

THE SPIRIT OF MEDJUGORJE
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www.spiritofmedjugorje.org

SUBSCRIPTION RATE - FREE WILL OFFERING - PLEASE SEE PAGE 8

If this is the first time you have received this newsletter, and you would like a "Beginner's Guide," please contact us for one.



EDITOR: JUNE KLINS
PHONE: (814) 898-2143
E-MAIL: jklines1981@verizon.net

EDITOR EMERITUS: JOAN WIESZCZYK
SPIRITUAL ADVISOR
FR. WILLIAM KIEL

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CURRENT MONTHLY MESSAGE OF JANUARY 25, 2016

ON THE 25TH DAY OF EACH MONTH, THE BLESSED VIRGIN GIVES A MESSAGE TO THE VISIONARY, MARIJA, THAT IS TO BE GIVEN TO THE WORLD.

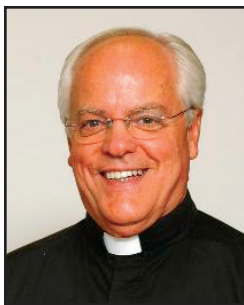


"Dear children! Also today I am calling all of you to prayer. You cannot live without prayer, because prayer is a chain which brings you closer to God. Therefore, little children, in humility of heart return to God and to His commandments so that with all of your heart you are able to say: as it is in Heaven so may it be on earth. You, little children, are free to in freedom decide for God or against Him. See where Satan wants to pull you into sin and slavery. Therefore, little children, return to my heart so that I can lead you to my Son Jesus who is the Way, the Truth and the Life. Thank you for having responded to my call."

The statue of Our Lady of Lourdes pictured above was in St. James Church before the apparitions began in 1981. When the statue was stripped for re-painting, the word "Mir" (the Croatian word for peace) was found engraved in the mold, according to author Finbar O'Leary, in his book, Vicka...Her Story. February 11th is the feast day of Our Lady of Lourdes. On February 24, 1858, Our Lady said to St. Bernadette, "Penance! Penance! Pray to God for sinners. Kiss the ground as an act of penance for sinners!" See page 5 for a related article.

Sacrament of Confession/Penance

By Fr. Bill Kiel



Fr. Bill Kiel

“Repent, and believe in the Gospel.” “Remember you are dust, and to dust you shall return.” One of these will be said as you receive ashes in the form of a cross on your forehead on Ash Wednesday. This is a powerful reminder that we are going to leave this earthly life,

and our souls will be in union with God if we repent of our sins and live the Word of God.

Repentance results from our awareness of God’s love for us, God’s commandments, our sinfulness, and seeking God’s love, mercy and forgiveness through the Sacrament of Penance (for mortal sin) or an Act of Contrition.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church defines Penance: *Interior Penance – a conversion of heart toward God and away from sin, which implies the intention to change one’s life because of hope in divine mercy. External acts of penance include fasting, prayer, and almsgiving.*

During this Year of Mercy, we are reminded of God’s infinite Divine Mercy. What does the word ‘mercy’ evoke in our minds? Being forgiving to others? Being kind and compassionate? Hopefully, it first evokes an awareness of God’s love for us, and the forgiveness God is willing to give us for our sins if we have a contrite heart.

Many Catholics do not participate in the Sacrament of Penance for personal reasons. Many fear telling the priest their sins, thinking the priest will think of them as “a bad person” when he sees them outside the confessional. Pride may keep us from admitting we have done something wrong. But we can combat these obstacles by remaining mindful that the priest’s intention is to bring to all Catholics a greater awareness of God’s Divine Mercy through the sacrament.

The love of God is brought to us in the forgiveness of our sins and the resulting interior peace of experiencing

“This is how God inspired me, Brother Francis, to embark upon a life of penance. When I was in sin, the sight of lepers nauseated me beyond measure; but then God Himself led me into their company, and I had pity on them. When I had once become acquainted with them, what had previously nauseated me became a source of spiritual and physical consolation for me.” ~ St. Francis of Assisi (our patron saint this year)

As of January 25, 2016, the number of Masses reported for Our Lady’s intentions was 13,129.

