

**THE SPIRIT OF MEDJUGORJE**  
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[www.spiritofmedjugorje.org](http://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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## MONTHLY MESSAGE OF JUNE 25, 2023

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.



*The painting shown above, titled "Visitation", is the work of Stephanie Morris. We are so grateful to her for her permission to use it. The beautiful story about this painting and its connection to Medjugorje can be found on pages 4 and 5 of this issue. "Dear children, today, through me, the good Father calls you to, with your soul filled with love, set out on a spiritual visitation. Dear children, be filled with grace, sincerely repent for your sins and yearn for the good. Yearn also in the name of those who have not come to know the perfection of the good. You will be more pleasing to God. Thank you." (Our Lady, May 2, 2010)*

"Dear children! The Most High permits me to be among you – to pray for you, to be a Mother to you and to be your refuge. Little children, I am calling you: return to God and to prayer and God will bless you abundantly. Thank you for having responded to my call."



Fr. Ray

# Count Your Blessings!

By Fr. Ray Donohue

In today's news, whether on TV or in the papers, we see disasters, shootings, hate crimes, wild fires burning out of control, politicians, floods, and the list goes on and on... None of these would I call a "Blessing", but sometimes, things can turn into Blessings.

Jesus' agony in the garden, the tears that fell like drops of blood, those tears were for us and because of us! Sin brought about the need for Jesus to come here, born as a human being like you and I, and God responded, giving us HIS Greatest Gift, His Only SON! Jesus came because the Father asked Him to come to us to save us, and He is still with us.

My grandmother, my dad's mother, lived in a rural area and had an old well where she got the water for baths, her house to do the dishes, and for drinking. That was there long before my dad was born, and he was born in 1913! Well into her 80s, my grandmother still had that well and no "city" water, as she called it, and sometimes that water came up reddish in color, brownish. When I was about 6 years old in 1964, my grandmother called our home (she had a party line telephone system that I used to love to listen to when I went there every Saturday to cut her grass and visit with her). Grandma Donohue was crying for joy telling us that she had running water now and it was clean and you could drink it! (My dad would bring her 2 jugs of our "city water" every other day on his way to work and stop in to see what else she needed, if anything.) She said very clearly on the telephone, with everyone else that was listening in: "Land O' Goshen! I have clean running water and it is a miracle!!"

Today we just wouldn't understand her joy, but even at 6 years old I remember that like it was a huge miracle and we all went to church to thank God for that! We counted our blessings!

I asked many to pray for a little baby last year, little Zora, who was having a huge health problem. I baptized her in the hospital, anointed that tiny little beautiful baby girl, and blessed her young parents, the mother of Zora, whom I have known since she was born. I baptized her! It was a miracle, and last week their 4 month-old son had to have spine and back surgery at that tender age, and we all fasted, prayed and lit candles, and little Teddy came through with flying colors! We counted our blessings!!

Two dear friends were trying to adopt a baby for at least 5-6 years. I presided at their marriage and know their whole family very well. The mom's father is a Deacon and her mom was always in church and decorating it, and bringing wonderful holy programs and very Catholic ideas to the church where I was pastor at the time. People scammed these two young people who were praying and begging God and our

Blessed Mother that they could adopt a baby. They wanted a baby so very much and had so much love to give that child. A lady or a couple would promise to give their child to them for adoption, but they had to pay for all these bills for the so-called parents and then they said they could give the baby to them. But it was all a scam. Many times people did this, and it just broke their hearts! Suddenly, a young lady offered her little babies to my friends because she loved the babies so much and couldn't take care of them. The babies were adopted and are so absolutely beautiful, and the new grandfather, who is my Deacon friend, baptized the babies and I celebrated the Mass and assisted the Deacon! We all counted these 2 little babies, who are getting big and strong and are so happy and loved, a blessing! We are all still counting these blessings and always will.



