

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.



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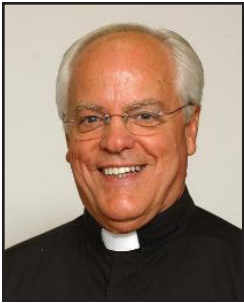
CURRENT MONTHLY MESSAGE OF MAY 25, 2017

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.



On June 25th we will celebrate 36 years of the apparitions of Our Lady of Medjugorje. We thank our Heavenly Father for sending His beloved Daughter all these years to guide us on our way to holiness and peace.

Dear children! The Most High has permitted me to call you anew to conversion. Little children, open your hearts to the grace to which you are all called. Be witnesses of peace and love in this peaceless world. Your life here on earth is passing. Pray that through prayer you may yearn for Heaven and the things of Heaven and your hearts will see everything differently. You are not alone; I am with you and intercede before my Son Jesus for you. Thank you for having responded to my call.



Fr. Bill Kiel

What Kind of Example Am I to Others?

By Fr. Bill Kiel

We hear it often said that we are the product of our environment — that many people around us have an effect on our thoughts and behavior. But how often do we think of the influence *we* have on *other* people?

“Only those who are pure, humble and filled with love sustain the world — they are saving themselves and the world...

apostles of my love, spread the faith in the hearts of people by your example, your prayer and merciful love. I am beside you, I will help you.” (5/2/17)

These words bring with them questions we should be thinking about. Am I trying to be a person who is pure? Am I trying to live a humble life? Am I filled with love? When reflecting on my life, do I try to live the Commandments, so I open myself to receiving God’s grace to live a life free from sin, being more Christ-like, being more pure? As I live each day, do I try to live according to the Will of God in ways that are humble, not seeking the attention of others, but only living to give God praise through my actions and words? Am I filling myself with more of God’s love by being open to receiving the love that God the Father has for me? Only I can answer these questions; and they reveal my relationship with God.

Who have been my examples — those I admired and followed? Have I thought about the passive examples in my life and their influences? How have they made positive

impacts on my life? Negative impacts? To what extent has Jesus in His humanity and divinity influenced my life? Has Jesus been my focus of example, the greatest model for me to follow?

How are my prayers spreading faith in the hearts of others? Do I ask others to pray with me when the opportunity is present? What kind of prayers do I pray when in the presence of others, Catholic and non-Catholic? Are my prayers evidence that I am a faith-filled Catholic with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit at the center of my life?

“Love” is used very freely in our language, but to what depth does it have meaning in our daily lives? Do I really



Mirjana

accept God’s love, or do I only say that I accept it? If I only say I accept it, I am not living the love of God in my relationships with other people. Am I forgiving, compassionate, kind, patient, helpful? Am I Christ-like in my thoughts and my actions toward others? Am I an example of a living Jesus? Being an example of Jesus and having a deep living faith requires a sincere love for God and for accepting God’s love.

The Holy Eucharist is a profound source of grace for being a person of purity, humility and love. What a blessing to receive the Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus!!!

We are reminded that our Blessed Mother is with us to help us become more like Her Son, Jesus. Mary’s prayers of intercession are invaluable for our faith development.

Mary, Queen of Peace, pray for us.

Message to Mirjana on May 2, 2017

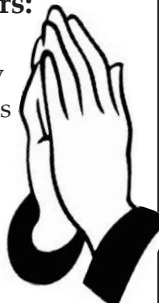
“Dear children, I am calling you to pray, not to ask for, but to offer sacrifice – sacrificing yourselves. I am calling you to reveal the truth and merciful love. I am praying to my Son for you, for your faith, which is all the more diminishing in your hearts. I am imploring Him to help you with the divine spirit, as I also desire to help you with my motherly spirit. My children, you must be better. Only those who are pure, humble and filled with love sustain the world – they are saving themselves and the world. My children, my Son is the heart of the world. He should be loved and prayed to, and not always betrayed anew. Therefore, you, apostles of my love, spread the faith in the hearts of people by your example, your prayer and merciful love. I am beside you, I will help you. Pray for your shepherds to have all the more light, so as to be able to illuminate all those who live in darkness. Thank you.”

Editor’s note: Our Lady asks us to sacrifice. We still have a small number of sacrifice beads available for free.

Prayer Intention of Pope Francis for June

National Leaders:

That national leaders may firmly commit themselves to ending the arms trade, which victimizes so many innocent people.



