



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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MONTHLY MESSAGE OF APRIL 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! I am with you to tell you that I love you and to encourage you to prayer; because Satan is strong and every day his strength is stronger through those who have chosen death and hatred. You, little children, be prayer and my extended hands of love for all those who are in darkness and seek the light of our God.

Thank you for having responded to my call.”

May is the month of Mary and also the month (in the US) in which we celebrate Mother's Day. Happy Mother's Day to all of our mothers and especially our Heavenly Mother! Let us make our Mother happy and strive to live Her messages the best we can. The picture above seemed so appropriate for the cover when reading Fr. Ray's article for this month.

Mother, At Your Feet Is Kneeling

By Fr. Ray Donohue



Fr. Ray

As I write this article for the beautiful Month of Our Lady – the Queen of Heaven, Our Mother Dearest, and the Mother of Our Lord and Savior – I think that, just as Mary brought new life and new hope and joy into the world of darkness and hate and evil, that for many centuries our dear Mother has come to us in many ways to help Her children stay on course, or get on course, Our Mother is a compass and guide for all people. She leads us and heads

us all into the right direction, as so often we have gone astray and followed the wrong paths – paths of earthliness, and not a path to Light and Holiness and Truth.

Everything that Mary has done, and continues to do, directs us to Jesus, Her Divine Son and Savior of the world! Jesus, as we all have just celebrated in Lent, Easter and throughout this Holy Season of redemption, opened the gates to Heaven to all of humanity. Mary calls us, as such a wonderful holy Mother, to Herself, to bring us to Jesus, and get us on the right road to holiness.

For 30 Pilgrimages to Medjugorje, each one I have made is new, and I am taught so much more. Each one has opened my eyes, my heart and my soul in ways I never dreamed of; and in all of them, Mary has led me closer to Jesus, and holiness, compassion. I have experienced there such peace, and so much healing, for myself and mostly for others! Hearing Holy Confessions in Medjugorje is like being in Heaven and seeing souls that are dark and sad and lonely become beautiful flowers, budding and alive again and so colorful with Grace and Holiness and Love beyond all telling!

Souls come from all over the world, called by our Mother, all to bring us to Jesus! She calls all Her children to know Jesus, and for those unable to come to Medjugorje, our Mother tells us the way to Him in all Her messages, slowly and in a most motherly holy way! “My very dear Children.” Mary calls us, and so we are, or try to be. In our sins and imperfections, Mary calls us to the “Confessional of the World” in Medjugorje, as Pope Saint John Paul II would call it.

Over Lent, I heard so many confessions and I witnessed so many souls coming to me, one of Mary’s priests, and seeing people so crushed, so sad, no self-esteem, because sin has tried to eat them up and leave them open to devilish sadness, guilt, hate, darkness and total gloom!

The good news is that, through others, through Holy Mother Church, through homilies about the joy and happiness of un-burdening ourselves of all the sin, Mary’s and God’s Presence stir a little flame in the little spark they still have of holiness and they come bearing loads of darkness, so heavy; and yet after time in Holy Confession,

they come out like the very day they were baptized – cleansed, renewed, happy, and most of all with the Grace so strong to crush the evil one’s head! I tell them often in the Holy Sacrament, the devil is a smelly old garbage collector with stinky, smelly, moldy hate and despair. Who wants that garbage and carrying it around with us all the time?! They unburden themselves and God, and our dear Blessed Mother, the Mother of us ALL, inspires us, takes the fear away, and through the Holy Sacraments, gives us strength to say: “NO!” to all evil. Like our Blessed Mother, Who was conceived without any stain of sin, and by the Grace of God never had sin on Her holy Soul, we start all over again, a complete “Do-Over,” and with the Grace, we have the power now and ambition to say, “NO” to evil and “YES” to God.

O Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to Thee! God gives us the Grace we need, and Mary, the Queen of Heaven and yet so humble and so holy, assists us in so many ways to live without sin, and to do things in accord of God’s ways!

Yes, it is May, Our Lady’s month, and as Her children, we need to celebrate Her month by honoring Her in song, in joy, in following Her example and saying, “YES” to God and “NO” to evil! Mary was tempted by the devil just as we are, but never sinned! Why? Because She was “filled with Grace!” We too, when we make a good monthly confession, are then “filled with Grace.”