Fr. Ray and Dublin

A blessing we have is that in spite of ourselves, we have people who love us dearly even with all our faults, and we have people we love with all our hearts! We have animals as our friends and companions, (namely for me, my little beautiful Dublin Dog, who gives me unconditional love and right back at him). We have changes of seasons, Faith in God, knowing God is with us, as is our Blessed Mother, when things are not going so well, and who are with us to share the joy when things are going well!

The list goes on and on, and we need to be grateful and count our blessings, although many times, we focus on the negative and not the positive. We don't hope and pray, but lose faith and complain! That is NOT what we are called to do, especially looking at the life of Jesus and the Blessed Mother, Saint Joseph and the Saints throughout the ages.

Bing Crosby (I was the youngest member of the Bing Crosby Fan Club when I was still in grade school at St. Teresa's in South Buffalo, NY) sang a song named "Counting Your Blessings"! A verse or two of the song is: "When I'm weary and I can't sleep, I count my blessings instead of sheep, and I fall asleep counting my blessings! When my bank roll is getting small, I think of when I had none at all, and I fall asleep counting my blessings! So if you're worried and you can't sleep, just count your blessings, instead of sheep, and you'll fall asleep, counting your blessings!"

Counting your blessings is prayer! It is very holy and powerful prayer! The devil wants us and tempts us to think of negative things, bad things, things out of our control, he brings on fear, scares us, brings on hate and despair and makes us worry, and worry is NOT from God, it is from inside us, and worry is the opposite of prayer and faith!

Our Blessed Mother many times reminds us not to worry. Worry is counter to who we are as Catholics and people! Worry is always from the devil, but Faith and confidence in God and the intercession of our Blessed Mother and in our holy prayers and the intercession of the Saints

*"Can any of you by worrying add a single moment to your life-span?" (Mt 6:27)*



is always a gift from God that never, ever leaves us! Nothing is impossible with God. We may not always get what we ask for, but we will always receive peace when we pray from the heart and with our heart!

My mom always said, and I have said this many times in my articles and on Mary TV and in my Homilies: "Faith is believing and trusting in God when common sense tells you not to!" (*Miracle on 34th Street*)! Goodness and peace are God's gifts, and they are there always to those who ask from their hearts to God's Heart!

If we stop counting our blessings, we grow old, and sad, and feel helpless, abandoned, just as the devil would want us to be.

I live in my cabin in the woods. I am surrounded by trees and wildlife. I have every kind of bird feeding at my 3 feeders; some are so familiar with me they don't fly away, they are just an arm's length from me as I fill up their feeders! I have many, many deer that come up and eat some of the bird food that dropped out of the feeders, and they don't run away when I am standing still and there with them. I have foxes, woodchucks, chipmunks, beautiful trees everywhere you look, a little pond of running water where the birds take their baths, and the polliwogs turn into frogs; and I walk around and thank God for these wonderful blessings! I could focus on the mosquitoes that give me a bite or two, or the leaves that fall into the pond so I have to clean them out, the weeds that come into the lawns all around my cabin, but I refuse to do so! I see beauty, I see God and His handiwork, and I thank Him for allowing me to be a very small part of keeping His creation beautiful, clean and happy, and for the happiness it all brings... even the shoveling of snow!

Look for evil, or bad news, or a problem and you are

sure to find it! Count your blessings, ask for peace, pray from your heart, love and don't hate, and you will feel the Graces of Our Lady of Medjugorje, the Love of God, and the company of all the Angels and Saints!

Don't dwell on what you *don't* have, and be happy with what you *do* have. Offer everything up to God and our Mother in Heaven. Life here is short, and we are not made to stay here forever, but this is the "readying" place to get to know God, love God and serve God. We are not in this world for ourselves; we are here to spread the Good News, to bring hope and help to others, to love and never hate, to give and expect nothing in return. Our real reward is in Heaven. What we do and do not do here sets the course for Heaven.

