

MEDJUGORJE NEWS

New Zealand

FREE

Issue no* 74 – December 2014

A Holy
Christmas
&
A Happy New
Year

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peace

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As its name 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.

News from Medjugorje can be found at the official website:

<http://www.medjugorje.hr/>

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 practise 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



25 August, 2014

"Dear children!

Pray for my intentions, because Satan wants to destroy my plan which I have here and to steal your peace. Therefore, little children, pray, pray, pray that God can act through each of you. May your hearts be open to God's will. I love you and bless you with my motherly blessing.

Thank you for having responded to my call."

25 September, 2014

"Dear children!

Also today I call you to be like the stars, which by their light give light and beauty to others so they may rejoice. Little children, also you be the radiance, beauty, joy and peace - and especially prayer - for all those who are far from my love and the love of my Son Jesus. Little children, witness your faith and prayer in joy, in the joy of faith that is in your hearts; and pray for peace, which is a precious gift from God.

Thank you for having responded to my call."

25 October, 2014

"Dear children!

Pray in this time of grace and seek the intercession of all the saints who are already in the light. From day to day may they be an example and encouragement to you on the way of your conversion. Little children, be aware that your life is short and passing. Therefore, yearn for eternity and keep preparing your hearts in prayer. I am with you and intercede before my Son for each of you, especially for those who have consecrated themselves to me and to my Son.

Thank you for having responded to my call."



From the Editor

Dear Friends of Medjugorje News,

Many blessings to all our readers. Since our last magazine, the family have travelled to Brisbane to be part of our Grandsons baptism in the Redcliffe Catholic Church. What a wonderful weekend, we were so blessed. A great opportunity for the family to come together as ONE and for Hunter to be welcomed into the Church family. I was very impressed with the symbolism used at this Church, both parents and God parents held Hunters head in the palm of their hand as The Priest blessed him with the water. I had never seen this before and thought, yes, both parents and God parents have a role in supporting the child in his faith journey. We have not been able to get any stories from Medjugorje Today, they have now gone on "subscription only". We will



keep trying, and hopefully the stories will come through other avenues.

I hope you enjoy the story of Claude Newman page 10 – 12, I know it is for someone out there as The Lord definitely wanted it in the magazine.

As I sit here, I am again thinking how quickly Christmas and New Year seem to come round each year. Maybe we are just too busy, or maybe life is too short.

May you all have a very blessed Christmas and a happy New Year, and May the Lord Bless you and keep you, may The Lord shine His face on you and give you peace.

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 3592087

Take Time to be Aware

Edward Hays, *A Pilgrim's Almanac*, p. 196

"Take time to be aware that in the very midst of our busy preparations for the celebration of Christ's birth in ancient Bethlehem, Christ is reborn in the Bethlehems of our homes and daily lives. Take time, slow down, be still, be awake to the Divine Mystery that looks so common and so ordinary yet is wondrously present.

"An old abbot was fond of saying, 'The devil is always the most active on the highest feast days.'

"The supreme trick of Old Scratch is to have us so busy decorating, preparing food, practicing music and cleaning in preparation for the feast of Christmas that we actually miss the coming of Christ. Hurt feelings, anger, impatience, injured egos—the list of clouds that busyness creates to blind us to the birth can be long, but it is familiar to us all."

Children of Medjugorje

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

On Aug. 2, 2014, Mirjana received her monthly apparition at the Blue Cross surrounded by a large crowd. After the apparition, she gave the following message:

"Dear children, the reason that I am with you, my mission, is to help the 'good' to win, even though this does not seem possible to you now. I know that you do not understand many things as I also did not understand everything, everything that my Son explained to me while He was growing up alongside me - but I believed Him and followed Him. I ask this of you also, to believe me and to follow me. However, my children, to follow me means to love my Son above everything, to love Him in every person without making differences. For you to be able to do this, I call you anew to renunciation, prayer and fasting. I am calling for the Eucharist to be the life of your soul. I am calling you to be my apostles of light who will spread love and mercy through the world. My children, your life is only a blink in contrast to Eternal Life. And when you come before my Son, in your hearts, He will see how much love you had. In order to spread love in the right way, I am asking my Son, through love, to grant you unity through Him, unity among you, unity between you and your shepherds. Through them my Son always gives Himself to you anew and renews your soul. Do not forget this. Thank you."

The Youth Festival was extremely refreshing!

The new pastor, Fr Marinko, organized it more like a retreat this year, so it was very deep, prayerful, and joyful. All the details are available on YouTube, or other media, but in this newsletter I'd like to share a very powerful story that Fr. Danko told us during his homily on July 30th, the day before the festival started. There were already many youth present to hear it:

"There is an old Christian legend about a rich and famous lady that spent her life seeking entertainment and living in luxury; but as she got older, she began to pray and think about Eternal Life and the Kingdom of God. She sincerely thought that she would have a wonderful place there. She was convinced that a very powerful and rich person on earth would also be powerful and rich in Heaven. So God decided to show her in what way she would truly achieve greater joy in Heaven. He spoke to her in a dream, and her Guardian Angel offered to take her to Heaven to see what is awaiting the blessed ones who go there. Of course, she agreed. When they arrived, they took a walk through a beautiful valley of flowers, and on both sides were immense palaces, each one more beautiful than the next.

"To whom do these homes belong?" She asked the Angel. "To various people who were pleasing to God," he said. And he began to recite their names. Soon the two came to a place that was just being built. Many Angels were working really hard.

"To whom will this palace go?" She asked, as she looked at the beautiful home that was just being finished. "It will be your neighbour's palace," the Angel responded. "What? It will be my neighbour's - that poor woman with so many miserable children?" "Yes," he assured her. "This is the palace for her!"

Then she saw a really modest house, built with very poor materials. "Whose is this?" She asked. "It is yours," said the Angel. "How is that possible?" She was shocked! The Angel said, "You see, here they are building this modest house with the materials that they received from you, and they are very earthly. The one who sends us building materials of Heavenly weight - the gold that comes from prayer, pearls that come from good deeds, marble made of much suffering and penance - the angels build that person a palace made of that! Your neighbour sent us many of these materials with her hard life, which was pleasing to God. That is why she will have such a beautiful palace here. What you sent us was enough for this little plastic house."

After the dream, the lady woke up decided to send more precious materials to Heaven by helping others so that she too would receive a worthy place in the company of all saints!"

Now this story, even though it's just a legend, feels so real! Our Lady said in a message, "Dear Children, do not forget that the goal of your life is Heaven! But you are getting lost in material things, Satan is pushing you astray through modernism." So, let us take advantage of this time of rest during summer to stop, suspend for a while the vicious circle of our activities and think: 'Where do I want to spend my Eternal Life? What direction should I choose now to make sure I am on the right track, the track that leads to Heaven, and not on another way that the world is offering me, that looks easier at first, but which will lead me to the wrong place?' The youth festival was a tremendous time for all of us. We were able to re-focus on the true meaning of our life on earth, and stop losing time in petty things. For many of them, thank God, it was the opportunity of a turning point. Our Lady is indeed preparing her special team of apostles for the new time coming! Beautiful!

As we celebrate the Mother of God today, I'd like to ponder with you this magnificent pearl for contemplation called "The Dream of the Lord" that I received from a friend.

The Blessed Virgin Mary, the Immaculate One, is the finest creature that God ever created. She is His

masterpiece.

Once, the Archangel Gabriel shared this story with a young shepherd about how God prepared His Mother: "Many centuries ago, long before the universe was created, Adonai (the Lord) wanted to create the finest of all of His works. It seemed to be such an easy work for God, and indeed it was. Among all creatures, there was one who would be the most perfect; and shaped whenever He desired. He wanted to make her so beautiful that it would not be possible to improve her at all. Even He himself would not be capable of making His "work" better. That is how when the Father, Son and Holy Spirit met (as they always did) they decided unanimously to complete her creation by resolving that she would always be intimately related to all three Divine Persons, and she would receive from Them all of Adonai's beauty and perfection. She would express all of Their traits at the same time, like the most pure mirror. 'I will be her Spouse,' said the Holy Spirit. 'I will make her holy from the beginning of her being. I will conceive in her womb with My presence and she will always be filled with Me and my gifts. She will be Immaculate and full of grace, as only the Spouse of God could be.' 'I will be her Son,' added the Word. 'I will receive her flesh, blood, gestures, and gentleness. I will mold her kisses in a divine way, her gaze and hands will nurture me. Everything of hers will be Divine, for it will be mine.' 'She will be My dearest Daughter,' said the Father. 'She will stand before My eyes and with My gaze I will make her beautiful and I will not be able to stop looking at her, all out of the great love I will have for her.' That is what the Three of them said. We, angels, who are before God all the time, were listening in amazement, not realizing what kind of angels Adonai would want to create, as He was describing such a wonderful creature. Finally, when Adonai started to dream about the one who was to become His Mother, His Daughter, and His Spouse, we all understood. When He thought about her eyes, He created the sea; thinking about her smile, he filled the flowers with petals; when He missed her gentleness, the doves were born. Since the beginning of the world, He made something of Mary in every woman. (It is a pity that some of them destroy that!)

