



THE SPIRIT OF MEDJUGORJE
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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 JANUARY 25, 2014

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.



*February 11 is the feast of Our Lady of Lourdes. A popular stop for Medjugorje pilgrims going to or from the Split airport is the Lourdes Shrine in Vepric (shown above).
See a related story on page 3.*

“Dear children! Pray, pray, pray for the radiance of your prayer to have an influence on those whom you meet. Put the Sacred Scripture in a visible place in your families and read it, so that the words of peace may begin to flow in your hearts. I am praying with you and for you, little children, that from day to day you may become still more open to God’s will. Thank you for having responded to my call.”



Fr. Bill Kiel

The Heart is a Symbol of Love

By Fr. Bill Kiel

The month of February is often associated with the red heart – the symbol of St. Valentine’s Day. It is a great symbol of love for a special person or persons in our lives; usually we remember the person with a card or gift, designating our love for the person. As human beings, one of our greatest needs is to be loved and

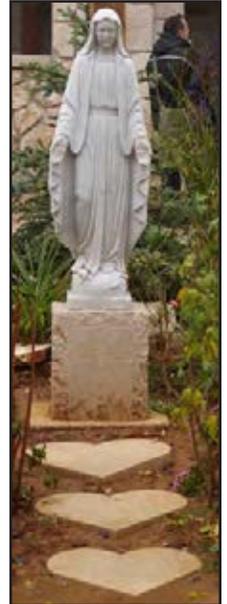
we love ourselves. The two great commandments remind us to love God with our whole heart, mind and strength, and to love our neighbors as ourselves. If we have difficulty loving God and ourselves, how will we love others? If we are convinced we are not really loved, is that why we are unable to love others? *“To come to know and to love yourself, you must come to know my Son; to come to know and love others, you must see my Son in them”* (Our Lady, 7/2/10). If we accept God’s love, we will feel the love that we long for in our lives. When we feel God’s love, we are able to see the face of Jesus in others, and we are able to give love to them. In the world today, many people do not know God or His love; thus, we have many loveless searching people. The lack of love in people leads to lack of respect for self and others. The absence of love and respect leads to many difficult and troubling situations in our lives. There must be an openness and reception of God’s love in our hearts. Why is it difficult to open our hearts to the love of God – Father, Son and Holy Spirit?

Let us follow Mary’s life of love and care, move closer to Her Son and become secure in the love of God, and we will be able to reach out to others with an unconditional and selfless love. Let’s make February a month of growing in God’s love!

know we are important to someone.

Reading 1 John 4:8-12 gives us the assurance God loves us. God is love. Knowing God’s love is essential to living a life of peace, joy and happiness. Love involves two individuals, the one who loves and the one who is loved. If we know God’s love, we are able to become more loving and giving persons. The more intimately we come to know God, the more we become like His Son, Jesus. The more we love God – Father, Son and Holy Spirit – the more selfless we become in our living. As we become more loving in our relationships, our love becomes more unconditional. Love should not be looked upon as a reward; love should be given freely to all, as God has given us His gift of love freely and unconditionally. Mary was and remains for us a model of loving and caring, by helping us to develop a closer relationship with Her Son, Jesus. Jesus is our Divine/human model for ultimate love. *“Pray for the gift of love, because when the soul loves it calls my Son to itself. ... Pray for those who do not comprehend love, who do not understand what it means to love”* (Our Lady to Mirjana, 3/18/10).

There are times in our lives when we find it difficult to love others. It may be necessary to ask ourselves how much



Statue at the “castle” in Medjugorje

Our Lady’s Message to Mirjana on January 2, 2014

Mirjana said, “At first Our Lady was sad and then decisive” during this apparition. She gave the following message:

“Dear children, for you to be able to be my apostles and to be able to help all those who are in darkness, to come to know the light of the love of my Son, you must have pure and humble hearts. You cannot help for my Son to be born in, and to reign in, the hearts of those who do not know Him, if He does not reign – if He is not the King – in your heart. I am with you. I am walking with you as a mother. I am knocking on your hearts. They cannot open because they are not humble. I am praying, and you, my beloved children, also pray, that you may be able to open pure and humble hearts to my Son and to receive the gifts which He has promised you. Then you will be led by the love and strength of my Son. Then, you will be my apostles who everywhere around them spread the fruits of God’s love. My Son will act from within you and through you, because you will be ‘one’. My motherly heart yearns for this – for unity of all of my children – through my Son. With great love I bless, and pray for those who are chosen by my Son – for your shepherds. Thank you.”