Our thanks to Sue Taccone, Diane Niebauer, Cassondra Dragone, Marge Spase, Cindy Bielamin, Chris Falk, Mary Tirak, Lore Blair, Vickie DeCoursey, Julie Hansen, Dianne Yochim, Sue Kirby, Barb Cesare, Kathy Wayman, Pat Berrier, Barb Sirianni, Louise Lotze, and those who want to remain anonymous for their help with the May mailing. We thank Helen Bell, Isaac Ripple, Diana Stillwell and Dr. Steven Miller for their photos, and Dorothy Cavanaugh and Mary Stumpp for making us more prayer cloths. We also thank our proofreader, Pat Berrier, and our webmaster, Jason Klins.

As of May 25, 2017, the number of Masses reported for Our Lady’s intentions was 17,841. Someone recently asked if we hit 20,000 yet. We have a ways to go, but if all of our readers, including our online readers would have a Mass said, we could reach it in no time. How about it, those of you who have not yet participated in this great endeavor?

Medjugorje and Recent Comments by Pope Francis

7 Points to Consider

By Dr. Mark Miravalle

On his return flight from Fatima to Rome on May 13, 2017, Pope Francis offered some personal comments about the Medjugorje apparitions in response to a question from an Italian journalist. These comments have led to false and misleading secular headlines such as “Pope Declares Medjugorje A Hoax,” and “Pope Nixes Medjugorje Apparitions.”

For a proper understanding of the comments of the Holy Father on Medjugorje, the following points should be kept in mind:

1. The comments of Pope Francis do not in any way constitute an official or final Church declaration on the status of the Medjugorje apparitions. Rather, they were impromptu comments made by the Holy Father, who further qualified his remarks by stating, “This I say as a personal opinion.”

2. The papal evaluation of Medjugorje continues, and Pope Francis specifically mentioned the further report which he will be receiving from his papal envoy to Medjugorje, Polish Archbishop Henrik Hoser. Archbishop Hoser, in his public homilies and press conferences, has strongly supported Medjugorje as a place of profound prayer and global spiritual fruits.

3. On May 16, 2017, the conclusions of the Vatican Commission established by Pope Benedict XVI in 2010 to investigate Medjugorje (referred to as the “Ruini Commission,” after commission leader, Cardinal Ruini), were released by the Italian newspaper, *La Stampa*, in its Vatican Insider column. The Ruini Commission was highly praised by Pope Francis during his May 13 comments: “It was a commission of good theologians, bishops, cardinals, but good. Very good... The Ruini report was very, very good.” In this report, the Commission voted 13 to 1 in favor of the authenticity of the first 7 apparitions of the visionaries, and moreover, recommended that Medjugorje be granted the status of a “pontifical sanctuary.” The ecclesiastical designation of a location as a pontifical sanctuary is, in itself, a form of Church approval, as the Church does not grant pontifical status to places of only false apparitions.

4. The Holy Father indicated a distinction between the earlier apparitions and later apparitions, which implies that he may perceive the former to be more worthy of a

conclusion of authenticity. This is also a conclusion of the Ruini Commission. In either case, authentic apparitions would constitute a substantive aspect of the Medjugorje event.

5. Pope Francis seems to be personally uncomfortable with the aspect of Medjugorje that Our Lady announces a specified day and time when she is to appear. However, the specifying of time and date of appearance is an established precedent of numerous other Church approved Marian apparitions, including Fatima, Lourdes, Kibeho, Itapiranga, Laux, San Nicolas, and others.

6. There is Church precedence for legitimate development, and even change, in the personal opinion of a Roman pontiff in regards to a particular private revelation or mystical event. For example, the saintly Pope Pius XI entertained serious personal doubts about St. Pio of Pietreclina for the majority of his papacy. When Padre Pio was eventually exonerated of the many false claims about him and accepted as authentic by the Holy Father, Pius XI told the stigmatist

saint that it was not he whom he had condemned, but only the person of whom he had heard so many negative and false reports.

7. Since Pope Francis has yet to make a definitive judgment and consequent declaration, it would be prudent to remain patient and open for the official and final judgment of Pope Francis regarding the Medjugorje apparitions.

