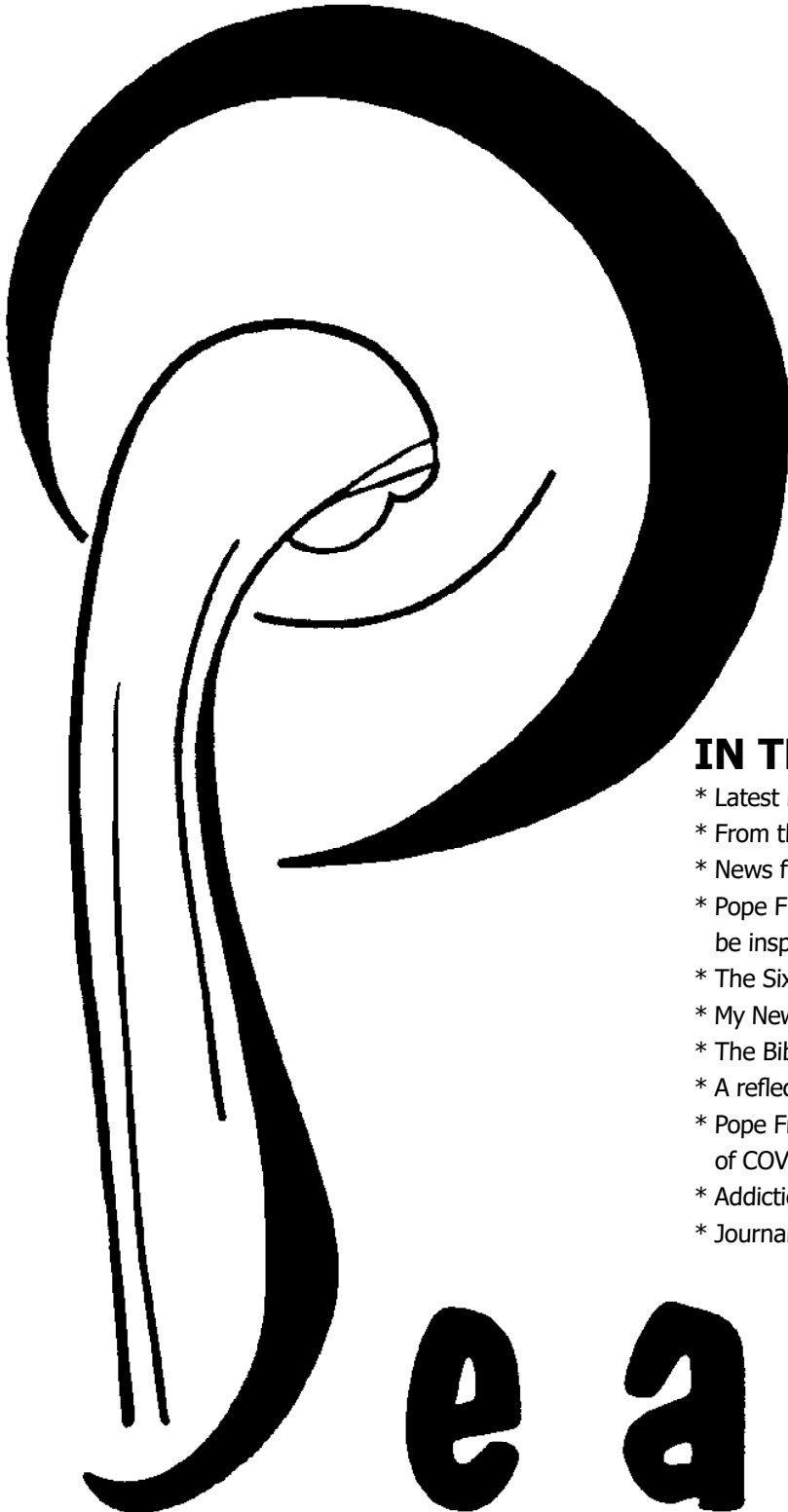


MEDJUGORJE

NEW ZEALAND

NEWS

FREE



POPE FRANCIS TELLS YOUTH AT MEDJUGORJE: BE INSPIRED BY THE VIRGIN MARY

(p.9)

IN THIS ISSUE

- * Latest Messages from Our Lady (p.3)
- * From the Editor (p.4)
- * News from Medjugorje (Children of Medjugorje) (p.5-8)
- * Pope Francis tells youth at Medjugorje:
be inspired by the Virgin Mary (p.9)
- * The Six Good Habits of Missionary Disciples (p.10)
- * My New Year's Blessing from our Holy Mother Mary (p.11)
- * The Biblical Roots of the Marian Doctrines (p.12-15)
- * A reflection on the road to Emmaus (p.16)
- * Pope Francis and Benedict XVI receive first dose
of COVID-19 vaccine (p.17)
- * Addiction and Redemption (p.18-22)
- * Journal Reflection on the 7 Last Words of Jesus (p.22-23)

e a c e

EDITOR: SARAH MORAN

Medjugorje News, PO Box 287, DARGAVILLE 0340 P. 09 439 6151

E: sarah.medjugorjenews@gmail.com W: www.medjugorjenews-nz.org

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/medjugorjenews-nz>

**CO-EDITOR: BERNADETTE ISAACS
bernadette.medjugorjenews@gmail.com**

The Editor relies entirely on Divine Providence for the expense of producing this publication and any donation will be gratefully accepted.

As we are registered as a "legal charity with a donee status" (under the name of MEDJUGORJE NEWS TRUST) any donation of over \$5.00 can be claimed for income tax deduction purposes. **If a receipt is required immediately, a stamped self-addressed envelope would be appreciated.** Otherwise it will be sent with the following issue of MEDJUGORJE NEWS.

This newsletter may be copied and distributed free of charge. Further copies may be obtained from the address above.

***PLEASE MAKE ALL CHEQUES PAYABLE TO
MEDJUGORJE NEWS**

Donations can also be made by direct credit to our account, details below.

ASB BANK LTD
RATHBONE STREET, WHANGAREI.

12 3099 0681435 00

If you wish to receive this newsletter directly, please send your name and full postal address, (PRINTED please) and you will be included in our list of subscribers. ANY ISSUE RETURNED BY NZ POST AS "UNKNOWN AT THIS ADDRESS" WILL AUTOMATICALLY RESULT IN THE ADDRESSEE BEING DELETED FROM OUR MAILING LIST. So, please advise us of any change of address.

As its name 'Medjugorje News' implies, the aim of this newsletter is essentially **the spreading of the messages received by the visionaries in Medjugorje, according to the wishes of Our Lady.**

The Medjugorje Story

On the evening of 24 June 1981, in the parish of St James in Medjugorje, six young people claimed to have seen the Blessed Virgin Mary on Podbrdo Hill.

The next day four of the six alleged another meeting with Our Lady, and said they spoke with her. On this occasion, the four teenagers (three girls and a boy) were joined by another young boy and a teenage girl. These six became the definitive visionaries in Medjugorje; they are Ivanka Ivankovic, Mirjana Dragicevic, Vicka Ivankovic, Ivan Dragicevic, Marija Pavlovic and Jakov Colo.

Since 1981, these six young people have been the centre of world attention, and medical and scientific studies. Their principal claim is that practically every day to the present time, our Blessed Lady has been appearing to one or more of them, and that from her they have received thousands of messages for

the parish of Medjugorje and the world. All six still claim apparitions, though only three of them now on a daily basis, and each of the six says that he or she has received, or is in the process of receiving, ten secrets. The first of the secrets is to be revealed to the world through Mirjana Dragicevic, and the third is said to be concerned with a permanent sign that will authenticate the apparitions and be a help to conversion, and will be evident to all at Medjugorje. The visionaries say that Our Lady identifies herself to them as the Queen of Peace.

As a result of these claims, more than forty million people have visited Medjugorje from all over the world and there have been many assertions regarding remarkable signs and wonders, cures and spiritual healing. There is no doubt at all that those millions of people have found a pilgrimage to Medjugorje one of the most spiritually significant experiences of their lives.

We acknowledge and accept that the authority regarding the authenticity of apparitions, locutions and related messages as well as all private revelations from Our Lord, Our Lady or any Saint rests with the Holy See of Rome whose final judgement we will respect and obey. We also affirm our total allegiance to our One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church, our Priests and Bishops and our Holy Father, Pope Francis.

THE MEDJUGORJE MESSAGE

THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY PROPOSES A SIX-POINT PROGRAMME:

1. **Faith** - Belief in God and in the supernatural. It is your true vision. Therefore live by it.
2. **Commitment to God** - Let Him direct your life. Begin by turning away from sin in true conversion and repentance.
3. **Prayer** - Regular Mass, monthly confession, daily rosary and dedication to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary.
4. **Fasting** - Bread and water on Fridays (and Wednesdays) if you can. If not, at least cut back or practice some other form of self denial.
5. **Peace** - In your own heart, in your family and neighbourhood and workplace, in all your human relations and reaching out to the war-stricken world.
6. **The Holy Bible** - We should read part of the Holy Scripture every day.

THE MESSAGES OF MARY ARE ADDRESSED NOT ONLY TO CATHOLICS
BUT TO THE WHOLE HUMAN RACE, **REGARDLESS** OF BELIEFS OR RELIGION.

.....



Our Lady's Messages



November 25, 2020

"Dear children!

This is a time of love, warmth, prayer and joy. Pray, little children, for little Jesus to be born in your hearts. Open your hearts to Jesus who gives Himself to each of you. God sent me to be joy and hope in this time, and I am saying to you: Without little Jesus you do not have the tenderness or the feeling of Heaven which is hidden in the Newborn. Therefore, little children, work on yourselves. By reading the Sacred Scripture you will discover Jesus' birth and joy, as in the first days which Medjugorje gave to humanity. History will be truth which, also today, is being repeated in you and around you. Work on and build peace through the Sacrament of Confession. Reconcile with God, little children, and you will see miracles around you.

Thank you for having responded to my call."

December 25, 2020

"Dear children!

I am carrying to you little Jesus who brings you peace, Him who is the past, present and future of your existence. Little children, do not permit for your faith and hope in a better future to be extinguished, because you are chosen to be witnesses of hope in every situation. That is why I am here with Jesus that He may bless you with His peace.

Thank you for having responded to my call."

January 25, 2021

"Dear children!

I am calling you at this time to prayer, fasting and renunciation, that you may be stronger in faith. This is a time of awakening and of giving birth. As nature which gives itself, you also, little children, ponder how much you have received. Be joyful carriers of peace and love that it may be good for you on earth. Yearn for Heaven; and in Heaven there is no sorrow or hatred. That is why, little children, decide anew for conversion and let holiness begin to reign in your life..

Thank you for having responded to my call."