February intentions of Pope Francis:

Elders: That the Church and society may respect the wisdom and experience of older people.

Collaboration in Evangelization: That priests, religious, and lay people may work together with generosity.



Michael K. Jones has retired as our webmaster. We thank him for his many years of faithful service to *The Spirit of Medjugorje*. If we could each say a Hail Mary for him in thanksgiving, that would be awesome!

We are very grateful to those who helped with the January mailing, some of whom traveled a long distance in the snow to help Our Lady’s messages get out: Susannah and Thomas Klins, Sue Kirby, Cindy Bielanin, JoAnne Warren, Marge Spase, Annette Ratajczak, Dianne Yochim, Kathy Luschini, Shelly, Jessica, and Veronica Kibbe, Estrella Igras, and Diane Niebauer. We thank Diana Stillwell and Wendy Ripple for the use of their photos. We thank Pat Berrier, our proofreader and Anita Cugini for making us more prayer cloths. We also thank Jason Klins, our new webmaster.

The Vatican Commission Submits its Report

The international Vatican commission, which was set up in March of 2010 to investigate the events at Medjugorje, concluded its work on January 17, 2014. The results of the inquiry will now be examined by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF) headed by the Prefect Gerhard Müller.

According to the *Vatican Insider*, the commission focused mainly on the first phase of the apparitions and there is apparently no proof of any hoaxes. They added, however,

that it is difficult for the Church to form a verdict on the supernatural nature of an event that is ongoing.

The commission, headed by Cardinal Camillo Ruini, noted that people really are converting to the faith or returning to the sacraments – what the Church refers to as spiritual fruits – in a significant way.

After the commission's report is examined by the CDF, it will be given to the Pope who will have the final say, but this may take some time.

The Six-decade Rosary

By June Klins

One of our subscribers, Bernadette Zim, made me a rosary to pray for the repose of my mother's soul. This rosary was different though – it had six decades instead of five. Bernadette explained in her note that this rosary was inspired by information she read in Susan Tassone's book, *Praying with the Saints for the Holy Souls in Purgatory*. Bernadette wrote that the rosary has six decades because the statue of Our Lady in Lourdes, France, holds a six-decade rosary. The Blessed Mother appeared to St. Bernadette holding a six-decade rosary and when St. Bernadette asked why the rosary had six decades, Our Lady replied that the sixth decade was



for the souls in Purgatory!

Bernadette further explained, "The colors of the rosary [black Hail Mary beads] represent the state of souls in Purgatory that need to be cleansed and made white and pure [pearl Our Father beads]. Jesus appeared to St. Gertrude and told her that Heaven's gates are encrusted with pearls, which represent prayers for the Holy Souls, because pearls are a symbol of perfection through purification. The pearl starts as something unclean such as

a grain of sand caught in a mollusk, but through time and suffering, the mollusk forms a beautiful, shining iridescent pearl."

Ivan's Apparition on January 3, 2014

Ivan had an apparition, January 3, 2014, at the Blue Cross in Medjugorje.

Our Lady said: 'Dear children. Also today I desire that you live the messages that I have been giving you. Live my messages, because only in this way can I give you other new messages. Pray in a special way for my plans that need to be realized – plans for the world, plans of peace. Thank you, dear children, for also today having responded to my call.'

Marija: Put Faith Above Fear and Fatalism

By Jakob Marschner

Medjugorje visionary Marija Pavlovic-Lunetti took on what she saw as misplaced priorities and bad use of time in addressing 900 attendees on Saturday [December 12, 2012], at a prayer meeting in the Grand Theatre in Canazei, Italy.

"What do we have to fear? The prophets, hurricanes, or that the end of the world is coming...? The end can come every day, but it seems that our life depends on the horoscope of the day, but we must learn from those in the past who trusted God," Marija said, according to the local newspaper *Trentino Corriere Alpi*.

"I do not know what will happen to us, but God teaches us that without Him there is definitely no future for us. What is a hundred years if there is no eternal life? We are too busy with evil, television and computers, but how much time do we devote to God?" the seer also said.

"I do not know what will happen tomorrow – but the

important thing is to have your heart free from anxiety, fear, pain, and live through every test of your lives, remaining steadfast in prayer and love," Marija added, according to the regional newspaper *L'Adige*.