Our thanks to Tom and Joanne McIntire, Pat Weller, Sue Taccone, Diane Niebauer, Marge Spase, Peggy Chludzinski, Cindy Bielanin, Kathy Luschini, Rose Leach, Celeste Migneault, Dianne Yochim, Sue Kirby, Estrella Igras, Louise Lotze and Barb Sirianni for help with the January mailing. We thank Wendy Ripple and Mike Golovich for their photos in this issue. We thank Dorothy Cavanaugh for making us more prayer cloths. And we thank our proofreader, Pat Berrier, and our webmaster, Jason Klins. **Thank you to all of you for the prayers for my father – the cancer has not spread to his bones. He truly appreciates your prayers.**

God on a very personal level. This love and peace become a significant part of our life, affecting how we interact with other people, and how Christ-like we live the Gospel messages and commandments.

We are encouraged to participate in the sacrament as often as necessary, or at least once a month. As we examine our conscience each day, we become more aware of sins we repeatedly commit. This should encourage us to seek God’s grace and guidance through a good confession.

As we enter the season of Lent, let us remember why Jesus suffered and was crucified – it was for US – forgiveness of OUR sins. Many Catholics seem to regard the death of Jesus as meaningless, when they fail to ask for forgiveness or participate in the sacrament of Penance. Most parishes offer the Sacrament on a weekly basis and by appointment with the priest. The availability is there; are we taking advantage of it? How could we not, if we

truly believed in God’s love for us through the crucifixion?

We have been given the words “...pray with me that sinners may become aware of their sins and repent sincerely.” And “...sincerely repent for your sins and yearn for the good. Yearn also in the name of those who have not come to know the perfection of the good. You will be more pleasing to God.”



Confessionals in Medjugorje

Pilgrimage sites, retreats, and days of recollection seem to be especially blessed places where penitents are aware of their sinfulness and participate in the Sacrament of Confession. For those unable to participate in the aforementioned activities, your parish priest or another priest are available for your confession. Do not be afraid to ask a priest to allot time for a private confession time; it is part of our sacramental life.

Throughout Lent and the Year of Mercy, try to participate and encourage others to seek God’s mercy in the sacrament of Penance.

Lord Jesus, have mercy on me, a sinner.

Prayer Intentions of Pope Francis for February:

Care for Creation: That we may take good care of creation – a gift freely given – cultivating and protecting it for future generations.

Asia: That opportunities may increase for dialogue and encounter between the Christian faith and the peoples of Asia.



Ray's Call

By June Klins

Last November 27th (2015), I received a phone call from a lady in Virginia, who said she had sad news. She identified herself as Barbara and said that her cousin Ray had passed away earlier that week. Ray was a subscriber of ours from Buffalo, who called me on occasion, and often sent me cards saying he had offered a month of holy hours of Adoration for me, my family, and *The Spirit of Medjugorje*.

I asked Barbara when Ray's funeral was scheduled. She shared with me that there would be no funeral Mass – that the family chose not to have a funeral Mass for him. I felt so badly about this, because Ray was such a devoted Catholic. I told Barbara that I would contact Stephen Sematiko in Uganda to see if Fr. Frederick would be able to say a Mass for him right away. That seemed to give Barbara some comfort. Then she asked me when the last time was that I spoke to Ray. I was not sure, but I thought he had called me within the last two weeks.

After we hung up, I looked on my caller-ID box to see when Ray had called. I scrolled backwards through the dates: 11/26, 11/25, 11/24, 11/23...and then I came to his name, but the date said 11/27 !!! That was impossible! That was the present date and Ray had died either on 11/22 or 11/23. I ran to get my camera to take a picture of the screen, since this was so weird. But when I came back the screen was blank. I scrolled back again to find Ray's name and this time the date on it was 11/13, which I imagine was the correct date. I am not sure why this happened, but I felt in my heart that Ray was reaching out through this little sign. Whether he was asking for prayers or letting me know he was OK, I don't know.