You already know that jealousy does not exist in Heaven. After the Lord questioned us, and Satan fell from above, we never had that strange problem. We were all very happy. And, do you know what He called Mary? He called her "the Lord's dream". Until the day when the Holy Virgin was born, God told us her name: Full of Grace. That is her name from eternity; that is how I greeted her in her house of Nazareth."

Dearest Mother, carried by the angels into Heaven in the most glorious way, please remember us, sinners, who are striving so hard to follow in your footsteps! Please help us keep our hand in your hand! Lead us surely to Heaven where the Blessed ones constantly praise your beauty!

On September 2, 2014, Mirjana received her monthly apparition at the Blue Cross, surrounded by a large crowd. After the apparition, she gave the following message:

"Dear children, I, your mother, am coming anew among you out of love which has no end, from endless love of the endless Heavenly Father. And as I am looking into your hearts I see that many of you accept me as a mother and, with sincere and pure hearts, you desire to be my apostles. But, I am also the mother of those of you who do not accept me and who, in the hardness of your hearts, do not desire to come to know the love of my Son. And you do not know how much my heart suffers and how much I pray to my Son for you. I pray to Him to heal your souls because He can do so. I pray to Him to illuminate you with the miracle of the Holy Spirit so that you may stop, always anew, betraying, cursing and wounding Him. With all my heart I pray for you to understand that only my Son is the salvation and the light of the world. And you, my children, my dear apostles, always carry my Son in your hearts and thoughts. In this way you are carrying love. All those who do not know Him will recognize Him in your love. I am always beside you. In a special way I am beside your shepherds because my Son has called them to lead you on the way to eternity. Thank you, my apostles, for your sacrifice and love."

A heavy bag! A few days ago, during the evening Mass, a priest recounted the following parable in his homily: A man came home from work one day and found a huge sack of potatoes near the door of his house, blocking the entrance. His little boy was there, happy to welcome his daddy home, but the sack was barring the way and it was much bigger than the child. The father said to the child, "Move the sack so that we can open the door properly!" The little fellow tried to move the sack, but was unable to. "I can't daddy, it's too heavy!" "Yes, you can!" his father replied, "Try again to shift it!" The child tried again, but couldn't get the enormous sack to budge even a millimeter. "I can't daddy," he protested yet again. "Yes, you can!" the father insisted. The child made one last attempt, putting all his weight to the sack, but in vain!

"Daddy, I tried with all my strength, I really did everything I could, but the sack is too heavy for me!" "No, my boy, you haven't done everything you can!" The child looked at his father, puzzled. "You haven't done everything you can," the father explained, "You didn't call on me for help!" The child understood then. He had allowed his true possibilities to slip by; the thought hadn't crossed his mind that having a father multiplied his capabilities. Having a father meant that he could rise above himself and not be checked by his own limitations any more. Having a father gives us wings! This parable is very timely today, when

man tries to live of his own strength, without calling on God's help. He labours with all his strength and invests all his natural capacities in building a world to his liking, and he perceives with anguish that happiness eludes him and that this world is falling apart. The mountain of problems he encounters is too big for him to handle. And all along the Heavenly Father is there, waiting for his child to turn to Him, instead of being oblivious of God, or even worse, rejecting Him from his life! "You work a lot," the Virgin Mary tells us, "But without God's blessing!" Why is it that we live below our means and go without the powerful riches that God offers us? We are made for the infinite and we carry a deep nostalgia for it within us! The hour has come to welcome the infinite love of the Infinite Heavenly Father, according to Our Lady's expression in the message above.

Why not Six Modern Beatitudes?

Today we celebrate the Exaltation of the Cross of Our Lord, the One who has taught us the true way of happiness, and who has revolutionized our conceptions. If Jesus was walking among us today, we could imagine that He might say the following:

Blessed are you when you fail, because in your failure you discover your real need of me.

Blessed are you when you are in trouble, because your trouble has opened your ears to hear my message.

Blessed are you when you are suffering temptation, because then your weakness comes home to you, and you are willing to accept the offer of my strength.

Blessed are you when you are lonely, or afflicted, or rejected, for then you realize that true communion is only possible with me, and in me, with other people.

Blessed are you when you love and so are vulnerable; I too was wounded because I loved.

Blessed are you when you meet with difficulties when trying to follow me; this is a sign that you are on the right path. (*Transmitted by Colin Beatty*)

On Friday September 12, at 10pm, Ivan received Our Lady's apparition at the Blue Cross, the last one before going home to the USA. Our Lady appeared very happy and joyful. After blessing us, she prayed over us at length with her hands extended. She then prayed for a long time for peace in the world and for vocations in the Church. Let us join her in her motherly intercession, with our own prayers and offerings. She is so much in need of our prayer. How many times has she said: "Less talk and more prayer"?

A nice thing to know is that, sometimes during her apparitions to the visionaries, Our Lady prays out loud in her mother tongue, especially on Thursdays when priests are present at the apparition at Ivan's place, or when pilgrims with Jewish roots are present.

On September 3rd Vicka celebrated her 50th birthday! As always, Our Lady gave her a kiss, and Vicka was radiant with joy! Let's pray for Vicka, who prays so much for us! May the next fifty years be as fruitful as the first fifty! Until now, when receiving the pilgrims, Vicka would pray silently for a full 20 mins over the crowd. But recently, she prayed for an hour, which has never happened before! It was very powerful. No one moved or spoke, you could have heard a pin drop. This new initiative of Vicka's is a notable sign that Our Lady is giving us to better understand the urgency of prayer today.

On October 2, 2014, Mirjana received her monthly apparition at the Blue Cross, surrounded by a large crowd. After the apparition, she gave the following message:

"Dear children, with motherly love I implore you, love one another. May there be in your hearts, as my Son desired from the very beginning, love for the Heavenly Father and for your neighbour in the first place - above everything of this world. My dear children, do you not recognise the signs of the times? Do you not recognise that all of this that is around you, all that is happening, is because there is no love? Comprehend that salvation is in true values. Accept the might of the Heavenly Father, love him and honour him. Walk in the footsteps of my Son. You, my children, my dear apostles, you are always gathering around me anew, because you are thirsty. You thirst for peace, love and happiness. Drink out of my hands. My hands are offering to you my Son who is the spring of clear water. He will bring your faith back to life and purify your hearts, because my Son loves pure hearts and pure hearts love my Son. Only pure hearts are humble and have firm faith. I ask for such hearts of you, my children. My Son told me that I am the mother of the entire world. I ask of those of you who accept me as such to help me, with your life, prayer and sacrifice, for all of my children to accept me as a mother-so that I may lead them to the spring of the clear water. Thank you. My dear children, as your shepherds offer you the Body of my Son with their blessed hands, always in your hearts give thanks to my Son for the Sacrifice and for the shepherds that he always gives you anew."

The Synod in Rome. To save the Family, Mary has been giving us, for 33 years, again and again the surest remedies! She tells us, "Satan wants, as never before, to destroy your families." Satan's first plan is to destroy the family (the second is the destruction of the Church). She also says, "Dear children, prayer in the family is THE remedy to heal today's world." Mary invites us to pray at home every day together with members of the family. Why is prayer in the family so powerful? Jesus tells us in the Gospel, "When two or three are gathered in my name, I am in their midst." If we pray every day together at home, Jesus ends up living with us and he

accomplishes his divine work of restoration among us. With him, so many impossible situations would be avoided, so many tears, so many tragedies, so many divorces and despair! Mary tells us, "The goal of prayer in the family is to have Jesus arrive in the midst." The Word of God is LIFE and if we want to have life in our families real Life, the one that gives birth to love, respect, forgiveness and peace, let us welcome the Giver of Life into the centre of our families! "Dear children, put my Son Jesus at the first place in your families, then you will have a safe pathway with Him!" That's the key to "Security," that which we all search for and which is so cruelly missing in our families. "Dear children, you search for happiness where it is lost." True happiness has a first name: Jesus. We can't make it without Him nor without prayer, haven't we already tried that? I don't know what the conclusions of the Synod will be. I pray that our society and the whole Church put God in his rightful place, the 1st place, so that no time is wasted with makeshift solutions. "Renew prayer in the family, have children pray with their parents, parents with their children, and thus united in prayer, Satan will be powerless against you."

Doudou! One of our dearest brothers just left us, Jean-François Callens, called Doudou, after a very painful cancer. An airplane pilot before joining my community of the Beatitudes, he was consumed with the fire of the Word of God, and he was a master of evangelization. He had prepared a message for his friends, to be read at the time of his birth in Heaven, and I think this letter will touch each one of you. This is it:

"Hello, my friends! I just 'landed' in Heaven! (At 22:33, Oct. 14.) If I tried to make my Paul's words to Timothy, 'I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith', (2 Tim 4.7), yet do not stop praying for me, I can still be in quarantine, and then you'll make efficient my intercession work in your favour (COCC 958). And I promise you, I will do all I can for each one of you! I entrust to you my Evelyne (his wife), a true widow, without children in this world, without parents, reminding you that the widow's tears run down God's cheeks and that her cry overwhelms the one who causes them (Eccl 35.15) I translated, I did not find the passage in my NRSV Bible. I deeply and sincerely ask forgiveness from everyone, for not having corresponded to the one I should have been, considering the graces I did not use. Put that on the account of incompetence and temper, and not on the deliberate intention to hurt anyone. I left with no debt towards any of you. But if unknowingly I have any debt, please remit it for the love of God. And now real life begins, at last! Rejoice for me! I will give a kiss to Mary for you, very soon I hope! I do not say, 'See you soon', you might become afraid! But if you knew... A Dieu! JFC (Doudou)

All Souls' Day is coming. Rather than pre- occupy ourselves with pumpkins, witches' stories, or other fictitious characters that introduce subtle viruses in children's little hearts, let's make these hearts vibrate with the lives of saints through CDs, movies, comics, etc. and draw on the magnificent treasures the Church offers us. Children love them. Saints are real, strong and exciting!