From the Editor:

Dear Friends of Medjugorje News,



The beginning of another year and with the sudden Community outbreaks of Covid, this year is again looking like we will have many disruptions along the way. We are however blessed with how our country has managed the covid outbreak as opposed to the rest of the world, a timely reminder for all of us to remain vigilant.

How dramatically our life and world can change in a year, no international travel to visit family in Australia, and no idea when our son's wedding will be able to be held in Australia. However, we remain a community of around 5 million, growing each day as family members arrive back from overseas, a more caring and sharing community looking out for one another as never before. Out of hardships, let us continue to help one another.

Our Catholic family continues to care for each other, our Parish Priest gave us a talk the other day about looking after each other and not gossiping about members within the church. Helping not hindering, growing together spiritually in a caring environment. We all can get overcome with our own problems, and lose sight of a loving Father who watches over us each and every day. He did not say that we would have a problem free life BUT that he would walk with us along the way. Call on Him as you journey each day and ask Our Lady to intercede to Her Son for you. PRAY PRAY PRAY.

May The Lord bless you and keep you, May The Lord let his face shine on you. Many blessings for 2021.

Sarah Moran

Visiting those in prison – by writing

Would you like to become involved in a very special work of mercy by writing to long-term prisoners in a foreign country? Divine Mercy Publications have set up a team of letter writers to correspond with the inmates of a maximum security jail in Zambia, central Africa. Most of these are Catholics/Christians to whom we send reading and prayer literature as well as clothes and toiletries.

The requests for pen pals are growing; the prison we write to has over 400 inmates, most of whom are in desperate need of consolation and encouragement. They are served by an Irish Catholic priest, whom they see 2-3 times per month.

We wish to continue this important work of mercy and need helpers to 'adopt' a prisoner and write on a

regular basis, usually once every 1-2 months. Can you help?

There will be absolutely no cost to you, Divine Mercy Publications/Trust will cover all expenses including sending funds via the prison Chaplain approximately twice per year to help the inmates purchase food, toiletries, medicines, clothes and in some case pay a portion of their children's school fees to prevent them becoming 'street kids'.

All you need give is your time and mercy to these needy souls.

If you would like to know more please contact us. Thank you for your consideration of this important request.

**Divine Mercy Publications Trust
Christchurch. PO Box 20266,
Bishopdale, Christchurch 8543.
Ph/Fax 03-359 2087**

Excerpts from **Children of Medjugorje**

From Sister Emmanuel - <http://www.childrenofmedjugorje.com/>

Five Simple Messages

Sr. Emmanuel is the founder of Children of Medjugorje, a lay missionary organization dedicated to delivering five simple messages from Our Lady in Medjugorje:

- ✓ Fasting
- ✓ Praying of the Rosary
- ✓ Scripture Reading
- ✓ Holy Mass
- ✓ Confession

Who can thwart the plan of the Nations? The Blessed Mother invites us to call on all the Saints for their help and to seek their assistance. Don Dolindo "is our man", waiting to help us fight against the harmful fruit of fear, and root us firmly in the power of the One who reigns forever and who alone can thwart the plan of the Nations. It is a matter of entrenching ourselves in Christ's victory over all evil. Is a particular evil troubling us? Is it overwhelming us? We must surrender it to Jesus. We say to him with faith: "Lord, this is YOUR problem, it is too much for me, I'm too small, it's beyond me, you take care of it!" We do what little is in our power (that does not mean being lazy!) and we let him handle the rest for us, with infinite trust. We then act like true children of God and not like orphans who react on impulse. Of course, trials can affect us, but they will not annihilate us! Reading the lives of the Saints shows us how surrendering our lives into the hands of our Father is a fast lane for reaching the heights of holiness, and experiencing heavenly joy while on earth.

.....
St. Edith Stein (1891 - 1942), one of the six Patron Saints of Europe had a great affection for the Child Jesus and the mystery of the Incarnation. Her Jewish roots had already given her a deep sense of the Living and True God. On becoming a Catholic, she became fascinated by the person of Jesus, especially in the smallness of His childhood, and she devoted herself entirely to Him in the Carmel of the Child Jesus of Prague, in Cologne, Germany.

Before entering the Carmel, she attended midnight Mass in a church on Christmas Eve. After Mass, the church emptied, all lights went out, and the last door was closed. No-one had noticed the silent presence of a woman praying. The next morning, when the sacristan opened the church, she could not believe her eyes: Edith was standing there, in front of the crib, in the same position as the day before. The

sacristan apologized for locking her in all night and asked if she was tired. But Edith replied, "How can one be tired on the night God became man?"

Arrested by the Gestapo as were so many Jews, Edith was first deported to the Westernburg camp and then transferred to Auschwitz. In one of those horrible 'death trains', which was to take her to the hell of Auschwitz (as if toward her last station), she managed to smuggle a little note to her community to reassure them about her fate, saying:

"The beloved Child Jesus is also here, in our midst!"

Was the Child Jesus in the midst of these people condemned to an excruciating death? Yes.... He had not abandoned Edith, who had venerated Him with so much love for so many years. The Child God had given her a peace that is not of this world; that divine peace that Jesus speaks of in the Gospel, which only He gives us, and which the world cannot give us. Nothing and no one can take this peace away from us, not even all the Auschwitz' of today's world. Jesus Himself lays this peace in our hearts during prayer. Of course, I am not belittling some of the tranquility and security that the world sometimes gives, but this is only short lived, like the scent of flowers in a field! At the moment of the great passage from this life to the next, what is left of these worldly transient delights? The Prince of Peace, born in Bethlehem in a manger on a freezing cold night, is the One who offers us His peace, a peace that fills our heart, that captivates us on this earth and fills the elect with eternal happiness in Heaven.

This Christmas 2020, O Child Jesus, please come to warm up and encourage our poor, worried hearts! Come heal us from the wounds of fear and lack of love! Make us bearers of peace in this world without peace, which seeks peace where it is lost. Your Mother says to us, "Work for peace and build it through the sacrament of Confession." You, Child Jesus, come and work with us for peace! Come and build it with

us through our resolution to forgive others and in the Sacrament of Reconciliation! May all the evil that is within us and around us be crushed by your innocence!

Like Teresa of Avila, like Edith Stein and so many Saints, I in turn want to discover you, play with you, hold you against my heart, live constantly with you, fulfill your desires and let you transform me day after day! With you, little King of Glory, I want to seize the Kingdom of Heaven that belongs to children and those who resemble them.

Shepherds without sheep? Jesus expressed His sorrow at seeing so many of his children wandering, like sheep without a shepherd: "When He saw the crowds, He had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd." (Mat 9:36). What would He say today seeing the desolation of our empty churches, hearing the cry of his children deprived of liturgical celebrations and the indispensable sacraments? Would he not look at the plight of his shepherds without sheep?

Dear friends, our priests are in danger today! They need us! The struggles they are going through because of their isolation can help them grow into a very deep intimacy with God, but, conversely, may subject them to immense discouragement. Some are tempted to make choices that would take them away from God and their magnificent priestly vocation. Our Lady tells us that the "priests are bridges." However, in order to move from this time of great trial to the "New Time of Peace" that she has announced, we must pass over these bridges. But if we let these bridges fall apart, how can we pass over to the other side? Mary said to us, "With them, I will triumph!" Not without them! They are our precious pearls. Let us pray for them and, through our sacrifices offered on their behalf, let us form a wall of fire to protect them from evil and help them live their priesthood in holiness! It is vital for them. Then we will no longer be sheep without a shepherd.

Prayer by St. Thérèse of Lisieux for priests. "O Jesus, Eternal Priest, keep your priests within the shelter of your Most Sacred Heart, where none can touch them. Keep unstained their anointed hands, which daily touch your Sacred Body. Keep unsullied their lips daily tinged with your Precious Blood. Keep pure and unworldly their hearts, sealed with the sublime mark of your glorious priesthood. Make them grow in love and fidelity to you. Let your Holy Love surround and protect them from the world's contagion. Give

them, with the power to change bread and wine, the power to change hearts. Bless their labors with abundant fruit, and give them the crown of Eternal Life one day. Amen. (Saint Thérèse of the Child Jesus and of the Holy Face).

Visionary Jakov Colo received his annual apparition and shared with us this message:

"Dear children! Also today Jesus is here beside you, even when you think that you are alone, and that light does not exist in your life. He is here and has never left you or distanced Himself from you. The light of His birth illuminates this world and your life. His Heart is always open towards you, to receive your every pain, every trial, fear and need. His arms are extended towards you, that as a father, He may embrace you and tell you how important you are to Him, how much He loves you and cares for His children.

"Children, is your heart open to Jesus? Have you completely surrendered your life into His hands? Have you accepted Jesus as your father, to whom you can always turn and in Him find consolation and everything you need to live true faith?

"That is why, my children, surrender your hearts to Jesus and permit Him to begin to rule your lives, because only in this way, will you accept the present and be able to face the world in which you live today. With Jesus, every fear, suffering, and pain disappear, because your heart accepts His will and everything that comes into your life. Jesus will give you the faith to accept everything and nothing will distance you from Him - because He firmly holds you by the hand and does not permit for you to distance and lose yourselves in difficult moments - because He has become the Lord of your life. I bless you with my motherly blessing."

The Queen of the Prophets speaks out! Many people have their eyes and hearts fixed on the Blessed Mother in these troubled times, for the Queen of the Prophets knows how to tell her children what they need to know, at the right time for them. She speaks with simplicity, accuracy, tenderness and she irradiates peace!

Silent and hidden miracles? The country of Hungary, which was consecrated to the Mother of God by Saint Stephen shortly before his death in 1038, gives us a new mystic who deserves to be known: Sister Maria Natalia Magdolna, a servant of God, 1901-1992. Her process of beatification is proceeding quickly, as

this nun has shown amazing signs of holiness. I will mention here only a few excerpts of what Our Lady said to her. For instance, she spoke to her about the unimaginable miracles that will occur in souls, silent and hidden miracles, that will be obtained through unceasing prayer of atonement.

Mary said to her, "When Satan thinks he has become the master of the world and thinks he can sit on the throne, I will snatch his treasure from him. The final victory will belong only to my Son and to me."

She also stated in other words: "When Satan takes victory for granted and has dragged most souls along with him; when, in his immense pride and boundless arrogance, he believes he will be able to destroy goodness and all of God's creation (including souls); when the light of faith will shine in only a few souls, since the weak have always been easily deceived by the Evil One, it is then that God's Mercy and Grace will triumph definitively. It will be the end of the Lie and the beginning of a path that will bring divine peace to the world."

Well, praise God! These words of hope and deep encouragement are most welcome today!!

