



THE SPIRIT OF MEDJUGORJE

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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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FR. RAY DONOHUE

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MONTHLY MESSAGE OF FEBRUARY 25, 2024

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! Pray and renew your heart so that the good which you have sown may bear the fruit of joy and oneness with God. Darnel has seized many hearts and they have become unfruitful; that is why, you little children, be light, love and my outstretched hands in this world which yearns for God Who is love. Thank you for having responded to my call."

"...Kneel down beneath the Cross and look at my Son. He conquered sin and died so that you, my children, may live. Permit me to help you not to die but to live with my Son forever. Thank you!" (Our Lady, 10/2/09)

The picture above was taken on Apparition Hill. May you and your families have a transforming Lent and a beautiful Easter.

Editor's note: The word "darnel" is found in certain translations of Matthew's gospel in the Parable of the Wheat and the Weeds (Mt 13:24-30). See page 5 for more on this.

Are We Late? Early? Or Something Else?

By Fr. Ray Donohue



Fr. Ray

Here we are in the month of March. This is kind of a crazy year of sorts! Last month in February, we talked about the holy season of Lent and things we can do, and should do, as well as things we should not do and stay far away from, to make for a holy, successful and blessed Lenten experience, for ourselves, and for others!

Usually now we would only talk of Lent, however, Easter Sunday this year is the very last Sunday of March, which is the very last day

of March, the 31st!

So we still have the journey of Lent in our midsts! That is an extra gift from God to us all! Many people have asked me: "Why is Easter so early this year, why can't it be in April when the weather is nicer and it is more like Spring? Why do they change the dates and months all the time???" You may remember some years ago, I explained why Easter is sometimes early, sometimes "just right" and sometimes later! It goes back centuries with an Ecumenical Council where it was decided that: "Easter Sunday should be the first Sunday after the first full moon after the Spring Equinox." It was to bring unity into the Church and it was agreed upon. Some Christians do not abide by this, but most, including the Holy Roman Catholic Church, do!

So, let's ask ourselves: How is my Lent going? Am I prepared spiritually to be re-born anew with Jesus in this holy time of the year? Are my Lenten practices of doing things, and not doing things going well and benefitting me and others? Am I any kinder and more patient with others, and especially with myself? Am I still complaining about this or that, or trying to be more positive and kinder and holier?

Very, very soon is Holy Week, starting with Palm Sunday. Do I place a Blessed Palm in my home, and other places? My Grandmother had many places in her home to put Blessed Palms – bedrooms, kitchen, bathroom, living room, basement, and there was one nail in her old garage with a small little note she wrote saying: "This nail is for Blessed Palms only." She wouldn't let my uncles or anyone put a tool or anything else on that nail, only that palm was allowed! She allowed me to go collect the palms before Palm Sunday, so we could pray and then burn the palms and put new ones on that nail and throughout her home. Each room had a palm in it, reminding us of Jesus, His Triumph and His suffering and His love!

Holy Week shows us how to walk with Jesus and His disciples, and shows us humanity in full color! Our Lord's own disciples ran away, hid from the public, and most of them even denied knowing Him. Do we do that when

people see us praying a holy Rosary, or having prayers near our favorite chair, to make excuses about religious things we have around our home? Some people, when they came into our house as I was growing up, would see a Crucifix in every room, statues of the Lord, the Infant of Prague, the Blessed Mother, and would comment that they "felt like they were in a church." My mom and dad and I took that as a compliment and a Grace and Blessing! It was in no means "overdone," but you knew a Catholic with love and kindness and Faith lived in that house!

Holy things are not lucky charms, but "Sacramentals," things blessed to help us and remind us that God is present in that house and respect is due to Him and the Blessed Mother and all of Heaven! We can be "living sacramentals"

by loving, praying, forgiving, by kindness, peacefulness, holiness, and joyfulness! Anyone who lives a Lent and Holy Week, and lives an Easter is a joyful person, a person of hope, a person of love!