Through their examples, they are extraordinary springboards to plunge into the heart of God and to help us shape our own holiness, the one the Creator has been dreaming of all eternity for us. Mary told us that "God gave us the gift of sainthood." She does not say, "He will give it to you", in the future. No, the gift has already been made, we have to take it. There are two ways of receiving a gift: (1) I receive a box of chocolates, I say 'thank you', then forget about them and leave them in a cupboard. (2) I receive the box of chocolates, I say 'thank you', and I eat the chocolates. In both cases, I received the present, but only in the second case do I use it. It is the same with holiness, we received the gift at the moment of our conception, but what do we do with it?

St. Therese, the Little Flower, gives us an example that illustrates her choice of holiness in her daily life. In her Carmelite convent, there was a nun who irritated her about everything, and for whom she felt a deep natural antipathy. But Therese had chosen the path of holiness. So she decided to try out true charity towards the nun, charity that does not consist in feelings but in works. She writes, "I applied myself to doing for this nun what I would have done for the person I love the most. Each time I met her, I prayed to God for her, offering him all her virtues and merits. Not only did I pray a lot for the person who caused me so many internal struggles, but I tried to help her as often as I could, and when I was tempted to answer her back in an unpleasant way, I was content with giving her my most friendly smile, and I tried to change the conversation.

Also, during the working hours, since I had contact with that nun at work, I would run away like a deserter whenever my struggles became too violent. As she was quite unaware of what I felt for her, she never suspected the reasons for my behaviour and she remained convinced that I found her character pleasant.

One day during a recess, looking very happy, she said to me, "Would you please tell me, Sister Therese of the Infant Jesus, what attracts you so much to me? Every time you look at me, I see you smile." What attracted me was Jesus hidden at the depth of her soul... Jesus who makes the bitterest things sweet." (Adapted from Little Flower's Autobiography, *Story of a Soul*)

Alan Ames – Listen to the Truth

Many people search for the truth and cannot seem to find it. Many are blinded by the deceptions, distortions and deceptions of the world, governments and media. People often prefer to accept anything they are told by those in authority or with influence as truth when often it is not. For Catholics the truth should be obvious it is before them in their faith...the truth is Jesus, The Lord, and all truth resides in Him and with Him. While it may be difficult to see and understand this at times if a person follows their Catholic faith the truth will become clearer and the deceptions apparent.

To listen to the world before The Lord and His Catholic Church is truly foolish but many have been blinded into putting the deceit of evil in the world before the truth of God. Some clear examples are:

a) It was pronounced by many in the world that living together in trial relationships would reduce the amount of divorces. The Church said it was false and that this would affect society and relationships badly. Now the divorce rate skyrockets and more and more families fall apart and the number of children growing up suffering because of this grows...the world was wrong!

b) The so-called wise of the world who think there is overpopulation have suggested that having less children will improve marriages because there will be more time for the husband and wife to spend together and enjoy each other's company. The Church teaches it is important to have children if it is the will of God and that happiness can be found within families of all sizes. The increasing divorce rate is a result of married couples listening to the world... the world was wrong!

c) Pro-contraception lobbies and governments declared contraception would reduce abortions. The Church said contraception is wrong and would not reduce abortions. That contraception would devalue love between people and lead to more promiscuity. Abortions have escalated to horrific numbers as mankind slaughters its babies and promiscuity abounds...the world was wrong!

It is not only with these issues of morality that people are deceived, I remember when I lived in England in the seventies and there was an oil crisis, it was boldly declared by governments around the world that oil would run out within 20-30 years. We all listened and believed it and the governments increased the price of fuel saying it was to reduce usage and save the dwindling supply of oil. How foolish we were! Or when we were told that when the computer age arrives people will have more time for leisure. No mention of the jobs that would be lost or people earning less so some need to have 2 jobs to survive and of course so many work harder and longer than ever, if they can find work.

Deceit is rampant in the world and sadly many people just listen to what they are told and accept it as truth without even questioning what they are told. The fruit of this has been lives lost in wars, societies changing for the worse, people paying more for goods and a growing apathy among people. Sometimes in the media I see they state one thing as truth then a short while later state the opposite as truth. I find it hard to believe what I read in newspapers or see on the news because listening carefully to what they say it is clear to see the agenda they have and often the truth is not on the agenda.

The truth when lived to builds lives and societies, increases happiness and gives people a reason for hope. This is what Jesus, Our Lord does, for He is the truth and we must live to His truth and put that before all else if we want the world to improve. We should listen to the words of the Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church before listening to the words of the world, for the truth of the Church is the truth of Christ. Will we do that, I wonder? Because so many prefer to ignore the Church and do not recognise the cost of doing that. To be a true follower of Christ, He must be first in all things and we must listen to Him above all others recognising when the Church speaks it is Christ, Himself speaking to us through the Church.

The foolish put the world first...the wise put God first. Be wise.

<http://alanames.org/en/letter-listen-to-the-truth.htm>

I am sure that when Jesus went about driving out demons, and curing the sick, and gaining a following, He attracted many who thought that they could just simply follow Him and the same popularity would occur for them. Jesus, however, tells them that following Him is not going to be all that easy. He tells them that it is going to involve nights without a pillow to sleep on, or days when they cannot attend to the needs of their family. Thus, it is going to involve a lot of sacrifice on their part. We too in our own way are faced with the challenge of following Jesus. We may not be without a place to sleep, or the need to let go of our family, but sooner or later, it is going to cost us whatever gives us security or comfort, and at that time we are going to have to make a decision whether we will continue to follow Christ, or choose a more secure, or more comfortable alternative. Whether we choose to follow Christ or not, we would have to admit that He did not promise us that following Him would be easy.

- Fr. George Mangiaracina, OCD | email: doxajesus@gmail.com

The miraculous story of Claude Newman and his conversion through the intercession of the Virgin Mary

The remarkable true story of the miraculous intercession of the Virgin Mary in 1944 to prisoner Claude Newman of Mississippi -The Virgin Mary appears in a series of visions through the intercession of the Miraculous Medal and converts two men on death row. By: Glenn Dallaire

Claude Newman was an African American man who was born on December 1, 1923 to Willie and Floretta (Young) Newman in Stuttgart, Arkansas. In 1928, Claude's father Willie takes Claude and his older brother away from their mother for unknown reasons, and they are brought to their grandmother, Ellen Newman, of Bovina, Warren County, Mississippi. In 1939, Claude's beloved grandmother, Ellen Newman, marries a man named Sid Cook. Soon Sid becomes sexually abusive toward Ellen, which deeply angers Claude. In 1940, Claude works as a farmhand on Ceres Plantation in Bovina, Mississippi. The plantation is owned by a wealthy landowner named U.G. Flowers, and Sid Cook was born and raised on this plantation. One biographer also has Claude getting married also in 1940 at age 17 to a young woman of the same age. On Dec.19, 1942, Claude is apparently still very angered by Sid's abusive treatment towards his grandmother Ellen, and egged on by dominant friend named Elbert Harris, Claude lies in waiting at Sid Cook's house (Sid Cook and Ellen Newman have since separated). Claude shoots Sid as he enters, killing him, and takes his money, then flees to his mothers house in Arkansas, arriving on Dec 20th.

Claude is arrested and sent to prison on death row In January 1943, Claude is apprehended in Arkansas and is returned to Vicksburg, Mississippi and makes a coerced confession on Jan. 13. Despite protests of Claude's lawyer Harry K. Murray, his confession is admitted as evidence, and he is found guilty by jury, and is initially sentenced to die in the electric chair on May 14, 1943. Later an appeal to retry the case is rejected by State Attorney General and he is rescheduled to be executed on January 20, 1944. Claude receives the Miraculous Medal of the Blessed Virgin Mary The majority of the information that will now be presented comes from a tape recording of a radio show interview of Father O'Leary- a priest who came to know Claude very well during Claude's imprisonment. While Claude was in jail awaiting execution, he shared a cell-block with four other prisoners. One night, the five men were sitting around talking and eventually the conversation ran out. During this time, Claude noticed a medal on a string around one of the other prisoner's neck. Curious, he asked the other prisoner what the medal was. The young prisoner was a Catholic, but he apparently did not know (or did not want to talk) about the medal, and seemingly embarrassed, he appeared angry and suddenly took the medal off from around his own neck and threw it on the floor at Claude's feet with a curse and a cuss, telling him to "take the thing". Claude picked up the medal, and after looking it over, he placed it around his own neck, although he had no idea whose image it was on the medal; to him it was simply a trinket, but for some reason he felt attracted to it, and wanted to wear it.