.....
The story goes that an old king was to die, but he was without an heir. So he said to himself: "I will invite all the eligible aristocrats in my Kingdom, on such and such a day and at a given time, and I will choose my heir among them." When the day came, a great feast was prepared in his palace, and no one suspected the secret plan that the king had devised. He dressed up as a beggar and placed himself prominently in front of the large front door, holding his empty little beggar bowl. The aristocrats began to enter the room one by one as they chatted. They all walked past the beggar king without giving him anything, not even a single glance. Actually, not all of them ignored him! One of them stopped, smiled at the beggar and discreetly slipped a beautiful offering into his little bowl. When they all had entered, the king himself walked in, wearing his wretched clothes, and to everyone's surprise, he went straight to the aristocrat who had taken to heart the suffering of the poor, and solemnly said to him, "You will be my heir!" With great wealth comes the responsibility to give back to those who are less fortunate than oneself.

This isn't just a lovely story. It is to be remembered for the days we are living in, where those who are considered useless, or even embarrassing, are suffering a great deal. The elderly, weakened by illness or disability, the poor of all kinds, those who

are wounded by life, those who are considered too expensive for the nation and whose profile does not fit in with the plans of those who live in plenty, are indeed threatened by profound discouragement. But if we carefully read the Word of God, especially the New Testament, we discover God's immense tenderness for these "little ones" and how important they are in humanity's plan of salvation. They are the beloved little remnant of God. In reality, their life in the midst of us is crucial because they support the world through the hidden and silent offering of their suffering.

I wish here to encourage them, for a day will come, and it is near, when those who suffer in silence from the contempt of the "great ones" and are first and foremost the victims of the disastrous choices of our culture of death, will be highly exalted. They will shine like the sun in the eyes of all, and to the confusion of those who believe they have the right of life or death over them. I have seen many in Medjugorje, they come from all walks of life because real poverty does not always derive from one's bank account. I can only thank God for the grace of meeting them. They are the treasures of the Church and the precious stones of Mary's crown!

.....
New! "Spiritual Warfare, the Fast Lane to Union with God" In this book, I aim to answer what so many people have been asking about: how to resist Satan and stay the course of prayer in the midst of so much spiritual confusion. "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." (Eph 6.12) Here is a pocket tool, very easy to read, to help you pray and walk peacefully in the midst of the flames! This book is available to buy on Amazon.

.....
Maria, a music from Heaven!

My dear friends! In this time, of what feels like the predicted apocalyptic trials, Mary is closer to us than ever. She is fully with us.

In joyful anticipation of the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe (December 12), I have a burning desire to share with you the treasure hidden within an image that was not painted by man (acheiropoieta). This is a recent and overwhelming discovery concerning the Tilma of St Juan Diego, in Mexico. Do you know about this miracle? Many of you already know that this image is scientifically inexplicable because of the 13 characters that are visible in the retina of Mary's

eyes. Here is the amazing discovery, a real scoop: Professor Fernando Ojeda, a mathematician and specialist of the Tilma, has found musical notes on it. He has managed to put into music the harmonies present in the golden sun rays behind the silhouette of Mary, the harmonic proportions of the flowers covering her dress and the stars displayed on her mantle. The result is heavenly music! https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DmFFZc_LXZM

This music is very similar to the songs of the Angels recorded during healing masses celebrated by the famous Italian priest, Father Matteo Lagrua, in Sicily. Close your eyes and relax: Find a quiet place where you can recollect and have a divine experience; allow this music to flood the arid and thirsty spaces within your heart. It will transport you into a contemplative prayer where you will taste something of the incredible peace given by Mary and the Child she carries.

This music also transports us to the fields of Bethlehem where the shepherds listen in amazement to the Angel announcing the birth of the Savior, and the angelic choirs singing to the glory of the Most High.

This melody nourishes us like a heavenly balm that reassures us and heals our wounds of anxiety, fear, anguish and even despair. Today more than ever, the Evil One wants to oppress us with his own anxieties and is delighted to see humanity stray into darkness. It is no coincidence that this music was discovered in our troubled time: The Heavenly Father has revealed it to us now because he knows how much we need it! Open your hearts, welcome this gift of grace and let the Virgin Mary, the Lady clothed with the sun, caress your soul and heal it.

The fact that Mary sings should not surprise us. During the first apparitions in Medjugorje, she taught the members of the prayer group to sing with their heart, like a real choir teacher. Mary would sing an hymn, the visionaries would listen to her and then repeat to the members of the group what they had heard.

It is also good to recall a word from the youngest of the visionaries, little Jakov Colo who, at the time, was about 10. Father Jozo Zovko (who did not believe in the apparitions at the time) asked him, 'How does the Gospa speak to you?' 'She doesn't speak, she sings,' replied the child. 'What do you mean, she sings?' The child replied, "Her voice is like music!"

.....
The best wishes I can send you in these days of grace for the year 2021 are those given by God Himself to

Moses for His people:

**"May the Lord bless you and keep you.
May the Lord let His face shine upon
you and grant you His grace.
May the Lord turn His face towards you
and give you peace."** (Num 6: 24-27)

With all my heart and with joy!

.....
*Dearest Gospa, beloved Mother,
please teach us how to always
focus our gaze on your Son Jesus
and to abandon ourselves to Him
with infinite trust.
For He alone is the source
of true peace!*

Your sister, Emmanuel +





What does it mean to be Catholic?

Visit our Facebook: Catholic Discovery NZ
CATHOLIC ENQUIRY CENTRE
www.catholicenquiry.nz



Pope Francis tells youth at Medjugorje: be inspired by the Virgin Mary

Vatican City, Aug 2, 2020 / 07:30 am MT (CNA).- Pope Francis has urged young people gathered in Medjugorje to imitate the Virgin Mary by abandoning themselves to God.

He issued the appeal in a message to an annual youth meeting in Medjugorje, read out Aug. 1 by Archbishop Luigi Pezzuto, Apostolic Nuncio in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

"The great example of the Church that is young in the heart, ready to follow Christ with new freshness and fidelity, always remains the Virgin Mary," the pope said in the message, sent in Croatian and released by the Holy See press office Aug. 2.

"The power of Her 'Yes' and Her 'Let it be unto me' which she said before the angel, delights us at all times. Her 'Yes' means to participate and take risks, without any guarantee except knowing that she is the bearer of the promise. Her 'Behold the handmaid of the Lord' (Luke 1:38), the most beautiful example that tells us what happens when a man, in his freedom, surrenders himself into God's hands."

"Let this example inspire you and be your guideline!" Pope Francis approved Catholic pilgrimages to Medjugorje in May 2019, but he has not made a deliberation on the authenticity of the alleged Marian apparitions reported at the site since 1981.

His message to young people gathered at the site did not mention the alleged apparitions, which began June 24, 1981, when six children in Medjugorje, a town that was then part of communist Yugoslavia, began to experience phenomena which they have claimed to be apparitions of the Blessed Virgin Mary. According to the "seers," the apparitions contained a message of peace for the world, a call to conversion,

prayer and fasting, as well as certain secrets surrounding events to be fulfilled in the future.

The alleged apparitions at the site in Bosnia and Herzegovina have been a source of both controversy and conversion, with many flocking to the city for pilgrimage and prayer, and some claiming to have experienced miracles at the site, while others claim the visions are not authentic.

In January 2014, a Vatican commission concluded a nearly four-year-long investigation into the doctrinal and disciplinary aspects of the Medjugorje apparitions, and submitted a document to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.

When the congregation has analyzed the commission's findings, it will finalize a document on the site, which will be submitted to the pope, who will make a final decision.

In his message to youngsters at the 31st International Prayer Encounter of the Youth in Medjugorje, which takes place Aug. 1-6, Pope Francis said: "The annual encounter of the youth in Medjugorje is the time filled with prayer, reflections and fraternal meeting, time that gives you the opportunity to meet the living Jesus Christ, in a special way in the celebration of the Holy Eucharist, in Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and in the Sacrament of Reconciliation."

"It thus helps you discover a different way of life, different from the one offered by the culture of the temporary, according to which nothing can be permanent, the culture that knows only the pleasure of the present moment. In this atmosphere of relativism, in which it is difficult to find true and sure answers, the motto of the Festival: 'Come, and you shall see' (John 1:39), the words used by Jesus to address his disciples, are a blessing. Jesus is also looking at you, inviting you to come and stay with Him."

Pope Francis visited Bosnia and Herzegovina in June 2015 but declined to stop in Medjugorje. En route back to Rome, he indicated that the process of investigation into the apparitions was nearly complete.

On the return flight from a visit to the Marian shrine of Fatima in May 2017, the pope spoke about the final

document of the Medjugorje commission, sometimes referred to as the "Ruini report," after the head of the commission, Cardinal Camillo Ruini, calling it "very, very good," and noting a distinction between the first Marian apparitions at Medjugorje and the later ones. "The first apparitions, which were to children, the report more or less says that these need to continue being studied," he said, but as for "presumed current apparitions, the report has its doubts," the pope said. Pilgrimages to Medjugorje have declined in numbers due to the coronavirus crisis. Radio Free Europe reported March 16 that the pandemic had diminished significantly the number of visitors to the town, especially from Italy. The pope concluded his message to the youth meeting

by quoting from *Christus vivit*, his 2019 post-synodal apostolic exhortation to young people.

He said:

"Dear youth, 'keep running attracted by that face of Christ, whom we love so much, whom we adore in the Holy Eucharist and acknowledge in the flesh of our suffering brothers and sisters. May the Holy Spirit urge you on as you run this race. The Church needs your momentum, your intuitions, your faith.'"

"In this race for the Gospel, inspired by this Festival as well, I entrust you to the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, invoking the light and the power of the Holy Spirit so that you may be true witnesses of Christ. Therefore, I pray and I bless you, asking you to pray for me, too."

THE SIX GOOD HABITS OF MISSIONARY DISCIPLES

In his Unleash the Gospel pastoral letter, Archbishop Allen H. Vigneron outlines six good habits that shape our witness to Christ in our communities. Examining the presence or lack of these habits in our lives can help us intentionally become better witnesses — and to grow in our personal relationship with God.

Wherever you are in your spiritual journey, take heart. Archbishop writes, "Our acknowledgement of our own spiritual poverty is precisely what can lead us to rely wholly on God. Then it becomes clear that success belongs to him alone and not to any human ingenuity. If we have become spiritually dry, we need not fear. Dry wood is perfect for being set on fire!"

It's never too late, and you're never too far from him, to rekindle the light of your faith. So take these questions to prayer, as you enter into conversation with God and reflect on your role in sharing the Gospel. Pray to hear how he is calling you to live these habits in your own life and way.

1) Docility to the Spirit

The Holy Spirit inspires all Christ's disciples, fortifying them with the insight, strength and graces needed to witness. Do you let God lead you in everything you do, following his promptings with a humble and obedient heart? "[The Holy Spirit] is the divine force that changes the world. The [coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost] reminded us of this: The Spirit is 'in toil, comfort sweet; solace in the midst of woe.' And so we beseech him: 'Heal our wounds, our strength renew; on our dryness pour your dew; wash the stains of guilt away.' The Spirit enters into situations and transforms them. He changes hearts and he changes situations." (Pope Francis, Homily on the Solemnity of Pentecost, 2018)

2) A Spirit of Innovation

We are called to share the Gospel with the people of our time. As missionaries, we must be inspired and learn from St. Paul and the early disciples on how to present the Gospel to our contemporaries in an attractive and effective way. How can you share the life-changing message of the Gospel with the tools and means around you and learn from the ideas and creativity of others?

