going on in his life. John told me that exercising gratitude is not new to him but that the power of gratitude to heal his soul is more apparent than it was previously. John’s story is both unremarkable and amazing. He certainly isn’t the only person to know heartbreak in the loss of a job but his attitude is extraordinary.

My asking John about gratitude stems from my own experience of the great power of thankfulness. I am filled with gratitude when I contemplate the enormous variety of gifts that people freely put at the service of others. Some of this service takes the form of traditional ministries. A great deal does not. It

happens in little and big ways in the course of a person’s daily life. I have been blessed to be able to hear about the various ways people place their lives in service of others in my role as the Vocation Director for the U.S. Province of the Adorers of the Blood of Christ. It is astounding.

I am grateful that one of the ministries of my congregation is to help women and men discern their true vocation. If the discernment leads them to join a religious community, that is wonderful. Equally wonderful is their finding greater clarity and commitment in their call in the secular world. Our *Life Choices*® program invites interested persons to examine their life, reflect on their spirituality and contemplate their future life. It is an outstanding process that has helped many, many people find new meaning in their lives.

No one can be assured of stability in their life’s path. Sometimes events outside of our control can seem to take away all the really matters in our lives. At other times we receive unexpected gifts that bring fulfillment. Like John, we are best served when we ground ourselves in gratitude. If we practice gratitude each day we will find the strength to endure losses and be quicker to realize the gifts that are given us. What a blessing it is to know this truth.

(Sister Diana Rawlings, ASC, Krvstaalovsia@cs.com)

CROSS

How hard it is for me to give thanks! Thank you Lord for the grace that allows us to do with joy what we have to do.

Really, if You were not present, what would be of us?

What could we talk, say, feel, without You?

If the strength, the clarity, the consistency of that Spirit that do everything right, was not with us?

Lord, I want to manifest my happiness because You were and are always there when I need You.

I believe the Holy Spirit is your right hand, is the gratifying blow which gives light and truth to our words and acts.

Nothing without You, Lord, absolutely nothing without You.

I cannot express with the correct words what is the action of your Spirit in me, when I call Him and I ask Him with efforts and sometimes with perseverance, His assistance.

HE COMES, HE IS, HE IS PRESENT.

He makes our sight sweet, He makes us feel channels and instruments, and we feel that words come out which are not ours, and there we realize of the grace.

But Lord, I am ungrateful, I know it, but I don't do anything to mend that, and I stay, and I demand, and I expect. When He doesn't arrive, so I can learn patience and virtue, I get anxious and it seems that my life doesn't make sense and I feel bad.

Please Lord, comprehend me, help me, give me strength to believe and to trust, and to continue despite all the obstacles and situations I have to face.

In the morning, it seems that I have to lift a heavy load and I never do it with happiness to offer it to You. I play a double game, one step here and the other gets stuck and I don't let that big 'Yes' grow, which I, for so long, want to feel in my heart.

I am tired Lord, oppressed sometimes, with long, unending waits, and Your silence paralyzes me, petrifies me and anguishes me.

I keep a lot inside, yes, selfishly, and I believe that it is impossible to change in this sense and sometimes I get bored. I stay alone waiting.

I have moments when I don't understand what I am doing, although deep inside I know that You are present because You let me see it constantly, in the sign, in the word and in the most vain act of the daily life. Unfortunately I can't express what I really am and feel, and where I am going, if I am going anywhere.... Lord, what do you want from me? What is Your will in me?

You know that I can't take it anymore, still I feel afraid before You and I truly lack trust and blind faith, which is given by the LOVE, the love that I don't have, the love which means: to give up myself and let myself be taken and to TRUST.

Today, more than ever, since it's a long time that I don't feel like writing with all my will and even tears, I ask You for the sweet company of the Holy Spirit. Only He can keep me company and make me feel alive, there, where He is present and where He waits for me.

Pour out a little bit of Your mercy and most of all your tenderness, I am in need.

Hear me and consider my plea. That Your light keeps fortifying me and being with me in the search and in the wish of knowing, and of being able to fulfill your Will.

(Gustavo Daniel Gopar Echeverría, psychologist with children and adults in Montevideo, Uruguay, <http://www.netgate.com.uy/~ggopar/prayers.html>)

THE POPE URGES ROSARIES for PEACE and FAMILIES

ASSESESSES the YEAR DEDICATED to MARIAN DEVOTION

As the Year of the Rosary draws to a close, Pope John Paul II invited the faithful again to pray the rosary for world peace and for the family.