Marija cited several examples of healing – one about a boy who was in a coma for three months after a car accident, but woke up without any kind of brain damage.

"So many times we do not believe in miracles, but they are there. My testimony is intended to be a sign of God's love for you. We are nobody, I am nobody, but we are here as a sign that Our Lady intercedes with God for us," she said.

"Our Lady loves you and carries the image of all of us in Her heart, today and tomorrow, because everyone is important to Her," Marija told them.

www.medjugorjetoday.tv

Medjugorje Vegetable Box

If you like to start your gardens inside, you might want to take a tip from Sean Bloomfield, director of *The Triumph* (see our September 2013 issue). Sean wrote, "My daughter, Anna, who just turned 7 on October 13, and my 4-year-old son, James, helped me build and paint a raised vegetable garden bed this weekend. We hope the inclusion of a Medjugorje scene will help our garden grow!"



The Testimony of Kim Ha

By June Klins

In July of 2012, the website, www.marytv.tv, started broadcasting a wonderful program called "Fruit of Medjugorje" on Monday and Thursday evenings at 8:00 P.M. Each episode features the testimony of one or more people whose lives have been changed through Our Lady of Medjugorje. MaryTV keeps all the episodes in their archives, so if you miss the original program, you can watch it later. When I watched Episode 95, which was originally aired on December 2, 2013, I felt prompted to share one of the testimonies in that segment – that of a Vietnamese lady named Kim Ha.

Kim Ha, who lives in California, began by saying that although she originally heard about Medjugorje in 1997, she did not pay attention until a friend invited her to a Medjugorje conference in October of 1998. She went out of curiosity, but was very touched after hearing the testimony of Patrick and Nancy Latta (see our May, 2013 issue). Kim bought a book about Medjugorje at the conference, and read the entire book in one night. After she finished the book, she prayed and told Our Lady that she was ready if Our Lady wanted to use her to spread the messages.

One month later, she landed a radio program, which she still has today! On the program, Kim translates Our Lady's messages and articles about Medjugorje into Vietnamese, and she interviews people about their testimonies. Kim has been doing this for 15 years now, and also maintains two websites: MeMaria.org and MeMaria.net. She explained that the "Me" in the website address means "Mother" in Vietnamese, so it is "Mother Maria.org." She estimated that she has reached about 50 million people.

In May of 1999, Kim felt Our Lady calling her to Medjugorje. Although she did not want to be a tour leader, because of all the work and responsibility, Our Lady had other plans. Kim has now been a tour leader for 15 pilgrimages to Medjugorje! She said that she goes to Medjugorje every year, not only as her mission, but to "recharge her batteries" and to experience the peace that is there.

Kim said, "It's interesting to work for Our Lady because you see a lot of things happen in your life." Before her conversion, Kim didn't pray the Rosary regularly. Now she prays it all the time. Since she retired from her job as a state auditor, she has more time to pray and work for Our Lady.

Kim shared a few experiences she has had over the years. She told the story of a lady who was one of her pilgrims in 2001. This lady had not shared her personal life with the group, but when they were at Adoration in St. James Church, Kim noticed that she was praying very hard and crying a lot. When they got back to the pansion (bed and breakfast), the lady shared that she saw the face of Jesus in the monstrance. She said He was so happy to see them all

knelling in front of Him, but for a moment He was sad.

When they returned to the U.S., the lady's five year-old autistic son, who never spoke prior to this, opened his mouth and said, "Mom, I want bread," and then said, "Mom, I want water." She was stunned! Kim said to her, "That's the message – Our Lady wants us to fast on bread and water on Wednesdays and Fridays." Those were his first complete sentences: "I want bread. I want water." He is now a teenager, and spends a lot of time in front of the tabernacle adoring Jesus. Kim said, "It was a miracle of healing."

Then Kim told the story of a group of five people who went to Medjugorje with her in 2003. She said that as soon as they got to Medjugorje, they went right up Cross Mountain. Four of the people in the group saw Our Lady, but She came as Our Lady of La Vang, which is a Vietnamese devotion. She was standing with Baby Jesus, smiling and listening to the people for over an hour as they prayed five Rosaries and the Divine Mercy Chaplet. Our Lady was still there when they left. The one man who did not see Our Lady recorded the apparition with his video camera as he prayed. When he returned home and looked at his recording, Our Lady was on there! Kim said members of the group still have a copy of it. She noted that those who have an older TV can see Our Lady, but those who have a new, fancy TV cannot see Her. Interesting!