When I was ordained a Deacon in 1984, I was sent to St. Joseph Church in Fredonia, NY. I used to visit the school and teach in the school as a Deacon, (WOW! That was 40 years ago!! I remember it like it was yesterday and still know very well the students I taught!) Then ordained a priest, in fact

I was ordained a priest at that wonderful parish in 1985, it was 39 years ago this past April 26th! In any case, I remember when I was teaching the lower classes simple prayers, the “Our Father” and the “Hail Mary,” we got to the part: “Hail Mary, Full of Grace, the Lord is with Thee.” I remember so vividly a young man in second grade, and so very seriously and wanting a true answer to his question asked me: “But you said our Blessed Mother Mary was clean and immaculate!” I answered him and said: “Very good, Mary was indeed pure and Immaculate!” as I was very pleased he remembered that! But he continued in all seriousness: “Then, how could Mary be pure and clean if She was filled with grease?” No kidding... it took another whole class to explain the difference between “Grace” and “grease”, but at least he was listening and understood what Grace is, and that was a good thing for the whole class to hear!

We all need to learn and re-learn how much the Blessed Mother loves us. Mary asks us to pray the Holy Rosary each day, and that is not a chore, but a joy! Who



Fr. Ray with visionary Ivan in Medjugorje

wouldn't want to spend time praying and thinking of the Blessed Mother at the very same time?

There is a very old hymn to Mary entitled: "Mother At Your Feet Is Kneeling." As a child, I knew (and I have written about) an older couple who "adopted me" and I "adopted" them. They lived about four houses from the church and went to daily Mass that I served, right until I entered the Seminary. I have mentioned them many times, Mr. and Mrs. Park. He was blind, and Mrs. Park was "his eyes." Her favorite hymn was "Mother At Your Feet Is Kneeling." I end here with the lyrics. I am going to play and sing this beautiful hymn at St. Columban's on the Lake because I know so many will know it and it is so beautiful.

(1) Mother at Your feet is Kneeling, one who loves you 'tis your child, who has sought so oft to see you. Bless me, Mother, bless your child. Mother, when my Jesus calls me, from this world so dark and drear, from the wily snares of

Satan, shield me, Mother, Mother dear.

Refrain: Dearest Mother tell my Jesus, how I love Him fond and true, and oh Mary dearest Mother, tell Him I belong to you.

(2) Plead for me when Jesus judges, answer for me when He asks, how I spent so many moments, How perform'd so many tasks. Mary, oh my dearest Mother, May it e'er to me be giv'n, as on earth I fondly love Thee, so to love Thee still in Heav'n.

Give Glory to God, and thank Him for so great a gift of Mary, His Mother, for us all to be able to call Mary Our Mother, our dearest Mother too! May God bless you always!

In Jesus, Mary and Saint Joseph, in the merry, merry month of May,

~Father ray and Dublin and the newest member of the family, our new little Kitty, Sweet Pea!

Vicka's Husband, Mario, Speaks About Mother Mary

By Cathy Nolan

Mother Mary is with us. She is with us in Medjugorje, accompanying us on our way to heaven. As we continue to prepare for Pentecost, let's listen to another message She has given us with Her guidance for this time of battle for the Kingdom of God: (August 25, 2000) "Dear children! I desire to share my joy with you. In my Immaculate Heart I feel that there are many of those who have drawn closer to me and are, in a special way, carrying the victory of my Immaculate Heart in their hearts by praying and converting. I desire to thank you and to inspire you to work even more for God and His kingdom with love and the power of the Holy Spirit. I am with you and I bless you with my motherly blessing. Thank you for having responded to my call."

Our Mother was excited to see that many of Her children had drawn closer to Her. Through prayer and conversion, Her children were able to carry Her victory in their hearts, the victory of Her Immaculate Heart. This is very important. The victory of Our Lady's Immaculate Heart is a victory over our terrible enemy, Satan. Her victory is bringing many souls into the Kingdom of God. It is the final battle for souls.

Mario Mijatovic (Vicka's husband!) shared about the importance of Mother Mary in his interview with Rosie in "Tea with Rosie," Episode 290 [5/18/2020]. He spoke with such conviction! It was his personal experience that he spoke about. (I highly recommend that you watch this interview on our website, www.marytv.tv because seeing Mario speak communicates much more than the words he spoke alone could communicate. He is filled with the Holy Spirit!)