The Pope made this appeal during today's general audience held, due to the rain, in Saint Peter's Basilica as well as Paul VI Hall, to accommodate the 16,000 pilgrims present.

In his apostolic letter "Rosarium Virginis Mariae" the Holy Father had called for the Year of the Rosary, with an eye toward his 25th anniversary as Pope.

"I am profoundly grateful to God for this time of grace, in which the whole ecclesial community has been able to reflect on the value and importance of the rosary, as a Christological and contemplative prayer," John Paul II said in his prepared address, a good part of which he himself delivered.

"Desirous of reflecting ever more the mystery of Christ, the Church enters the school of Mary to meditate on the mysteries of his Gospel," he said. "This is Mary's way, the path on which she carried out her exemplary pilgrimage of faith, as first disciple of the Incarnate Word."

"It is, at the same time, the way of an authentic Marian devotion, centered totally on the relation that exists between Christ and his most Holy Mother," the Pope said.

He reminded the faithful that this year he has commended to them "two great prayer intentions: peace and the family."

"The disconcerting attacks of September 11, 2001, and what has happened in the world since then, have increased tension at the global level," the Holy Father said.

"In face of these worrying situations, to recite the beads of the rosary is not to retreat into oneself, but a conscious choice of faith," he explained. "Contemplating the face of Christ, our peace and our reconciliation, we wish to implore from God the gift of peace, through the intercession of Mary Most Holy."

"We ask her for the necessary strength to be builders of peace, beginning with daily life in the family," the Pope added.

John Paul II said his second prayer intention is the family, as the latter should be "the first realm in

which the peace of Christ is received, cultivated and guarded.”

“In our days, however, without prayer it becomes ever more difficult for the family to realize its vocation,” he added. “The family that prays together stays together.”

www.zenit.org/senglish/send_friend/index.phtml?sid=43653, VATICAN CITY, OCT. 29, 2003, Zenit.org ZE03102905)

PRAYER of CONSECRATION of YOUR CHILD to the INFANT JESUS

Jesus knows what it means to be a child. Weak. Vulnerable. Small.

He no doubt cried in His parents’ arms. He relied on Mary and Joseph’s loving protection when the family fled into Egypt because of King Herod’s desire to kill Him. In His humanity, Jesus sought to identify Himself with us.

One beautiful and traditional way of identifying ourselves with Him is through devotion to the Infant Jesus. Knowing what Jesus must have experienced as a child, we can entrust to Him the protection of our own children and grandchildren.

In fact, the Marians have had a longstanding tradition of honoring the Infant Jesus during the Christmas season. In 1944, the first year the Marians settled in Stockbridge, MA, they began an annual tradition of praying to the Infant Jesus in the week leading up to Christmas. That first winter as today, the novena is prayed specifically for our benefactors and their children and grandchildren.

Father Walter Pelczynski, MIC, who founded the Association of Marian Helpers, was so devoted to the Child Jesus that he had a statue of the Child Jesus placed near the altar in the National Shrine of The Divine Mercy in Stockbridge. It was given in memory of Father Walter’s nephew who had died of a brain tumor as a very young boy.

Indeed, Christmas is an ideal time for parents, grandparents, godparents, aunts, and uncles to honor Jesus by helping to bring their children closer to Him. Why not consecrate them anew this Christmas, giving them into His care for the coming New Year? Through this consecration to the Infant Jesus, we share in the mystery of His love for us - love that we find and celebrate especially in the Christmas season.

And as you carry out your holiday routines and traditions, remember to keep the Christ Child at the

center. This Christmas, in these troubled times, we want so much to bestow gifts that last a lifetime. And spiritual gifts are more precious than material ones.

So, instead of thinking only about what material gifts you can give your children, I suggest you think of what you can give them spiritually. Pray for them. Consecrate them to the care of the Infant Jesus. And join us in our novena of prayer to the Infant

A Prayer of Consecration

O Infant Jesus, our beloved King, through the hands of Your loving Mother, I consecrate (name), my child (godchild, nephew, niece) to You.

Place him/her under Your protection, save him/her from illness and all harmful influence.

Keep him/her pure and permit that he/she may grow, like You, in grace and virtue before God and men.

Bless (name), Infant Jesus. Amen.

(MIHI Stockbridge Mass. Shrine of Divine Mercy)

MARY, EVER VIRGIN?

Exploding the myth that Christ had brothers, and why this matters.