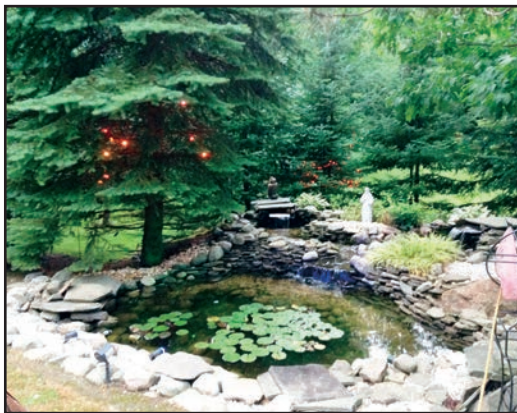
God bless you and you are all in my prayers. My little Dublin sends his love and prayers to you, too. I have my little private Chapel, Our Lady of the Woods, right in the woods where I can pray, contemplate, sing hymns to the Lord and Our Lady, and to be at peace! Our Mother, Queen of Peace asks us and reminds us of what Jesus asks us to do: "When you pray do not act as the pagans who love to stand and pray on street corners so that

everyone sees that you are praying. When you pray, go to your inner room, and pray to the Lord in secret and your Father who sees what is secret will repay you."

The repayment God gives to us is the gift of Counting our Blessings! You are all my blessings and I keep you all in my holy prayers and daily Masses!

In Jesus, Mary and Saint Joseph and all the Angels and Saints,

~Father ray and my little dog and prayer-partner and one of my dearest Blessings, Dublin!



Fr. Ray's Pond

## A Novel Way to Teach an Important Lesson

Recently I read a story about St. Philip Neri, the patron saint of *The Spirit of Medjugorje* for 2019 (who continues to help us). St. Philip was known for his sense of humor which was sometimes used to teach a lesson. According to this particular story, St. Philip once noticed a man leave Mass early, right after receiving Holy Communion. So he sent two altar boys to follow him with lighted candles through the streets. When the man finally returned to the church, St. Philip told him, "We have to pay proper respect to

Our Lord, Whom you are carrying away with you. Since you neglect to adore Him, I sent two acolytes to take your place." St. Philip Neri, please help us to never forget that when we receive Holy Communion, we become a living Tabernacle, just like Our Lady was!

"You should also receive Holy Communion with an open and pure heart; purity of heart and openness. Do not leave the church without an appropriate act of thanksgiving." (Our Lady, October 1984)

As of June 25, 2023, the number of Masses reported for Our Lady's intentions was 39,634. We were hoping to have 40,000 by the anniversary. Maybe Our Lady's birthday on August 2... Thank you.

### Prayer Intention of Pope Francis for July: For a

**Eucharistic life** – We pray that Catholics may place the celebration of the Eucharist at the heart of their lives, transforming human relationships in a very deep way and opening to the encounter with God and all their brothers and sisters.



Our thanks to Fr. Ray Donohue, Carol Bleck, Elaine Brady, Diane Niebauer, Sue Taccone, Laura and Kevin DiBacco, Barb Cesare, Chris Falk, Peggy Smith, Chris Opron, Judy Johns, Rose Heintzel, Pat Heinlein, Kandace Lyons, Sue Verga, Louise Lotze, Betsy Truran, Georgia Chludzinski, Carrie Conley, Darlene Wilkinson, Barb Sirianni, Peggy Chludzinski, Cindy Bielanin, Irene and Dan Zuba, Joan Peterson, Kathy Luschini, Corky Young, Jane Culmer, and those who want to remain anonymous for their help with the June mailing. We thank Wendy Ripple and Josip Elez for the use of their photos in this issue. We also thank our proofreader, Don Spaeder, our webmaster, Jason Klins, and our prayer group administrator, Patti Millar.

## Three in One

While in Adoration, praying about this issue, I felt prompted to put the following three stories about our cover picture together and call it "Three in One." There is a dual meaning in this title. First of all, these three stories should be read together as one, and you will understand why when you read them. Secondly, you will

hopefully see how God, the Most Holy Trinity, "Three in One", was present throughout these stories. We are three ordinary people, but through Our Lady, God connected us to share this amazing story. He can be present in your life also, if you just open the door and let Him in.