On January 10, 1983, Our Lady said, *"It happens that God permits them [souls in Purgatory] to manifest themselves in different ways, close to their relatives on earth, in order to remind men of the existence of Purgatory and to solicit their prayers to come close to God who is just, but good."*

That night just happened to be the night my parish has a Mass and devotions for the souls in Purgatory. Father always says that the Mass will be offered for whomever we want. So, of course, I offered the Mass for Ray. Before I left, I had emailed Stephen in Uganda to ask Fr. Frederick to say a Mass for Ray. After I returned home, Stephen responded

that because Pope Francis was in Uganda that day, all the priests were at the shrine of the Uganda Martyrs with him, and there were no Masses being said at the parishes. After the Pope left, Stephen heard from Fr. Frederick, who said he would say a Mass for Ray the next day.

In that same note, I broke the news to Stephen that Ray had committed to sponsoring four children for the school they are opening (St. Philomena Primary School), and that was not going to happen now. Stephen looked in his records and saw how generous Ray had been over the years, and decided that the best way to thank Ray for his generosity would be to ask Fr. Frederick to celebrate a set of Gregorian Masses (30 Masses in a row) for him. The Masses would start on November 30.

That very same day, a woman named Marlene called Pam Kossan at Mary's Mission [see her story in our November, 2015 issue] and told her she wanted to sponsor four children! When Pam told her about Ray, they both felt that Ray had something to do with the inspiration Marlene got to sponsor exactly four children – the same number of children Ray could no longer sponsor.

When I called Barbara to tell her all of this, she said it brought her great comfort. She had been so upset that Ray was not going to have a funeral Mass, but instead he ended

up having over 30 Masses in Uganda, one in North Dakota, and even one in Medjugorje!!! I then remarked what I find myself saying all the time: "God always brings good out of bad!"

May you rest in peace, Ray. Thank you for having responded to "the call."

Editor's note: If you are looking for a recipient of your Lenten almsgiving, consider sponsoring a child for the school in Uganda. You can visit greenvillagechildrencenter.org to pick a child. If you cannot afford to sponsor a child yourself, maybe you could go together with your prayer group or others. They will also gratefully accept a one-time donation to help the children. Mary's Mission is now a 501(c) charity, and all donations are tax-deductible. You can send your donation to Mary's Mission, 3270 Bethany Loop, Bismarck, ND 58573 or contact them at 701-530-9310 or kossanjj@bis.midco.net.



Two sponsored children, Christine and Jonathan, in their school uniforms

January 2, 2016 Message to Mirjana

"Dear children, as a mother, I am joyful to be among you because I desire to speak anew about the words of my Son and of His love. I hope that you will accept me with the heart, because the words of my Son and His love are the only light and hope in the darkness of today. This is the only truth and you who will accept and live it will have pure and humble hearts. My Son loves those who are pure and humble. Pure and humble hearts bring to life the words of my Son, they live them, they spread them and they make it possible for everyone to hear them. The words of my Son bring back life to those who listen to them. The words of my Son bring back love and hope. Therefore, my beloved apostles, my children, live the words of my Son. Love each other as He loved you. Love each other in His name, in memory of Him. The Church is advancing and growing because of those who listen to the words of my Son; because of those who love; because of those who suffer and endure in silence and in the hope of final redemption. Therefore, my beloved children, may the words of my Son and His love be the first and the last thought of your day. Thank you."

“I don’t get it!”

By Michael Douglas

As Sylvia and I made our way down Apparition Hill we encountered a friend who was climbing barefoot. After we said our hello, Sylvia’s response was “I don’t get it – why are you climbing in your bare feet?” Seamus’s response was, “I’m offering it up – I also believe when I climb barefoot it gives me a greater understanding of some of the suffering Jesus must have felt when He was carrying His cross to Mount Calvary.”

It was difficult for Sylvia to understand fully why someone would want to walk barefoot up any hill. As a retired nurse, she was prone to seeing the practical realities of walking across rugged rocks and the probable consequences of cut and infected feet. She considered that life itself had its full share of suffering, and that to deliberately seek out suffering seemed masochistic, if not an overly-pious way of living the Gospel of Jesus. She had witnessed intense suffering in her patients and their relatives, and understood the realities of pain in all its forms – physical, psychological, spiritual and social. So, she wondered why anyone would want to deliberately invite suffering into one’s life, when a person only had to wait awhile and suffering would eventually visit their front door. She was not convinced of Seamus’s explanation, but was open to hear of others’ experiences of “offering up” and was keen to find out what the Scriptures said on the subject, if it said anything at all.