We recently had a question asked in our Q&A forum regarding the perpetual virginity of Mary. And reminded of all the times that someone has looked at us like we were stark raving mad to suggest that Mary lived with Saint Joseph in an unconsummated marriage, pointing to the specific Biblical references to Christ’s brothers, we thought it best to devote an entire article on the subject. While we appreciate the kind words that some have sent in regarding the piece in the Forum, full credit has to go to Mr. Bob Stanley, who originally wrote the piece in October of 1995. Placing it in the public domain, it is available for all to print out and share with family, friends, and any uninvited proselytizers who show up at your doorstep.

One of the most pernicious invectives that is hurled against Catholics, is the ridiculous notion that Mary was a virgin her entire life. It is an invective since it is usually used to debase the Mother of God as just another common Jewish girl, and also because it is designed to get a rise out of us, which is usually successful. The charge is akin to questioning the virtue of someone’s mother, and invokes as much, if not more, outrage.

This needn’t be, however. As Catholics, we believe not only that she was a virgin before the birth of Jesus

(a belief we share with our Protestant and Muslim (!) brothers (there's that word already), but that she was a virgin DURING the birth of Christ, and AFTER the birth of Christ, until her earthly life had ended. Protestants are keen to point to a number of Scriptural passages, however, that clearly point to the "brothers" of Jesus, and yet as Catholics, we needn't get outraged, but should rather delight in showing those who love the Word of God so thoroughly, how Scripture tells us who all these so-called brothers were.

Let's start with the brothers that are specifically mentioned, to wit:

MATTHEW 13:55-56, and MARK 6:3, both say, "Is not this the carpenter, the Son of Mary, the brother of JAMES, and JO'SES (JOSEPH), and of JUDE and SIMON? And are not His sisters here with us?" (Note! Only the 'carpenter' is called 'THE Son of Mary', not 'A Son of Mary')

Some people refer to these verses as 'proof', that Mary had other children. See also: Mt 12:46, Mk 3:31, Lk 8:19, Jn 7:5.

Now using the Bible, we are about to explode forever, the myth that Christ had other brothers.

The word: 'Brethren'...appears over 530 times in the Bible.

'Brother' - appears over 350 times. 'Brothers' - appears only once, in Num 36:11. 'Sister' - appears over 100 times. 'Sisters' - appears over 15 times.

BRETHREN: This is a plural word for 'brother' as shown in dictionaries.

BROTHER: The Hebrew word 'ACH', is ordinarily translated 'brother'. Since Hebrew, and Aramaic in which the Gospel of Matthew was written, had fewer words than our English, the Jews at that time, used it in a broader sense to express kinship. The Hebrew terms for different levels and degrees of relationship did not exist. 'Brother' meant the sons of the same father, and all the male members of the same clan or tribe. In Greek, in which the Gospel of Mark was written, 'brother' is Phratry, from the Greek Phrater, meaning a fellow member of a clan. Even today, the word is used in a larger meaning, so that friends, allies, fellow believers, and fellow citizens can be included in the same brotherhood. It was no different in the time of Christ. Four dictionaries I have checked list three or four classes of meanings of the word 'brother'. The first class concerns sons of the same parents. The other two or three classes say, kinsman, fellow man, a close friend, a pal, a member of a religious order, a fellow member of a Christian Church, etc. How many times have you seen TV. Evangelists address their audiences as 'Our brothers

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and sisters'? Marian detractors accept the last three meanings to suit themselves, but when it comes to Mary, the mother of GOD, they always refer to the first meaning. Is this fair to her? How do you explain this?

See: Num 8:26, 1Sam 30:23, 2Sam 1:26, 1King 9:13, 2Chron 29:34.

For Example... If you will read Gen 29:15, "And Laban said to Jacob, because thou art my brother..." At first you would think Jacob and Laban are blood brothers. Now compare Gen 29:5, "...know ye Laban, the son of Nahor..." Compare Gen 25:21-26, and you will see Jacob was the son of Isaac and Rebekah. Laban was the son of Nahor. They were not blood brothers but fellow citizens. Christ tells the Multitude and His disciples in Mt 23:1-8, "AND ALL YE ARE BRETHREN." In Mt 12:50 and Mk 3:35, Jesus says, "For whosoever shall do the will of My Father which is in Heaven, the same is my 'BROTHER', and 'SISTER', and MOTHER." That verse says it all.

In 1Cor 15:6, Jesus appeared to five hundred 'brothers' at one time. Could all of these be blood brothers? Hardly. Then there is Peter speaking before one hundred and twenty brothers in Acts 1:15-16. Paul speaks of one 'called a brother', in 1Cor 5:11. The Bible has many more similar verses.