## A Visitation on the Mountain

By Patrick Kelker

One very hot August, while on pilgrimage [to Medjugorje], I decided to climb Cross Mountain. Everyone told me it was too hot and that I shouldn't attempt it. I kept getting called to make the climb, so I decided to do it. When I reached the bottom of the mountain, I noticed I was the only one there.

I started up the mountain, finding it so unusual to be by myself on the mountain. Near the Sixth Station, I noticed a woman coming up the mountain carrying a baby. She was dressed as in *biblical times*. I wondered if this woman was crazier than I. Not only was she out in the heat, dressed like that, but what if she fell carrying that baby!

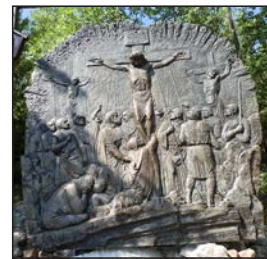
No matter how far I made it up the mountain, she stayed the same exact distance from me.

After the steep ascent to the Twelfth Station, I made up my mind I was going to stay right where I was and see this lady. Almost on cue to my thinking this, she started proceeding up towards me. When she came near, she covered the baby up so I couldn't see it. When she got next to me, my body went rigid

and I was unable to move. Every hair on my body stood straight up and I began singing, "What Child is This?" I somehow knew all the words and it was pure heaven coming out of my mouth. The woman was beautiful, and looked to be all of 14 to 15 years of age. She nodded to me as she passed and proceeded up the mountain.

I was finally able to move again and I began racing to get to the top. Upon reaching it, I was alone, as the woman with child was no longer there. I know that she could have gone down the backside, but why would she walk down the mountain right after getting up there? I believe I was blessed this day to see the Mother of God.

Upon arriving home, I went to our Adoration Chapel and lying on the pew was a print of the Mother with Child that was exactly what I saw on the mountain!



The 12th Station on  
Mt. Krizevac

## Holy Detective Work

By June Klins

This past February, a subscriber named Patrick Kelker sent me a copy of an article he had published in *Medjugorje Magazine* called "Moments on the Mountains". He told me he thought I would enjoy reading it, but he did not expect me to use it in our newsletter. But when I asked if we could, he agreed. The story above ("A Visitation on the Mountain") was the first of several stories in this article. That story ended with the statement that the picture of the Mother with Child (called "Virgin with Child" on the back of the card) could not be included in the article because it was copyrighted.

Days later, Patrick sent me the picture of the "Virgin with Child". As soon as I saw the picture, I loved it and wanted to use it in our newsletter along with the story. I felt that this artwork was "from the heart" and that the artist would be likely to give us permission, so I began my quest to find her.

The back of the card said that the artist's name was Stephanie Morris. An internet search revealed many women by that name, but then I saw one entry that said "Stephanie Morris Fine Art". I clicked on the link ([stephaniebmmorris.com](http://stephaniebmmorris.com)) and then on the tab that said "Works" and lo and behold – there was the picture! I was so excited! But then I noticed that the title was "Visitation", not "Virgin and Child" like the card. I was puzzled since at the Visitation as we know it through the Second Joyful Mystery, Jesus was still in the womb. I put that on the back burner, as my goal now

was to write to get permission to use the picture. I went to the "Contact the Artist" tab and sent her a note. Since the copyright on the card said 2012, I was hoping she still read her notes on her website.

By mid-March, I let Patrick know that I had not heard back from Stephanie yet, and he replied, "I've been going to our Blessed Sacrament chapel daily during Lent for an hour every day. Since this is the chapel where the picture was waiting for me when I returned from Medjugorje after the experience on the mountain, I'm sure if I ask God to help you, the request will be granted."

On April 18, I told Patrick that I still had not heard back from Stephanie, and it was too late for us to use the story in May, as I had originally hoped. (I have gotten used to, in my 20+ years of doing this, that Our Lady often has other plans, and they are always way better than mine.)