"For though I am free from all men, I have made myself a slave to all, so that I may win more ... To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak; I have become all things to all men, so that I may by all means save some. I do all things for the sake of the gospel, so that I may become a fellow partaker of it." (1 Corinthians 9:19, 22-23, NASB)

3) Confidence in God

Divine confidence should ground us and encourage us. We can trust in God's plan for the renewal of our families, neighbourhoods and faith communities. In which areas of your life and your work God is calling you to greater confidence and cooperation with his grace?

"It is needful to remain little before God and to remain little is to recognize one's nothingness, expect all things from the good God just as a little child expects all things from its father." (St. Thérèse of Lisieux)

4) An Attitude of Gratitude

Thankful hearts are happy hearts. Gratitude puts us in a right posture before God. When you feel down, do you counter your discouragement with thanks, staying open to God so He can continue to work in you and through you? "Get used to lifting your heart to God, in acts of thanksgiving, many times a day. Because He gives you this and that. Because you have been despised. Because you haven't what you need or because you have.

Because He made His Mother so beautiful, His Mother who is also your Mother ... Thank Him for everything, because everything is good" (St. Josemaria Escriva).

5) *A Spirit of Cooperation*

Sharing the Gospel in our communities requires unity and teamwork. Have you let your pride get in the way of collaborating with others, being open to receiving and giving help? "With all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love, being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Ephesians 4:2-3, NASB).

6) *Apostolic Boldness*

Following Jesus and going where he leads us requires courage. This is not a human trait but the fruit of our relationship with Christ. When you face adversity, do you actively and diligently turn to God for strength and wisdom? "Courageously follow the path of personal holiness and diligently nourish yourselves with the word of God and the Eucharist. The holier you are, the more you can contribute to building up the Church and society" (St. John Paul II).

Christine Warner April 3, 2019

My New Year's Blessing from our Holy Mother Mary

Jan 1st 2021 the Feast of Mary the Holy Mother of God, I arose early praying a Rosary and enjoying a quiet time in the Lord's presence. This is the most peaceful and quite part of the day for me. I am so grateful and thankful for this time. While reading a daily devotional "Jesus Calling" the words "***be aware that I am fully attentive to you***", caught my attention. I sat with them for a moment and thought yes, I do need to be more attentive to you Lord. I asked the Lord to help me be more attentive to him knowing I often forget Him in the business of the day. I went to Mass with this thought and intention on my mind. After receiving the Body and Blood of Jesus and during that time of thanks I could smell the lovely scent of Roses. I felt so at peace knowing our Holy Mother was close by. After Mass I shared with Sarah how I had smelt the scent and she said that she had smelt it also but thought she was the only one who had smelt it. I shared this with one other and was told it was someone wearing that perfume, as I had hugged and kiss this person wishing them a happy new year I would have smelt it then, so I knew Our Lady had blessed me with the knowledge that she was with me. After Mass I travelled to the service station for petrol as the gage was on E and I was travelling 90 kms to my family. I paid for my petrol and asked the attendant if he would mind checking the tyre pressure, he was so attentive to my needs. I was taken back a bit because I always deal with that company and have never been looked after like this. I moved the car to the tyre bay and while he was checking the tyre pressure we were chatting. I learnt a little of his life and I shared that I was traveling North to be with my family. With the job complete he wished me and happy new year and safe travels. He went to attend to other customers and I jumped into my car only to find it wouldn't start. I went back into the service station and he remarked had I forgotten something. I said "no my car won't start and I'm not going anywhere". With no hesitation he said he would come and have a look. I lifted the bonnet tried again and no it wouldn't start. It seemed like the battery

was flat but there was also a different sound as well. After checking all the connections and tightening them it still wouldn't go. He then said it sounded like a starter motor problem. With that he suggested I come into the shop and ring the AA. The waiting time was between 15 mins and an hour wait for a service man to come. The attendant said he would make me a hot chocolate and I could sit at the table to wait. He wouldn't let me pay for my drink and said it was his good deed for the day. I sat at the table where the drink and a paper were brought to me. I began to think Lord do you not want me to travel to my family, am I meant to stay still, why has all this happened today, do you have other plans for me? I thought oh well if You have other plans they will soon come to light. I felt at peace and was not really concerned with what was happening at all. I decided just to go with it all and see what happens. Next the AA man appeared at the door and asked who it was that needed help. I thought that was quick but when I looked at the time it was exactly and hour since I phoned. This man was so helpful and again so attentive to my needs. Yes, a flat battery which he got going and said it would all be good with a long run. He also told me the battery was 8 years old and they only have a life expectancy of 5 years. As I drove, I was reflecting on the happenings of the morning and my eyes were fully opened to the attentiveness of Jesus in all those who had helped and come to my aid. That attentiveness became very overwhelming that I could only keep praising and thanking Jesus for the juration of my journey. Those words then came back to me "***Be aware that I am fully attentive to you***". This was Jesus saying to me that He is attentive to my needs. He not only told me but because I'm so slow in hearing him and understanding that it is Him wanting to be attentive to me that He had to show me through all those he put in my path. What a blessing I received and an incredible learning. I believe Our Lady brought me face to face with her Son Jesus and His attentiveness to me. Without her help this day I would still be oblivious to Jesus' attentiveness to me. What a truly beautiful, loving, and attentive Mother to all our needs. So let us keep asking Our Lady to help us understand.

Bernadette Isaacs

The Biblical Roots of the Marian Doctrines

**Scripture contains strong evidence of each belief
the Catholic Church holds regarding the Blessed Virgin**



CATHOLICS DO NOT WORSHIP MARY

Perhaps the most common objection and misunderstanding when considering the Catholic faith is the charge that Catholics worship Mary. The Catholic Church condemns worship of anyone but God and God alone: Father, Son,

and Holy Spirit. This is a foundational truth and has always been the teaching of the Catholic Church since Jesus established it.

Conversely, veneration or showing great respect to Mary is part of the Catholic tradition. St. Maximilian Kolbe said, "Never be afraid of loving the Blessed Virgin Mary too much. You can never love her more than Jesus did, and if anyone does not wish to have Mary Immaculate for his mother, he will not have Christ for his brother." Loving Mary and imitating her life will lead us closer to her son, Jesus Christ.

Mary, worthy of honor

The angel Gabriel had no hesitation in greeting Mary with honor. But wait—doesn't Gabriel offer honor to Mary when that honor should have been given to God alone?

The angel sent from God did not have any reservations about honoring Mary. We honor special people every day. We honor soldiers, great presidents, and legendary sports figures. We honor our mother and father, as this is a commandment from God. One would never claim that this honor takes away from honor that belongs to God alone.

Surely, Jesus honored his mother and father. How fitting it is to honor the Mother of God as Christ did. We give honor to saints in the family of God without worshiping them. God alone is to be worshiped. This is the teaching of the Catholic Church and has been

for 2,000 years. Catholic and Orthodox Christians honor Mary because Jesus honored her, and we are simply disciples who follow Jesus and do as he did.

MARY, THE MODEL DISCIPLE

In Luke 1:38, Mary humbly proclaims, "May it be done to me according to your word." A few verses later, in what is referred to as the Magnificat, Mary's heart for God is laid bare when she announces, "My soul proclaims the greatness of almighty God. My spirit rejoices in God my savior. For he has looked upon his handmaid's lowliness. Behold, from now on all generations will call me blessed" (Luke 1:46-55). Shouldn't every Christian desire to be just like Mary and "proclaim the greatness of almighty God" while shouting from the rooftops how our "spirit rejoices in God [our] savior?" Shouldn't all authentic disciples of Jesus respond in complete obedience to God as Mary did? Mary is the perfect disciple for every Christian to imitate.

Mary in salvation history

Evidence for Marian doctrines is found (ironically) in the very place where Protestantism contends it is absent: the Bible. Mary is prefigured in the book of Genesis, she participates with Jesus in the Gospels, and she is observed fighting Satan in the book of Revelation. From the very first pages of the Bible to its last book, Mary's role in salvation history is astonishing.

In Genesis, there is a stunning prophecy. God said, "I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise him on the heel" (Gen. 3:15).

This passage is called the Protoevangelium, meaning "first gospel." It is here we find the first announcement of the Messiah. There is a battle between the serpent and the woman, and we find prophesied the final victory of a descendant of the woman over Satan.

Who eventually crushed the head of the serpent? This can only be Jesus, who crushed the head of Satan at the cross of Calvary. Fittingly, the site of Calvary where Jesus defeated Satan means "skull

place," reminiscent of crushing Satan's head. Because Jesus is the seed or offspring of the woman, who must the woman be? The Blessed Virgin Mary. She is prefigured right here in the beginning of Genesis. In John's account of the crucifixion, Mary stood near the cross as Jesus said to her, "Dear woman, here is your son," and to the disciple, "Here is your mother" (John 19:26-27). Mary was not John's biological mother, yet John is called Mary's son, and Mary John's mother!

This creates uneasy implications and a dilemma for Protestants who insist we should never call Mary our mother. Nevertheless, the Bible says Mary became the mother of John. The beloved disciple is a model that must be true of all disciples of Jesus, including us.

The disciple whom Jesus loved took Mary into his home and became a spiritual son to her. Equally, Mary became the spiritual mother of the beloved disciple. Christians following the model discipleship of the "disciple whom Jesus loved" must ask: am I like the beloved disciple by taking Mary into my home? When we consider how this disciple was faithful in obeying the command of Jesus to receive Mary as his mother, it becomes natural for all Christians to do likewise.

In Revelation, there is another exciting connection verifying Mary as the woman and spiritual mother of Christians. "Then the dragon became angry with the woman and went off to wage war against the rest of her offspring, those who keep God's commandments and bear witness to Jesus" (Rev. 12:17). The woman in Revelation has other children who keep the commandments of God and "bear testimony to Jesus" who are Christians.

Recalling that Jesus calls Mary the mother of John and John now calls Mary the mother of all Christians, we can easily see the scriptural basis for the acknowledgment of Mary as our spiritual mother and mother of the Church.

THE WOMAN CLOTHED WITH THE SUN

John wrote about a woman and a child in Revelation: Then God's temple in heaven was opened, and the ark of his covenant could be seen in the temple. There were flashes of lightning, rumblings, and peals of thunder, an earthquake, and a violent hailstorm. A great sign appeared in the sky, a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars. She was with child and wailed aloud in pain as she labored to give birth. Then another sign appeared in the sky; it was a huge

red dragon, with seven heads and ten horns, and on its heads were seven diadems. Its tail swept away a third of the stars in the sky and hurled them down to the earth. Then the dragon stood before the woman about to give birth, to devour her child when she gave birth. She gave birth to a son, a male child, destined to rule all the nations with an iron rod. Her child was caught up to God and his throne" (Rev. 11:19-12:5).