Now we have four 'brothers', JAMES, JO'SES, SIMON, and JUDE to account for as written in Mk 6:3.

Mk 15:40, "There were also women looking on afar off: among whom were Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of JAMES the less, and of JO'SES, and Salome." These people were at the crucifixion.

Jn 19:25, "Now there stood by the cross of Jesus His mother (Mary) and His mothers sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene."

Mt 10:2-3, "...JAMES' the son of Alphaeus, and Lebbeus, whose surname was Thaddeus." Alphaeus is an alternate translation of Cleophas (Clophas) and so he is the same person.

Acts 1:13, "...JAMES, the son of Alphaeus, and SIMON Zelo'tes, and JUDE the brother of JAMES."

From these four passages, we see we have another 'Mary', who was the wife of Cleophas (Alphaeus), and the mother of three of Jesus' 'brethren', JAMES (the less), and JO'SES, and JUDE. This clearly shows that Mary, the mother of Jesus, was not the mother of JAMES, JO'SES, and JUDE of Mk 6:3.

To keep Mk 6:3 in harmony, since three are not children of Mary, the mother of Jesus, then SIMON is not either. SIMON is the Canaanite Mk 3:18, also

called the 'Zealot' (Zelo'tes), Mt 10:4, Lk 6:15, Acts 1:13.

Jude, who authored the Epistle of Jude, says he is the brother of James in Jude 1:1. Jude was also called 'Thaddeus' in Mt 10:3, and in Mk 3:18. This was to distinguish him from Judas Iscariot. Lk 6:16 further distinguishes the two by saying, "And Judas (Jude) the brother of James, and Judas Iscariot, which also was the traitor."

Jn 19:26-27, "When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the disciple standing by, whom He loved..." The disciple was John, the author of the Gospel of John. "Then He said to the disciple, BEHOLD THY MOTHER." Was John a child of Mary and blood brother of Jesus?

Read the following verses to see...

Mk 1:19, "...He saw James, the son of Zebedee, and 'JOHN', his brother."

Mk 3:17, "And James the son of Zebedee, and 'JOHN' the brother of James."

In neither of these passages is it said that Jesus saw a blood brother or even recognized them as men that He knew.

Mt 27:56, "Among which was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James Mt 20:20, (the less) and Jo'ses, and the mother of Zebedee's children." Mk 15:40, "...among whom was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James (the less), and Salome (mother of Zebedee's children)."

Lk 24:10, "It was Mary Magdalene...and Mary ('the other Mary') the mother of James (the less)..." A comparison of Mt 27:56, and Mk 15:40, clearly shows that Zebedee had a wife whose name was Salome. She is called the 'mother of Zebedee's children' in Mt 27:56, and 'Salome' in Mk 15:40. They had two children, JOHN and JAMES, Mk 3:17. JOHN at the foot of the cross to whom Jesus gave His mother, was not a child of Mary, the mother of Jesus, but of Zebedee and Salome. If Jesus had blood brothers, why then did He not give His mother to them? Jewish law would have demanded it.

GENEALOGY:

Zebedee begat James and John with Salome.

Cleophas (Alphaeus) begat James (the less), Jo'ses, and Jude with Mary (the other "Mary", Mt 27:56,61, 28:1, Jn 19:25)

THE HOLY SPIRIT begat JESUS THE CHRIST with the Blessed Virgin, Mary, espoused to Joseph the Carpenter.

Additional notes...

Mt 1:25, "And knew her not till...". The old meaning of the word 'till' or 'until', meant an action did not occur up to a certain point. It does not imply the action did occur later. Gen 8:7, "He sent forth a raven, which went forth to and fro, 'until' the waters were dried up off the earth." 2Sam 6:23, "...the daughter of Saul had no child 'until' the day of her death." Did she have a child after she died?

Lk 1:34, "Then said Mary unto the Angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?" This shows Mary had no relations with a man before and was virgin.

Lk 2:7, "And she brought forth her 'firstborn' Son and wrapped Him in swaddling clothes..." Firstborn, at the time of the writing of the Gospels, meant, 'the child that opened the womb'. See Ex 13:2 and Num 3:12. Firstborn does not imply that Mary had other children, as an ONLY son, IS a 'FIRSTBORN SON'. The author of this letter is one.