Five days later, prayers were finally answered. Stephanie called and left a message on my voice mail that she would be "honored" to have us use her painting! I praised and thanked God and Our Lady! And I did not even know at the time that Stephanie had her own little Medjugorje story! When I called her back, we had a lovely conversation and she told me the story about the painting and I asked her to write it up for us. And she did!

## Have You Ever Felt Like a Fraud?

By Stephanie Morris

The other day, I went to a local Catholic high school to talk to a Bible study group about my experience painting "Visitation". I had been struggling with all kinds of negative thoughts, guilt, anger, self-doubt, etc. I thought I was the last

person on the face of the earth who should be speaking to anyone about God! But because I had learned to run to Jesus with all of my sins and brokenness, that's what I did. And, as I poured my heart out to the Lord, the darkness lifted and by



the time I arrived at school, I couldn't wait to share with the girls the beautiful message Our Lady had given me. It wasn't about me! It was about how much Mary loves Her girls and wanted to thank them for loving Her Son, Jesus.

She wanted an encounter with them and I was simply going to facilitate it. As I looked out at the class, I was deeply moved by their receptivity and eagerness to receive Mary, reminding me of Elizabeth in Luke's account of the Visitation, verses 1:39-45. And so my story begins.

I'm a cradle Catholic who somehow grew up believing that I had to earn or be good enough to have a close relationship with Jesus. And since I was acutely aware that I wasn't all that good, all the time, I felt that I had to either get holy enough on my own or go through a saint or Mary or someone who was holy to enter into that relationship. This caused me deep sadness because no matter how hard I tried, I couldn't EARN that intimacy with the Lord. Now I know that it's actually the opposite. We don't earn the entrance. Jesus gave his life on the cross to make a way for us! That's how badly He wants us! Jesus is the source of holiness, healing and love. To grow in holiness, I run to Him and let Him love me just as I am. The miracle is that knowing my need and trusting in His grace opens the door to authentic, on-going conversation.

So at age 25, I got down on my knees in my kitchen and simply asked Jesus to come into my life and to forgive my sins. I surrendered. And my life changed. I gave Him all that I was and received Him as "My Lord and Savior". And I read a book *Beyond Ourselves* by Catherine Marshall, a book about grace. Truly I was His and He was mine. I started having an enormous hunger for Scripture and everywhere we moved, God put me next to some Bible-believing Protestant on fire with love for the Lord. I became resentful that the Catholic Church hadn't led me to this wonderful new life.

And I foolishly resented Mary and balked at the theology that teaches "to Jesus through Mary". (I am deeply grateful that the Catholic Church now, and for many years, has emphasized the power of grace to initiate and sustain our relationship with The Lord.)

A few years later, a friend of mine who had gone to Medjugorje gave me some tapes quoting the visionaries' messages from Mary. I kept avoiding playing them in my car until one day, my tape player broke and I decided to put Mary to the test, saying, "Ok, Mary, if these words are truly from you and you want me to listen to them, make my tape player work!" With that, I put in the tape and BAM! It worked! And Mary was saying, "All I ever wanted was for you to love my Son, Jesus!" Needless to say, I was dumbfounded! I went home, got down on my knees (again) with my rosary beads and asked Mary, "What was it like to be with Jesus in all of those Mysteries of the Rosary?" and I wept.

What a merciful, compassionate and patient Mother we

have! And persistent – thank God! Later, I found out that the reason my tape player wasn't working was because one of those little heart-shaped candies that said "BE MINE" was stuck inside. One of my children probably stuck it in there. Regardless of how it got there, it came out looking like a broken heart!