Jesus is calling us in Holy Week to come to Holy Mass on Holy Thursday and be one of the disciples, one of the Apostles at the Last Supper. Do we leave the table early like Judas (not that we literally leave the table), but turn our back on the Lord and go in a way that denies our Faith? Do we stay with Jesus and walk with Him and be with Him in the time He needs us most? God uses us just as He used His Apostles, to proclaim the Truth and Love of God – to follow the Commandments, to love, forgive, listen, and trust!

Do we stand by the Cross of Jesus on Good Friday and walk the holy Stations of the Cross if we are able to go to church? If you can go to church, DO IT! We do not have a "GET OUT OF CHURCH FREE CARD!" If we are able to go, there is nothing to

think about! GO TO CHURCH if you can without making excuses, and participate in Holy Week.

Above all: GO TO HOLY CONFESSION and do not slack in that at all. It doesn't matter if you went a month before or 20 years ago, GET TO HOLY CONFESSION and make a good Confession. You will NOT be yelled at – you will be welcomed and there will be great joy in Heaven and in your heart and in your life. There is nothing you did, or did not do, that cannot be forgiven. Everything can be forgiven and WILL BE FORGIVEN if you are sorry and move ahead without looking back! God wants us to go to Holy Confession and your soul will be as it was the moment you were Baptized! ALL sins are forgiven. You can go face to face or behind a screen, but either way, GET TO HOLY CONFESSION AND THERE IS ABSOLUTELY NO EXCUSE FOR NOT GOING! If you can't get out of the house, call the priest and he will come to you. That is what a priest does, and remember, all priests go to Confession too, like everyone else. God gave the priest the Grace to forgive sins, however, he cannot forgive his own sins, so he goes to Confession too! I make a point to go once a month. It gives grace and joy and peace and holiness! Our Lady asks us all to go once a month, we can do that for Her, can't we? (Just so you know... the answer to that is a whopping "YES!")



Window in Fr. Ray's chapel

So, Dublin and I wish you all a very holy, blessed, sacred and wonderful Holy Week and Easter. We are all an Easter PEOPLE! We belong to Christ, Who suffered for us, yes, you and I, and died for us, but the Joy we celebrate is His Resurrection from the dead and opening Heaven to us all.

Rejoice and be glad! Die to ourselves so that we can Live in eternity! There is a place in Heaven for us all, but while we are here in this world, the way to get to Heaven is to be "ALLELUIA PEOPLE" – people who rejoice and follow Jesus in all His ways and example. The major things we can do in our lives are these: Forgive one another, and forgive yourself. Take advantage while we can of the Holy Sacraments, especially the Holy Mass and Holy Confession. Be kind, and be happy. Put your trust in God and His ways,

not in the world's ways. The world will pass away, but Heaven is Eternal. This body of ours will die, as Jesus' body died, but when that happens, we are assured of Eternal Life if we try to do what God asks us to do. Read the Creed and pray the Creed we pray at Mass...it begins: "I BELIEVE..." and when you pray that at Mass and in your holy prayers, especially the Holy Rosary... don't just say the words, reflect on them and LIVE THEM!

A Very Blessed and Happy Holy Week and Easter to you, one and all! We are better than we think, and the door to Easter is open! Go through that door, of Resurrection and Life!

With great love and prayers for you and all you love,
~Father ray and my little Easter doggie, Dublin ☺

Joseph Most Just, Pray for Us

The following is excerpted, with permission, from the book, Consecration to St. Joseph: The Wonders of Our Spiritual Father, by Fr. Donald H. Calloway, MIC.

What does it mean to call Saint Joseph a just man? St. Josemaria Escrivá provides a great answer for us. He states:

"Saint Joseph was an ordinary sort of man on whom God relied to do great things. He did exactly what the Lord wanted him to do, in each and every event that went to make up his life. That is why Scripture praises Joseph as "a just man." In Hebrew a just man means a good and faithful servant of God, someone who fulfills the divine will (cf. Gen 7:1; 18:23-32; Ezek 18:5ff; Prov 12:10), or who is honorable and charitable toward his neighbor (cf. Tob 7:6; 9:6). So a just man is someone who loves God and proves his love by keeping God's commandments and directing his whole life towards the service of his brothers, his fellow men."

What about you? Are you just? Do you love God, keep his commandments, and act with honor and charity toward your neighbor?