NOWHERE IN THE BIBLE DOES IT SAY THAT MARY, THE MOTHER OF JESUS, HAD OTHER CHILDREN. WHY THEN, DO SOME INSIST THAT SHE DID?

Why Does This Matter?

A reasonable question, though, is why any of this matters. Ultimately, it would seem that Mary's virginity or not is unrelated to anything that would have to do with our salvation, and while that might be technically correct, per se, the danger comes from the disobedience that such a belief causes.

If we can deny the Church's teaching on this, pretending even to use the Bible to do it, then this leads to doubts elsewhere. If we can be led to believe that the Church is wrong about this, what else might She be wrong about? Bit by bit, brick by brick, our faith is eroded, until one day we decide the Church is wrong about everything, and leave. From there, we have spoken Satan's mantra "I will not serve," which is exactly what he wants for us to say and do.

The Church has made it infallibly clear the Mary was ever-virgin, and the Bible clearly indicates that she bore no other children. Unfortunately, we have only closed one argument that Satan uses to lead souls out of the Church. He will simply find other means to do so now. Our hope is that someone will read this article and ask instead, "Hmm...what else is the Church RIGHT about?" and come to know and love the very church that Christ established on earth, so that salvation can be theirs.

(Michael Shea at

www.immaculateheart.com/MaryOnLine/html/family.html)

PILGRIMS of FAITH MARIAN CENTER (PFMC)

The **PFMC** is not a church, store or travel agency but has aspects of all three. The **PFMC** operates as a non-profit, with 501(c)(3) tax exempt status, religious association and ministry whose volunteers are lay persons professing a belief in Jesus Christ, Our Lord and Savior, as the Only Begotten Son of God the Father, Creator of the Universe.

Most **PFMC** volunteers profess that faith through the apostolic and universal teachings of the Roman Catholic Church. Those volunteers who are practicing Roman Catholics profess allegiance to the Magisterium of the Church founded upon the Rock (Kephas / Cephas or Petros depending on original or translation) of Simon bar Jonah and led by his apostolic successor **Pope John Paul II**.

The **PFMC** was established in the home of Keith and Kathleen Werner based on pilgrimages to Medjugorje, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and other holy places or shrines worthy of pilgrimage.

Books, pamphlets, and religious articles brought back from pilgrimages were placed on display for others to view and acquire for themselves based on donations. The **PFMC** is NOT a store and does not sell anything. We strongly support the use of Catholic stores for books, pamphlets, and religious articles wherever they are convenient to our readers. We send people to other ministries and commercial operations such as the **Saint Jude Shops, Abbott's, and Angels of Our Lady of Medjugorje** operated by **Ceal Prizer** for things that we do not carry.

For books, pamphlets, and religious articles, the **PFMC** operates like a church pamphlet or bookrack where selections are made and donations offered based on value posted or received. Most of the other outlets are operating on a for profit basis. Your gifts from the **PFMC** may be a tax break for you.

The **PFMC** has items from inventory on display at Epiphany House. Order forms have been produced in the past and enclosed in previous issues of "**The PILGRIM**" as well as loaded on the Internet as printable pages such as the one for December 2003 <http://www.geocities.com/pilgrimsfaith/12OF03.pdf>.

Copies are available if you did not get yours or if you need extras. We need volunteers to help us get the entire inventory available for production of order forms. We eventually want to take pictures and load up a shopping cart program. If you have inventory or computer skills we would love to have your help.

If you wish to order, please determine your order request, make out a check or complete the

information for use of a credit card, i.e. card type, number, expiration date, and name on card, sign, and mail to **PFMC**. If you do not have an order form, call us at (856) 768-9228 with a FAX number or mailing address and we will send you an order form. If you know what you want and we carry it, you can order over the telephone using your credit card.

The **PFMC** is directed and operated by volunteers who monitor the donations made for all activities. These activities include coordination of pilgrimages to holy places and shrines, retreats in local retreat centers or hotels, and days of recollection at the **PFMC** as well as the inventory management mentioned above.

Operating for many years on a cash only basis, the **PFMC** now accepts DISCOVER/PRIVATE ISSUE (NOVUS), MASTER CARD (CIRRUS) and VISA (PLUS) for all transactions requiring donations to the **PFMC**. This includes for books and religious articles, pilgrimages, retreats, conferences, seminars, "The PILGRIM," or the office equipment replacement fund. We ask that those who use credit cards assist us with the costs associated with their use, about 3%.

Please come and see the **PFMC**. We know you will enjoy what you see and find a way of helping out.