Let us all “pray from the heart” for our beloved Holy Father, Pope Francis, and for his docility to the Holy Spirit and Our Lady herself regarding the best possible discernment and eventual final judgment of the events of Medjugorje. At the same time, let us prepare our own hearts to receive his eventual official and final decision regarding Medjugorje with the proper “religious submission of mind and will” which should obediently be given to the “authentic magisterium of the Roman Pontiff, even when he is not speaking *ex cathedra*” (cf. *Lumen Gentium*, 25, Second Vatican Council).

Editor’s note: Dr. Miravalle is Professor of Theology and Mariology, Franciscan University of Steubenville. He is the author of many books, a number of which deal with Medjugorje.



Our Lady and the Pope in June’s backyard shrine

“Half Full”

At Fatima, the only apparitions with official Church approval are the ones from May 13 to October 13, 1917. The apparitions to Lucia after that time never received “Church approval.” Likewise, in Kibeho, Rwanda, only the apparitions of Our Lady in 1982-1983 received approval, and only to the original three seers. Subsequently, a shrine has been built to Our Lady of Sorrows in Kibeho. So if only the first seven apparitions in Medjugorje get Church approval, that is not that unusual; it is a very good thing! We should look at the glass as “half full,” instead of “half empty.”



“We fast for three purposes: (1) to restrain the desires of the flesh; (2) to raise the mind to contemplate sublime things; (3) to make satisfaction for our sins. These are good and noble things, and so fasting is virtuous.”

~ St. Thomas Aquinas

My Life Has Never Been the Same

By Marie-Adele Hayes

My life was upside down and I was a mess, when a gentleman approached me after Mass one evening and said that Our Lady wanted me “to have these rosaries.” I started to cry because they reminded me of my deceased husband’s, which I buried with him. The man returned shortly with material about Medjugorje, and invited me to their meetings, where I met many wonderful people.

After some time, even though I didn’t really believe in it, I decided to go to Medjugorje. I wanted to see what it was all about. After all, all my new friends had gone and couldn’t stop talking about it. On this trip, everything that could happen did, and then some! Every fear I ever had materialized – and I found the Lord is the only one that you can trust.

This was about thirty years ago, and Yugoslavia was still under Communist control. I made the arrangements and was to meet up with a tour group in Chicago. We were to fly on a Yugoslavian plane to Zagreb and then on to Dubrovnik. On the plane from Dallas to Chicago, I experienced excruciating pain in my upper jaw. I found out later that one of my implants had just come away from the bone. This pain continued on and off through my two-week trip. Then when I reached Chicago, I could NOT find any one in my travel group. (My tour group never did materialize!)

When it came time to board the plane, they informed us that we would need to board a bus to get to the plane. I was the last person on the bus, so I was the closest one to the door. When the door opened, there stood a very large Jordanian plane with Arabic writing on the sides. At that time, they were hijacking Jordanian planes and even had killed some of the passengers. Needless to say, no one wanted to get off the bus. We were told it was all right, just to go get on the plane. My sister later asked me, “Why did you go? You were still in the U.S.” I don’t know; it never occurred to me to stay.

We soon realized that the Yugoslavian crew members couldn’t read Arabic. The plane appeared to be very old; you could actually see outside in some of the cracks along its insides. Later in the flight, an attendant came back and took about 12 of us up front temporarily to the first class compartment. When I asked why, he said that they needed to balance the weight. I also asked him what was going on up front, and he told me it was better I didn’t ask any more questions. We were never given anything to eat or drink on this 13-hour journey. At one point in the flight, I was speaking to a Protestant girl who was also on her way to Medjugorje. She was trying to learn the Hail Mary so she could say the Rosary. While I was helping her, suddenly the plane dropped about 1,000 feet. Everyone was screaming, including me (this had been one of my worst fears). My new friend turned to me and said, “Why are you yelling? The angels have surrounded this plane.”

We finally landed in Zagreb, and my luggage had not made it to the plane. All the other people boarded a plane for Dubrovnik, but my ticket had me on another flight at a