Who is this woman? Who is the woman clothed with the sun? Is she the Church, Mary, or Israel? The woman has a male child who is destined to rule all the nations, an obvious reference to Jesus and his kingship. Jesus was caught up to heaven, which is what apostolic Christianity calls the Ascension. Thus, the identification of the woman clothed with the sun is undoubtedly Mary. For completeness, the woman can also refer to the Church and Israel. In Catholic theology, all of these are valid.

In light of these theological truths, it is clear that the biblical reference to woman, who is Mary, is not derogatory but rather a powerful word packed with beautiful meaning that harkens all the way back to the very beginning of God's salvation plan.

Typology in Sacred Scripture

Typology is crucial in understanding relationships that exist between the Old and New Testaments. A type is a person or event in the Old Testament that prefigures or foreshadows a reality in the New Testament. The early Christian theologian St. Augustine recognized this relationship by his observation that "the New Testament lies hidden in the Old and the Old Testament is unveiled in the New." Many Catholic doctrines are best understood in the framework of typological relationships.

Doctrines related to Mary and her place in salvation history are highlighted through the careful study of typology. Irenaeus in the second century explains, "The knot of Eve's disobedience was loosed by the obedience of Mary." Irenaeus further articulates, "For what the virgin Eve had bound fast through unbelief, this did the virgin Mary set free through faith."

MARY, THE NEW EVE

St. Jerome, in the fourth century, understood the connection between Eve and Mary. He wrote, "Death came through Eve, but life has come through Mary" (Letter to Eustochium 21).

Like Jesus, the New Adam, we can see that Mary is

"May Mary, our guide on the Lenten journey,
lead us to ever deeper knowledge of the
dead and risen Christ, help us in the
spiritual combat against sin, and sustain
us as we pray with conviction:
"Convert us to you, O God, our salvation."
Pope Benedict XVI

the New Eve through a similar contrast:

Eve gave birth to death; *the New Eve (Mary) gave birth to Life.*

Eve gave birth to sin; *the New Eve gave birth to grace.*

Eve listened to the serpent; *the New Eve listened to the angel.*

The biblical comparison is clear: Jesus is the New Adam, and Mary is the New Eve. Just as Eve is the mother of all physically alive, Mary the New Eve is the mother of all spiritually alive: Christians.

Mary, the Mother of God

Elizabeth, John the Baptist's mother, exclaimed, "And how does this happen to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?" (Luke 1:43). Elizabeth recognizes that Mary is the mother of God. Is Jesus God? Was Mary carrying Jesus in her womb? Did Mary give birth to Jesus?

The earliest Christians referred to Mary as Theotokos, a Greek term meaning "God-bearer." Jesus has two natures, fully human and fully divine. These natures are entirely united, without any division. Since Mary is the mother of Jesus, Mary is appropriately called the "Mother of God."

Church Fathers such as St. Ignatius of Antioch, St. Gregory Nazianzen, and St. Cyril of Alexandria believed and declared Mary the Mother of God. St. Irenaeus said, "The Virgin Mary . . . being obedient to His word, received from an angel the glad tidings that she would bear God" (Against Heresies 5:19:1).

MARY, ARK OF THE NEW COVENANT

In the Old Testament, the Ark of the Covenant is described in Exodus as being covered with gold: "Have them make a chest of acacia wood . . . overlay it with pure gold, both inside and out . . . cast four gold rings for it . . . then make poles of acacia wood and overlay them with gold" (Exod. 25:10-13).

Likewise, the New Testament describes the Ark of the Covenant as gold-covered: "Behind the second curtain was a room called the Most Holy Place, which had the golden altar of incense and the gold covered

Ark of the Covenant" (Heb. 9:3-4).

Notice how the Ark of the Covenant is covered with pure gold, both inside and out. Gold is associated with holiness, purity, and consecration to God. This foreshadows the purity, holiness, and consecration to God of the Ark of the New Covenant.

The Ark of the Covenant held three items: "the gold jar of manna, Aaron's staff that had budded, and the stone tablets of the covenant" (Heb. 9:4). Observe the three items contained in the Ark of the Covenant: stone tablets containing the commandments given to Moses, the rod belonging to Aaron, and the bread of heaven (manna) that fed the Israelites. It is easy to see that the Ark of the Covenant can be described as a pure or spotless enclosure holding bread, the word of God, and a priestly staff.

Now, what was contained inside Mary? The Word of God, our great High Priest and the Bread of Heaven, which are all analogous to the contents inside the Ark of the Covenant. Furthermore, the Holy Spirit "overshadowed" the Ark of the Covenant, bringing God's presence to the people.

In the New Testament, we discover that the Ark of the New Covenant, Mary, was likewise "overshadowed" with the Holy Spirit (Luke 1:35). As with the Ark of the Covenant, which perpetuated special graces to the people, the Ark of the New Covenant (Mary) also then perpetuates graces to the followers of her Son, Jesus.

Since the Ark of the Covenant was created pure inside and out and set aside for divine purpose, Mary, the Ark of the New Covenant, was likewise created pure and holy, set aside for divine purpose. Here we discover the Catholic doctrine of the Immaculate Conception, where Mary is kept pure for a special purpose in God's redemption plan.

For a thousand years, Christians have used this nontheological analogy to visualize how Mary was saved: suppose a man falls into a deep pit, and someone reaches down to pull him out. The man has been "saved" from the pit.

Now, imagine a woman walking along, and she too is about to fall into the pit, but at that very moment someone holds her back and prevents her. She too has been "saved" from the pit but in a more profound way. She was not taken out of the pit; she was prevented from getting stained by the mud in the first place. This illustrates how the preservative redemption of Mary and human redemption are, in fact, compatible truths.

The Ark of the Covenant was never to be touched by

sinful man (2 Samuel 6). Likewise, Mary, the Ark of the New Covenant, was never to be touched by sinful man. From this, the Catholic doctrine of the perpetual virginity of Mary takes shape with great clarity.

Mary, queen mother and intercessor

What about Mary's title as queen? The answer is found in understanding the queen mother's role in the context of the Old Testament. In ancient Israel, it was not the king's wife who reigned as queen—it was the king's mother. She wore a crown and advocated for the people. The king's mother would present requests of the people to the king. In other words, they would seek her intercession on their behalf.

As we have seen, Mary appears in Revelation 12 reigning in heaven as the mother of the king. She is wearing a crown on her head. She is clothed with the sun and radiates with the splendor and power of a queen. Therefore, Mary is appropriately given the title of queen, who is able to pray with us and for us.

MARY, OUR HELP IN SPIRITUAL BATTLES

How do we bridge the gap between the doctrines of Mary and our everyday life? Why are these truths vital to Catholic and Orthodox Christians? The Ark of the Covenant went before the people in battle. In this way, the Ark of the Covenant assisted in overcoming the enemies of Israel and helped to secure victory (e.g., the battle of Jericho). The Ark of the Covenant and God's presence was a powerful weapon and protection.

Turning to Mary, the Ark of the New Covenant, she is likewise a weapon in our spiritual battles. We can and should ask for her intercession to God on our behalf as we fight our spiritual battles here on Earth.

Do You Believe Your Pastor or Martin Luther?

It often comes as a surprise to Protestant fundamentalists that Martin Luther (1483-1546), the founder of the Protestant Reformation, maintained

Mary was the "Mother of God" and believed in Mary's perpetual virginity and immaculate conception. Luther was a Catholic priest and monk before he decided to break from the apostolic Church. One might expect he would have rejected the Church's teachings about the Virgin Mary, but the opposite is true.

Thus, Protestants are left to wobble on the horns of a sharp dilemma. If you are a Lutheran, Methodist, Baptist, or nondenominational Christian, chances are you reject the perpetual virginity and immaculate conception of Mary. However, the very founder of Protestantism believed both of these doctrines. Should a Protestant believe his individual pastor or Martin Luther?

Sadly, Protestantism has departed not only from 2,000 years of apostolic teaching but even its own founder's teachings.

THE CHURCH FATHERS' DEVOTION TO MARY

One cannot read the early Church Fathers without noticing their deep honor for the Virgin Mary. Athanasius of Alexandria (A.D. 295-373), St. Ambrose of Milan (338-397), St. Jerome (347-419), St. Augustine of Hippo (354-430) (depicted at right), and Pope Leo the Great all believed in the perpetual virginity of Mary.

Cyril of Jerusalem (315-386) believed Mary was the Mother of God and called her that. He explains, "The Father bears witness from heaven to his Son. The Holy Spirit bears witness, coming down in the form of a dove. The archangel Gabriel bears witness, bringing the good tidings to Mary. The Virgin Mother of God bears witness" (Catechetical Lectures, 10:19). For Cyril, Mary is without question the Mother of God. Similarly, Justin Martyr (105-165), Irenaeus (140-202), and Origen (185-253) believed in the Immaculate Conception of Mary.

The Fathers of the Church leave us with certainty that the Blessed Virgin Mary is central in God's redemptive plan.

<https://www.catholic.com/magazine/print-edition/the-biblical-roots-of-the-marian-doctrines>

In New Zealand and Australia

Over 200 Catholics are offering Catholics "B & B" for \$35.00 one person, or \$30.00 per person for 2 or more persons per night, includes continental breakfast. This is a wonderful way for Catholics to meet and enjoy the company of other Catholics. If you wish to become a host or if you wish to purchase a book with all the details of hosts, the cost is \$15, includes postage, contact or order from Marie Anderson, 2 Brent Place, Christchurch, 8053. Phone: 03 3595 541, email: marie.ian@xtra.co.nz.

A REFLECTION ON THE ROAD TO EMMAUS



I think there are five truths that are revealed in today's reading from the Gospel of Luke:

1) The two disciples walking along the road to Emmaus didn't recognize Jesus when He first approached them. Why is this? Because their faith was weak. Only a strong faith allows our intellects to be illuminated by the light of God's truth. Without that faith, our pride causes us to be spiritually blind, and we can't see God even when He's right in front of us.

2) Jesus presented Himself to the two disciples as a stranger on a journey. It was a test for them. If they were truly Jesus's disciples, would they treat this stranger the same way they'd treat Jesus if it was Him? They called themselves disciples of Jesus, but now it was time to prove it. He taught them that they should love their neighbors as themselves. Now they had a chance to do that. Jesus calls us to treat every single person we meet, no matter what they look like or how they treat us as if we were interacting with Him. He wants us to love others the way He loves us, and the way we should love Him in return. Do we see Jesus in everyone we meet? If we did, I think it would change the way we treated people.