Some years later, I joined a group of women called "The Daughters of Mary" who meet weekly to pray and meditate on the upcoming Sunday gospel. The artists in the newly formed group were asked for paintings to decorate the walls of the Marian Center where we met. And that began a search to find "my Mary". Everywhere I went, I looked for Her. Finally, I found a beautiful young college student who had a deep faith and could sing like an angel. She was "the one"! She came to my studio and I took lots of pictures. Originally, I posed her with her face looking up over her left shoulder. Somehow it just didn't seem right. So, on the day before it was due, I wiped it out and turned her face to look straight out into the eyes of the spectator. And immediately I knew – this was what She wanted. She wanted to look into the eyes of Her children and have an encounter with them. I was listening to Andrea Bocelli sing "Ave Maria" and praying that God would help me paint something that drew people

closer to Jesus and Mary like his heavenly music!

I had my encounter with Her at a retreat that took place in the Marian Center months later. We were meditating on "The Visitation" and suddenly I felt that I was Elizabeth and Mary was coming to me out of the painting and I was saying, "Who am I that the Mother of my Lord would come to me?" I couldn't believe She was bringing Jesus to me! And She said "You are so beautiful! Do you want to hold my baby?" I was overwhelmed and tried to say yes. But She looked at me with the most tender expression and said, "If you want to hold

my baby, you'll have to put down some of those things you're carrying." There was so much love in Her voice and eyes that I felt no criticism, only a desire to love Him with all my heart.

Not long after that, I had the opportunity to go to Magnificat Day in Memphis, TN, where I was introduced to Pierre-Marie Dumont, the creator and founding publisher of the liturgical monthly magazine, *Magnificat*. When he saw my painting of Mary, he said, "I love her! Let's put her on the cover of *Magnificat*!" Ultimately, it came out in the form of a card in the January 2016 issue with a message on the back from Mary to Her children.

Recently, I received an email from June Klins telling me about an amazing encounter a friend of hers had with Mary in Medjugorje. To my astonishment, he said that She looked to him just like Mary as She is depicted in my painting.

All I know is that Mary loves Her children and wants them to experience this love. And more than anything, She wants us to love Jesus with all that is in us.

**My beloved one, be still.**  
Let me look into your eyes.  
Can you feel the intensity of my love for you?  
Can you feel my gratitude to you for loving my Son Jesus?  
Do you know how much I treasure you in my heart?

**My beloved child, you are so beautiful!**  
Do you want to hold my Baby?  
Will you love him and care for him?  
I hear his voice in the cries of my suffering children.  
I need you to be my arms!

**Will you let go of the things that distract you  
and prevent you from being single-minded?  
I call you to a deeper conversion.  
I call you to love Jesus with all that is in you!  
I believe that this is the moment  
and that by the power of the Holy Spirit you can say yes.  
You can live Yes!  
Now go live out your Magnificat!**

Wording on back of "Visitation" card

# Confession

By Cathy Nolan

Yesterday [May 23, 2017], Fr. Glen Sudona gave a wonderful homily on Confession. I realize not all of you can go to the archives to listen, so I transcribed it! Thanks to Fr. Glen for such a beautiful exhortation!

One word today very, very important is the word, "Confession." And you know that Medjugorje is really noted for healing. And while Lourdes is known for the healing of the body, here it is noted for the healing of the soul. And quite frankly if you had to choose a healing, choose the healing of your soul, because we all have to give up the body some time, but the soul lives forever. And so it is all important that we make a good Confession.

Outside in the Confessional area you will see a statue of a priest, a Capuchin Franciscan. His name is St. Leopold of Mandic. Do notice that the statue is a life-sized statue. Fr. Leopold was 4 feet 5 inches tall. A little man, but as the saying goes, great things come in small packages. And like St. John of the Cross and Mother Teresa and a number of saints, what they lacked in height, they had in holiness.

And so for ourselves, quite often we want to grow in many areas in our life, and when we're young we want to grow up; when you get old, you grow out; and then you grow grey; then you grow deaf. I said, "YOU GROW DEAF!" [laughter] And we want to grow financially, and many of these things are good things, and understandable things. But there is a growth in holiness, and that is often neglected. We want to grow in many areas, but not to grow holy.