Our Lady of La Vang

Kim then shared a story of a priest she met at the Visitation Station on Apparition Hill in 2008. When her group stopped there to pray, she noticed the priest praying with them, but he was crying hard as he prayed. Kim was curious, so she asked him if he would mind sharing why he was crying so hard. He said that 10 years before, he had seen Our Lady at that Station. At that time, he was not a priest, but had been married with six children and had just lost his wife. He was in his fifties at the time. Our Lady appeared to him at that Station and asked him to become a priest. He said he was old and sick and could not become a priest. But on the way down the hill, he said he felt very driven to become a priest. He did study to become a priest, and when he was ordained he was in his sixties. He told Kim that every year he has to go back to Medjugorje to praise and glorify God and thank Our Lady for choosing him as a priest.

Kim shared that a few of her pilgrims have given up prestigious jobs to enter religious life. One pilgrim was an engineer with a six-figure salary who owned two houses. She gave it all up to become a nun.

Kim ended her testimony by saying, "I thank God for choosing me to be an instrument to bring the Gospel and Gospa's messages to the whole world."

Editor's note: When searching for a picture of Kim, I ran across the fact that Kim's site, MeMaria.org is among the Top Ten Vietnamese Catholic websites!

Do Not Complain, Brothers and Sisters, About One Another (James 5:9)

By June Klins

A cartoon in a church bulletin recently caught my attention. Two men were pictured in the first frame. The one is saying, "Sometimes I think God gave us families for just one reason." The second man questions, "What's that?" In the second frame, the first man replies, "To give us a place to practice conflict resolution skills." Hmmmm. Does that cartoon hit home with anyone?

On Gaudete Sunday last December (2013), my pastor, Fr. Larry Richards, based his homily on one line in the second reading that day: "*Do not complain, brothers and sisters, about one another*" (James 5:9). Father said that "Gaudete" means "Let us rejoice," but that we are usually people who do not rejoice. He talked about the "perpetual scowl" that he sometimes sees on people. Father said, "But the reality is that the Church tells us we are supposed to be people who rejoice." Likewise, Our Lady tells us to rejoice. According to the concordance of the messages, Our Lady says the word "rejoice" 33 times and the word "joy" or some form of it 188 times between 1984 and 2011.

Fr. Larry said, "The God of the Universe tells us not to complain, but we do it all the time. We complain about our spouses. We complain about our children. We complain about our parents... We complain about our pastor [laughter]. We complain, we complain, we complain. Yet God says, 'Don't do it.' What?? Why? Because when we complain, we focus on the negative. We *become* negative."

Father continued, "The God of the Universe says, 'I want you to rejoice and be grateful for the things you've got. I want you to learn to appreciate.'" Father questioned why we focus on the bad. He said nine times out of ten there is more good than there is bad. Father said we have a tendency to blame our families if we were brought up with complaining, but we should not use that as an excuse. He said we need to re-train our minds. "We have to let the Holy Spirit come in and re-train us to start thinking about what we *appreciate* about others." Father said it is the devil who wants us to make excuses and to focus on the negative.

Father said that there are people who think that they are "of God" the more negative they are. He said, "Really??? Is that the way Jesus did things? When Jesus was confronted with a big sinner, did He say, 'You're a horrible sinner?' That's not the way Jesus dealt with the sinners. He dealt with the Pharisees that way, because that is what they needed. But the *sinners*, He treated with such love and compassion. He appreciated the good in them and brought that forward, and then His love got them through to repentance."

Father said we must likewise start focusing on what we appreciate about others. He said we need to start with our families. What do you appreciate about your spouse? What do you appreciate about your son, your daughter, your mother, your father? Father then gave some practical advice. He said that when you are tempted to complain about someone, start thinking about qualities of that person

that you appreciate, and then write them down.

Father continued, "What I'm learning more and more in my life is that the only thing that brings others to repentance is *love* of them – not judgment of them. So I encourage you, when you're getting irritated with others, stop, sit down and start writing what you appreciate about these people and start focusing on that instead of the negative." Father cautioned not to listen to the devil who will keep telling you that there is nothing about this person that you can appreciate.