The Blessed Virgin Mary appears to Claude in a vision (The Icon to the left is of "Mary the Teacher" © Copyright 2004 by Brother Claude Lane, OSB, Mount Angel Abbey. This beautiful icon is a representation of the amazing facts below. Click here for more info about Brother Claude's iconography.) During the night while sleeping on top of his cot, he was awakened with a touch upon his wrist. Awakening with a start, there stood, as Claude told Father O'Leary afterwards, 'the most beautiful Woman that God ever Created'. At first he was quite frightened, not knowing what to make of this extraordinary beautiful glowing Woman. The Lady soon calmed Claude down, and then said to him, "If you would like Me to be your Mother, and you would like to be My child, send for a priest of the Catholic Church." And after saying these words, She suddenly disappeared.

Excited, Claude immediately started to yell "a ghost, a ghost", and started screaming that he wanted a Catholic priest. Father Robert O'Leary SVD (1911-1984), the priest who tells the story, was called first thing the next morning. Upon arrival he went to see Claude who told him of what had happened the night before. Deeply impressed by the events, Claude, along with the other four men in his cell-block, asked for religious instruction in the Catholic faith. Claude and some of the other prisoners receive instruction in the Catholic faith

Father O'Leary returned to the prison the next day to begin instruction for the prisoners. It was then that the priest learned that Claude Newman could neither read nor write at all. The only way he could tell if a book was right-side-up was if the book contained a picture. Claude told him that he had never been to school, and Father O'Leary soon discovered that his ignorance of religion was even more profound. He knew practically nothing about religion or the Christian faith. He knew that there was a God, but he did not know that Jesus was God. And so Claude began receiving instructions, and the other prisoners helped him with his studies. After a few days, two of the religious Sisters from Father O'Leary's parish-school obtained permission from the warden to come to the prison. They wanted to meet Claude and hear his remarkable story, and they also wanted to visit the women in the prison. Soon, on another floor of the prison, the Sisters began to teach some of the women-prisoners the catechism as well. A heavenly lesson about Confession

Several weeks passed, and it came time when Father O'Leary was going to give instructions about the Sacrament of Confession. The Sisters too sat in on the class. The priest said to the prisoners, "Ok boys, today I'm going to teach you about the Sacrament of Confession." Claude said, "Oh, I know about that! The Lady told me that when we go to

confession we are kneeling down not before a priest, but we're kneeling down by the Cross of Her Son. And that when we are truly sorry for our sins, and we confess our sins, the Blood He shed flows down over us and washes us free from all sins." Hearing Claude say this, Father O'Leary and the Sisters sat stunned with their mouths wide open. Claude thought they were angry and said, "Oh don't be angry, don't be angry, I didn't mean to blurt it out." The priest said, "We're not angry Claude. We are just surprised. You have seen Her again?" Claude replied, "Come around the cell-block away from the others." Proof that the Blessed Virgin Mary was appearing to Claude When they were alone, Claude said to the priest, "She told me that if you doubted me or showed hesitancy, I was to remind you that lying in a ditch in Holland in 1940, you made a vow to Her which She's still waiting for you to keep." And, Father O'Leary recalls, "Claude then told me precisely what the vow was."

Claude's revelation absolutely convinced Father O'Leary that Claude was telling the truth about his visions of Our Lady. The promise Fr. O'Leary made to Our Lady in 1940 from a ditch in Holland (the proof Claude gave the priest that Our Lady really was appearing to him) was this: that when he could, he would build a church in honour of Our Lady's Immaculate Conception. He did just that in 1947. He had been transferred to Clarksdale, Mississippi in 1945 when a group African American Catholic laymen asked to have a church built there. The Bishop of Natchez, Mississippi had been sent \$5000 by Archbishop Cushing of Boston for the "Negro missions." The Bishop and Father O'Leary commissioned the church of the Immaculate Conception to be built, and it is still there today (photo left) Father O'Leary and Clark then returned to the catechism class on Confession. And Claude kept telling the other prisoners, "You should not be afraid to go to confession. You're really telling God your sins, not the priest" Then Claude said, "You know, the Lady said that Confession is something like a telephone. We talk through the priest to God, and God talks back to us through the priest."

A heavenly lesson about Holy Communion. About a week later, Father O'Leary was preparing to teach the class about the Blessed Sacrament. The Sisters were again present for this lesson too. Claude indicated that the Lady had also taught him about the Eucharist, and he asked if he could tell the priest what She said. Fr. O'Leary agreed immediately. Claude related, "The Lady told me that in Communion, I will only see what looks like a piece of bread. But She told me that It is really and truly Her Son, and that He will be with me just as He was with Her before He was born in Bethlehem. She told me that I should spend my time like She did during Her lifetime with Him-- in loving Him, adoring Him, thanking Him, praising Him and asking Him for blessings. I shouldn't be distracted or bothered by anybody else or anything else, but I should spend those few minutes in my thoughts alone with Him."

Claude is received into the Catholic church and scheduled to be executed. As the weeks progressed, eventually they finished the catechism instructions and Claude and the other prisoners were received into the Catholic Church. The St. Mary's parish (Vicksburg, MI) baptismal log has recorded his baptism on January 16, 1944. Fr. O'Leary officiated and a young nun, Sr. Bena Henken, served as his godmother. Soon afterwards the time came for Claude to be executed. He was to be executed at five minutes after twelve, midnight, on January 20, 1944.

The sheriff, named Williamson, asked him, "Claude, you have the privilege of a last request. What do you want?" "Well," said Claude, "all of my friends are all shook up. The jailer is all shook up. But you don't understand. I'm not going to die; only this body. I'm going to be with Her. So, then I would like to have a party" "What do you mean?" asked the sheriff. "A party!" said Claude. "Will you give Father O'Leary permission to bring in some cakes and ice cream and will you allow the prisoners on the second floor to be freed in the main room so that we can all be together and have a party?" "Somebody might attack Father," cautioned the warden. Claude turned to the men who were standing by and said, "Oh no they won't, right fellas?" The warden consented and posted additional guards for the party. So, Father O'Leary visited a wealthy patron of the parish, and she generously supplied the ice cream and cake, and everyone enjoyed the party. Afterwards, because Claude had requested it, they made a Holy Hour, praying especially for Claude and for all of their souls. Fr. O'Leary brought prayer books from the Church, and they all said together the Stations of the Cross, and made a Holy Hour, without the Blessed Sacrament.

As the time neared for Claude's execution, the men were put back in their cells. The priest then went to the chapel to get the Blessed Sacrament so that he could give Claude Holy Communion in the moment before his execution. Father O'Leary returned to Claude's cell. Claude knelt on one side of the bars, the priest knelt on the other, and they prayed together as the clock ticked toward Claude's execution.

A two week stay of execution is granted Fifteen minutes before the execution, sheriff Williamson came running up the stairs shouting, "Reprieve, Reprieve, the Governor has given a two-week reprieve!" Claude had not been aware that the sheriff and the District Attorney were trying to get a stay of execution for Claude to save his life. But when Claude found out, he started to cry. The priest and the sheriff assumed Claude's reaction was that of joy because he was not going to be executed. However Claude said, "But you don't understand! If you ever saw Her face, and looked into Her eyes, you wouldn't want to live another day!" Claude then continued, "What have I done wrong these past weeks that God would refuse me my going home?" Father O'Leary then testified that Claude sobbed as one who was completely broken hearted. Bewildered, the sheriff then left the room. The priest remained and Claude eventually quieted down, then Father O'Leary gave Claude Holy Communion. Afterwards Claude said, "Why Father? Why must I still remain here for two weeks?"

Claude generously sacrifices himself in an offering for a fellow prisoner. Father O'Leary then had a sudden inspiration. He reminded Claude about James Hughs, a white prisoner in the same jail who hated Claude intensely. This prisoner had led a horribly immoral life, and like Claude he too was sentenced to be executed for murder. James was raised a Catholic, but now he was a reprobate, and rejected God and all things Christian. Father O'Leary then said "Maybe Our Blessed Mother wants you to offer this denial of being with Her for his conversion." And the priest continued, "Why don't you offer to God every moment that you are separated from your heavenly Mother for this prisoner, so that he will not be separated from God for all eternity." Claude thought for a moment, then agreed, and he asked Father O'Leary to teach him the words to make the offering. Father O'Leary complied, and he later testified that from that moment on the only two people on earth who knew about this personal offering were Claude and himself, because it was a private matter between God, the Blessed Mother, Claude and himself. A few hours later (still on the morning after his reprieve of execution) Fr. O'Leary came once again to visit Claude, and Claude said to the priest, "James hated me before, but oh Father, how he hates me now!" (This was because James had heard about Claude's reprieve and was jealous) To encourage him the good priest said, "Well, perhaps that's a good sign.