Mario shared with Rosie:

Mario: Mother Mary, Mother Mary is calling us to have patience, which is a beautiful way to stay close to Her. We must stay close to Mother, not with our lips, not with our words – but with our heart. You know, with our heart. Speaking with Her about all your problems. Speak with Her, talk to Mother. Tell Her everything. Ask Mother – She is doing something for us, She is sending Her Son Jesus. Mother is doing this for us.

This is most important. Because, when I speak today with my Mother, with Mother Mary, when I tell Her everything that is here [he points to his heart], then tomorrow somebody may ask me, "Who is your Mother?" I can tell him, "My Mother is the same mother – the Mother of Jesus Christ, Mother Mary." Well, after this the man may ask me, "What did you speak about with Mother Mary today?" Then I can tell him, "I spoke this, this, this."

But when you speak to another person, and you ask him, "What did you speak about with Mother Mary? What did Mother Mary tell you today?" That person might frown like this... (frowning). Now, many people say this: "Mother Mary is my mother." Excuse me? Who is this mother when you don't speak with Her? Who is your mother – (that you don't speak with Her)? This is important.

Mother Mary is safe for us. A sure way for us. Mother Mary brings us to Her Son Jesus. You know, this is important. Because when I go to find Jesus without Mary, I am not sure which Jesus I will find. Maybe some can find Jesus. But I find Him with Mother. I want to tell you all, this is most important, to stay close to the Mother Mary.

Rosie: And She will guide you to Jesus.

Mario: Mother Mary of Nazareth! Not Mother Mary of Medjugorje, of Lourdes, of Fatima...but of Nazareth! This same Mother Mary of Nazareth has been to Lourdes, has been to Fatima, is here for us [in Medjugorje]!

Mario knows the Mother! He wants us all to understand that we need to be her children. We need to speak to Her every day from our hearts, sharing everything with Her, simply, like children. And we need to listen for Her words, Her guidance. This is how we will grow in holiness. This is how we will be ready for the coming of the Holy Spirit. This is how we will help Her heart to triumph!! Be Her children, truly Her children. Thank you, Mario, for your witness. It brings us closer to our Mother, the Mother, Mary, our Mother.

www.marytv.tv



Mario
(courtesy of marytv.tv)

Blessed Mother, I Cannot do it by Myself"

By Gail Boos

It is a gift to be chosen by the Queen of Peace to bring Her children that have responded by saying "Yes" to make the pilgrimage to Medjugorje. It is also a rewarding one, but a humbling one too, especially when you have bumps along the way. I'm sure all pilgrim leaders will agree to that.

It was through a priest friend that had gone on pilgrimage with us to Medjugorje, several years ago, that Fr. John Conway of Blue Ridge, Georgia, was recommended to go on our October 2017 pilgrimage. Fr. John accepted our invitation, and several members of his parish joined the pilgrimage. We met up with Fr. John and his parishioners in Atlanta at the international terminal. As we began to introduce ourselves, one young woman stood out among the rest. In my heart I just knew something was wrong with her. I did not know what, but felt that way and would later find out.

Once in Medjugorje, as our group assembled for the evening meal, I noticed that the young woman, named Vayla, drank an awful lot of wine and became a happy drunk. I just prayed about what to do and decided to let it go to see how she would react the next night. Lo and behold, she did the same thing, so I had to take her aside and ask her to not drink so much. That went in one ear and out the other. Vayla enjoyed her wine and that was that.

Once back home from the pilgrimage, I made it a point to get to know Vayla and her husband Russell on a personal level. As our relationship grew, Vayla started sharing her history with me. What an incredible journey she has been on, and she is blessed to be alive. Her dark journey started when she was raped at the age of 13. By the age of 16, she was pregnant, and she gave the baby girl up for adoption. About three months after giving up her baby, she started on a deeper and very dangerous path of using IV drugs, along with making and selling drugs. This she did for the next 38 years of her life. During those years, she met a man in the army and had two children by him, a daughter and a son. When Vayla was seven months pregnant with her third child, she suffered a massive stroke which left her paralyzed on the left side, unable to walk, talk, or feed herself. She was hospitalized for 29 days. It is a miracle she recovered from the stroke, and her son was born healthy. Only through the grace of God did she pull through all this. Her marriage ended when her husband took his own life.