Offering it up? What does the Bible say about enduring suffering?

1 Peter 2:19 *You see, there is merit if, in awareness of God, you put up with the pains of undeserved punishment; ²⁰but what glory is there in putting up with a beating after you have done something wrong? The merit in the sight of God is in putting up with it patiently when you are punished for doing your duty. ²¹This, in fact, is what you were called to do, because Christ suffered for you and left an example for you to follow in his steps. ²²He had done nothing wrong, and had spoken no deceit.*

I knew someone who decided to climb Mount Krizevac in his bare feet because his friend was dying of cancer. John told me he did not understand the reason why climbing barefoot, as opposed to wearing shoes, should make any difference in the offering. He had climbed barefoot before and knew it would be a bit uncomfortable. Fifteen minutes into the climb he said he was crippled – he had never experienced this pain while climbing barefoot before. He wondered how much his friend and his family were suffering: this was the catalyst to keep him going. When he reached the Thirteenth Station he was now on his hands and knees trying to climb. The last stretch between the Thirteenth to the Fourteenth Station is covered in very small pointy stones – by now the balls of his feet were so tender he was nearly in tears. After finishing his climb, he said he would never ever climb barefoot again.

Three days later, John set off to climb Mount Krizevac again, only this time, wearing his shoes – or so he thought. The eve before he was to climb, his friend, June, asked if he were planning on climbing Mount Krizevac again. He told

her he had planned to climb Krizevac the following day after Holy Mass. June had her fourteen year-old son, Simon, with her, and asked if it would be okay if he climbed with him. June was climbing at 5:30 a.m. the following morning, but this was too early for her son. John arranged to meet Simon the following morning after Mass. The following morning after breakfast, a young woman (Ruth), who was staying in the same house as John, also asked if she could climb with him; her parents had overheard the conversation with John and June inquiring about the climb.

So after Mass, John, Simon, and Ruth started walking to Mount Krizevac. After they said a decade of the Rosary, Ruth inquired if John had heard of pilgrims climbing in their bare-feet. (This was her first pilgrimage.) John told her a small percentage of pilgrims climb barefoot, but suggested it best to climb barefoot while on your own. He was thinking, “What if they decide to climb barefoot – what will I do?” On arriving at the base of Mount Krizevac, Ruth and Simon started to unbuckle their shoes. A cold sweat came over John – what was he to do? Here he was, a veteran pilgrim to Medjugorje, with two raw and sore feet from the previous climb. After a quick prayer, he took his sandals off and started to climb with the two of them. To his surprise, he felt nothing – no pain, no soreness. It was only then he understood the significance of offering his suffering for his dying friend. Although John now understood the significance of offering his suffering for his friend, he said, “It is too difficult to explain, as it is a personal realization that one has to experience oneself. It is the same when praying with the heart.”

I love telling this story about Jakov. The purported visionary Jakov loves to play soccer with his friends. When he was still a child, Our Lady told him to never stop praying and to offer to God short words from the heart while walking to school or playing with his friends. The next day, Jakov was organizing a game among friends. Before he started playing, he remembered what Our Lady had told him the evening before, but he didn’t feel like praying. He was so eager to start the game! As a little compromise, Jakov recited a very quick ‘Hail Mary’ in order not to sadden Our Lady. That day, when She appeared to him, She showed him a man in China who was dying. He was a very wicked, hard-hearted man, and he was heading right to Hell. But Our Lady said to Jakov that She was grateful for the prayer he offered before the game, even though it was a quick one, because with it she could obtain a grace for this man: his heart had changed just before dying and he was saved thanks to little Jakov. (The power of offering one Hail Mary) © 2009 Children of Medjugorje

There are many ways we can ‘offer it up’: prayer and fasting are one of them; instead of sore feet, we have aching stomachs and sore fingers from saying the Rosary. Going to Mass daily and Adoration weekly are also great forms of offerings, [as are] going on a pilgrimage and praying for



Pilgrim walking barefoot up the mountain

everyone who asked us to pray for them, etc.