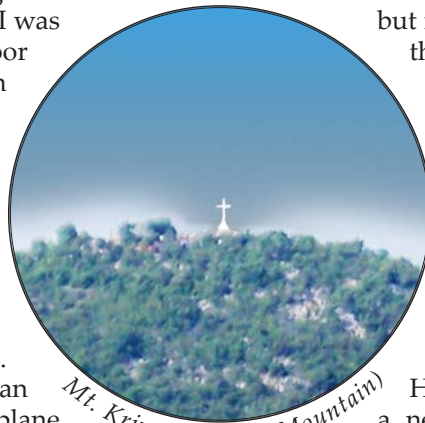
later time. As I sat waiting, I just watched the soldiers with their guns, all through the airport. Finally I was off for Dubrovnik. When I arrived, a gentleman was waiting with another couple and said that he would place us on a bus for Medjugorje. The bus ride was about two hours, and when we got to Medjugorje, we found out that they didn’t have any room for us! We were sent to Citluk for the night and they told us that they would find a place for us the next day. I was glad to have an American couple with me, especially a man, because the Communists didn’t seem to have respect for women. I was becoming weak – I hadn’t had anything to eat or drink since I left the States over 24 hours previously. The man at the hotel desk called a cab, and he took us to a restaurant. We all had a gourmet meal for about \$3.00 each. I couldn’t believe it. Back at the hotel I took a shower and realized that all I had to sleep in was my underwear. (My clothes never did arrive until the night before I was supposed to leave. I just washed things out every night and miraculously they were dry the following morning.)

The next morning, a police car arrived to take us back to Medjugorje. The man would not speak other than to open the car door and say “IN” in a very disdainful voice. Looking back, I wonder why I wasn’t afraid – I was in a very dangerous situation. The Communist policeman took us to a small house, where I was to stay for a week. It was Holy Week and I couldn’t have been in a holier place, but neither did I know or care back then. I was thinking only of myself, and I was not very happy about what had already happened. I just wanted this week to pass and get back home.

I awoke the next morning only to be able to see a Cross on the top of the mountain. It was a beautiful sight to see every morning. I couldn’t get over the peace that is in the village of Medjugorje. I climbed Mt. Krizevac, went to Adoration, said the Rosary, and went to Apparition Hill. I also was able to visit Father Jozo in a neighboring village and hear him preach.

All of this I thought was wonderful, but it didn’t seem to make a great impression on me, at least not at that particular time. The family I stayed with was lovely, even though they didn’t speak any English. They couldn’t have given me more – they shared everything, and if they didn’t have enough they would make sure we got first servings. It’s hard to believe how these poor people were so very generous. I watched so many elderly women working in the fields and grape orchards. They would be there early in the morning and still there late in the evening. What really stayed with me was that *outside of Medjugorje, no one seemed to smile* and I never saw any children playing. They would walk in the street in a straight line with their hands behind their backs. It all seemed very strange to me – almost like a dream. If this was what Communism offered, why would anyone want to be a part of it?

The other couple left and I was alone again for the rest of the week. I spent my time climbing the mountain, praying in church and looking in a few store windows. I couldn’t



Mt. Krizevac (Cross Mountain)

believe how, with all these soldiers all over, there still was an unbelievable peace in Medjugorje. I never felt afraid. I ran into my friend that I had met on the plane, and she told me that she had seen blood coming from the Cross on Mt. Krizevac. I had heard this had happened to a very few individuals, and I was delighted for her. She seemed like a saint. I have often wondered what happened to her, as I never saw her again.

The night before I left, there was a full moon. It was breath-taking. I associate the full moon with blessings, as all my children were born on a full moon. I went to Mass on Easter morning and then got ready to leave. A guide was to take me to Dubrovnik, show me around the town, and get me to my hotel where I would spend the night before my flight the next morning. In the afternoon, he arrived and the woman of the house started yelling at him, but I didn't know what all the fuss was about. When I got in the cab, another young lady was sitting in the front. I was happy, thinking that I now had company again. She said nothing, so I assumed that she couldn't speak English. When we finally got to Dubrovnik, after my guide had checked me into the hotel, he told me we would then go into town. I left with both of them and my hotel key (thank God) with the name of the hotel on it. When we got into town, he told me that the girl was his girl friend, and they were going to spend a few days together. He showed me the bus I was to take that would take me back to the hotel. After he left, I started to get afraid, as I didn't speak the language and didn't know where to go. The town looked beautiful, but for me, all I wanted to do was to go back to the hotel. I found an English-speaking cab driver and showed him my hotel key and asked him to take me there. When we got back to the hotel, he asked for much more money than the meter called for. I told him that I didn't have that and the meter didn't say that amount. He became very, very angry and said that it was double on Sunday. I was about to cry. He locked all the doors so I couldn't get out. I saw some people walking toward the hotel, so I unrolled the window and started to yell. He told me to get out. I threw some money at him and ran as fast as I could. Shaking, I went up to my room and locked the door. After I had gathered my senses back, I decided that I would call down to the lobby for a sandwich, as I didn't want to leave my room. The phone was dead! All night long I kept praying, "I believe in God, etc." I prayed that prayer over and over again all night long. Finally, dawn came, and I went downstairs to get my passport from the desk clerk and tell him to call the cab for the airport.