A mother never forgets the child she puts up for adoption, and at some point, either the mother or child will usually try and find one another. In 1983, Vayla found a little postcard from the national adoption location agency and filled out the form and mailed it back. There was no internet at the time.

On December 23, 1993, a social worker at the agency decided to make one more phone call, before going on Christmas break, to see if a match could be found. Vayla received a call asking if she had a child on April 8, 1969, in Seattle, Washington. The daughter was also searching for her mother. So, on December 24, 1993, they were reunited for the first time.

Dana, Vayla's daughter who was put up for adoption, got to meet her stepsister Jessica, her stepbrother Adrian, and her grandmother for the first time. Vayla learned Dana had been adopted by a Mormon couple and had a very good home life.

In August of 1995, Vayla met Russell by selling drugs to him. Russell had to return to Georgia as his father died. His mother was very ill and needed care, as she was suffering with Alzheimer's disease. Vayla ended up moving to Georgia to be with Russell and help care for his elderly mother. Russell and Vayla lived together for 11 years before receiving their annulments and then the Sacrament of Marriage.

Russell and Vayla received their Sacrament of Marriage on November 10, 2007, at St. Anthony's Catholic Church, with 75 Baptists in attendance and two Catholic friends. No family was present at their wedding. Even Russell's mother was too ill to come.

When Fr. John met Russell and Vayla for the first time, he told me he thought he had "met a pair of pit bulls." As pastor of St. Anthony's, parish, Fr. John, with all his duties and parishioners to care for, saw two lost sheep. He personally made time to get to know them and guide them back to their Catholic roots. Along this new journey in their lives, the Holy Spirit was working within them, as they just stopped doing drugs. Fr. John instructed them to give up all their addictions and the evil sin of pornography. He told them to burn the DVDs. They did not want to, but Father insisted. They obeyed him and burnt all of them. Now they were free of the addiction to drugs and porn. They went to Confession and started attending Holy Mass.

In 2019, Fr. John, Vayla and Russell, and other parishioners from his parish, went on a pilgrimage again to Medjugorje with me. To be perfectly honest, I did not want Vayla to go because of her drinking. They had gone in 2018 and her behavior was the same. However, I did not want to offend them, nor Fr. John, so I let them return. Most of the pilgrims ignored her, but some came and complained they could not take her anymore.

While enroute to Tihaljina, she and Russell were really having differences of opinions and Russell broke down and started crying, saying he just could not take it anymore with Vayla. He simply did not know what to do. They were arguing even on pilgrimage. We sat down and prayed and asked Blessed Mother to please help her.

Returning to our hotel in time for our evening meal, my daughter told me that she and I were invited to Marija's

apparition and I could bring one person with me. What a decision to make as there were so many people on that pilgrimage that really needed to be at that apparition. All I could do was pray and ask God to put the name of the person I should take into my heart. My daughter also prayed for the same intention. I sat down beside Vayla at the dinner table and in my heart, I knew she was the one to go. I never mentioned to Vayla about asking



Dana, Vayla, Jessica, and Vayla's mother

her to the apparition, but as she started to pour herself a glass of wine, I put my hand over her glass and said, "Vayla, not tonight!" She said, "Well, okay," and gave me a not-so-nice look.

We had to leave at 4:30 p.m. to get to Marija's, so I said, "Come on, Vayla, we have to go." She thought she was going to be spoken to again about her drinking. The moment we started out the door of the hotel, the sky was picture-perfect blue, and lo and behold, the word "HI" formed in the sky. Oh my, we looked at it and walked toward the confessionals. I said, "Vayla, we have to go to Confession," and she said, "I was just there yesterday." "That is great, Vayla," I responded, and we told Her where we were going. Vayla started to cry.

When we got to Marija's, we were about three rows back from the front, near the statue of our Blessed Mother, and we told Vayla to write a prayer petition and put it in the basket. We also told Vayla to just surrender herself, her drinking, and all bad habits to our Blessed Mother when She came down from Heaven. When our Blessed Mother came down from Heaven, we were on our knees, my daughter and I both praying for a miracle for Vayla. Vayla told us, as we walked out of Marija's, after the apparition, that she asked Blessed Mother to help her, as she could not do it on her own.