Romans 8:16 *The Spirit himself joins with our spirit to bear witness that we are children of God.* ¹⁷ *And if we are children, then we are heirs, heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ, provided that we share his suffering, so as to share his glory.* ¹⁸ *In my estimation,*

all that we suffer in the present time is nothing in comparison with the glory which is destined to be disclosed for us.

Editor's note: Michael lives in Ireland. He has written two books on Medjugorje: Medjugorje Peace In My Heart and Medjugorje The New Road To Damascus.

The Realization of God's Plans

Draga Vidovic, a Medjugorje guide who was a friend of the visionaries growing up, wrote in her book, *Salvation of Mankind*, that Our Lady invited them on many occasions to make sacrifices. She wrote that they used to walk to the evening Mass regardless of the weather, and sometimes would get so wet that they would not be able to put their shoes on the next day. Because they were poor, they did not have a spare pair to wear.

Draga recalled how, after one of the apparitions, the visionaries told their prayer group that Our Lady wanted them to climb Cross Mountain in bare feet the following evening. It was mid-December and quite cold, so they were not too excited about this. They asked the visionaries to ask Our Lady what would happen if they got sick. Our Lady said, *"Dear children, do not be afraid! None of you is going to get sick; therefore, I am begging you to make this sacrifice so one specific plan of God for salvation of the world can be realized!"* Although they did not quite comprehend, they decided to comply with Our Lady's wishes anyway. However, they did not tell their parents they were going up the mountain at night in bare feet, because they knew they would not be allowed to go.

When they arrived at the base of the mountain, they took their shoes off and began to climb in the freezing cold. Around the Ninth Station, Our Lady appeared unexpectedly. She smiled and thanked them for their sacrifices. She appeared a second time at the foot of the Cross at the top of the mountain and thanked them again. A few days later,

Our Lady told them that God's plan was realized, and that Satan failed to do what he was planning to do!

Draga wrote that at that time many people stayed up the night, praying and fasting. She lamented, *"If only those days could be repeated again; if people could only do half of what they did back in those days!"*

"Nevertheless," Draga noted, *"worth mentioning in a special way, are those pilgrims who walk to Medjugorje."* She said that some of them walk for hundreds of miles,

and fast on bread and water at the same time. Pilgrims who walk from Zagreb, the capital of Croatia, walk for 10 days. Pilgrims from Austria walk for two weeks, and those from Germany for four weeks! One man took 49 days to walk from Belgium! Draga wrote, *"One thing that was the same to all of them was great and immense joy while doing what they did to honor Our Lady."*



High school students from the Czech Republic walking to Medjugorje while singing in June of 2012

Our Lady of Lourdes

By Carolanne Kilichowski

Our Lady came with a message to Lourdes, but do we all know what that message is? Do we live it? Why was Our Lady permitted to come to earth? Did She have a mission? Was it important?

"Penance! Penance! Penance! Pray for sinners!" was often said to St. Bernadette. Do I still have your attention? Yes! Penance was the main message of Lourdes. Why did Our Lady have Bernadette rub the mud on her face to find the spring? Our Lady did not wish her to be ridiculed, but she was laughed at by the crowd. They laughed and said she looked like a pig! The grotto is actually where pigs would hide while feeding in the area – actually a pigsty (a representation of the poverty of the human person).

The messages of Lourdes are poverty, penance, prayer and Church. Our Lady calls each of us to live a spiritual life of prayer and sacrifice for sins. Have we listened to that message of Lourdes?

Many are surprised to know that St. Bernadette has an incorrupt body! Yes, her body is more beautiful than ever! It can be seen on the web pages from Lourdes. The face of St. Bernadette carries a message. Gaze at her face and notice the peace, the beauty! She was told by Our Lady that she would not be happy on earth, but in the next life. That holy

and beautiful face tells the story of happiness in eternal life for those who pray and do penance.