Thank you and God bless you,

(Kathleen and the Volunteer Staff)

PFMC PRAYER

O Precious Mother of God, I come before you this day in union with your most Immaculate Heart and the most Sacred Heart of your Son, Jesus. I ask for special blessings upon the Pilgrims of Faith Marian Center, as well as all Marian Centers. Bless them in their work of spreading your messages of Prayer, Fasting Reconciliation, Conversion and Peace. Bless them with the gifts of Charity to all who seek their guidance, of love for all hearts both hardened and converted, for healing of the wounded areas of all aspects of physical, emotional, and spiritual life. Fill each person with a desire to serve you and your Son in wisdom, and as ambassadors to bring forth the Kingdom of God. Allow each Marian Center to work with a freedom in the fullness of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit .so that every soul who comes in contact with them will be touched with His gentle hand, His truth, His Knowledge and His Justice. I invoke the spiritual warfare armor of Saint Michael, the Archangel, and all the angels and saints. May they protect this Center of Peace, and enable it to function and prosper with Heavenly guidance. AMEN.

(originated by Joe Bridgeman in the middle 1990s)

BULLETIN NOTICES for *PFMC* AREA EVENTS

Would you be so kind as to copy or cut out one or more of following BULLETIN NOTICES and take them to your Pastor and / or Parish Bulletin Coordinator?

One per week should not be an overload to you.

Ask your Pastor and / or Parish Bulletin Coordinator to publish these notices to support the events for which you have an interest.

Thanks for your assistance, we really need and appreciate it.

12 FEBRUARY 2004, HOLY MASS and HEALING SERVICE

The Pilgrims of Faith Marian Center (PFMC) will sponsor a special Holy Mass and Healing Service at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church, US 30 and Franklin Ave., Berlin, NJ, at 7 PM on Thursday, 12 February 2004. Father Bill Halbing, Pastor, Saint Antoninus, Newark, NJ, will be the Celebrant.

For more information call (856) 768-9228 or visit <http://www.geocities.com/pilgrimsfaith>.

MARCH 2004 *PFMC* RETREAT CONFERENCE (RC), 3 DAY EXTENSION (3DX) and YOUTH TRACK (YT)

The Pilgrims of Faith Marian Center (PFMC) 2004 RETREAT CONFERENCE (RC) will be at the Hilton Hotel, Cherry Hill, NJ. The dates are Friday through Sunday, March 12th, 13th, and 14th, 2004.

The RC theme is "Behold, I am sending you like sheep in the midst of wolves." (Matthew 10:16) [NAB].

Babsie Bleasdel, Father Bill Halbing, Father Andrew Apostoli, CFR, Father John McFadden, and Sister Claire Marie de l'amore Crucifie of the "*Marian Community Oasis of Peace*" will be featured speakers.

Father Michael Semana, founder of the "*World of Hope Foundation*," will return to sing Holy Mass on Saturday, a concert Saturday evening as well as his very generous work with the youth and young adults in the Youth Track (YT). The YT will be led by J.P. Kasperowicz.

The **Metuchen Diocese Charismatic Music Group "REFUGE"** will be back to provide the weekend music. **Al Barbarino** has agreed to EMCEE for the Weekend and will be providing music and witness. Other musicians including **Marty Rotella**, "**HEARTS AFIRE**," "**CEDARS in CHRIST**," and "**VOYAGE**," have been invited.

Father John Hampsch, C.M.F., will lead seminars and workshops in the 3-Day Extension (3DX) on "**The HOLY SPIRIT ALIVE in YOUR LIFE**."

The 3DX will be on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday, March 15th, 16th, and 17th, 2004.

Rooms may be booked at the **PFMC** \$94 rate with 1-4 persons in a room for both the RC and 3DX as well as up to 7 days before or after the events. Rooms have either one King bed or two Double beds. Roll-away beds are available. This rate and availability of additional rooms expires on 2/12/2004. For Hotel reservations please call NOW: 1-800-HILTONS or locally (856) 665-6666.

Please make your reservations for the RC, YT, and 3DX with the **PFMC** as soon as possible.

Please make your reservations for hotel rooms with the HILTON as soon as possible.

Consider making reservations for the RC, YT, and/or 3-DX and donating for them as a gift to your favorite relative. All donations to the **PFMC** are deductible from your income tax.

For information call (856) 768-9228 or visit <http://www.geocities.com/pilgrimsfaith>

or find reservation forms at

<http://www.geocities.com/pilgrimsfaith/2004/04RET3CF.pdf>.