When I got to the counter at the airport, the clerk looked at my ticket and just said, "Sit down." He was trying to show me something in a book. They had no computers, just loose-leaf books. When I tried to tell him my plane was about to leave, he just repeated, "Sit down!" Now I was close to tears and was shaking. As the airport lobby thinned out, I saw what looked like a cafeteria and decided to sit there. I got a cup of coffee and started praying – I don't believe I have ever prayed that hard before or since. I kept asking the Lord to PLEASE HELP ME! After sitting there for what seemed like eternity, a man came up to me and, in perfect



Dubrovnik

English, asked if HE COULD HELP ME. I started to cry. I told him of my situation, and he said I needed to get to a computer, which was in the basement of the airport. He took me downstairs to the computers, and he and a woman started talking in some language that I didn't understand. He started yelling and she was yelling right back. Finally, she started typing and then handed him another ticket.

He told me I had a seat on the plane and I would be going home. I really started crying then. Back upstairs, he asked me if I wanted something to eat, and I realized I again hadn't eaten in over 24 hours. He took me to a restaurant in the airport and we ordered breakfast. Then it really got weird! He didn't have any money, and after I paid the bill, he told me that he was from Germany and was there just for the weekend and didn't have any luggage. He told me to stay in the airport and not to leave, no matter who or what tried to get me to go outside. He said I was safe as long as I stayed in the airport. He asked me to walk him to his plane and act as if I had known him for years. He also wanted to carry my luggage, but I wouldn't allow him. He had his arm around me and kept asking me to join him. I thanked him and repeated that I just wanted to go home. He asked me to stay there and wave to him as the plane took off. After the plane left, I returned to the lobby of the airport. It was almost deserted then. I sat there and a policewoman came and sat a few feet from me. She followed me wherever I went in the airport, even to the bathroom.

Around 2:00 that afternoon, I heard English being spoken. I could never express what a beautiful sound that was to me. I ran to meet them – a group of Jewish couples who had been touring Europe and heading back to the States. I told them briefly what had happened. They said not to worry, that I was with them now, going back to the United States. The Lord had heard me and I was going home! The trip back was wonderful. I sat beside a nun who introduced me to a famous healing nun who was also on the plane. I kissed the ground when I got back and thanked God for all His goodness and also allowing me to be born and raised in the United States. I thank you, Jesus, for all your blessings and forgiveness.

From the time I got back home from Medjugorje, my life changed for the better. I have met so many wonderful and blessed people. I no longer travel in the fast lane, but I enjoy life like never before. I have a peace that didn't exist for me before, and I do everything I can to keep it. I know now that Jesus is in control of everything, and nothing is going to happen unless HE allows it. *What happened on that trip had to happen*; otherwise I would not have attempted to change. I trusted no one and believed in nothing.

I did ask my cousin, who is a Jesuit priest, about the gentleman in the airport. He thought he was a spy for both countries, who probably thought that I might be one also, because a woman would never travel in a Communist country by herself. Angel or spy, he got me out of there, and my life has never been the same. God works in mysterious ways!

Editor's note: Marie-Adele lives in Plano, TX.

We Are All Pilgrims

By June Klins

On May 13, 2017, I was blessed to be able to help with a bus pilgrimage to the Fatima Shrine in Lewiston, NY. I decided to include "A Pilgrim's Prayer" (right) in the folders for our pilgrims because I knew the shrine would be very crowded for the 100th anniversary. I have heard this prayer read on my pilgrimages to Medjugorje and have been meaning to share it with our readers. When I searched for it on the internet, I was surprised to discover that it was written by John Haffert, the co-founder of the Blue Army of Our Lady of Fatima! Dean Rose, who led our bus, felt that since our lives are a pilgrimage on the way to Heaven, this should be shared with everyone, so he posted it on his Facebook page. Not long after Dean told me this, I read on the back cover of Fr. Svetozar Kraljevic's book entitled *Pilgrimage*: "For we are all pilgrims – on a journey that will last a lifetime."

A Pilgrim's Prayer, By John M. Haffert

If some things do not happen as they are scheduled, Lord, may I remember that I am a pilgrim not a tourist!