Once outside, Vayla's face looked 20 years younger. Even Dragan, our guide, noticed it right away. Her behavior was totally different. Back at the hotel, she had no desire for wine. Blessed Mother had healed Vayla of her drinking, and to this day, she has not had a drink of anything!

When Russell and I were stranded in Medjugorje, in March 2020, due to COVID, I feared she might take a drink, and we called her at home in Georgia to let her know we were OK, and I begged her not to drink. She said, "I would never do that. It would be like slapping God in the face."

God was at work in Vayla's life all along. In 2009, when she and Russell went with Fr. John to New York to attend the Papal Mass with Pope Benedict, Vayla was healed of her smoking addiction. In June of 2021, Dana came to Georgia to spend 10 days with her mother. Those days will forever hold special memories for Vayla, as Dana

died on October 14, 2021. She was only 52 years old. God knew there had to be closure for Vayla.

Today, through the graces and healing she received in Medjugorje, Vayla is a very strong, devout, Catholic woman who said she would go through her past again to be where she is today. She has a healthy relationship with her daughter, son and grandchildren.

We can *never* look at anyone and judge them. Only God knows their heart and past, and He has a plan for every one of us, if we will just surrender to His will, like Vayla and Russell did. They were so blessed to have a priest that cared and loved them, to keep them from losing their souls. Fr. John Conway is a very special priest, a traditional one, who preaches truth at all costs.

Vayla will be the first to tell you to *never lose hope*, keep the rosary in your hands and to always talk to God. One thing Vayla shared with me was that through all those horrible years, from the time she was a teenager, she always had her scapular and rosary and always talked to God. Surrender is the key to forgiveness, as Blessed Mother in Medjugorje keeps telling us, after almost 43 years.

Epilogue: Medjugorje is the chosen place on earth today, where the Mother of God comes down from Heaven and prays at the foot of the Cross on Cross Mountain for all Her children that have answered Her call. It is through special graces given in Medjugorje, that Vayla, Russell, and thousands of others have been given a new path to life. Each awakening day begins with prayer, praying from the heart, and the Rosary, as Blessed Mother asks us to do in Medjugorje. She tells us to just talk to God. He is listening and waiting for us. In doing so, we find peace, peace in our hearts, and peace in our homes. Peace!

Editor's note: Gail gave us permission to print this story, which was originally published in Medjugorje Magazine. Gail lives in Cleveland, Georgia. She has led pilgrimages to Medjugorje for 29 years and worked for 13 years as the U.S. sponsor for Fr. Jozo's orphans. She is currently working on a prayer book called "Dear Children! I Am Calling You!" We will tell you more about that in a future issue.



Marija's chapel

"Stop judging, that you may not be judged. For as you judge, so will you be judged" (Mt 7: 1-2).

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As of April 25, 2024, the number of Masses reported for Our Lady's intentions was 40,052. Thank you.

Keep your heart in peace and let nothing trouble you, not even your faults. You must humble yourself and amend them peacefully, without being discouraged or cast down, for God's dwelling is in peace."

~ St. Margaret Mary Alacoque, our patron saint for 2024

Editor's introduction: Last month I was surprised to see that an article from our May 2002 issue was featured for a few days on a popular website called spiritdaily.com. It drew almost 15,000 visitors to our website. Although the 2002 issue is not online, we had decided years ago to include it in the feature articles because it was such a popular article. We also re-printed it in our May 2013 issue. We have never re-printed an article more than once, but when I received an email from a lady who read it on spiritdaily and had two answered prayers by the third day, I got a nudging from Our Lady to share it in this issue. It seemed like a "Medjugorje Moment."

The Swap

By June Klins

"Keep making the swap with Our Lady. She'll take care of everything. I made the swap about my job last week. Today I got a promotion. Wahooooooooo! It works!" After reading this note from my friend Christine, I wrote back to her and asked, "Did I miss something? What is 'the swap?'" Christine wrote back and told me that the "swap" is giving your troubles, worries and intentions to our Heavenly Mother, while you pray for Her intentions – the conversion of unbelievers, peace in the world, priests, youth, healing of the sick, etc. Christine told me that she had three "swaps" taken care of in two days. "I can't believe how fast She handles things," Christine said. "Sr. Emmanuel taught this to me. It's so easy and it works!"