Then Father focused on the importance of telling your children what you appreciate about them, particularly teenagers. Father suggested that parents re-train themselves to start affirming their children every day. He said that if you don't have children, focus on appreciating your spouse

or the people you work with or people in your parish, etc. He said that when you do that, you will become a person who rejoices.

A friend of mine recently shared with me that she had the best Christmas ever last year. She comes from a large family, and knows that every year when they gather together at Christmas time, there will be things people do or say that irritate her. But every time someone irritated her last Christmas, she just buttoned her lip and said a prayer for that person. She told me she had the most glorious Christmas, filled with peace and joy.

As we think about Lent approaching, maybe giving up complaining about people would be a good thing to work on. As an incentive, we are again offering to our subscribers a free string of St. Therese sacrifice beads to help in this endeavor. Our Lady will even cover the postage!

Sacrifice beads (also known as "Good Deed Beads") spring from a practice from the childhood of St. Therese of Lisieux. Therese's sister, Marie, gave her a set of beads on which

to count the things she offered up to God. The most typical "chaplet" consists of a string of 10 beads, with a Crucifix at one end, symbolizing your taking up your Cross. When you mentally offer up something to God (in this case, not complaining about someone), you slide one of the beads toward the Crucifix. But for each failing, you move a bead back toward the medal. This is a good way of examining your conscience throughout the day. Hopefully by the time Easter arrives, you will not be complaining about anyone at all, and you can have the best Easter ever, filled with peace and joy!

Editor's note: The day that I transcribed Fr. Larry's homily, an intercessory prayer in my devotional that same night said, "Help us to feel and show appreciation for one another." How's that for a confirmation?! You can listen to Fr. Larry's homilies at his website, <http://thereasonforourhope.org>. We thank Anita Cugini for making the sacrifice beads. If you are interested in learning how to make the sacrifice beads, you can contact us for Anita's email address.



St. Therese statue in Medjugorje

My Conversion Story

By Linda Rolinski

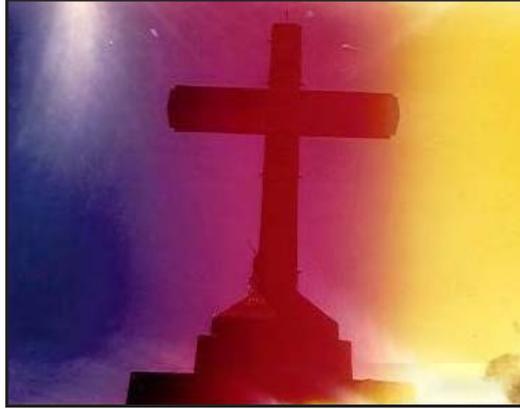
When my husband, Stan, told me we were going to raise our son, Alex, as a Catholic I told him, "No way!" I was raised Protestant, in the "non-denominational" Church of Christ, hung around with Protestants all my life, and was VERY anti-Catholic. I was an amateur historian, too, and, therefore, thought myself quite the expert on the abuses of the Catholic Church throughout the ages as well as the Inquisitions. "Therefore, I had NO intention of becoming Catholic.

In 1986, our friend, Cecilia, began giving me articles about Medjugorje. The articles were written by a Lutheran named Wayne Weible (who has since become a Roman Catholic). Oddly enough, I couldn't put them down, and kept reading and re-reading them. Then one night, the program 20/20 with Barbara Walters came on, and to my great surprise, the program was about the Blessed Mother and the visionaries in Medjugorje! I watched with fascination, and then came the time when Barbara Walters interviewed one of the visionaries named Vicka. The second I saw her, I said out loud, "I'm going to be friends with her!" I felt a link with her, and really drawn to Medjugorje during that program. How strange!

Our friend, Cecilia, had been diagnosed with breast cancer and knew she didn't have very long to live. She wanted desperately to go to Medjugorje, but couldn't afford it. I love to travel and said I would go with her, but I really only wanted to go because it was someplace new, as well as out of curiosity. Just because a bunch of hysterical Catholics believed the Mother of God was there, that didn't mean She really was, and I was determined not to get caught up in any "mass hysteria." My husband and I had frequent flyer points, so in April of 1987, I took Cecilia to Medjugorje on our points. It was the least we could do for her, since it was her family that was instrumental in bringing my husband and his mom to the U.S. from the concentration camps in Germany. Before leaving, Cecilia told me to buy a rosary and have it blessed and bring it along, which I did. I also brought a little brochure that showed how to say the Rosary. I was against "repetitive prayers," but "When in Rome..."