If I should get tired and inclined to become short-tempered, Lord, may I remember that I am a pilgrim not a tourist!

If my meal in a foreign country may not be to my particular liking, Lord, may I remember that I am a pilgrim not a tourist!

If any delays should occur and I should become anxious, Lord, may I remember that I am a pilgrim not a tourist!

If some other pilgrim is making noise so that I cannot hear the guide, Lord, may I remember that I am a pilgrim and not a tourist when I ask that person to be a bit more quiet!

If someone takes a better seat or more choice place, Lord, may I remember that I am a pilgrim not a tourist!

If I find myself last in line waiting, Lord, may I remember that I am a pilgrim not a tourist!

If I should get a chance to help another person, who always seems to be annoying me, Lord, may I remember that I am a pilgrim not a tourist!

But Lord, especially let me remember that what I find objectionable in another is really what you oftentimes find objectionable in me and let me remember this and forgive the other, as you are continually forgiving me!

Two Broken Hands

By June Klins

Sister Emmanuel wrote in her book, *Medjugorje in the 90s*, that at the time of Our Lady's apparition, we can receive the same graces as the visionaries even if we are not physically present at the apparition. One of the visionaries, Vicka, told Sr. Emmanuel, "The Gospa is very pleased when people come to Medjugorje, as She has made an oasis of peace of this place, and She calls us all here. But if you really can't get here, but open your heart widely at the time when She appears, then, wherever you are, you will receive the same graces we, the visionaries, do." Is that awesome, or what?!!!

On February 25, I set an alarm to remind myself that it was apparition time. When it went off, I went to the little altar in my house and I knelt down and did something I had never done before. With my right hand, I held the statue of Our Lady of Medjugorje in the place where the left hand is missing. (I wrote about this statue in the August, 2016 issue – that the hand broke off on my way home from Medjugorje and I felt this was Our Lady's way of asking me to be "Her extended hand.") I prayed with all my heart that Our Lady would give me all the graces necessary to do Her work to spread the messages. I prayed for about five minutes.

That evening, I went to our Adoration chapel. There is a bench outside the chapel where people sometimes put their unwanted religious items, free for the taking. I noticed a statue of Our Lady of Medjugorje, so I picked it up. I was flabbergasted when I noticed that the extended hand was broken off, just like my statue! I felt that might have been a confirmation – that Our Lady was telling me She did hear my plea for special graces at apparition

time earlier that day!

As I kept looking at the statue, it seemed different though. Soon I realized the difference. On this statue, the right hand was the one broken off, while my one at home was the left hand. I wondered what this meant. The visionaries say there is a reason for everything.

The next morning it came to me that since between the two statues, both the right and left hands are broken off, that maybe Our Lady was telling me to be Her extended "hands" (plural) – that we live in such a challenging world, that She really needs our help more than ever (and since you are reading this, it is meant for you also).

Later, it dawned on me that a good way to help spread Our Lady's messages would be by distributing the wonderful book, *My Heart Will Triumph*, written by visionary Mirjana, in addition to our own book, *I Have Come to Tell the World That God Exists*. As I mentioned in our April and May issues, we are offering both books for free to subscribers who cannot afford the books. All we ask is that you pray a Rosary for Our Lady's intentions and for the lady whose donation made this possible. Another way to spread the messages would be to donate the books to libraries to make them available to other people who may

not know anything about Our Lady of Medjugorje and the messages. If you know of a library (church, school or public) that will accept them, please send us the mailing address. Still another way to spread the messages is by distributing our Beginner's Guides. If you would like a packet, please let us know how many. (We will be updating them again after the Pope's official statement later this year.)



Jesus is the Lens Through Which We Read Scripture

By Cathy Nolan

Fr. Leon gave a powerful homily yesterday on how we interpret Scripture and how it can inform our lives, our choices. I thought I would reproduce it for you so you can chew on it. Fr. Leon is trying to help us understand how to discern the Truth. It is very good.

Fr. Leon Pereira's Homily on March 22, 2017:

If I were to give you all a copy of *The Wizard of Oz* and you read the book, there would be as many interpretations of this book as there are you! Some of you would come away thinking that the wizard was a great man. Some of you would think he is a megalomaniac. Some of you would think he is a coward, or a frightened man. Some of you would come away loving the munchkins. Others would think they are a nuisance. But there would be as many interpretations as the number of pilgrims who had received a copy of *The Wizard of Oz* from me.