Christine gave me permission to share another of the "swaps" she made with Our Lady that week. This one involved her husband, who she said had been displaying a grouchy and mean temperament at the time. She said, "Thankfully he has a spiritual life and that is what kept me from digging a hole out back and throwing him into it. I gave him to Mary and really wished Her the best of luck!" Not long after she made the swap, Christine and her husband went to a talk about Blessed Padre Pio and had the opportunity to have religious items blessed with Padre Pio's glove. Christine's husband surprised her by taking off his wedding ring and laying it on the glove. Then he asked the priest to give their marriage a special blessing. He was transformed!

I was intrigued. I wanted to know more. So I wrote to "Children of Medjugorje," the organization with which Sr. Emmanuel is affiliated, and asked how I could learn more about the "swap." I was informed that I could learn more about it on one of Sister's audio tapes, "True Consecration to Mary." I immediately ordered the tape.

Sr. Emmanuel reveals on the tape how the idea of the "swap" originated. She was with Ivan's prayer group on the mountain one night when Our Lady's message was, "Dear children, give me all your worries, all your problems. Then your heart will be free to pray. And pray for my intentions." As Sister reflected on this message, she thought Our Lady was suggesting that we make a trade with Her. We give Her *our* worries and we pick up *Her* worries. A similar message was given to Mirjana in March of 1991 when Our Lady said to her, "Help me, and I will pray to my Son for you." The idea of a "swap" is hardly a new one though. Over 600 years ago, Jesus said to St. Catherine of Sienna, "You take care of My business; I'll handle yours."

Sr. Emmanuel tried the swap herself and said it worked perfectly. Soon after, Sister met a man named Albert who came to Medjugorje and had a conversion. On his last day there he was very dejected and Sister asked him why. He



Sr. Emmanuel

said that he was sad because he would not be able to live the message Our Lady gave about praying in the family. His wife, at home in France, was an atheist, and had even threatened him when he left for Medjugorje. He also had hoped to return to Medjugorje but said he would have to save for many years for that. Sr. Emmanuel suggested to Albert, "Let's make a deal with Our Lady." So Albert did. He said, "I give You my wife, and I wish You all the best. And I will pray for Your intentions instead of worrying about my wife." Three months later Albert was back in Medjugorje, but this time his wife was with him! He said, "She forced me to come to Medjugorje.

That deal works tremendously." Albert said that now he had a new problem though – his wife prays so much that he can't keep up with her!

In a later note, Christine told me that there was also a reference to the "swap" in Sr. Emmanuel's book, *Medjugorje in the '90's*, which my son had bought in Medjugorje last summer. It was easy to find the story because it was titled, "Theresa's Swap." This story was about a woman named Theresa who was worried about her daughter Vera's family. Her son-in-law, an atheist, was constantly fighting with and criticizing Vera. On the same day that Theresa left for Medjugorje, Vera made an appointment to file for divorce. In Medjugorje, Theresa heard about the "swap," and decided to try it. She went to the Blue Cross and prayed for unbelievers, young people, families, priests, those without peace in their hearts, etc. On that very night, she found out that Vera canceled her meeting with the lawyer. Theresa returned each night to the Blue Cross to pray. When she returned home she found that her son-in-law was a totally changed man. Vera and her husband have converted and with their daughter Harmony (no coincidence in that name), the family began to pray together every day.

In further explaining the "swap," Sr. Emmanuel said that Mary, in the role of our Heavenly Mother, wants to help you, to make your life peaceful and joyful. She wants to take all the pressures and crosses in your life. She wants to pick up your problems, all those things that prevent you from being peaceful with God and peaceful with other people. She wants you to give the problems to Her so that She can take care of them. She knows much better than you do how to take care of your problems. After all, She has been a Mother for a very long time! So once She picks up that problem, you will be free of it. Instead of your heart being focused on a problem which will obsess you all the time, you will be able to open up your heart to the whole world. For instance, if you are praying for the conversion of one of your children, and make the "swap" with Her, then instead of your heart being focused on *your* child alone, your heart

will become like Her Motherly heart, taking care of *all* the children of God. You enlarge your heart to the dimensions of God's heart! But it is not as if you have stopped praying for your own intention either, because your intention will be included in Our Lady's intentions. If you think about it, almost every intention that you pray for can be included in any one of Our Lady's intentions. Perhaps you are praying for a friend who is very ill. Our Lady's intentions include prayers for the sick. So when you pray for Her intentions of the sick, you are praying for your friend as well. Maybe you are praying for your teen-agers. Our Lady's intentions include prayers for young people. Maybe you are praying for a job situation. Chances are that the people causing you grief at your job are unbelievers, so when you pray for unbelievers, you are in essence, praying for your own job situation. The list goes on.