24 MARCH 2004 - 4 APRIL 2004, PILGRIMAGE to MEDJUGORJE, B-H via PRAGUE, CZ

The Pilgrims of Faith Marian Center (PFMC) will coordinate a pilgrimage to Medjugorje, Bosnia-Herzegovina via Prague, Czech Republic, with Father Thomas Kiely, Saint Lawrence, Lindenwold, NJ, as Spiritual Director.

Reservation forms are available at:

<http://www.geocities.com/pilgrimsfaith/2004/04PPM04.pdf>.

Departure is on Wednesday, 24 March 2004, from John F. Kennedy (JFK) International Airport, NY. Return is to JFK on Sunday, 4 April 2004.

Requested donation is \$1399 per person double occupancy plus \$130 for air taxes. Single supplement is \$399. As with all **PFMC** pilgrimages, this includes breakfasts and suppers throughout the pilgrimage. A deposit of \$500 is required with reservation. Full payment is due by 24 December 2003.

For more information call (856) 768-9228 or visit <http://www.geocities.com/pilgrimsfaith>.

**1 AUGUST 2004 - 9 AUGUST 2004,
PILGRIMAGE to LOURDES, FRANCE
via PARIS, FRANCE**

The Pilgrims of Faith Marian Center (PFMC) will coordinate a pilgrimage to Lourdes, France via Paris, France, with Father John (Giovanni) Tino, Saint Joan of Arc, Jackson Heights, NY, as Spiritual Director.

Reservation forms are available at:
<http://www.geocities.com/pilgrimsfaith/2004/04PPL08.pdf>.

Departure is on Sunday, 1 August 2004, from John F. Kennedy (JFK) International Airport, NY. Return is to JFK on Monday, 9 August 2004.

Requested donation is \$1999 per person double occupancy plus \$130 for air taxes. Single supplement is \$399. As with all **PFMC** pilgrimages, this includes breakfasts and suppers throughout the pilgrimage. A deposit of \$500 is required with reservation. Full payment is due by 1 May 2004.

For more information call (856) 768-9228 or visit <http://www.geocities.com/pilgrimsfaith>.

**10 – 22 OCTOBER 2004, PILGRIMAGE
to MEDJUGORJE, B-H via ROME, IT**

The Pilgrims of Faith Marian Center (PFMC) will coordinate a pilgrimage to Medjugorje, Bosnia-Herzegovina via Rome, Italy, with Doctor Bob and Anita Rice of In His Omnipotent Presence (IHOP) Ministries, Albuquerque, NM, and Father Phil Sladicka, Saint Patrick / Holy Spirit / Saint Michael, Olyphant, PA, as Spiritual Directors.

Reservation forms are available at:
<http://www.geocities.com/pilgrimsfaith/2004/04PPM10.pdf>.

Departure is on Sunday, 10 October 2004, from John F. Kennedy (JFK) International Airport, NY. Return is to JFK on Friday, 22 October 2004.

Requested donation is \$2299 per person double occupancy plus \$130 for air taxes. Single supplement is \$399. As with all **PFMC** pilgrimages, this includes breakfasts and suppers throughout the pilgrimage. A deposit of \$500 is required with reservation. Full payment is due by 12 July 2004.

For more information call (856) 768-9228 or visit <http://www.geocities.com/pilgrimsfaith>.

Thanks for anything you can do to post these notices in parish bulletins or even with local prayer groups. Information sheets with reservation forms are available at or from the PFMC. Please help us to spread the word.

(Kathleen as well as all the *PFMC* Volunteer Staff)

CONFERENCE CORNER

16-17 January 2004 Our Lady of Lourdes Church, Glassboro, NJ. "Catholic Life Today: The Dynamic Vision of John Paul II Called to Holiness, Called to Mission." Ralph Martin. Call (856) 858-8909 or contact ApostlesofLife@aol.com. Pre-registration is encouraged using: [Conference%20Form.htm](http://www.apostlesoflife.org/Conference%20Form.htm) from <http://www.apostlesoflife.org/>.

20-21 February 2004 At the John Paul II Cultural Center in Washington, DC. "The Immaculate Conception in the Life of the Church" with Doctor Mark Mirivalle, Father Peter Fehlner, FI, Doctor Robert Stackpole, STD, and Father Donald Calloway, MIC. (413) 298-1184 or jp2@marian.org.

21 February 2004 - 11th Annual Saint Mary's Conference, Hilton Hotel, Concord, California. Theme: "I Call You Each By Name." For information write to P.O. Box 904, Pinole, California 94564-0904 or call (daytime) (510) 724-7272 (evenings & weekends) (510) 799-0474.