To read is to interpret. Therefore, when someone says to you something like, "Where is that in the Bible?" this becomes automatically one of the silliest questions they can ask – because as soon as you read it, you are interpreting it. So you have to say, "Well, how do I know that your interpretation is correct? How do you know mine isn't better than yours? And how do you know that we are even able to read these things by ourselves and somehow magically come to an understanding?"

Jesus is the lens through which we read the Scripture. We have Holy Mother Church to interpret the Scriptures for us. But Jesus is the lens through which we see and understand the Scriptures. What do I mean? For example, in the Old Testament, there is a law that adulterers are to be stoned to death. Why don't we stone adulterers? Because of Jesus, because of what He did. When the adulterous woman was brought before Him, He said, "Let he who is without sin cast the first stone." He didn't say, "Don't stone her." He just said to let whoever is without sin be the first. So He didn't abolish the law; He perfects the law and fulfills it. And that is why we don't stone adulterers (mostly because we would be stoning ourselves). OK?

Think of another example. ...Jesus says, "Because of the hardness of your hearts, Moses gave the children of Israel divorce." You can divorce your wife and marry another for whatever reason basically, is what it boils down to – if

she is displeasing in your sight. But Jesus says, "It was not so from the beginning." Then He completes and perfects the law. He says, "Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery," and etc. If a divorced woman marries someone else, she commits adultery. This doesn't come from man, but from Jesus Himself. He completes and perfects the law.

It becomes difficult for us, because our lives are complicated. We make them complicated somehow – through original sin, through our selfishness, through chance, through all sorts of reasons. But then to say, therefore, that Christ must meet me where I am, is a bit of a strange thing to say. Christ does meet us where we are, but imagine if where you are is at the bottom of a well. If you say, "God should meet me where I am; the Church should meet me where I am. Come down to the bottom of the well and sit by me and we will drown together," that's not going to solve anyone's problems. Christ comes and meets us where we are so that He can lift us up to where He is. That is a very important point. We don't stay down there in the mud or in the depths of the well. But Christ comes to lift us up. And when we say it's impossible for man, Jesus says, "Yes, I said that already. But all things are possible for God."

When people bandy around this catch phrase, "The Eucharist is not a reward for the strong; it is medicine for the weak," then you have to ask yourself, "Who is the strong person?" It is the person who says, "I don't need to repent. I don't need the Eucharist. I'm not going to repent." That is the strong person. And the weak one is the one who says, "I have sinned. Have mercy on me. Forgive me and help me."

So remember, many people will come, lying to us and trying to falsify the Gospel. But Jesus is the lens through which we read and understand the Scriptures. He told us He is the Truth, and He has come to bear witness to the Truth. And in these latter days, men will have itching ears, wanting all kinds of unsound teachings, willing to run away as soon as a pied piper comes along with false teachings. But we know what Jesus Himself said, and we know that He is the Truth. And even if it is hard for us to live by the Truth, Jesus has the grace for us to live by it.

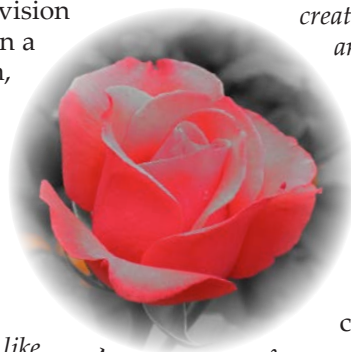
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Vision of Three Flowers

One day during prayer, Marija was shown a vision of a flower but in each vision the flower was in a different state. At first it was beautiful, fresh, colorful and in the second vision the flower was withering and had lost its beauty. During the third vision, drops of water began to fall on the flower and immediately it regained its freshness, beauty and radiance.

Marija didn't understand the meaning of this vision, so during one of her apparitions she asked Our Lady what it meant.

Our Lady smiled and said: "Your heart is like that flower. Every heart is beautiful because it is God's



Medjugorje rose

creation, like the first flower. When in sin the flower fades and the beauty dulls and it begins to droop like the second flower. The water that fell on the third flower represents the Sacrament of Confession. With the Lord's love and mercy in Confession, the soul is cleansed of its sins, and it becomes radiant and regains its beauty and is revived again."

We thank You, Lord, for Your mercy in the Sacrament of Reconciliation, and we ask for Your grace to be truly humble and contrite in confessing our sins. AMEN

The Medjugorje Council of Ireland

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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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