Saint Joseph will increase in you the virtue of justice. Theologians define the virtue of justice as "giving to another his due." For example, in our relationship with God, we owe it to him to be grateful for our existence, and to praise him for his goodness. We act justly toward God, giving him his due, when we worship him, especially by our participation in Holy Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation. If we fail to do this, we are not loving God. We are not acting justly toward God; we are not giving him his due.

For Saint Joseph, being a just man meant he observed the dictates of the Jewish religion. This required him to travel to Jerusalem three times a year – a long distance from Nazareth –

and participate in various rituals and ceremonies. You, on the other hand, most likely live a short distance from a Catholic church. If you can't spend one hour a week thanking God and worshiping him, you are not loving God or giving God his due. You are not a just man.

Holy Mass is not about the priest, the people, or the choir. It's about returning love for love and giving God his due. Yes, priests should preach well, liturgical music should be sacred and inspiring, and it's always pleasant to see familiar faces at Mass. Yet even if you find the priest less than edifying, the music a distraction, and the congregation spiritually dead, you need to remember it's not about them – it's about you acting justly and lovingly toward God. There is no greater way to tell God "I love you," give thanks to God, and worship him than through the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. "Eucharist" means "Thanksgiving."

God is not the only one that we are to act justly towards out of love. You also need to give others their due. Do you? Do you love, venerate, and honor Mary, your spiritual mother? Do you love, venerate, and honor Saint Joseph, your spiritual father? Do you treat members of your family with love, respect, and dignity? What about your neighbors, co-workers, and everyone else with whom you daily interact? If you are an employer, do you offer a just wage?

Remember the Golden Rule: "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you" (Lk 6:31). Your spiritual father acted justly and lovingly toward everyone; you should, too.

Editor's note: You can visit www.consecrationtostjoseph.org for more information on the Consecration to St. Joseph.



St. Joseph statue in Medjugorje

As of February 25, 2024, the number of Masses reported for Our Lady's intentions was **40,000** *Thank You!*

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The Conversion of Bernard Ellis

The following is an excerpt from the book Twilight of Marxism: Medjugorje, The Downfall of Systematic Evil, and the Fulfillment of the Secret of Fatima by Dr. Tom Petrisko.

Bernard Ellis, a businessman who sold steel to Third World countries, lived in the suburbs of London with his wife, Suzanne, in the early 1980s.

Extremely successful for over twenty-five years, Ellis was raised an Orthodox Jew and once thought of becoming a rabbi. By then, he had pretty much seen the world, though he never heard of Medjugorje.

But Sue, a Catholic, was well aware of the rustic little village of miracles. And, the more she discovered, the more she became convinced that it was the one place she hoped to go. So, Sue hatched a plan.

For her birthday in 1983, she would ask her husband to take her on a vacation to Dubrovnik in Croatia. Then, once there, she would see if they could take a stroll over to Medjugorje, some two-and-a-half hours up the Adriatic coast by car.

Executed to perfection, Bernard and Sue Ellis landed in Medjugorje in August of that year, although not so much to Bernard's liking as Sue's. Still, it was her birthday, and Bernard figured being the only Jew in a Catholic town would go pretty much unnoticed.

It didn't. The locals and religious took to them both so warmly, that the couple began to repeatedly return. Sue, for the spiritual graces. Bernard, for the peace and relaxation he found in the village.

In 1985, during what Bernard referred to as a "regular visit" to Medjugorje, they overheard that visionary Marija Pavlović was going to witness a late-night apparition at the site of the massive cross on Mt. Krizevac. For Sue, it was an easy decision – they were attending.

Arriving at the top of the mountain early that evening, the couple decided to sit at the base of the concrete cross to wait for the apparition to begin. Soon, they found themselves in pitch black darkness surrounded by several thousand people, all singing and praying in pious anticipation of the vision.

Suddenly, there emerged a small group carrying a lantern that cut its way through the crowd, with Marija Pavlović at its center. As the people parted to let them through, Bernard could see that Marija was headed directly towards him and Sue, with the visionary eventually stopping right at his shoulder.

Moments later, Marija fell to her knees and started to pray.