In my Medjugorje prayer group, when we state our intentions before we start our Rosaries, one of our members always says, "I pray for Mary's intentions, which covers every good thing." And she is right. Sr. Emmanuel says that when you enlarge your heart to the dimensions of God's heart, you feel the love of God penetrate you in a new way, a deep and strong way. You become like Mother Teresa whose heart was open to the whole world. Everybody you meet becomes very dear to you because you have God's heart in your heart instead of being focused on your own problems. Not only does this freedom alleviate you of your worries, but it also frees you up for deeper prayer of adoration, contrition and thanksgiving. It frees you up to listen to what

God wants to say to you too. That is an important part of prayer often overlooked.

A few months ago, I decided to try a "swap." This may seem like a trivial intention, but I was having trouble with my computer. It looked like it was a lost cause, so I told Our Lady, "You get my computer fixed so I can continue to do Your work, and I will pray for Your intentions." Every time I would start to think about my problem with the computer, I would say a "Hail Mary" for Our Lady's intentions. That night, my husband worked diligently on the computer and was able to fix it. As of this writing, it is working better than it has ever worked before! Our Lady is a powerful intercessor! So you can bet I will be giving Her some more challenging projects in the future.

An added benefit of the "swap" that Sr. Emmanuel did not mention is that you become more youthful looking and also healthier. Think about it. It makes sense. It is no secret that stress causes lines in your face and causes damage to your body. So if you give your problems to our Heavenly Mother, it's OK because Her glorified body can handle it. The visionaries say that She is so beautiful because She loves, and She would love to have your problem. Don't be surprised if your problem is solved in a way different than what you had planned though, because She and Her Son always know what is best.

As my friend Christine says, "Imagine if we were *all* praying for Blessed Mother's intentions instead of worrying about our own problems! Imagine what could be accomplished!" We could change the world!

Editor's introduction: By the time someone sent me the following prayer, it was too late to include it in the March issue when this novena began. But in a recent reflection, Cardinal Raymond Burke, who wrote this novena prayer, invited people worldwide to join, even if late. He wrote, "For anyone who has not joined the Nine-Month Novena, it is not too late. Please join today, begin the Novena on any day, and pray the Official Novena Prayer every day. You might also invite someone to join us in this novena." The novena ends on December 12, 2024, the feast day of Our Lady of Guadalupe. For more information and to receive his monthly reflections, you can visit novena.cardinalburke.com.

Prayer of the Nine-Month Novena to Our Lady of Guadalupe

O Virgin Mother of God, we fly to your protection and beg your intercession against the darkness and sin which ever more envelop the world and menace the Church. Your Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ, gave you to us as our mother as He died on the Cross for our salvation. So too, in 1531, when darkness and sin beset us, He sent you, as Our Lady of Guadalupe, on Tepeyac to lead us to Him Who alone is our light and our salvation

Through your apparitions on Tepeyac and your abiding presence with us on the miraculous mantle of your messenger, Saint Juan Diego, millions of souls converted to faith in your Divine Son. Through this novena and our consecration to you, we humbly implore your intercession for our daily conversion of life to Him and the conversion of millions more who do not yet believe in Him. In our homes and in our nation, lead us to Him Who alone wins the victory over sin and darkness in us and in the world.

Unite our hearts to your Immaculate Heart so that they may find their true and lasting home in the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus. Ever guide us along the pilgrimage of life to our eternal home with Him. So may our hearts, one with yours, always trust in God's promise of salvation, in His never-failing mercy toward all who turn to Him with a humble and contrite heart. Through this novena and our consecration to you, O Virgin of Guadalupe, lead all souls in America and throughout the world to your Divine Son in Whose name we pray. Amen.



Our Lady of Guadalupe painting in Ivan's guest house in Medjugorje

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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.

If you want a prayer cloth we made, send a self-addressed stamped business size (4 1/8" x 9 1/2") envelope with \$.92 postage on it. This offer is available while supplies last.



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