We arrived at midnight, and the church was packed. The feeling that came over me as we stepped out of the taxi is hard to describe. I now know it's a feeling of complete peace, but at the time, not understanding it, I made a deliberate effort to ignore it. Cecilia, however, could hardly contain her excitement. The next morning, we had breakfast and went over to English Mass. We attended the German Mass beforehand, in order to get a seat in the English Mass. Cecilia understood the German perfectly (as she had been in the camps, too). I'd never attended a Mass before. I counted 37 priests concelebrating the Mass. I found myself wanting Communion so badly! Again, what an odd thing to want, especially when I had no idea or concept of the Real Presence. I was in a state of anxiety because I WANTED

Communion so badly; but I simply crossed my arms and received a blessing, as Cecilia instructed me to do. Afterward, I found I totally did NOT want to leave the church. How badly I wanted to stay! But you can't...you have to clear out immediately for the next Mass, as there are Masses in all the languages throughout the morning. So I left, and we climbed Cross Mountain.



Linda's picture on Cross Mountain

What a climb! I wheezed and crawled mostly, wondering where the ski lift was. When I FINALLY reached the top, I prayed the Lord to take me then and there. Once I found I could still breathe, I snapped some pictures, and then we headed down the mountain for a talk by Father Slavko. After the talk, Cecilia and some people we had befriended wanted to climb the mountain again! There was no way I was going to go up again, but I asked Cecilia to please take my camera and take some more

pictures. So she did. When they arrived at the top, she knelt down to take a picture of the big cross (which has a relic of the True Cross). She heard a voice telling her to "wait." So she waited. Then she heard the voice say, "Go ahead." So she snapped the picture.

Later, we climbed Apparition Hill and then went to the Croatian Mass that night. At 6:40 P.M., Our Lady appeared, as usual, in the choir loft of the Church. I wasn't going to look, as I believe Jesus and Mary are present wherever the faithful are gathered...but curiosity got the best of me... and I looked. I saw three distinct flashes of light when She arrived, which were NOT from any camera, and three flashes of light when She left. I was overcome. I wanted to fall to my knees and cry, but fought those feelings hard thinking "mass hysteria."

The next morning when we woke up, I saw that my silver rosary had turned to gold. My jaw dropped to the ground! Cecilia, who seemed to be in ecstasy since we arrived, was happy and crying then, too. It seemed like every homily was just for her. I didn't know that Croatian was so similar to the Polish language (her native language). So she understood everything during the German Mass, the English Mass, AND the Croatian Mass

When it came time to leave for home, it was awful. I can still remember my pain at having to leave Medjugorje. I cried on the bus all the way to Dubrovnik. I cried HARD... sobbing worse than a baby. When I arrived back home, I developed the pictures. All were 'normal' except for the one of the Cross that Cecilia took. On the left of the Cross was a deep blue area with a flash of light at the top. Most people see Jesus and/or Mary in the flash of light in the blue. The Cross itself was bathed in red, and to the right of the Cross was a vivid yellow. It's really the most amazing picture and quite unexplainable.

After coming home from Medjugorje in April of '87, I was totally consumed with the thought of going back. I HAD to go back. So I planned another vacation for October and off

I went. I went alone. Once I got there and checked in and went to Mass...I was sitting in the newly built gazebo behind the church, and thought, "Now what am I going to do?" I had no idea where the visionaries were. Was I just going to pray, climb mountains, and be bored for a week? I still wasn't Catholic and didn't know about Stations of the Cross or any other devotion. I no sooner wondered, when a British couple sitting nearby asked me, rather out of the blue, "Did you know Ivan will be giving a talk here in 10 minutes?" I said, "No", and we talked until Ivan arrived. So I got to hear his talk.

Afterward, I wandered over to an outdoor cafe for lunch. I was sitting there looking at Cross Mountain again wondering, "Well, what now?" Suddenly, a lady came over and asked if it was my first time in Medjugorje. I told her it was my second, and she said she was a tour guide and it was her 17th time. She wanted to show me some miracle pictures that her pilgrims had taken, and I showed her mine. She asked if she could have a copy of my picture, and since I'd brought several, I told her that was fine. Then she mentioned that she was going to see Fr. Jozo and asked if I would like to come. I asked who he was, and she told me all about him, surprised that I'd never heard of him before. So I got to go with her and her group to see Fr. Jozo.