As she did, a man accompanying Marija asked Bernard, in a badly-mangled English syntax, a question, "Are you English?"

"Yes," Bernard answered.

"Tell the crowd in English that the Mother of God is appearing to Marija Pavlović; everybody kneels, no photographs and pray."

So, Bernard turned and shouted through the darkness to the throng: "Everybody kneel, the Mother of God is appearing to Marija Pavlović, no photographs, everyone pray."

Upon hearing him, the people dropped to their knees.

Except for Bernard. His religious tradition forbade him to do so.

But that didn't last long. Seeing how he had told everyone to kneel, it dawned on him that remaining upright wasn't going to work. So, on his knees he went – right next to Marija.

For Bernard, the moment of truth had arrived.

Not only was he stuck late at night on a cold mountaintop somewhere in the middle of Bosnia and Herzegovina – several thousand fanatical Catholics waiting for an invisible lady from Heaven to drop in – he was doing so on his knees.

"There were stones on the ground and they were cutting into my knees. I felt very uncomfortable. I wondered whether Catholics had special kneecaps that allow them to kneel. These were the thoughts going through my head when the apparition was taking place."

Then, minutes later, another looming disaster.

On top of his very prominently bald head, Bernard suddenly felt a tiny splash. As if to crown the evening off with one last insult, it was starting to rain.

"I felt a drop of rain fall on my head and I thought it was going to pour...We were going to get soaked...And I wondered what any Jewish man was doing in such a situation."

Finally, the apparition was over. But not for everyone.

Around Marija, members of her entourage quickly jumped to their feet. They then shoved little handheld tape recorders in front of her face so she could repeat the message given to her by the Virgin.

Almost simultaneously, others then began to swiftly translate her words into different languages. As before, Bernard was drafted to aid the cause for the English-speaking members of the crowd.

"I can't remember the exact words," recalled Bernard, "it was something to do with returning to living in the light of the Gospel, otherwise, the world would inflict a great tragedy upon itself."

But, as Bernard slowly worked his way to the end of the [translated written] message, his eyes suddenly gazed upon something startling.

"A tear rolled down the cheek of Our Blessed Mother," he told the crowd, "and landed on the cloud she was standing [on]."

Instantly, Bernard realized what this meant. The good Jewish husband had just been christened by the good Jewish

Mother – the Mother of God herself.

"I thought to myself, I must have been right under that cloud. That night it did not rain."

On Holy Thursday, April 13, 1987, Bernard Ellis was baptized and confirmed into the Catholic Church. Coincidentally, it was also the first night of the Jewish Passover that year.

Bernard recognized the significance:

"The first night of the Jewish Passover and Holy Thursday do not always fall on the same day, but on this year it did."



Cross on Mt. Krizevac

For Jewish people, the Messiah will come on the first night of the Passover. It's a tradition and they wait for the Messiah to come on that night. For me, the Messiah did come on that night when I was Baptized, Confirmed, and received my First Holy Communion."

There was one more so-called coincidence. Bernard says it was a present for him from the Blessed Mother on that day. "April 13th also happened to be my birthday! Born again on my birthday! What a wonderful grace for a Jewish man!"

What is Darnel?

When the February message came out, people questioned the word "darnel." Steve Shawl, from Medjugorje.org, wrote: "Darnel is not a person. It is not Satan, and it is not a typographical error. Darnel is a weed that is known as the 'mimic weed.'" Fr. Ray wrote: "On investigation, darnel is a grassy weed grown in Asian countries and mixes in with plants and fields. If animals or human beings eat it, it will cause sickness and eventually death! So Our Lady is telling us Satan is sowing evil in our lives and we are consuming it, which is killing or at the very least, poisoning our faith and the practice of our faith. So we must weed out the evil so we can produce rich and healthy food for the soul and body. People need to understand what our dear Blessed Mother is telling us, so we can act on it and stay holy and our faith remain healthy and strong, never letting the evil one get the upper hand on us, the Holy Catholic Faith given to us by Jesus Himself!"