So it's not a matter of the height, but it's the depth of a person. This is why Confession is all important, because Jesus says, "I am the vine, you are the branches." And the branches, as He says, need to be pruned. Those of you who have a garden or know anything about gardening, know that you have to take away the weeds and the dead things in order to produce greater fruit or flowers. Same thing with the soul – we have to sever things from us that are sapping the life from the soul.

*"Therefore whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord unworthily will have to answer for the body and blood of the Lord" (1Cor 11:27).*

There are some people that are daily communicants (which is wonderful), but they don't go to Confession. ...And you know what is happening to your soul? Nothing! If you are in a state of mortal sin, something is happening and it is not good. However, if you put seed in sand, do you know what happens to the seed? Nothing. So it is important that we make a good Confession.

We have this idea that the Church is sort of like a spiritual organization, and Jesus is alive, but that is sort of a spiritual thing. NO...Jesus rose from the dead. He told Thomas, "Touch me and see that I am not a ghost." Too many people, including Catholics, want the Church to be a ghost. They want it to be this ephemeral thing that doesn't really communicate, doesn't really say anything; or if it says anything, you can't really trust it, so I will live my life...NO! Jesus has a body – a resurrected body, and this is the Mystical Body of Christ. And this is why we have to be united to the vine, physically, not just simply spiritually.

Some people say, "Well I don't like going to church on Sunday. The priest is boring, and the choir is awful... I go to the beach, and I run along the beach, and I listen to my

iPod, and I am inspired. I know the Bible better now, and I am just a better person." Fine, you want to do that, do that on Monday! Christ requires us, He wants us united to His Body. When you go to receive Holy Communion, the priest doesn't say, "Spirit of Christ," "Wisdom of Christ," "Knowledge of Christ..." He says, "The Body of Christ!"

When you go to Confession, you encounter the Body of Christ, through the priest – the Body of Christ. Saying your sins to the wall next to your bed may make you feel good for a little bit, but in the long run, nothing ever happens. So this is why we have to go to Confession, and we have to unite ourselves to the Body of Christ. We have to go out. It is not just simply something spiritual, but it is something spiritual and material.

We celebrate and profess the Incarnation. "Carnes" in Latin means "flesh". Incarnation is "God took on flesh in Christ". The Incarnation continues after the Risen Christ ascends into Heaven. It continues in a new body, the Church. Now it is true that sometimes the Body of the Church may be on a local level or whatever level we sort of don't like, but you know what? When Jesus appeared in the upper room, He appeared with wounds. The Church is wounded. But you know what? It's still the Mystical Body of Christ. This is why, as a Catholic Christian, we go to Confession.

The little sins or whatever – you say your Act of Contrition. As a matter of fact, at the beginning of Mass we have a little time of an absolution for the venial sins. Almsgiving, the reception of Holy Communion bring forgiveness of sins. But you know what? If you throw a leaf on a pond, it will float on the water. If you throw a stone on a pond, it sinks. Heavy things sink to the bottom. So this is why it is important for us to understand what just floats on the surface that can be skimmed off and that which goes down deep.

Go before the statue of St. Leopold of Mandic. And if you go to Padua, don't only visit St. Anthony, visit this man [St. Leopold]. His arm is preserved, because of the many times in which he gave Absolution. Go to St. Leopold and say, "St. Leopold, I know what is on the surface, you reveal to me what is in the center of my soul." And then go to Confession – anger, unforgiveness, ingratitude. God keeps all of us alive. We're all on life support. And do you think He gets a thank you? Did you thank God for your eyesight this morning? How many of you thanked God for your hearing? That you are not in pain? How many? And yet He does all these things, and we are ungrateful. And is that a leaf or is that a stone? To me it is a stone, because I like to be thanked. I like to be recognized. And I'm not God. God deserves it, I may not.

So, brothers and sisters, do yourself a favor, do your spouse a favor, do your children a favor, do your parents a favor, do your neighbor a favor – make a very, very good Confession. And when you finish, you will not only *feel* better, you will *be* better. May Christ be praised.