Lourdes, located in France, is a place of pilgrimage and wonder. It is a site where people come from all over the world in search of peace and of miracles. Yes, there have been many recorded miracles due to Lourdes. You can find that information easily today. For most, the real miracle appears in the heart. The miracle of conversion is a tremendous gift. Although it is wonderful to go to these sites of apparitions, we can receive the gift of conversion by opening our hearts to God and asking Him for the graces that we need. He will give it to us no matter where we are.

In all of Our Lady's apparitions in the past, and in the present appearances in Medjugorje, the message is always one of peace, conversion and penance. Let us appease Her tears by offering to Her Immaculate Heart our big and small acts of suffering. Give them to Her with the love in your heart and She will never forsake you.

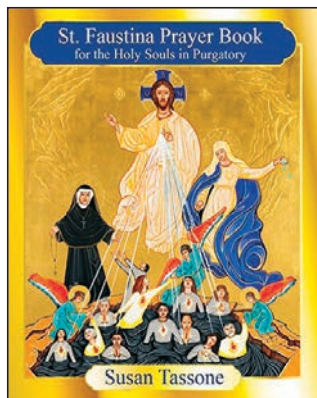
Editor's note: Carolanne lives in Hamburg, NY, and has been a pilgrimage leader for many years. For more information go to www.catholicpilgrims.com/lourdes/ba_bernadette_intro.htm and gaze at St. Bernadette's holy face.

Helping the Helpless

By June Klins

During sharing time at one of our Medjugorje prayer group meetings, my friend said that when her cousin moved to a Catholic nursing home years ago, she was very excited about having the opportunity to attend Mass there on a daily basis, since she had been a daily Communicant all her life. But her room was in a different section of the nursing home and she had no way to get to the chapel. She inquired about this and was told that the only way she could get there was if a family member or friend would take her. But there was no one who could do it. What a let-down that must have been. To me, it would have been like torture! To be so close, yet so far, from Holy Mass – where Heaven meets earth – must have caused this woman so much anguish!

Immediately, I interjected how this lady's situation reminded me of the plight of the Holy Souls in Purgatory. They are within reach of Heaven, but need help to get there since they are unable to pray for themselves. The greatest pain of the Holy Souls is that longing for God, and they have to rely on us, members of the "Church Militant," to help them.



Wouldn't that be a great thing to do for Lent during this Year of Mercy – to start a devotion to the Holy Souls? These are not strangers, but our parents, our grandparents, our aunts and uncles and cousins, etc. According to St. Augustine, "One of the holiest works, one of the best exercises of piety that we can practice in this world, is to offer sacrifices, alms, and prayers for the dead" (Homily 16). So, how can we help them? We can have Masses said for them; pray Rosaries; pray the Stations of the Cross, etc. The list goes on and on.

Recently, I watched an interview from EWTN of Purgatory author, Susan Tassone, who stated that the guardian angels of the Holy Souls tell them who is praying for them! Isn't that awesome?! Then they know who to pray for, in turn, and they will never forget us. It is a win-win situation. So what are we waiting for?

Editor's note: You can visit Susan Tassone's website, www.susantassone.com, to watch her interesting interviews on EWTN, and check out her wonderful books. St. Faustina Prayer Book for the Holy Souls, her newest book, will be released on March 1, 2016.

Fasting

By Peggy Angstadt

This was a very stressful year at school. I found myself not only ignoring the fast, but 'eating my way through' the year – stress eating. As I renew my commitment to prayer and fasting, I see the connections with fasting and the first 12 days of the De Montfort preparation for consecration to Jesus through Mary. The first part of the preparation is to cast off the spirit of the world, which is contrary to that of Jesus Christ. This is day six of my renewal, and each day my eyes are opened to attachments I have to this world, food excesses being one of those attachments.

When I looked up the definitions about fasting and abstinence, I found that fasting is always about FOOD. Abstinence may be food or any other thing. The Blessed Mother uses the word: fast. She also says, "Pray, pray, pray..."