Cross in the Sun

By Cathy Nolan

Many pilgrims experience unusual events during their time in Medjugorje. Most commonly these events happen in the sky, in the cloud formations, in the stars and moon, and in the sun. Many pilgrims have been able to gaze at the sun which normally would not be possible. And they have seen different images in the sun, like the Host, or a Cross, and even the outline of Our Lady or Jesus, or the Sacred Heart. These signs in the sun harken back to Fatima, when on October 13, 1917 the sun danced in the sky, and plunged toward earth, frightening the thousands of people who were present.

I want to share something that was shared by Father John Amsberry who gave the homily for English Mass on September 23, 2014. It is one example of a sign in the sun that is given to pilgrims and the effect it has.

"This is my third time to come here to Medjugorje. The first time I came was in 1986. The one thing that impressed me...I had just graduated from The Franciscan University of Steubenville, and I came over with my brother and another fellow who is now a Dominican priest... was the faith of the people, their fidelity. I don't need fireworks to believe in the reality of God's love. We just need to pray. We need to pray and become more connected to God and He will be more real to us. So I remember the fidelity of the people.

"The second time I came was in the summer of 2011. I came with my brother, his wife and their three children. We had just prayed, and then we went to a restaurant. There was an Italian family right by us, and they started freaking out, 'Oh, oh, look!' The sun was dancing. So we looked, and we saw the sun that was dancing. And I watched my two nephews and my niece as they watched the sun dance. Then we asked them, 'What did you experience?' And youngest nephew, Ciaran, who was about eight years old at that point, said, 'I saw the sun, and then I saw a man carrying a cross

across the sun, and then three people following that cross.' And I thought, 'What a great image and picture for us.' Of course, my brother started crying because he had been praying that would be his three kids following the Cross of Jesus Christ – following Him to the fullness of life. I think this is a great image for us today – to follow the Cross of Jesus Christ.

"Then going back to 1986, the first time I was here, I saw the miracle of the sun dance, and I was able to look at the sun, and then the Eucharistic Host came out from the sun and it turned red and it started bleeding. And I took that as the Blood of Christ, in the Eucharist, for us. Out of love for us, it was coming down to us to heal us and to make us whole and to give us the gift of the taste of Heaven, what we were created for.

"I wanted to give you those images, because that is what is constantly happening in the Eucharist and in our lives. The Body and Blood of Christ is offered for us so that you can know that you are loved and you can have everything now in His life for you, that He is offering everything now.

"Let's go back to St. Pio, and what he said, 'I just want to be known as a poor Franciscan who prays.' I just want to be known as someone who in his poverty prays to God and He offers us everything now! This is the God we celebrate. This is why we are here. So let's open our hearts to God, and let Mary and Jesus woo us into that eternal delight that is available to us now as God offers it to us in this Liturgy. My brothers and sisters, you are loved and let's pray that we will enter into it."

Thank you, Lord, for giving us signs in the sun in Medjugorje. May these signs bear wonderful fruit in the lives of pilgrims! May we open our hearts to God and receive the graces of conversion and healing He is pouring out through them!!

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Medjugorje pilgrims apparently looking at a sun miracle

My Experience on Cross Mountain in Medjugorje

By Steve Shawl



10th Station of the Cross on Mt. Krizevac

This month we have a short testimony by a man named David. I truly hope and pray that everyone can experience something similar in their life time. To feel God's love is something you will never forget. God becomes present, He becomes real, and your life will never be the same.

In May, my wife and I were on a religious pilgrimage to a village in former Yugoslavia called Medjugorje. I awakened at 3:00 a.m. on the third day of our pilgrimage, and slipped out of the house where we were staying to climb Cross Mountain and watch the sunrise.

As I climbed, under a full moon, I was praying the "Stations of the Cross" out of a prayer book. As I meditated on the Fourth Station, "Jesus Meets His Mother," I heard an inner voice telling

me to go back to the house and back to bed. This was waste of time and energy...and what would my friends say if they saw me out here like this?

I had fallen several times in the dark on the rocks and was already sweating and tired from just the first four stations. There were ten more to go! Then another inner voice, one that sounded like a woman, encouraged me to "keep going."