Claude's execution During his two weeks reprieve, Claude generously offered his sacrifice and prayers for his fellow prisoner, the reprobate James Hughs . Two weeks later, Claude was finally put to death by the electric chair on Feb.4, 1944. Concerning Claude's holy death Father O'Leary testified: "I've never seen anyone go to his death as joyfully and happily. Even the official witnesses and the newspaper reporters were amazed. They said they couldn't understand how anyone could go and sit in the electric chair while at the same time actually beaming with happiness."

Claude's death notice was printed in the Vicksburg Evening News on the day of his execution Feb. 4, 1944 (see photo left). His last words to Father O'Leary were, "Father, I will remember you. And whenever you have a request, ask me, and I will ask Her." The miraculous conversion & execution of prisoner James Hughs Three months later, on May 19, 1944, the white man named James Hughs--the who Claude had offered his sacrifice for, was to be executed. Father O'Leary said, "This man was the filthiest, most immoral person I had ever come across. His hatred for God and for everything spiritual defied description." He would not allow a priest or any clergyman in his cell. Just before his execution, the county doctor pleaded with him to at least kneel down and say the "Our Father" before the sheriff would come for him. The prisoner spat in the doctor's face. When he was strapped into the electric chair, the sheriff said to him, "If you have something to say, say it now." The condemned man started to blaspheme. All of a sudden he stopped speaking, and his eyes became fixed on the corner of the room, and his face turned to one of absolute horror. Suddenly he screamed in terror--a horrible scream that shocked everyone present.

Turning to the sheriff, he then said, "Sheriff, get me a priest!" Now, Father O'Leary had been in the room because Mississippi law at that time required a clergyman to be present at executions. The priest, however, had hidden himself behind some reporters because the condemned man had threatened to curse God if he saw a clergyman. Upon calling for a priest, Father O'Leary immediately went to the condemned man. The room was cleared of everyone else, and the priest heard the man's confession. The man said he had been a Catholic, but turned away from his religion when he was 18 because of his immoral life. He confessed all of his sins with deep repentance and intense fervour.

While everyone was returning to the room, the sheriff asked the priest, "Father, what made him change his mind?" "I don't know " said Father O'Leary, "I didn't ask him." The sheriff said, "Well, I will never sleep tonight if I don't ask him." The Sheriff went to the condemned man and asked, "Son, what changed your mind?" The prisoner responded, "Remember that black man Claude -- the one whom I hated so much? Well he's standing there [and he pointed], over in that corner. And behind him with one hand on each shoulder is the Blessed Virgin Mary. And Claude said to me, 'I offered my death in union with Christ on the Cross for your salvation. She has obtained for you this gift of seeing your place in Hell if you do not repent.' I have been shown my place in Hell, and that's why I screamed." James Hughs was executed as scheduled, but the heavenly appearance of our Blessed Mother with Claude Newman and the subsequent vision of hell had instantly converted his soul in the last moments of his life. With the help of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Father O'Leary had taught Claude to unite himself with the suffering of Jesus by offering his own sufferings to Him, just as we all can do for others, and Claude's suffering helped to pay the price for James' remarkable last minute conversion and repentance. Therefore we must never under-estimate the value of our suffering joined with that of Jesus Christ's, and also the power and loving intercession of Our Blessed Mother in heaven.

O' Mary conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to Thee!

Behold Jesus crucified! Behold His wounds received for love of you! His whole appearance betokens love. His head is bent to kiss you. His arms are extended to embrace you. His heart is open to receive you. Oh, what love! Jesus dies on the Cross to preserve you from eternal death.

- Saint Francis of Assisi (1181-1226), Founder of the Franciscans, Feast day October 4

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Loving Father, Saint Frumentius was called the Apostle of Ethiopia because, as a bishop, he was sent there to spread the Faith. However, he was captured and taken to the king and made a member of his court. He realized that having such access to the king gave him a better opportunity to introduce Christianity into the country. I ask him to intercede for me whenever my plans go astray. Help me to set aside my own agenda and to welcome the unexpected. Remind me when I am surprised or frustrated that You, O Lord, are really the one in charge, and I can always trust in Your plans. Saint Frumentius, pray for me. Amen.

- Saint Frumentius (died c. 383), Bishop, Feast day October 27

A St. Nicholas' Note Edward Hays, *A Pilgrim's Almanac* (adapted)

"It is fitting that the feast of St. Nicholas comes at the beginning of Advent and the beginning of the shopper's season. As the patron saint of shoppers he proclaims, 'Keep it simple!' Keep it simple enough to fit in a shoe or a stocking.

"One gift that could fit in a...shoe, or in a stocking hanging on the fireplace, is a note that speaks of one of our most precious gifts, the gift of time. Such a St. Nicholas note might read: 'The gift I give to you is half an hour of quality conversation each night right after the dishes are done.' Or, 'The gift I give to you is one Saturday a month to be with you and do whatever you want to do.' We can appreciate the value of such a gift if we keep in mind that according to a recent survey, the average married couple in America has only 30 minutes a week of communication outside of exchanges that take place at the dinner table, and between parent and child is only 14 minutes. As you can see, the possibilities are almost unlimited for these St. Nicholas shoe gifts.

"Come, St. Nicholas, patron of shoppers and gift-seekers, and make Christmas this year fun, creative and love-filled."

How the Search for Truth Led Me from Atheism to Catholicism

By Jennifer Fulwiler is a writer from Austin, Texas who converted to Catholicism after a life of atheism.

One thing I could never get on the same page with my fellow atheists about was the idea of meaning. The other atheists I knew seemed to feel like life was full of purpose despite the fact that we're all nothing more than chemical reactions. I could never get there. In fact, I thought that whole line of thinking was unscientific, and more than a little intellectually dishonest. If everything that we call heroism and glory, and all the significance of all great human achievements, can be reduced to some neurons firing in the human brain, then it's all destined to be extinguished at death. And considering that the entire span of homo sapiens' existence on earth wouldn't even amount to a blip on the radar screen of a 5-billion-year-old universe, it seemed silly to pretend like the 60-odd-year life of some random organism on one of trillions of planets was something special. (I was a blast at parties.)

By simply living my life, I felt like I was living a lie. I acknowledged the truth that life was meaningless, and yet I kept acting as if my own life had meaning, as if all the hope and love and joy I'd experienced was something real, something more than a mirage produced by the chemicals in my brain. Suicide had crossed my mind -- not because I was depressed in the common sense of the word, simply because it seemed like it was nothing more than speeding up the inevitable. A life multiplied by zero yields the same result, no matter when you do it.

Not knowing what else to do, I followed the well-worn path of people who are trying to run from something that haunts them: I worked too much. I drank too much. I was emotionally fragile. Many of my relationships with other people were toxic. I wrapped myself in a cocoon of distractions, trying to pretend like I didn't know what I knew.

A year after I graduated from college, I met a guy at work named Joe. I was so impressed with him, I didn't think I had much of a chance. He'd grown up poor, raised by a single mother, and had gone on to get degrees from Yale, Columbia and Stanford. People who knew him said he was one of the smartest people they'd ever met. So when we began dating, I was thrilled. Our life together turned out to be even better than I could have imagined: We travelled the world on whims, ate at the finest restaurants, flew first class, and threw epic parties on the roof of his loft downtown. On top of that, both of our careers were taking off, so our future held only more money and more success.

We were a perfect couple. The only thing we didn't see the same way was the issue of religion. A few months after we started dating, it came out that Joe not only believed in God, but considered himself a Christian. I did not understand how someone who was perfectly capable of rational thought could believe in fairy tale stories like those of Christianity. Did he believe in Santa Claus too?

It didn't cause any problems between us, though, since we had the same basic moral code, he didn't practice this bizarre faith of his in any noticeable way, and, mainly, I did not want to think about it. At all. Whenever the subject of God came up, something deep within me recoiled. Not that I had any problem demolishing silly theist ideas -- it had been something of a hobby back in college -- but the subject took me too close to that thing I was trying to forget. I had constructed my entire life around not thinking about it, so I never articulated what it was. It had been so buried by the parties and the socializing and the breathless running from place to place that it was no longer a specific concept, just some dark, cold amorphous knowledge I needed to avoid.

Joe and I married in a theatre in 2003, reciting vows we wrote ourselves, with me wearing a dark purple dress. The plan was that marriage would be just a stepping stone along the path we were already on. But then I discovered I was pregnant, and everything changed. Motherhood caught me completely off guard. I'd grown up as an only child in a culture where nobody I knew had more than two kids living at home. I never had a friend whose mom had a baby during the time of our friendship. And considering that I'd never wanted kids and had some minor medical issues that made me think I probably couldn't have them anyway, I was utterly unprepared for motherhood. The physical, mental and emotional changes I went through after the birth of my son were a hard blow, like a punch to the head that comes out of the blue, and it left me reeling.

This cataclysmic event unearthed all those old thoughts about meaninglessness, and this time there was no re-burying them. Now that I had a child, it felt like my life had more meaning than ever. The dark-haired, blue-eyed baby felt so valuable; my own life was flooded with hope and joy at his presence. But with none of the usual distractions in place, the facts of the matter now descended upon me: There was nothing transcendent about my son's life, my life, or any of the love I felt for him. He was destined for the same fate as the rest of us, to have his entire existence erased upon his inevitable death.