3) Jesus told them everything in the Old Testament was referring to Him. This is the basis for the use of typology in Church tradition. When you read the Old Testament in the light of the new and the new in the

light of the old, you can begin to see the full picture. They're both centered on Jesus since He's the fullness, perfection, and pinnacle of God's creation. Thus, the New Testament and the Old Testament are meant to be viewed as one integrated whole rather than two individual parts.

4) The disciples asked Jesus to stay with them and eat dinner. When we're in God's presence we might not be able to immediately recognize Him, but His presence gives us the desire to stay with Him. Then, we read the most important line in the entire reading. It says Jesus took the bread, broke it, and said the blessing. Sound familiar? It should if you're Catholic. It's what every Catholic priest says before he consecrates the host at Mass. Notice that it doesn't say "he broke the bread and said a blessing". The fact that St Luke referred to a specific blessing means that blessing was already being used in the celebration of the Mass by the apostles by the time St Luke wrote that verse. This proves that Jesus instituted the Eucharist and the priesthood at the Last Supper. It also proves that the Eucharist truly is Jesus's body and blood.

But if that isn't enough proof, what happened next surely is. It says at the moment Jesus said the blessing, the disciples' eyes were opened, and they could see Jesus as He was for the first time. This makes it clear that through the Eucharist, the Holy Spirit gives us the grace to see things with the eyes of faith. If we receive it in a state of grace, it washes away our venial sins and unites us to Jesus and His body, the Church. Jesus opened the eyes of his disciples at that supper to show them how blind they were, and how much grace and power is stored in His body and blood in the Eucharist. But it wasn't just for them that Jesus performed this miracle, it was for the apostles they were about to tell, so that their faith would be strengthened and they'd believe in Him even stronger than before. It was also for us, so that we would believe in the power of the Eucharist. It wasn't a coincidence that this was the first miracle Jesus performed after His resurrection. He wanted to make it clear that the Eucharist is the lifeblood of the Church, and thus should be the center of our faith.

5) The last lesson we learn from today's Gospel reading is that when we receive Jesus in the Eucharist, our hearts are inflamed with love for Him because His Sacred Heart is on fire with love for us. That's why the disciples said, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he spoke to us on the way and opened the Scriptures to us?" That same presence they felt on the road to Emmaus entered their hearts when they received the Eucharist.

Then, after they received it and Jesus left them, they "set out at once" to Jerusalem to share their moving and illuminating experience with others. That's what receiving Jesus in the Eucharist can do to us, if we receive Him in a state of grace. He inspires us to go out into the world and tell everyone we meet how He opened our eyes to the truth about God, and how He filled us

Would you like to pray
**THE LITTLE OFFICE
OF THE
BLESSED VIRGIN MARY?**
(a devotion practised since the 10th Century)
A Pocket Edition is now available
in contemporary english
\$5.00 (p.p.free in NZ)
Send Name & Address to:
'BVM' P.O. Box 88, Whitianga 3510

with His love and grace. We're filled with a desire to share that love with everyone else, because love can't be possessed, it can only be shared and spread. When God enters our hearts, we're changed from within, and we desire to give ourselves to others, because that's what true love is, a total gift of self to another.

That's what Jesus did when He instituted the Eucharist. He knew He'd spend many days and nights alone in the tabernacle, just waiting for us to visit Him and spend time with Him. He knew many of us would receive Him with indifference and irreverence. But He gave us this gift, and chose to put His body and blood, His very

presence into a small piece of bread and some wine to show us how much He loves us, and that He'd always be there for us to give us spiritual nourishment- our daily bread. Through this gift, He wants us to nourish others with the grace He gives us in this sacrament so that the entire world can know who He is and how much He loves all of us. As He said, "I have come to cast fire upon the earth; and how I wish it were already kindled!" The Eucharist is the match that lights the blaze, and it's up to us become the fodder for it and spread it to everyone we meet.

Chris Antenucci, 5 April, 2018

Pope Francis and Benedict XVI receive first dose of COVID-19 vaccine

Pope Francis greets Pope emeritus Benedict XVI at the Vatican's Mater Ecclesiae Monastery on Nov. 28, 2020. Vatican City, Jan 14, 2021 / 04:50 am MT (CNA).- Pope Francis and Pope emeritus Benedict XVI have received their first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine, the Vatican confirmed on Thursday.

Responding to questions from reporters on Jan. 14, Matteo Bruni, director of the Holy See Press Office, said: "I can confirm that as part of the Vatican City State vaccination program to date, the first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine has been administered to Pope Francis and the pope emeritus."

The two men are expected to receive the second dose in about three weeks. Benedict XVI's personal secretary said on Tuesday that the 93-year-old pope emeritus would receive the coronavirus vaccine as soon as it was ready. Archbishop Georg Gänswein told CNA Deutsch, CNA's German-language news partner, on Jan. 12 that Benedict XVI would be vaccinated "as soon as the vaccine is available." "I will also be vaccinated along with the whole household of the Mater Ecclesiae Monastery," said Gänswein, referring to the Vatican monastery where Benedict XVI has lived since resigning as pope in 2013. The Vatican began administering vaccinations against COVID-19 on Jan. 13. Vatican residents and employees and their families are receiving their doses of the Pfizer-BioNtech vaccine in the atrium of the Paul VI Audience Hall. Vatican City State, the world's smallest independent nation-state, has a population of around 800 people. But together with the Holy See, the sovereign entity that predates it, it employs more than 4,000 people. Since the beginning of the coronavirus outbreak, a total of 27 people have tested positive for COVID-19 in Vatican City State. Among them were at least 11 members of the Swiss Guard. Dr. Andrea Arcangeli, head of the Vatican health service, said on Jan. 2 that the Vatican had purchased a low-temperature



refrigerator to store the vaccine.

"Priority will be given to health and public safety personnel, to the elderly and to personnel most frequently in contact with the public," he said. In a television interview broadcast on Sunday, Pope Francis said that he had booked an appointment to be vaccinated against the coronavirus. "I believe that, ethically, everyone has to get the vaccine. It is an ethical option because it concerns your life but also that of others," he commented.

Recalling the introduction of the polio vaccine and other common childhood immunizations, he said: "I don't understand why some say this could be a dangerous vaccine. If doctors present it to you as something that can be fine and has no special dangers, why not take it?" The 84-year-old Pope Francis is generally healthy, though he suffers from sciatica and had eye surgery for cataracts in 2019. When he was young, he had a portion of a lung removed because of an infection. At his traditional Christmas "Urbi et Orbi" blessing, the pope called for COVID-19 vaccines to be made available to the world's neediest people. He said: "I ask everyone -- government leaders, businesses, international organizations -- to foster cooperation and not competition, and to seek a solution for everyone: vaccines for all, especially for the most vulnerable and needy of all regions of the planet. Before all others: the most vulnerable and needy!"

CNA newsletter

Addiction and Redemption

If you had told me as a kid growing up in Dorchester, Massachusetts that I would be where I am today, I would not have believed you. I don't think anyone would have believed that, but God had different plans. I found sobriety — a true miracle — and a full life in Jesus, and my life has been permanently changed.

Growing Up in Dorchester

I was born above a bar in Dorchester, Massachusetts, which ended up making a lot of sense to me later in life. In the 1970s, Dorchester was an overwhelmingly working-class Irish Catholic neighbourhood, and our family fit in well. My Dad worked various jobs, including working at the bar downstairs and driving a truck. My Mom took care of the kids and would work at night cleaning buildings. I was the fifth of nine children and was a typical middle child starving for attention. Growing up, I looked for it in all the wrong places. There's even a story that, when I was a toddler, I escaped from the apartment, and my Mom found me across the street at the bowling alley, entertaining the older kids with my limited vocabulary.

Like most traditional Irish families, we were raised Catholic. We didn't really do it for the faith part of it, but more just to check off the boxes. My parents didn't grow up with faith, and you can't pass on something you don't have. They were raised in dysfunctional homes and received very little love. When I got older, I would talk to my uncle (my Dad's brother) about how I had never heard my Dad say "I love you" unless he had a few drinks in him. He said we were lucky because they had never heard it at all. This changed how I viewed my Dad. He just didn't know how to care for nine kids. He was never taught how.

My Mom was different. She would hug us, kiss us, and tell us she loved us all the time. She was a people pleaser and was always trying to keep peace in the family. That's how she was raised. She had been the one to keep peace between her parents and her siblings, and so she did the same with us. She always took care of us and made sure we knew she loved us. We didn't have much growing up, but one thing I'll always remember is that, around Christmas, my parents would go nuts with gifts. They would always make sure there were gifts under the tree for all of us. One year, they got us all bikes. I still don't know how they afforded nine bikes, but they made it happen.

Booze is a tyrant in the family of an alcoholic. It shapes every relationship. It also runs in the family. My father's father was an alcoholic, my mom's family was full of alcoholics, my Dad was an alcoholic, and I was an alcoholic. I had my first drink at eight years old, and I'm not talking about just a sip of my Dad's beer. I was with some of the older neighborhood kids, who thought it would be funny to watch a kid chug a whole beer. So I did. It was one of the first times I really felt accepted. The next time I drank was a year later. Again, I wanted to impress the older kids, so I bought a quart of Budweiser and a pack of cigarettes from one of the teenagers for \$50, which I had stolen from a wallet in the YMCA. I drank the whole quart and even started stealing the other kids' beers. That night, I went home and threw up all over the kitchen floor, right in front of my mom. She knew, in the way that moms know, what had happened. I still remember her yelling, "Are you crazy? You're nine years old!" You would think that, after a situation like that, I would have learned my lesson, but as soon as I was no longer grounded, I was back on the streets with the older kids.

That experience changed something in me. When you're in a family of nine kids and your parents both work, attention is hard to come by, and the neighborhood kids gave me that. When I was out with my friends, I felt like I belonged. We would drink and smoke almost every day and then go and hang out at the YMCA. If we needed money, we'd steal a wallet or rob a house. My friends would just lift me up into someone's window, and we'd rob the place blind. We didn't even think what we were doing was wrong.

We didn't get away with everything though. The first time I was arrested, I was in sixth grade. My buddy and I got in a fight with another guy, and he cut the guy with a small pocket knife. It wasn't serious, but we had to go to court. But even that didn't stop me; I just went right back to the streets.

As kids, we were taught always to be home by the time the street lights came on. One night in June, I saw the lights flicker and realized I wasn't going to make it home in time. Instead of rushing home, I just stayed out, and I didn't go home until August. I was in and out of homelessness for most of my middle school and high school years. I'd feel embarrassed when I ran into my family during that time, but whenever I saw them, I'd just act tough, so they wouldn't know.

I would see my mom outside the home, too. I'd be out by myself late at night, and I'd see her walking to Ashmont Station to catch a train. She worked at a bank in downtown Boston, cleaning the floors and offices. It was scary for anyone to ride a train at eleven o'clock at night, much less a mother of nine. I'd watch her from a distance, wishing I could just run up to her and say, "Mom, I love you. Please help me." But I didn't.