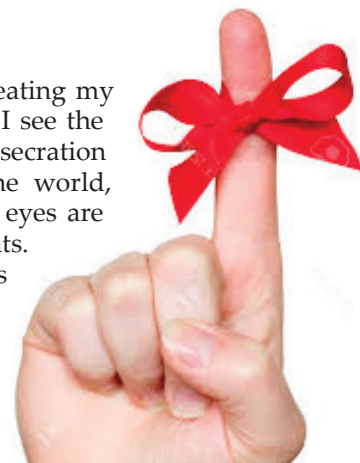
So here I share my own approach to returning to the fast for those who, like me, desire to return to this practice.

The night before...

1. I pray for the grace to fast.
2. Pray and surrender my heart and body to the Mother of God.
3. Offer my fast for a SPECIFIC, tangible situation or person.

The day of the fast...

1. I pray...
...to the Holy Spirit upon awakening...recall my Confirmation and the Power of His Love, and SURRENDER all the trials of the day ahead to that Love.
...to offer my fast to Our Lady for Her intentions, especially priests, unbelievers and the souls in Purgatory.
...to mention my specific fasting focus (parish priest, a specific soul).
2. Since my fasting has recently been inconsistent, I need a visual reminder. So I tie a red ribbon around the thumb or index finger of my right hand...the one that grabs the food! Whether it is old age or undiagnosed ADHD... I just simply forget sometimes during the day! It's a great visual for visual folks like me.
3. I pray ALL DAY LONG – a Hail Mary, or Memorare each hour (I have a watch that beeps!)
4. If it's a really difficult day, I say to myself, "I only have to fast for the next hour. Then I can eat." I can do ANYTHING for an hour, can't you?! When the next hour arrives, I repeat that sentence and commitment...an hour at a time, or a minute at a time. It's a "12-Step" thing, similar to those in 12-step programs.
5. I drink a LOT of water...all day!
6. I read Fr. Slavko's books on fasting – an inspiration! He's my hero!
7. Regarding family meals: when I'm really in prayer all day, I can make a point to prepare favorite family meals on those evenings. It adds to the sense of giving from my heart.



One last thought – if I have exceptional challenges in fasting, I remember challenges are actually gifts of God. If the challenge is to not eat, He allows this in order to STRENGTHEN me. The temptation may be from my own weakness: in weakness HIS power is perfected. Or the temptation may be from the ugly one who DETESTS holy fasts...then I call upon St. Michael. Michael is really awesome! It is IMPORTANT to actually BELIEVE my

prayer for help and support is answered!

“Prayer without fasting is like a soldier with one leg,” says visionary Ivan. As the spiritual battle rages, I desire to be a strong warrior under the command of our Twelve Star General: The Blessed Mother!

Editor’s note: Peggy lives in Shrewsbury, VT. She wrote this in 2013, and is now retired from teaching.

Making Excuses

By June Klins

Last summer, I attended a novena in which a talk was given each day. My memory is not what it used to be, so I cannot remember any of the talks except one – about forgiveness. I have read, heard and written about forgiveness before, but this one really stood out. It was simple and it was practical. The priest, Fr. Victor, said that when you need to forgive someone and are having trouble, just follow the example of Jesus. Jesus said, as He hung on the Cross, “Father, forgive them, *they know not what they do*” (Luke 23:34). Fr. Victor asserted that Jesus was *making an excuse* for them – they did not know what they were doing. And we should make excuses for those who hurt us also. I have never heard anyone put it quite this way, but it is so true. Father added that we should pray for them as well.

A friend once shared that when she told her daughter how she had been hurt by someone, her daughter surprised her by not siding with her, but by suggesting, “You should pray for him, because if he hurt you like that, it means he has a bigger hole in his heart than you do.” Her daughter was right. If you think about it, most people who do hurtful things are hurting themselves. Not

long after my first pilgrimage to Medjugorje I found myself not being angry with, but feeling sorry for people who do hurtful things. When I read in the newspaper about people getting arrested for violence or theft, etc., I feel sad that they have no peace in the heart, and I pray for them.

A few years ago, I heard a priest tell a story about a lady who lived in his neighborhood as a child. The neighborhood children all referred to her as “the witch,” because she was so mean. She would confiscate any balls that would roll into her yard and display them in her window to taunt the children. Then one Christmas, Father’s mother invited “the witch” to dinner. After dinner, “the witch” got up and kissed each one of them and said it was the best Christmas she ever had. It turns out she had had a very hard life, and this was the first time anyone had ever done anything nice for her.