For weeks, I hardly got out of bed. Some combination of severe sleep deprivation and more severe depression left me almost catatonic. But then one morning, as I looked at the baby in the pre-dawn light that filtered in through the window, I felt something new within me. It was something that was not despair, some unfamiliar yet welcome feeling. I peeled back the layers to find that it was doubt: Doubt of my purely materialist worldview, doubt of the truth I had believed since childhood that there is nothing transcendent about the human life.

I considered that in almost every single time and place throughout human history, people have believed in

some kind of spiritual realm. Almost every human society we know of has shared the belief that there is more to life than meets the eye, that what transpires here in the material world somehow reverberates into the eternal. Previously I had assumed that the vast majority of the billions of people who had ever lived were all simply ignorant; now I wondered if maybe I was the one who was missing something.

A few months later, I stumbled across a Christian book. I'd never been in the Religion section of a bookstore, let alone read anything about Christianity. I'd only picked up this book because the author claimed to be a former atheist, and I was curious to see what level of fraud he was. After flipping through the first few pages, I was surprised to find that I believed that he had been an atheist. I read a few more pages, and found his writing to be clear and basically reasonable. Obviously he'd come to the wrong conclusions, but I could respect the fact that he at least attempted to reason his way into his current belief system, rather than basing it on some emotional experience. I found that I couldn't put the book down, and ended up buying it (loudly noting to the cashier that it was a gift for a friend).

A quick internet search showed that the book was widely scorned by atheists, and some of their counter-points to the author's arguments were good. But it was simply not true to say that there was nothing compelling about it. For example, the book pointed out that thousands of Jewish people abandoned the sacred practices that had sustained them through centuries, through all types of persecution, in the years after the death of Jesus of Nazareth. Almost all of Jesus' original followers went to their death rather than recant their statements that they'd seen him rise from the dead. Christianity spread like wildfire in the early centuries, despite the fact that becoming a Christian often meant persecution or even death.

I had never seen Jesus as anything other than a silly fairy tale figure whom people called upon to give a divine thumbs-up to self-serving beliefs; but now I was intrigued by the man as a historical figure. Something happened in first-century Palestine, something so big that it still sends shockwaves down to the present day. And it all cantered around the figure of Jesus Christ. As Joe once pointed out when I asked him why he considered himself a Christian, Christianity is the only one of all the major world religions to be founded by a guy who claimed to be God. That's an easy claim to disprove if it's not true.

One afternoon, shortly after I finished the book, I was caught off guard by a thought: What if it's true? What if there were a God? What if he chose to enter history as a human being? It was the most shattering thought that had ever crossed my mind. Never once in my life, not even as a child, had I considered that a personal God might exist, or that there could be even a shred of truth to any of Christianity's supernatural claims. I quickly came to my senses and admonished myself to stop this silliness. Part of me wondered if I was losing my mind -- what else could explain such a thought?

I wanted to forget all about this embarrassing little incident...but I couldn't. Some strange feeling had risen up within me, that wouldn't let me walk away from this subject. I figured that it must be simple curiosity. All I needed to do was read a bit more about Christianity, then when I was overwhelmed with the obvious flaws in its theology, I could move on. I bought another Christian book, this one called *Mere Christianity* by C.S. Lewis. Unfortunately, this was not going to help me extricate myself from this religion.

Lewis was reasonable and obviously intelligent. His book was one of most clear, well-written things I'd read in a long time. I was particularly captivated by his case for the Natural Law, in which he proposed that God is the source of all that we call "good," and that that's why people in all times and places have had the same basic ideas about what is good and what is bad. My curiosity piqued, I then read excerpts online from the great Christian thinkers like Augustine and Aquinas. I began to think that this religion was not opposed to reason at all -- in fact, some of the most intelligent, reasonable people in history were Christians. I finally caved in and bought a Bible, the first I'd ever owned. Not knowing how else to approach it, I started reading at page one. I was alternately baffled and horrified by what I read in the first few hundred pages. Joe encouraged me to the second part of the book, called the New Testament, explaining that that's where Jesus comes into the picture. That didn't help. There was no clear call to action, like, "If you like what you've read here and would like to become a Christian, here's what you do..." I had no idea how to interpret most of the passages...and it seemed like no one else did either. When I would search online for whether or not the Bible said abortion, euthanasia, human cloning, etc. were right or wrong, I encountered as many different answers as there were people, with each person citing Bible verses to back up his or her personal view. Similarly, I had no idea which church to go to if I wanted to ask someone questions in person: In my community there was everything from Church of Christ to Jehovah's Witnesses to conservative Baptist to liberal Anglican churches, each one claiming to be based on the Bible, yet they all taught drastically different things about what constitutes sin.

This was a huge problem. If God is all that is good, then to define what is bad -- i.e., sin -- is to define the very boundaries of God himself. It was nonsensical to suggest that his religion would be confused on that issue. I'd found what I was looking for: the flaw that showed that Christianity didn't make sense. It was time to move on.

Shortly after I came to this realization, someone I'd encountered online made a crazy suggestion: he said that I'd been approaching the whole thing from a very modern and distinctly American perspective, that the traditional understanding of Christianity is totally different. He suggested that Jesus founded just one Church before he left

the earth, and that he instilled it with supernatural power so that it would accurately articulate the truth about what is good -- and therefore about what is God -- for all times and places. As if that weren't crazy enough, he was talking about the Catholic Church! Joe and I both balked. Joe said that Catholicism wasn't real Christianity, and I knew that the Church was an archaic, oppressive, sexist institution. Besides, this idea of supernaturally-empowered people was just silly.

However, I did notice something: almost all the people who had impressed me with their ability to defend their faith through reason alone, both famous authors and people online, were Catholic. In fact, the more I paid attention, the more I saw that the Catholic intellectual tradition was one of the greatest in the world. I began reading books by Catholic authors; not that I was really interested in Catholicism, I told myself -- I was just looking for something good to read. But I couldn't help but admit that these people seemed to possess an understanding of the world and the human experience that I'd never encountered before. They had the same solid grasp on science and the material world as the atheists, but also possessed a knowledge of the movements of the human soul that resonated as true down to the core of my being. I wasn't sure what to make of all this Catholic stuff, and still vehemently disagreed with the Church on some of its crazier ideas, like its opposition to abortion and contraception. But I had to admit that the more I read about Catholic theology, the more sane it seemed.

I also began to think that it was more likely than not that God does exist, and that if the Christians weren't entirely right, they were at least close with their understanding of him. But why, then, had I had no experience of him? Not that that was a requirement for me to believe, but it just seemed like if there were a God out there and he cared about me, I would sense his presence in some way. I'd been under a lot of stress between having a new baby and some money problems we were experiencing, plus I'd developed a severe pain in my leg that was almost debilitating. All along I'd prided myself on saying that I would never convert based on emotional experience, that I only needed facts, not feelings. But now it was getting old. It was hurtful to think that God might be out there but just withholding comfort from me. I was tired of pressing forward in this pursuit with no sense of his presence. I could be miserable and feel alone in the universe as an agnostic -- why bother with this religion business if that didn't change anything?

My feelings of frustration and resentment towards God reached a head. And then, just at the right time, I happened to come across a quote from C.S. Lewis in which he pointed out: [God] shows much more of Himself to some people than to others -- not because He has favourites, but because it is impossible for Him to show Himself to a man whose whole mind and character are in the wrong condition. Just as sunlight, though it has no favourites, cannot be reflected in a dusty mirror as clearly as in a clean one.

Of course. I'd been walking around talking trash, watching TV shows that portrayed all types of nastiness, indulging in selfish behaviour...and yet wondering why I couldn't feel the presence of the source of all goodness. I realized that, if I were serious about figuring out if God exists or not, it could not be an entirely intellectual exercise. I had to be willing to change. I wasn't sure if I was ready to sign up for that for the long haul, but I decided to give it a shot: I committed to go a month living according to the Catholic moral code. I bought a copy of the Catholic Catechism, a summary of the Church's teachings, and studied it carefully, living my life according to what it taught, even in the cases where I wasn't sure the Church was right.

My goal with the experiment had been to discover the presence of God; instead, I discovered myself -- the real me. I had thought that cynicism, judgmentalness, and irritability were just parts of who I was, but I realized that there was a purer, better version of myself buried underneath all that filth -- what the Church would call sins -- that I had never before encountered.

I found that the rules of the Church, that I had once perceived to be a set of confining laws, were rules of love; they defined the boundaries between what is love and what is not. It had changed me, my life, and my marriage for the better. I may not have experienced God, but, by following the teachings of the Church that was supposedly founded by him, I had experienced real love.

Following the teachings about contraception had been moot since I was pregnant with our second child, but I did read up on it during my experiment of following the Church's teachings. And, to my great surprise, I discovered that the Church had incredibly reasonable defences of its points. I asked Joe to take a look at this stuff in case I was missing something, and, to his own amazement, he also found the Church's arguments to be airtight. He had been doing his own investigation into Catholicism, and this was the final issue that had been troubling him too. We looked at each other, and for the first time dared to ask: Are we going to become Catholic?!