26-27 March 2004 At John Paul II Cultural Center in Washington, DC. Father Seraphim Michalenko, MIC, and Doctor Robert Stackpole, STD. (413) 298-1184 or jp2@marian.org.

Other conferences will be listed as they become known. A visit to the Internet will often provide links to additional conference information sites. A good start is <http://www.medjugorje.org/medconf.htm>.

IN HIS SIGN (IHS) MINISTRIES

On *Saturday, 1/31/04*, Father Bill Halbing will be featured at an IHS event from **9 AM to 4 PM** at **Holiday Inn, Essington, PA**. Registration fee is \$36. Call **1-888-34FAITH** for more information.

CALENDARS:

In *January*, the Church celebrates the Solemnities of *Mary, Mother of God (1)*, *Epiphany of the Lord (4)*, Feast of *Baptism of the Lord (11)* and Memorials of *Saints Basil the Great (2)*, *Gregory Nazianzen (2)*, *John Neumann (5)*, *Anthony, Abbot (17)*, *Agnes (21)*, *Francis de Sales (24)*, *Timothy (26)*, *Titus (26)*, *Thomas Aquinas (28)* and *John Bosco (31)* and Optional Memorials of *Saints Genevieve (3)*, *Raymond of Penyafort (7)*, *Hilary (13)*, *Fabian, Pope (20)*, *Sebastian (20)*, *Vincent (22)*, *Angela Merici (27)*, and *The Most Holy Name of Jesus (3)* as well as *Blessed Andre Bessette (6)*. Most Church calendars recognize *New Year's Day (1)*, and *Doctor Martin Luther King, Jr (15) (observed) (19)*.

In *February*, the Church observes the Solemnity of *Ash Wednesday (25)*, Feasts of *Presentation of the Lord (2)*, Memorials of *Saints Agatha (5)*, *Paul Miki and Companions (6)*, *Scholastica (10)*, *Cyril and Methodius (14)* and *Polycarp (23)*, Optional Memorials of *Saints Blase (3)*, *Ansgar (3)*, and *Peter Damian (21)* as well as *Our Lady of Lourdes (11)*, and *Seven Founders of the Order of Servites (17)*. Most Church calendars show *Presidents' Day (16)* and *Saint Valentine's Day (14)*.

For additional information, call the **PFMC** at (856) 768-9228. Please speak clearly and slowly, leave your name, address, and phone number with area code so that we may return your call. You may FAX your questions to (856) 768-9428.

PFMC PRESENTATIONS

Kathleen and Keith are available to participate in parish or other prayer group meetings with witness, and/or videotape or slide presentations, followed by a question and answer session. The experiences and continuation of the **PFMC** ministries for Our Lady and her Son in this time of manifestation of Our Lord's mercy and graces are shared at no cost. Free will offerings are accepted. This is especially true for books, tapes, and religious articles, when they are made available in displays at the presentation sites. Recipients are asked to donate at or above the suggested value posted on each article made available at the displays. Displays may be set up without presentations. Call (856) 768-9228.

AROUND the PFMC AREA

Please review the announcements on pages 1 through 6, the information sheets and reservation forms on the 2004 RETREAT CONFERENCE and the three 2004 pilgrimages enclosed, as well as the Bulletin Notices on pages 22 through 23. Please help get the word out on **PFMC** events. Ask your pastor to post bulletin notices and allow information sheets to be put out in church.

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Pilgrims of Faith Marian Center (PFMC), A Religious Association, Inc.
NON-PROFIT and IRS Code 501(c)(3) TAX EXEMPT
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<http://www.geocities.com/pilgrimsfaith>

or send us e-mail at:

PFMCkmw@comcast.net (Kathleen) or
keithwerner@comcast.net.



The PILGRIM, Volume 15, Number 1— January 2004

**PRIORITY DATED
RELIGIOUS MATERIAL
Mailed late PM,
Tuesday, 1/6/2004**

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PLEASE DON'T THROW THIS AWAY!!

If you do not desire to read "The PILGRIM," please give it to a Marian prayer group or return it to sender. If address has changed, please send a change of address.

If there is no time to read it all now, please put it with other reading material in a place where you can read at least an article per day until the next issue arrives. We operate on divine providence and the kind donations of those who can afford to support us. **PRIESTS!** Please note that **HOMILY** ideas have come from priests reading articles in "The PILGRIM!"