By the time I reached the 10th Station, "Jesus is Stripped of His Garments," I was nearing exhaustion. I had wandered off the path, walked into thorn bushes, fallen several times and was down to my t-shirt and jeans. Soaked with sweat, I read the meditations, Paul's letter to the Colossians (3:5-10,12) and Romans (13:12-13) [shown below]. Suddenly, it was not just something Paul had written 2,000 years ago. It was me! These are my thoughts....my words, my sins. I must put them aside... now!

At the 12th Station, "Jesus Dies on the Cross," I was on my knees from the worst part of the climb, literally crawling over huge boulders and up 45-50 degree slopes, resting on a flat rock in front of a bronze relief portraying the Crucifixion. As I looked up in the pre-dawn light and saw this horrible spectacle and realized the torture and exhaustion Our Lord had suffered, it hit me. He did this *for me*! I know, we learned in grade school that Jesus died for us. That was great....and safe. As

long as it was "us" it didn't take a lot on my part. But now... Wow! *Me*!

Thoughts started going through my mind. I remembered my high school girlfriend asking me after I told her "I love you," if I would die for her. I said, "No." I wouldn't die for anyone. That is asking way too much of someone.... and besides, I was an arrogant, self-centered, selfish person.

Wow! He died for me. I began to feel an incredible sense of being loved. I was overwhelmed with it. It brought me to tears (over the next several years, it would bring me to tears of joy many times....and still does). I had found, felt and was loved like I had never been loved before. It was amazing!

Then, I thought about several overpasses I had seen in the US with "Jesus lives" written on them. I always thought that was kind of silly. Yes, He lived 2,000 years ago, but what has that got to do with the here and now? Then, I felt an amazing sense of His presence there with me. WOW! He *is* alive! He just chooses not to make himself visible. That's what we call faith.

I finished the Stations and arrived at the peak just in time to watch an unbelievable sunrise – something I hadn't done willingly my entire life. With that sunrise came a new life...a better life...a life that is not mine anymore. I live for Him now....and what a wonderful life it has become.

www.medjugorje.org

"Put to death, then, the parts of you that are earthly: immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and the greed that is idolatry. Because of these the wrath of God is coming [upon the disobedient]. By these you too once conducted yourselves, when you lived in that way. But now you must put them all away: anger, fury, malice, slander, and obscene language out of your mouths. Stop lying to one another, since you have taken off the old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed, for knowledge, in the image of its creator... Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, heartfelt compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience" (Col 3:5-10, 12).

"...the night is advanced, the day is at hand. Let us then throw off the works of darkness [and] put on the armor of light; let us conduct ourselves properly as in the day, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in promiscuity and licentiousness, not in rivalry and jealousy" (Rom 13:12-13).

An Examination of Conscience

By Cathy Nolan

"Dear children, today I call you to a difficult and painful step for your unity with my Son. I call you to complete admission and confession of sins, to purification. An impure heart cannot be in my Son and with my Son. An impure heart cannot give the fruit of love and unity. An impure heart cannot do correct and just things..." (Our Lady, July 2, 2011)

A good examination of conscience begins with the 10 Commandments and the Beatitudes. This list is offered on the website of the Milwaukee Archdiocese.

The Ten Commandments

1. **You shall have no gods before me.** Is God the center of my life? Do I fully practice my faith? Is there a relationship, a possession, an activity that has become more important to me than God?

2. **You shall not take the name of the Lord in vain.** Do I swear or use God's name in vain? Is my speech worthy of a child of God?

3. **Keep holy the Sabbath.** Do I attend Mass on all Sundays and holy days? Do I make Sunday a day of rest and prayer? Do I avoid unnecessary work and shopping on Sundays?

4. **Honor your father and mother.** Do I love, respect and obey my parents? Do I respect and help those in authority?

5. **You shall not kill.** Have I physically or emotionally hurt others? Do I respect the dignity of everyone? Do I work for the great cause of the defense of all human life?

6. **You shall not commit adultery.** Do I live chastity as proper to my state in life? Do I respect the sexuality of others and myself as a divine gift? Do I use artificial contraceptives? Do I use masturbation, pornography, extra-marital sexual intercourse as a way to gratify lust?