And there was nothing she could do, either. My Dad wouldn't let me back into the house, and she still had eight other kids to feed.

One time, I did approach her. I followed her to the train station and decided to go up to her. All I could say was "Mom." She looked at me with the saddest eyes, and I could just imagine her thinking, "How did your young life come to this?" Neither of us knew the answer, so without saying a word she just got on the train, and I watched it pull away. I'll never forget that moment. I knew I was breaking her heart.

During that time, I would bounce around to different houses. When I was allowed, I would stay at my parents' house. But for the times I wasn't allowed, I would stay at friends' houses, or with my older sisters, and sometimes in a box behind the liquor store. After getting in trouble a few more times, I ended up in the government system and spent years jumping between foster homes and institutional housing. Over six years, I went to six different schools. People would take me in, but I would leave on my own, or they would kick me out.

I would get in trouble with the law over the years for many things, but my first serious conviction came when I was 17. My friends and I stole a sword and used it to rob a guy. We didn't hurt anyone with it, but I was caught and charged with armed robbery, getting three to five years in adult prison. I had been stealing for almost a decade, and it didn't even occur to me that I could go to prison for it.

I was sentenced to a medium-security prison but spent most of my time at a high-security prison. I learned quickly that the inmates determined the rules, and most of the time, I learned them the hard way. I also learned that the best way to get along with the different groups was to relate with them. Everyone had their own group of guys with whom they would hang out, and once I learned the groups, it was pretty easy to find ways to talk with them. Looking back, I can see now that this was another example of how I just wanted to be liked and accepted.

For most people, serving time in the "hole" at a high security prison would set them straight. Not me. After I got out, my brother picked me up, and we went straight to a bar. I spent the next six months either blackout drunk or nearly so. I continued to do drugs and even tried new ones. I was as broken a young man as you could ever meet.

One night, after getting drunk and doing drugs, a friend and I decided to rob a house. We didn't have a masterful plan. We just checked which doors were unlocked. Little did we know that the door we chose belonged to a cop. I collected all I could, but then checked the fridge for booze. I helped myself to a drink and sat down at the kitchen table to enjoy it. The cop and his

partner found me passed out there, and after taking a few swings at me themselves, they turned me in. Home invasion carries a life sentence. I knew I was in trouble this time, so I pled guilty. No one from my family was in the courtroom, but the cop who busted me was, and incredibly, he spoke up on my behalf. He knew I needed help. I ended up getting six to nine years.

The Big Hustle

Every big moment in my life was pushing me toward God. Left to my own devices, I ran into nothing but trouble. But when I let God take over, my life changed for the better. One of his priests and one of his saints pointed the way for me.

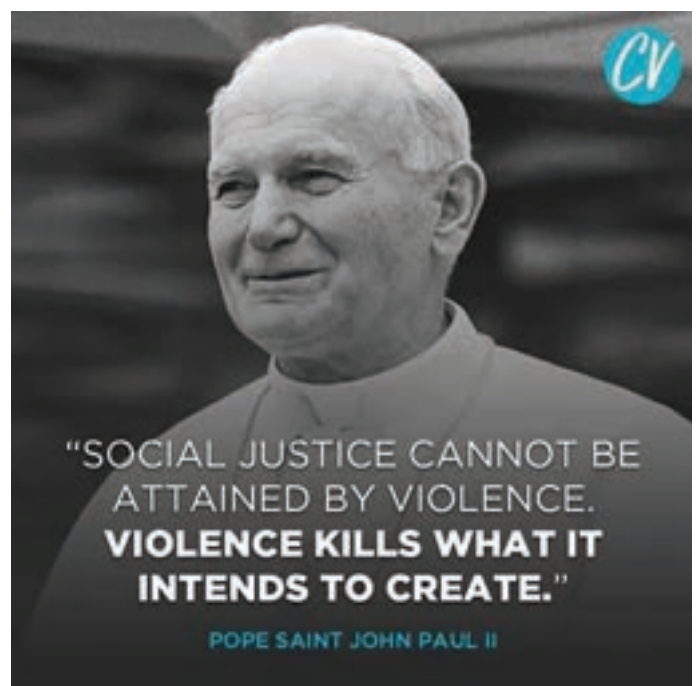
I was in prison again. I was 22 years old, no education, no hopes, staring at a six- to nine-year prison sentence. If I messed up here and had to serve the whole sentence, I'd be thirty-one when I got out. So what was I going to do?

The Big Hustle, of course! I had to create the illusion that I was trying to change. I had to shorten this sentence. I needed to give the appearance of being a good boy, a model prisoner, a young man bent on self-improvement.

This was all a lie. I just wanted to get out of prison and resume my criminal ways. But to create the illusion, I started going to Alcoholics Anonymous meetings. I went to therapy groups and said what I thought they wanted to hear.

That's when Father Jim Fratus, one of the greatest men I have ever known, approached me. He didn't give me any hard sell. He just told me that he had an opening in the chapel for a janitor, a handyman, and a cleanup guy to sweep the floors and empty the trash. Would I be interested?

Well, why not? This looked like the perfect hustle. The guy was a priest. I figured he was probably as naïve



as a newborn baby; I could con him out of anything: cigarettes, food, access to the phone. I could hide away from this crazy place in a quiet chapel. It would give me a chance to think, to be by myself. So "Sure, Father, I'll do it."

Then, little by little, Father Fratus drew me in. He said, "Hey, I need you to clean up after Mass Saturday night. Since you have to be there anyway, you may as well come to Mass." Week by week, he tried to bring me home to the Faith: a faith that was mine by inheritance, but about which I knew less than zero.

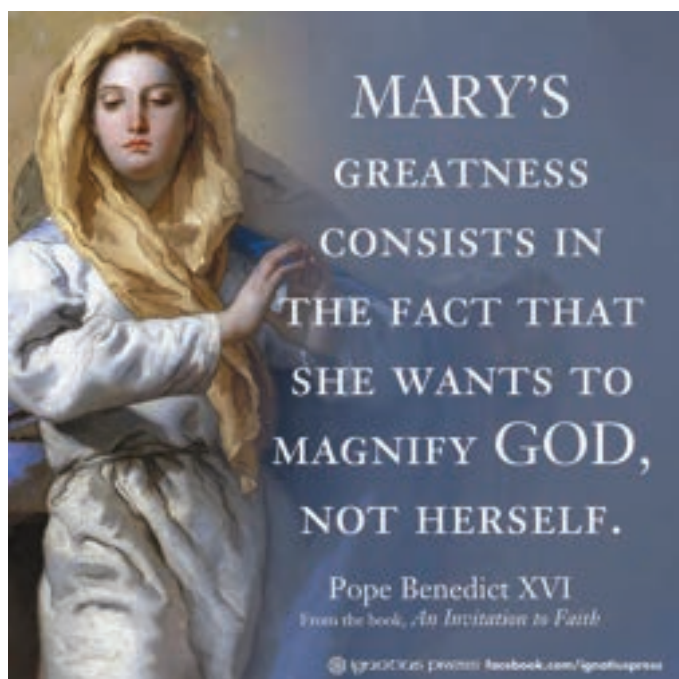
One day, he told me that we were having a special visitor at MCI Concord: Mother Teresa. "Oh, that's great, Father," I said. Pause. "Who's Mother Teresa?"

I really had no idea who she was. Now, not only was I Catholic, at least nominally, but you'd have to be living under a rock in the 1980s not to know who Mother Teresa was: the tiny Albanian nun, founder of the Missionaries of Charity, who had devoted her life to loving the poor and caring for them in Calcutta, India. She had won the Nobel Peace Prize and, after the Pope, was probably the best-known Catholic in the world. A few years after her death, she was canonized and is now known as Saint Teresa of Calcutta. But to Jim Wahlberg, inmate #44563 of MCI Concord, she was "Who?"

Mother Teresa had come in part due to an invitation from Donald Ouimet, a prisoner who had once been a Franciscan monk. He had written to ask if she'd visit. "If it is God's will," she wrote to him, "I will be able to come to you." It was God's will.

The day came for Mother Teresa's visit: June 4, 1988. I saw her from a distance, walking through the entrance to the prison, with its imposing 40-foot walls.

Here's this little 77-year-old lady walking toward me, surrounded by all these important people — the governor of Massachusetts, the prison warden, the



commissioner of the Department of Corrections. Mother Teresa was five feet tall if she stood on her tiptoes, her moth-eaten sweater had holes in it, and her sandals looked like she'd been wearing them since the time of Christ. As she got closer, I could see that her pockets were stuffed with money, as if people were trying to buy their way into heaven.

At Mass, which was celebrated in the MCI Concord gymnasium, thanks to Father Fratus, I was in the entrance procession — me, Jim Wahlberg, the armed robber, the breaker and enterer. Cardinal Bernard Law, Archbishop of Boston, was presiding.

He wore his miter hat and sat on his cathedra, the bishop's chair, in the sanctuary. There was a fancy chair for Mother Teresa, too, and the cardinal beckoned for her to sit with him. But she shook her head no, modestly refusing the offer.

Instead, she stayed with us, the inmates. We were on our knees, along with her and the sisters from her order, brothers and sisters before Christ. These guys are prisoners and rapists, murderers and bank robbers, drug dealers and just general scumbags like me. Mother Teresa stayed there and prayed with us.

For the first time in my life, I saw the face of Christ. The face of love. Mother Teresa knew that we weren't just inmates. We had names, we had stories, we had souls. When asked by the press why she had come, she responded simply, "You must find the face of God in the faces of these prisoners."

Faith

That meeting with Mother Teresa changed my life. I spoke with Father Jim Fratus, and we started to meet for Confirmation classes. Almost immediately, I also started to make changes in my life. I stopped hustling people. I still had temptations, but others saw the difference in me.

When it came time for my Confirmation, I called my mom and invited her to come. She was hesitant. The first time I was in prison, she only visited me once. Later, she told me that she could hardly recognize me on that visit and promised herself she wouldn't visit me in prison again. But she finally agreed, and when she came, I told her all about Father Fratus and meeting Mother Teresa. Even today, she still tells people the story. "I just watched you walk around that room. I watched the way you talked to people, the way you smiled. I knew that was my son."

It's only by God's grace that I haven't gone back to prison. While I was finishing out my sentence, other guys helped me stay on the straight and narrow. I wasn't drinking, but it was still easy to get into a hustle. My mom helped, too. When I was up for parole, she wrote to the board and told them that I had changed and deserved a second chance. It worked, and I ended up serving only half of my six to nine years.