The next day, I was walking and some pilgrims said, again out of the blue, "Come with us to hear Vicka's talk!"

So I followed along. Everyone I met, it was like I'd known them all of my life. The entire week went like that – people coming up out of nowhere to talk to me. My whole week was quite exciting.

Also, the day after seeing Fr. Jozo, the 'Tour Guide Lady' came up and told me that my picture saved their lives. She told me that she was telling her pilgrims at dinner about me and my picture, and one of the older ladies INSISTED on seeing the picture RIGHT THEN. She didn't want to wait until after dinner per the plan. So the tour guide went upstairs to get it, and discovered that everything had caught fire, due to a heat register. The curtains were burning and everything was burnt to a crisp when she finally got the fire out....everything *except the picture*. It was right in the middle of the fire and should have burned right up. It didn't!

On the plane back home, it FINALLY occurred to me just how well taken care of I was in Medjugorje. The thought came as a shock, and I just cried and cried. I am still incredibly grateful to Our Lady for Her care and am still overwhelmed by it all. So many miracles have happened to me since then, whenever I go to Medjugorje, it would take a book to tell it all. Needless to say, I've since become Catholic and am proud and happy to be one. Thanks to God, who causes coincidences to happen, and to Our Lady, who's a Mother to us all, indeed.

Editor's note: Linda lives in Eustis, FL.

The Gospel Writers

Since St. Jerome, Doctor of the Church, chose to be the patron saint of The Spirit of Medjugorje for 2014, we think maybe he wants us to promote Bible reading more this year. St. Jerome, who is also the patron of librarians, said that ignorance of Scripture is ignorance of Christ. We will try this year to present interesting articles about the Bible to pique your interest in it. We pray that St. Jerome will inspire all of us to read the Bible daily, as Our Lady asks.

In a church bulletin some time ago there was an interesting article about the gospel writers. It was referring to the four statues in the four corners of that church's sanctuary. Here is what it said:

If you have ever looked closely at these four statues (Gospel writers) you will have noticed that each of them includes, in addition to the presentation of the saint itself, another carved symbol: an angel (Matthew), a winged lion (Mark), a winged ox (Luke) and an eagle (John). These symbols go back to early Christian times where artists used them to represent the writings contained in the gospels.

The "winged man" that is used as the symbol for Matthew,



Photo of the gospel writers taken in St. Peter and Paul Church in Mostar

for example, represents the fact that his gospel teaches us of the human nature of Christ as it begins with Jesus' paternal genealogy. Mark is represented by a lion since he informs us of the royal dignity of Christ and his version of the gospel begins with "The voice of one crying in the wilderness," suggesting the roaring lion. The ox is the symbol of St. Luke because in his gospel he deals with the sacrificial aspects of Christ's life. Because his gospel begins with a scene in the temple, the ox is used to represent the animals used as temple sacrifice

offerings. John's symbol is the rising eagle, since his gospel deals with the mysteries of Heaven and his writings begin with a lofty prologue of the "word that becomes flesh."

"Dear children! Also today I call you to be carriers of the Gospel in your families. Do not forget, little children, to read Sacred Scripture. Put it in a visible place and witness with your life that you believe and live the Word of God. I am close to you with my love and intercede before my Son for each of you. Thank you for having responded to my call" (Our Lady, 1/25/06).

Bits and "Peaces"

- On January 8, 2014, Pope Francis invited a priest, Fr. Fabian Baez, into his popemobile. Fr. Fabian is a priest in Buenos Aires, the former diocese of the Pope. Fr. Fabian had been in Rome after returning from a weeklong pilgrimage to Medjugorje! They spoke for a bit before the Pope returned to his residence.
- It is not too late to pick your saint for the year. You can do it online at <http://jenniferfulwiler.com/saints/>. It will pick a saint for you at random and give you the option to read about the saint.
- As of January 25, there have been 7,162 Masses scheduled for Our Lady's intentions! Thank you!

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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.

The Blessed Mother invites us to PRAYER and FASTING and PEACE. "You have forgotten that with prayer and fasting you can stop a war from happening. You can suspend natural laws."

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 \$.70 postage on it.



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