7. **You shall not steal.** Have I taken what does not belong to me? Do I work diligently for the pay I receive? Do I share what the Lord has given to me?

8. **You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.** Do I lie? Have I gossiped or slandered others? Have I hurt the reputation of others?

9. **You shall not covet your neighbor's wife.** Do I honor and respect the proper boundaries of relationships? Have I led others to sin through immodesty or bad example?

10. **You shall not covet your neighbor's possessions.** Am I envious or jealous of others? Am I selfish, greedy or possessive with things or relationships?

The Beatitudes

1. **Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.** Do I live a spirit of detachment and generosity? Do I sacrifice for others?

2. **Blessed are they who mourn, for they will be comforted.** Do I console and help those who mourn and suffer? Do I show compassion?

3. **Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the land.** Am I authentically humble and self-giving? Have I been egotistical or boastful?

4. **Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for holiness, for they will be satisfied.** Am I passionate for the things of God? Do I work for the triumph of love, peace and justice?

5. **Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.** Am I forgiving and merciful? Do I give others the benefit of the doubt? Am I harsh or judgmental?

6. **Blessed are the pure of heart, for they will see God.** Am I single-minded in the practice of my faith? Have I allowed a particular sin or vice to distract me from God?

7. **Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.** Am I a person of reconciliation, peace and mercy? Do I hold grudges or seek revenge?

8. **Blessed are they who are persecuted, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.** Do I suffer well? Am I willing to sacrifice anything for my faith? Do I allow human respect to keep me from being a Christian witness?

Something for us to chew on! May the Holy Spirit anoint us as we continue to respond to Our Lady's call to purification.

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Confessionals on the right side of St. James Church in Medjugorje

The Cross Room

By June Klins

It was late and I could not sleep. It had been a very difficult weekend. Saturday was the worst day. But that evening, I noticed on my pant leg was something shaped like a tiny cross. It just appeared as I was sitting there. I had no idea where it came from. At first, I thought it was a consolation, that Jesus was telling me He was with me through this tribulation, but I was not sure. Then when I could not sleep, I remembered a story I heard years ago called "The Cross Room." I searched and found this story right away, whose source is unknown. Now I feel my little cross was more of a lesson than a consolation. I share this now in hopes it can help someone. We all have our crosses.

The Cross Room

A young man was at the end of his rope. Seeing no way out he dropped to his knees in prayer. "Lord, I can't go on," he said. "I have too heavy a cross to bear." The Lord replied, "My son, if you can't bear its weight, just place your cross inside this room. Then open that other door and pick out any cross you wish."

The young man was filled with relief. "Thank you, Lord," he sighed, and he did what he was told. Upon entering the other door, he saw many other crosses, some so large the tops weren't even visible. Then he spotted a tiny cross leaning against the far wall. "I'd like that one Lord," he whispered. And the Lord replied, "My son, that is the cross you just brought in."

"I think He intends to try you like gold in the crucible, so as to number you amongst His most faithful servants. Therefore you must lovingly embrace all occasions of suffering, considering them as precious tokens of His love. To suffer in silence and without complaint is what He asks of you." ~ St. Margaret Mary Alacoque, our patron saint for 2024

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MARY IS CALLING YOU

On June 24, 1981 in Medjugorje, Our Lady began appearing to six children. She identified Herself as the Blessed Virgin, Queen of Peace. 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, the Blessed Mother still appears daily to three of the visionaries, and annually to the others. They are all now adults. 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. They declare to see the Blessed Virgin as they see other people — three dimensional. They pray and speak with Her.

The Blessed Mother granted to confide ten secrets to each visionary (some are chastisements for the world). Some of the visionaries have received all ten secrets. Our Lady promised to leave a visible sign at

the original site of the apparitions in Medjugorje, for all humanity. In the meantime, this period of grace is for conversion and a deepening of faith.

Father Jozo Zovko, who was the pastor of St. James when the apparitions began, has spoken about what he calls "the weapons" or "the five stones" of Our Lady (as in the story of Goliath). They are PRAYER with the heart, especially the Rosary; EUCHARIST; BIBLE; monthly CONFESSION; and FASTING.

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

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