St. Leopold statue in Medjugorje

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## Ivanka Answers Questions

*Introductory words from the editor: The following is excerpted from our July, 1996 issue. It is from a question-and-answer period when Ivanka spoke at St. George Church in Erie, PA on June 6, 1996. I thought it was worth re-printing since the majority of our subscribers are new since 1996 (including myself).*

*Q: The evils of abortion in the USA... Does Our Lady speak of it?*

A: Our Lady is the Mother of Life, and God is the Father of Life, so whoever is with God will never kill any life. When I gave birth to my second child, Josip, Our Lady told me, "Thank you for giving new life to give life." So, Our Lady is always for life.

*Q: Did Our Lady say anything about the war? Why is it going on and why its nation was not protected (pertaining to the Bosnia-Herzegovina war)?*

A: From the very beginning, Our Lady was saying that Satan is strong and his plans [are] to destroy humanity. She was inviting and calling for prayer for peace. With prayer and fasting you can avoid catastrophes. Wars are sometimes visible, sometimes less visible. Someone mentioned abortion here. It is a war against life and this visible war in Bosnia-Herzegovina is a war against life. The aggressors were always targeting the churches first – everywhere aggression... against God, against good. The bottom line is war between evil and good. The aggressor is the one who is trying to destroy the good. Our Lady wants us with prayer to have strong faith in God, to be on the side of God, to be on the side of good. This is why She wants conversion to happen. In the last message She said, "I want people to convert." It means to walk back to God, to live according to God's Commandments. If this happens, then we would not have any wars. We would not have any destruction. We would live in peace and we would have Heaven on earth.

*Q: Mary asked us to fast and pray and do penance. How often does She recommend we do this? And to what degree should we fast and pray?*

A: Our Lady suggests to us to fast on bread and water on Wednesdays and Fridays. When they [the visionaries] asked what is the best fast, She said to fast on bread and water on Wednesdays and Fridays. First it was only Fridays, then She added Wednesdays. She also said to come to this further fast, you have to advance to that slowly, gradually. The same goes for praying. For instance, if you are not accustomed to pray in the family all three Rosaries daily, then start with only one Our Father, Hail Mary and Glory Be. Then advance to seven Our Fathers, seven Hail Marys and seven Glory Be's. Then come to saying a Rosary, and then all three Rosaries, if you can. Then the fasting...

first start with giving up something that is dear to you, then gradually give up something else. Someone who is addicted to smoking can put away cigarettes that day or television. Fasting does not mean only food, but anything we put in front of ourselves as dear, as idols.

*Q: Ivanka, you saw Heaven, Hell and Purgatory. Can you briefly describe them?*

A: I only saw Heaven and Purgatory. I did not see Hell. Other visionaries did – Vicka and Jakov. Our Lady showed me Heaven and Purgatory very fast, like a film strip. Even from those pictures, it was obvious to see the difference. When Our Lady showed me Heaven, you could feel so much peace, so much beauty and so much feeling of contentment. Everyone who was there was happy and very much at peace. But when I saw Purgatory, it was quite different. The pictures were very dark, and even from that, you could feel the tremendous need for prayers. They were calling and calling for prayers and help.



*Ivanka with her husband and Josip's family*

### Our Lady's Annual Apparition to Ivanka on June 25, 2023

The visionary Ivanka Ivankovic-Elez had her annual apparition on June 25, 2023. At her last daily apparition on May 7, 1985, Our Lady confided to Ivanka the 10th secret and told her that she would have an apparition once a year on the anniversary of the apparitions.

This year, the apparition, which lasted 7 minutes (6:38 PM – 6:45 PM), took place at Ivanka's family home. Only Ivanka's family was present at the apparition. After the apparition, Ivanka said: Our Lady gave the following message: **"Little children, I am in need of your prayers. Pray, pray, pray." Our Lady blessed us all.**

**A big thank you to all who have helped to support this newsletter! We could not do this without you. It is because of YOU that we have never charged a subscription fee in these 36 years of publishing. It really helps since this month we will have yet another postage increase. You are the best!**

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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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