Only two weeks after we had that thought, that pain in my leg got so bad that I ended up in the ER. I was seven months pregnant with our second child, and it turned out that I had a deep vein thrombosis, a life-threatening blood clot in a major vein. If the clot had broken free, I likely would have died. After some testing, the doctors delivered worse news: I have a genetic clotting disorder that means that my blood clots easily -- and I inherited from both parents, which makes it worse. On top of that, it's exacerbated by pregnancy, which makes pregnancy dangerous for me. I had a lot of time to mull over this turn of events: the clot couldn't be treated during pregnancy, and the pain was so severe that I could no longer walk on my own. So I spent most of my days lying in bed, wondering what to do now.

To treat the clot postpartum, the doctors wanted to prescribe an FDA Category X drug to treat the clot -- it's so dangerous for pregnancy that women often choose to be sterilized before they take it. They told me that my clotting disorder means I should not have any more children, because of the risk that pregnancy poses to my health. I didn't want them to think I was religious for fear of what they'd think of me, but when I hinted at the question of using Natural Family Planning (a method for spacing children that the Church deems morally acceptable), they laughed. Someone with my condition had to use contraception, they said. There was no choice.

Fatigued by the constant pain, overwhelmed by medical bills that were piling up by the thousands, I began to slide back away from this religion, tumbling down a slope that ended back in atheism. I hadn't minded changing in the sense of not using the f-word so much, but this was a whole different ballgame. To stick with the Church now would be to lose my life as I knew it, and to set out down an unfamiliar, frightening path. Not knowing what else to do, I went back to the basics of the way I'd been taught to work through problems since childhood. My dad, my parent from whom I got my religious views (or lack thereof), had not raised me to be an atheist as much as he'd raised me to seek truth fearlessly. "Never believe something because it's convenient or it makes you feel good," he'd always say. "Ask yourself: 'Is this true?'" And so I set everything else aside, and clung to the simple question: What is true?

I quickly realized then that that was not in question, and hadn't been for a while. For weeks now, I had known on an intellectual level that I believed what the Church taught. What stalled me had not been a hesitation of whether or not it was true; it had been a hesitation of not wanting to sacrifice too much. I had no idea how things would work out. I thought there was a fair chance that this step would lead us to financial ruin, and may even take a serious toll on my health. But I decided, for the first time in a long time, to choose what was true instead of what was comfortable. Joe and I signed up to begin the formation process at our parish church. And, in the first statement of faith I'd ever made, I told my doctors that I would not use contraception, because I was Catholic.

After that moment, a bunch of fortuitous events occurred that smoothed the way for us to become Catholic. A series of windfalls gave us the money we needed to manage our medical bills. After they got over their initial shock at encountering someone who wouldn't contracept, my doctors came up with creative solutions to keep me healthy. Even after a surprise positive pregnancy test came at the worst possible time, just a few weeks after I'd healed from the blood clot, a bunch of startling coincidences played out to help us stay afloat during that difficult time. The next Spring, three days before Joe and I would be received into the Church, it was time for my first confession. As I approached the confessional, I had no hesitation. I had an intellectual understanding that God is the source of goodness, and that therefore it's important that we take great care repent when we have done something bad. But I'd already privately confessed all these sins in my head, so I figured that telling them to the priest, who was simply standing in for Jesus, would be redundant -- after all, Jesus had already heard all this stuff.

But as soon as I heard the words coming from my mouth, everything changed. To hear all of these selfish, cowardly, hateful acts articulated with real words, for another human being to hear, was more powerful than I could have ever imagined. Tears began to flow, and, as I continued recounting every unloving thing I'd ever done, I shook and sobbed. Never could I have imagined the impact it would have on me to hear of my own sins, spoken out loud; but never could I have imagined how much it would impact me to hear the words, spoken by the priest on behalf of God, that I was forgiven. I walked away from the confessional in a daze, and slid into a pew in the silent church. I knew that my life had just changed, never to be the same again.

Later that night, around midnight, I stepped out on the back porch. When I was younger I used to avoid going outside at night when it was quiet and still, because it would trigger memories of all those ominous thoughts about meaningless that I was trying to forget. The darkness outside was too familiar, as if it had all spilled out from somewhere within me. But as I stood there that night after my first confession, I realized that all that was gone. The darkness within me was simply not there anymore. In its place was peace, and an unmistakable feeling of love. For the first time, I felt the presence of God.

Jennifer is a columnist for Envoy magazine, a regular guest on the Relevant Radio and EWTN Radio networks, and a contributor to the books The Church and New Media and Atheist to Catholic: 11 Stories of Conversion. She's also writing a book based on her personal blog, ConversionDiary.com. As much as she loves writing, her favourite job is being mom to her five young children. If you have found this story helpful in your spiritual journey we hope you will consider sharing it. Have feedback or would like to share your story? Email us at convert@whyimcatholic.com

The assistance of power from above is plainly visible, so that we are often humbled at seeing the great mercy and goodness of God!

- Blessed Francis Xavier Seelos (1819-1867), priest, Feast day October 5

Why I choose the Catholic Road to Jesus

Sr Marie OSF (Pentecost, 1999)

Jesus chose it for me. I responded with the help of Mary, our Heavenly Mother. My spiritual awakening began in my early teen years. I remember going coming back from Communion and sitting in my pew with my family. Suddenly the thought occurred to me, "What am I doing here? What is Communion...really?"

Not long after that I befriended a Franciscan Sister who worked in my high school. She invited me to go on a retreat to her "motherhouse." I was intrigued. It was that retreat at the age of 15 that I first remember hearing God's call. These Franciscan Sisters were the Sisters of St. Francis of Perpetual Adoration. Their main chrism was to adore the Eucharist and as a community, to always have two Sisters praying in their motherhouse adoration chapel before the exposed Host in the monstrance.

When I arrived at the motherhouse with a number of other young high school girls, we were instructed about the importance of this chrism. We were told that we could pray at any time of the day or night in the adoration chapel, as long as we were reverent. At about 2:00 in the morning, after the other girls had finally fallen asleep, I sneaked upstairs to check out this chapel. The whole atmosphere of the convent seemed beautifully mysterious to me, and I wanted to tap into the "secret." I entered the adoration chapel shocked to discover that there were no Sisters praying there...or so I thought! I was stunned! I couldn't believe that after nearly 150 years of commitment to this chrism, I walked in when no one was there! Surely there must have been some mistake! I decided to help the Sisters out and stay there until the someone arrived. (Little did I know that there was a balcony upstairs where the Sisters were quietly praying behind me!)

I knelt in the pew and started to leaf through the many little booklets I found there. Was I overjoyed to find the Sisters' custom books and other precious spiritual treasures! Surely, I was getting close to understanding the "secret" of the convent. I found myself particularly interested in a pamphlet on Our Lady of Fatima and the Holy Scapular. As I was reading this little brochure, I was unaware of what the Lord had in store for me at that moment. Suddenly, a glorious event occurred in my soul that I could never explain with human tongue. I felt as if I were being lifted up and thrown into the Heaven. My soul seems to remember a Light, my mind remembers only the sight of the golden monstrance and the Pure White Host. I was happy beyond any happiness I had ever known. I was steeped in the Love of the Divine. I knew beyond all doubt that there was a God. I had touched Him. He had touched me.

The next day, as I was preparing to leave the convent and the Sisters were hugging all the girls good-bye, I heard a voice in my heart say, "Aren't they beautiful?" I knew at that moment, God wanted me to be a Sister. (Once I heard a priest say that like Mary, our angels give us our "annunciation" of the vocation God has chosen for us. I believe that moment was my annunciation.)

Lovely as the story is, I must admit, it was not long before I turned away from my Beloved Lord and His call. A series of events and problems led me to despair and reject an intimate life with God. By the time I was out of high-school, I had rebelled against the Lord and had abandoned prayer. By the age of 20, my life was a disaster and my family was suffering the consequences of my sinfulness. At the lowest point of my life, I knew I had nowhere else to turn but to God. Everything was black and I felt alone.

I went to confession to a priest who lovingly welcomed me back into the Church. For my penance, he asked me to find a work of service that I could do in the Church to draw me back. I decided to become a CCD teacher.

It was not long after this that I heard about the alleged apparitions taking place in Medjugorje, Yugoslavia. I was intrigued, and using some money I received for my 21st birthday, I bought Wayne Wieble's book about Medjugorje. Our Lady used that book as an instrument to change my life. As I felt too weak to face Jesus alone, Mary took me in her arms during the next few months and brought me to her son. The miracles and the drama of the next two years would take an entire book to write!

All, I can say is that today, sixteen years later, I am a Sister of St. Francis of Perpetual Adoration, and I am preparing to profess my final vows this fall. My consecration to Jesus through Mary has been my security and a great source of perseverance. The road has not been easy, but it has been beautiful and has served to glorify God. The greatest sweetness in my life, is my relationship with Mary. The greatest passion in my life is my love for Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. I thank our Heavenly Father for the great gift of life He has given me over and over through the Sacraments of the Church. They are my greatest source of peace. How much more I could say in praise of all He has done for me in my life! How much more I could say about the fidelity of My Heavenly Mother in my life!