From that day on, she allowed the children to retrieve their balls from her yard. She was even present for Father’s ordination.

“...pray, pray, pray, and you will be able to accept others with love and forgive all who have done evil to you” (Our Lady, 9/25/97).



Crucifix on Apparition Hill

Fr. Peterson’s Intercession for My Family

By Connie B.

After my son, Max, was healed through the intercession of Fr. Peterson, of a growth he had on his arm for a year, I began praying to Fr. Peterson for my other son’s alcohol addiction.

It was a trying year, but through the powerful intercession of Fr. Peterson and the grace of God, we are moving forward. I asked Father to keep his hand upon Adam’s shoulder and stay close to him. As often happens, things got worse, but I continued to pray. And Father, without a doubt, kept his hand on my son. When things came to a breaking point, Adam decided to go into rehab at St. Joseph’s in Matilda, PA on May 5, 2015.

Adam has been sober since then. He seems happier than he has been for a long time. My oldest son said he finally feels like he has his brother back.

Recently when we visited, Adam was lying on a bed with his daughter, Bailey, waiting for her to fall asleep. I had the little prayer card of Fr. Peterson and I said, “Adam, can I pray over you?” He said, “Sure.” He sat up, and I held the card on his shoulder. Bailey (only a little over two) got on her knees, and took the card from me. She held it to her heart. I don’t know why she thought to do that. Adam said,

“Bailey, let Grandma have that, honey.” She wasn’t about to give it up, and I wasn’t about to take it from her. That was the cutest thing I had ever seen. So I held my hand on Adam’s shoulder and Bailey held the card to her heart and we prayed. I thought it was amazing that a child of her age seemed to have such reverence without ever being told.

I continue to pray to Fr. Peterson, for I have been dealing with some anxiety issues. He has continually strengthened me. I used to be afraid to go anywhere alone, even to church, because I would experience anxiety attacks. But that is getting so much better, as well. I praise God for bringing Fr. Peterson into our lives and for hearing all the prayers for our family. Sometimes I do feel bad that he doesn’t get rest, but I am so grateful to him and want him to receive the title of saint that he deserves!

Editor’s note: The names in the above testimony have been changed for the privacy of the family. For our new subscribers, Fr. Peterson was our former spiritual advisor. Our bishop may open his cause for canonization in two years. To receive a prayer card that was touched to one of Fr. Peterson’s hairs, send a self-addressed stamped envelope to us at P.O. Box 6346, Erie, PA 16512, and mark “Fr. Peterson” on the envelope.

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MARY IS CALLING YOU

On June 24, 1981 in Medjugorje, Our Lady appeared to six children. She identified Herself as the Blessed Virgin, Queen of Peace, and has continued to appear daily. Her message is PEACE, peace with God and man. Her words to the visionaries, "I have come to tell the world that God exists. He is the fullness of life, and to enjoy this fullness and obtain peace, you must return to God."

Today, all but three of the visionaries have daily apparitions of the Blessed Mother. During the apparitions, the visionaries do not react to light, don't hear any sound or react to being touched. They feel that they are outside of time and space. All the visionaries declare to see the Blessed Virgin as they see other people - in three dimension. They pray and speak with Her.

The Blessed Mother is confiding ten secrets to each visionary (some are chastisements for the world) and promises to leave a visible sign at the place of the apparitions in Medjugorje for all humanity. This time, this period of grace, is for CONVERSION

and a DEEPENING OF FAITH. After the visible sign, those still living will have little time for conversion.

Father Jozo Zovko, who was the pastor of St. James when the apparitions began, has spoken about what he calls "the weapons" or the "the five stones" of Our Lady. They are: prayer with the heart, especially the Rosary; Eucharist; Holy Bible; monthly Confession; and fasting.

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

To borrow an original prayer cloth from Medjugorje for a week, send a self-addressed stamped envelope to the address below. You must include your phone number. If you want a prayer cloth we made to keep, send a self-addressed stamped business size (4 1/8" x 9 1/2") envelope with \$.71 postage on it.



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