PIONEER

The Pioneer Total Abstinence Association of the Sacred Heart of Jesus
was founded by Fr James A. Callan S.J. in Dublin on 28 December 1898

AIM OF THE ASSOCIATION
Peace and Harmony in the Home

THE PIONEER CONTRIBUTION

The spread of the Christian virtue of temperance throughout Ireland and abroad

MEANS

- Prayer, an alcohol-free life style and public witness to the infinite love of the Sacred Heart by wearing the pin
 - Support for the young and victims of drug and alcohol abuse
 - Alternative social and cultural activities
 - A monthly family magazine and use of other media

Promoting Pioneer membership worldwide **CONTACT JOHN 09 522 1728 OR MARY 09 620 4605**

A New Start

When the time came, I was nervous about getting out of prison, so my brother Donnie asked me to go on tour with him and his band. I agreed — not a smart move, because with the tour, I was breaking parole. It was a great experience, but it was also a miracle that I was able to stay sober through it all.

After that, I went back to Boston and found an apartment. I started volunteering at an after-school program, the Dorchester Youth Collaborative (DYC). These kids were from the neighborhoods I grew up in, and most of them lived in a one parent home, so DYC became their safe place to do their homework and find encouragement. It also sometimes supplied their only meal of the day. It became my own safe place too, and it's where I met my wife, Benerada, or "Benny."

I knew Benny was beautiful on the outside, but as we got to know each other, I soon learned that she was just as beautiful on the inside. After dating a while, though, she saw another side of me. We were in a drive-through getting coffee, and somebody cut us off in the parking lot. My anger came out. I threw my coffee at his car. Benny screamed, horrified. "Take me home right now! You're an animal!"

We were touch and go for a while after that, but then we found out she was pregnant with our son. There was no way I was going to let my kid grow up without a father. We got back together, and two and a half years later, we were married. Father Jim Fratus married us in a Catholic church in October of 1995. That man brought Jesus into my life, which was the greatest gift I've ever received, and then he brought my wife and me back together. It was a beautiful day.

Not long after we got married, we bought our first house. I cried like a baby and thanked God for all that He had done in my life. It was near my old neighborhood, near the bar where I had slept outside in a box. Now I was buying a house with my wife and son. It was an unforgettable God moment.

After a move and more children, we decided to move to Florida. I continued to live a sober life as our family grew, but I was still missing something. I had given my life to Jesus, but I wasn't living my life for Him. I wasn't

happy. I went to Mass sometimes, but other times I would just drop off the kids and leave. My wife kept encouraging me to get involved in church. She ended up going on a women's retreat called the Road to Emmaus. It was named after the story in the Bible where Jesus met two travelers on the road to Emmaus, and just as their lives were changed after meeting Jesus, she came back a changed woman. When it came time for the men to go to the same retreat, she encouraged me to go. At first, I refused. It wasn't until my daughter asked me to go that I decided to give it a chance. I've never been able to say no to my daughter.

As the experience had changed my wife, Road to Emmaus changed my life, too. As the retreat went on, the ice around my heart began to melt. They provided an opportunity for Confession, and I finally let it all out. It was a long confession. Afterwards, I had the undeniable feeling of the presence of Christ in my heart. My heart had been ignited for God. I knew I needed to start living for Jesus, but just as it reads in John 16:33, there will be tribulation in this world. Shortly after the retreat, we found out my son was doing drugs. We began a cycle of him getting in trouble for having drugs, and us bailing him out, until finally I knew I had to do the same thing my father had done for me. I gathered his items, put them in a bag, and when he came home, I told him that he had to leave. My childhood flashed before my eyes as he cried, begged, and pleaded to stay. It was something I had never imagined doing with my own son, but we couldn't keep going in circles, so he left. A few weeks later, he was arrested again, so we decided to try different treatment facilities. One day, my wife phoned me. She was at home, watching EWTN's Life on the Rock. Four guys from a place called Comunità Cenàcolo, a Catholic faith-based community for addicts, were giving their testimony. It was powerful. "That's where Daniel needs to go," she said. "My son needs God. My son needs Jesus Christ. He doesn't need any of this other stuff." So we made the call and started the process. It wasn't easy, but my son agreed to stay with the community, and Jesus used it to save my son's life. After three years there, he decided to stay clean and continue serving.

Going through that experience helped me to realize that there was much more I could be doing to heighten awareness about addiction, and the healing and recovery that people can find in such organizations. I began to speak at events in Boston, then around the country. I knew God could take my experiences and use them to help others. These days, He uses me to let people know that there is a way out of the hell of addiction and brokenness.

I'm not a perfect man, but I've been blessed as the husband of an amazing woman and the father of three children who have never seen me drink. I also won — or "won" — the trifecta: I was raised by an alcoholic, I became an alcoholic, and then I raised an addict. But

my faith, and the steps I took to heal and grow out of this condition, enabled me to find healing, then to be there for my son, learning from him, too. His addiction brought my family to the foot of the Cross. What greater gift could there be?

I am not a finished product; I still have so much more to learn. But it is my mission to be a follower of Christ, to show others that there's always hope, redemption, and healing through Jesus Christ. Not everyone will accept my story, but I know that God has a plan for everyone, and that He will help others like me to achieve all that God has intended for them. We just have to give Him all we have and see what He can do.

Jim Wahlberg January 4, 2021 Coming Home series

JOURNAL REFLECTIONS ON THE 7 LAST WORDS OF JESUS

The magnitude of the gift of Jesus' death on the cross can be difficult to put into words. But as with all things, Jesus shows us the way. The Seven Last Words—the phrases spoken by our saviour and recorded in the Gospels—provide powerful messages for us to ponder and relate to our daily lives. To deepen your experience of Holy Week and more fully enjoy the Easter celebration, spend some time writing about the words spoken by Jesus and their meaning to you.

1) "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do." (Luke 23:34)

Even as he is wrongfully accused, convicted and tortured, Jesus asks God to grant mercy unto his persecutors.

Are there people in your life to whom you need to offer forgiveness? Are there people from whom you need to seek forgiveness? How can you find it in your heart to get past injustice and cruelty you might have suffered? Think about how forgiveness could free your heart and help you move forward.

2) "Amen, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise." (Luke 23:43)

Here, Jesus speaks words of salvation to one of the thieves also being crucified. That man believes in Jesus' innocence and asks Jesus to remember him when Jesus comes into his kingdom. Jesus, of course, provides us all with salvation through his death and resurrection.

How would you describe your relationship with Jesus? Do you see him as an unknowable being or a friend

who's close at hand? Recall times in your life when someone has saved you in some way.

3) "Woman, behold, your son. ... Behold, your mother." (John 19:26–27)

Preparing to leave the earthly realm, Jesus entrusts his mother, Mary, to "the disciple whom he loved." Even as he was dying, Jesus was thinking of his mother and how she would go on after her son's death.

What role does Mary play in your life? How is your relationship with your parents and other family members? What could you do to grow closer to them? Think about friends who feel like family, like the beloved disciple. Write about their importance to you and how you can show them how you feel.

4) "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Matthew 27:46 and Mark 15:34)

Jesus, at his most human, calls out in anguish from the cross. He is in profound pain, abandoned by most of his friends and suffering physically and emotionally. How do you perceive Jesus' cry of abandonment? Do you believe God had abandoned his son? Why or why not? When have you felt abandoned by family, friends or even God? In what ways can you relate to Jesus as a flesh-and-blood person?

5) "I thirst." (John 19:28)

In what is known as "The Word of Distress," Jesus once again expresses a human need. To quench his thirst, Jesus is offered a sponge soaked in sour wine. For what are you thirsting? How can you strengthen your faith life to quench that thirst? When have you felt distressed and cried out for what you needed? Who came to your aid? Where was God during your suffering?

6) "It is finished." (John 19:30)

With three simple words, Jesus changes the course of

MY SOUL IS THIRSTING FOR YOU, OH LORD - Volume II – by Willy Vermeulen

Available for \$5 plus \$1.40 postage, 4/8 Elizabeth St, Tauranga 3110 or e-mail willybverm@gmail.com

human history, declaring victory over sin and death—the fulfilment of God’s promises to his people. On earth, Jesus has finished his work.

When have you felt triumphant? How did God play a role in that experience? As Christians, we know Jesus’ life and death had special purpose. How would you describe your life’s purpose? If you’re still searching, how might you discover who God is calling you to be?

7) “Father, into your hands I commend my spirit.” (Luke 23:46)

Called “The Word of Reunion,” Jesus proclaims that he will join God in heaven. His journey is at once complete and only just beginning.

What do you think heaven will be like? What does it mean to you to be united with God? Do you see death as an ending, a beginning or both?

Having examined each of Jesus’ final statements individually, reflect on how the messages all work together to create a prayer. Just as he was a model for us in life, so Jesus was in death, teaching us how to pray through our darkest hours and reminding us that God is always listening. Fortified by the knowledge of God’s unfailing mercy, we have the strength we need to go forward as God’s Easter people.

*Jennifer Scroggins
April 3, 2019*

Questionnaire

WE REMIND READERS THAT, IN ORDER TO REMAIN ON OUR MAILING LIST, THEY SHOULD CONTACT US AT LEAST EVERY TWO YEARS.

We would appreciate it if all readers *WHO HAVE NOT DONE SO* would fill in the questionnaire below. Any comments, requests or criticisms will be welcome.

AS OUR MAGAZINE IS FREE, THIS IS NOT A REQUEST FOR DONATIONS, but to ensure that it is actually read. (If those who reply wish to give a financial contribution, we would be very grateful, but this is not essential.)

Yes, I wish to continue receiving the ‘Medjugorje News’.

No, please take me off your mailing list.

My address has changed and is now:

Name

Address (if not on back or if changed)

.....

.....

Comments

.....

.....

.....

Myriam Media Ministries

- ▶ We have a full range of audio and video tapes of all Eucharistic Conventions, DVDs from EWTN Catholic TV, Saints, Church teaching, World Youth Day, Pope Benedict's inauguration, children's Programme, etc.
- ▶ Sister Emmanuel's talks are available on CDs and audio tapes
- ▶ *Stressed? Oppressed? Bless!* – Fr Donald Calloway's incredible testimony – *The miracle of the Rosary*
- ▶ *Joyful Mysteries – Witness of a Professional Sinner* - 1 tape \$8.00 each or 2 or more \$6.00 each
- ▶ *The Rosary with Medjugorje with Luminous mysteries on CD* \$15.00
- ▶ *Books: Souls in Purgatory* – donation

Contact: Myriam Media Ministries,

10 Park Ave, Birkenhead, North Shore City 0626. Phone/Fax 09-418 3428

Important reminder

When writing to us or sending us new names and/or addresses, please:

- Include your Return Address
- NAMES & ADDRESSES MUST BE IN CAPITAL LETTERS, BLOCK LETTERS

-
- ✓ Have you enjoyed reading this issue? ✓ Is it helping you in your spiritual life?
 - ✓ Do you think others would benefit from reading it?

*What about passing it on to someone or leave it in any church porch/foyer or anywhere else,
so others can read it too.*