Why did I choose the Catholic road to Jesus? It is because of the gift of the Sacraments - most especially the Eucharist, and the gift of our Lady, which is not offered to me in other Christian denominations, beautiful as they may be... Through the power of His Spirit, may all come to find the great treasures of joy and truth present in our Holy Catholic Church!

Why I choose the Catholic Road to Jesus

Anon

I will begin with how I was raised. I was raised in a single parent home with very little religion. I went to church at times but it was mainly for fun with the other kids. We were certainly not a religious family. My mother went through a period when she attended church often and had my sister, my older brother and myself baptized in a Baptist Church. I was 12 at the time. That was the last time I attended church for years. I began dating a boy when I was 15 and he 16. By age 17 I had a baby and was married (not by choice.) My life went downhill from there. Not too long after I had my first child I had another child, a son who passed away. I was absolutely devastated and blamed my husband for his death. I could not bear to be around my husband or even look at him. I left him shortly after that. I was raising my daughter alone. Still hurting so from the death of my son I turned to drinking. During this time I remember very little time in which I was sober. I was hanging out with the wrong people. One night after much drinking I had went to a friend's house. Late in the night her friend forced himself on me and raped me. As horrible as that was I am thankful for it. It was a wakeup call for me. If I had not been drinking I would not have been there or would have at least been able to possibly stop it if I was sober, not to mention what I was doing to my daughter. What a bad mother I was. I quit drinking and began to go to college shortly after that. I then tried to forgive my husband and we got back together but as much as I thought I was over my son's death our marriage just could not withstand it. My husband had numerous affairs and eventually asked for a divorce. Within this time we did have another son.

So I was single for many years raising my children. Working for my Microsoft certifications and raising two children the last thing I was thinking about was God. Then I met a man. We were friends for a year then started dating. He is Catholic but had not been in a church since a child. Shortly after we began dating his mother passed away. I went to the funeral. I was quite nervous because I knew she was Catholic and I knew a priest would be there. I had never seen a priest before and silly me was afraid he would see all my sins when he looked at me.

It was not like that at all. When I saw him I saw true compassion and love. I saw that he was with God and that God was with him. At that moment everything made sense. I cannot describe in words the feelings. I knew where my life had to go. I knew what I needed to do. I lived another state at the time. I called the parish here that conducted the mass for his mother to make an appt with the priest. I asked if my kids could be baptized which he was of course thrilled to do. I began to drive the 2.5 hours each week to attend mass. After experiencing mass for a month I asked my priest if I was allowed to convert. He was so thrilled he threw up his arms and hugged me. For months longer I continued my drive each weekend to attend mass. One day on faith alone I quit my high paying job and moved the 2.5 hours to another state to be near the parish, which I now considered home. No job and no place to live. God provided me with everything. I am now a Computer Engineer, just bought my first house and married my now husband in June. I attend mass at least 5 times a week. My children are very involved. My daughter had her first communion in May. She is so devoted to Christ she even refused her first communion for fear of a small sin. True, she is being a little hard on herself but I was never so proud. My priest felt so bad he gave her absolution in front of everyone and she was able to receive communion. My son wants to be a priest. I just love that!!

Up until a few weeks ago I had still been struggling with the loss of my son. It was so hard to deal with daily. My priest and I were speaking about it one evening since I was having a tough time. He asked why I was being so hard on myself and didn't I trust Jesus. He said that my son knew me and loved me and knew that I loved him. With those words in my mind I went to bed in tears. I prayed to Jesus. I offered my son to Jesus that night and told Jesus that I did trust Him and thanked Him for His Mercy. I then found that answer that I had been longing for. I had to give my son a Catholic name. I renamed him after a Saint and also after my priest. His name is now Mark. I felt so much peace after that. The next day I was reading the Gospels. I opened it to Mark and immediately came across the scripture Mark 5:34 "Daughter your faith has healed you, go in peace and be free from your suffering." It is amazing how God speaks to us!!!

I am going to classes that will last for 5 years. It is training so that I can begin and be certified in my own ministry in the Catholic Church. My ministry will be grief counselling. The classes are wonderful. God has blessed me many times over, none of it I deserve. His mercy and love is beyond my comprehension.

Faith is easy when we meet with no difficulty and walk in a way of light and consolation. But when we are struggling with temptation, with suffering and trial, when we are in a dryness of heart and spiritual darkness, then it needs a strong faith to abandon ourselves to God and remain entirely united to His holy will.

- Blessed Columba Marmion (1858-1923), Redemptorist Abbot, Feast day October 3

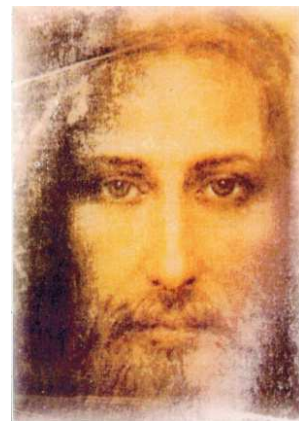
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We have all heard of the story of a teenage boy's parents going off somewhere for the weekend, and leaving him in charge of the house while they are away. No sooner are they gone than the boy invites his friends over to party and have a good time. Then, unexpectedly, the parents return home because they forgot something, and on their return, they are mortified that their house is in such disarray from teenage boys and girls they had never seen before. Needless to say, their son is going to have some explaining to do. He will not only be grounded, but also, it will take a long time, if ever, before his parents will trust in him again.

As with the boy's parents, so it is in today's parable. The master returned at an unexpected moment and found those he left in charge failing his trust in them. The same is true for us. We do not know when our Lord will come, but taking our cue from these two stories, it would be a good idea to have our moral and spiritual lives in order. Whenever He does return, we can be sure it will be a surprise!

- Fr. George Mangiaracina, OCD | email: doxajesus@gmail.com

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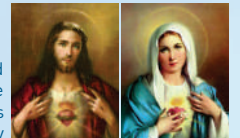
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Kathryn has worked in the airline and travel industry both in Australia and overseas for over 30 years in many facets of this industry.

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The Night Before Christmas

By Sister St Thomas B.N.D. de N.

Twas the night before Christmas, and all through the town,
St. Joseph was searching, walking up roads and down;
Our Lady was waiting, so meek and so mild,
While Joseph was seeking a place for the Child;

The children were nestled, each snug in their beds,
The grown-ups wouldn't bother, there's no room they said;
When even the innkeeper sent them away,
Joseph was wondering, where they would stay;

He thought of the caves in the side of the hills,
Let's go there said Mary, it's silent and still;
The moon on the breast of the new fallen snow,
Made pathways of light for their tired feet to go;

And there in a cave, in a cradle of hay,
Our Saviour was born on that first Christmas Day!
The Father was watching in heaven above,
He sent for His angels, His couriers of love;

More rapid than eagles God's bright angels came;
Rejoicing and eager as each heard his name;
Come Power, Come Cherubs, Come Virtues, Come Raphael,
Come Thrones and Dominions, come Michael and Gabriel;

Now fly to the Earth, where My poor people live,
Announce the glad tidings My Son comes to give;
The Shepherds were watching their flocks on this night,
And saw in the heavens and unearthly light;

The Angels assured them, they'd nothing to fear,
It's Christmas they said, the Saviour is here!
They hastened to find Him, and stood at the door,
Till Mary invited them in to adore;

He was swaddled in bands from His head to His feet,
Never did the Shepherds see a baby so sweet!
He spoke not a word, but the shepherds all knew,
He was telling them secrets and blessing them too;

Then softly they left Him, The Babe in the hay,
And rejoiced with great joy on that first Christmas Day;
Mary heard them exclaim as they walked up the hill,
Glory to God in the Highest, Peace to men of good will!

Meanings of Christmas

Fr. Andrew Greeley, Woman's Day, 12-22-81

"It might be easy to run away to a monastery, away from the commercialization, the hectic hustle, the demanding family responsibilities of Christmas-time. Then we would have a holy Christmas. But we would forget the lesson of the Incarnation, of the enfleshing of God—the lesson that we who are followers of Jesus do not run from the secular; rather we try to transform it. It is our mission to make holy the secular aspects of Christmas just as the early Christians baptized the Christmas tree. And we do this by being holy people—kind, patient, generous, loving, laughing people—no matter how maddening is the Christmas rush..."

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
willyv@kinect.co.nz

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:

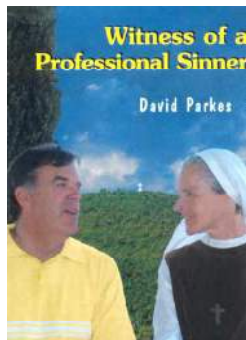
Name **Address** (if not on back or if changed)

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Comments

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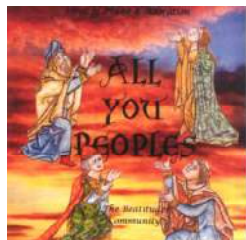


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To order, phone or write to above address or ask for our free catalogue

Installation of satellite dish to receive EWTN can be arranged in the Auckland area by contacting Peter Cornwall at the above address & phone number

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.

PO Box 287 – DARGAVILLE - 0340

New Zealand
Permit n° 57399

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