

THE SPIRIT OF MEDJUGORJE
P.O. BOX 6614 • ERIE, PENNSYLVANIA 16512
www.spiritofmedjugorje.org

SUBSCRIPTION RATE - FREE WILL OFFERING - PLEASE SEE PAGE 8

If this is the first time you have received this newsletter, and you would like a "Beginner's Guide," please contact us for one.

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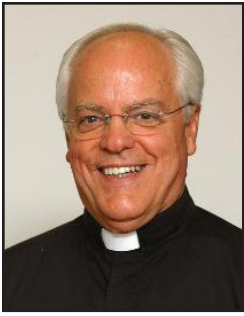
CURRENT MONTHLY MESSAGE OF SEPTEMBER 25, 2015

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! Also today I am praying to the Holy Spirit to fill your hearts with a strong faith. Prayer and faith will fill your heart with love and joy and you will be a sign for those who are far from God. Little children, encourage each other to prayer with the heart, so that prayer may fulfill your life; and each day, you, little children, will be, above all, witnesses of serving God in adoration and of your neighbor in need. I am with you and intercede for all of you. Thank you for having responded to my call."

October is the month of the Rosary. The statue of Our Lady of Medjugorje pictured above stands in front of St. James Church in Medjugorje. "I invite you to call on everyone to pray the Rosary. With the Rosary you shall overcome all the adversities which Satan is trying to inflict on the Catholic Church. All you priests, pray the Rosary! Dedicate your time to the Rosary" (Our Lady, 6/25/85).



Fr. Bill Kiel

The Rosary – A Powerful Prayer and Meditation

By Fr. Bill Kiel

The Rosary and the month of October go hand in hand. It is a time to remind us of the beauty and the power of prayer through the Rosary. Praying the Rosary is not only repeating the words of the Hail Mary, Our Father and the Glory Be; it also includes, as an integral part of prayer, meditating on the mysteries of Jesus and Mary. Spending time on the meditation of the Joyful, Luminous, Sorrowful and Glorious Mysteries helps us to appreciate the life of Jesus and Mary.

Meditation should be more than reading or listing the mysteries, it should be placing ourselves in the situation of the mystery. Each time we pray the Rosary and meditate on the mysteries will be different because we are always changing and growing in our worldly life and spiritual life. Take the time to meditate and reflect on your life and the life of Jesus, and align your life with Jesus. Your life will take on a deeper meaning in the spiritual realm. You will be drawn closer to Jesus and Mary.

If you are praying the Rosary each day, try to make a little more time to reflect and meditate on the mysteries. As you do, you will develop a greater appreciation of the Rosary and want others to pray it. Then you will begin giving rosaries to others, and perhaps a card or booklet listing or explaining the mysteries.

This is a beautiful way of evangelizing the life of Jesus and Mary.

In many parishes, rosaries are made by parishioners to give away, or parish groups will sponsor rosary purchases, to hand out rosaries to others or to children in their faith formation classes. Many parents are unfamiliar with the Rosary, and giving rosaries to children encourages their parents to learn to pray the Rosary and become familiar with the mysteries. Children are teaching their parents!

Many times I receive stories of individuals who have given rosaries to “lukewarm” Catholics and changes begin to take place in their lives, spiritually and worldly, as they pray the Rosary. The prayers of the Rosary are powerful! Remember – do not only *say* the words, but *pray* the words of the Our Father, Glory Be, and the Hail Mary *from the heart*. You are asking the intercession of our Blessed Mother as you finish each Hail Mary with the words “*pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death.*”



Bits and “Peaces”

• We have received an increased number of bounced checks lately. We are a non-profit organization, and whenever we receive a check that bounces, we are charged a fee of \$24. Please be sure your checking balance is sufficient for the written check! If you do not have the funds, but want to receive the newsletter, just let us know. We never turn anyone away who wants to receive the newsletter.

• Help wanted (for those in the Erie area): We are looking for people to help fold a box of newsletters by hand when we can't use our folding machine. You can do this in your home and your family can help. Please call June at 814-898-2143.

• For those in the Erie area: The annual Rosary March will be held on Sunday, October 11 at 2:00 P.M. starting at St. Peter Cathedral.

• After this issue was all finished, as I was reading over it, I noticed that the 2nd of the month was mentioned no less than six times. I remembered that Mirjana had said that the 2nd of the month was significant, and found the following in our June 2013 issue. This quote of Mirjana is from the book, *A Conversation with the Visionaries*, by Kresimir Sego: “...the Gospa is preparing us for everything that is going to take place through the love of God our Father. She said that She would finish in Medjugorje what She has started in Fatima, and that Her heart would prevail. She is preparing us for this victory. When these events will begin, people will understand why She chose the 18th of March and why the apparitions take place every second day of the month. They will understand the importance of these dates, why She has been appearing for so long, and why so many visionaries.”

Message to Mirjana on September 2, 2015

“Dear children! My dear apostles of love, my carriers of truth, again I am calling you and gathering you around me to help me, to help all of my children who thirst for love and truth – who thirst for my Son. I am a grace from the Heavenly Father, sent to help you to live the word of my Son. Love one another. I lived your earthly life. I know that it is not always easy, but if you will love each other, you will pray with the heart, you will reach spiritual heights and the way to heaven will be opened for you. I, your mother, am waiting for you there because I am there. Be faithful to my Son and teach others faithfulness. I am with you. I will help you. I will teach you faith that you may know how to transmit it to others in the right way. I will teach you truth that you may know how to discern. I will teach you love that you may come to know what real love is. My children, my Son will make it so as to speak through your words and your actions. Thank you.”

Prayer intentions of Pope Francis for October:

Human trafficking: That human trafficking, the modern form of slavery, may be eradicated.

Mission in Asia: That with a missionary spirit the Christian communities of Asia may announce the Gospel to those who are still awaiting it.



Our thanks to Susannah Klins, Sue Taccone, Celeste Migneault, Jeanette Burick, Vickie DeCoursey, Barb Repasy, Marge Spase, Joanne Warren, Georgia Chludzinski, Annette Ratajczak, Dianne Yochim, Kathy Luschini, Mary Tirak, Cindy Bielanin, and the people who want to remain anonymous for their help with the September mailing. We thank Mike Golovich, Diana Stillwell, and Johannes Dittrich for their photos in this issue. And as always, we thank Pat Berrier, our proofreader, and Jason Klins, our webmaster.

A Little Sign

By Cathy Nolan

I want to comment on a phenomenon that occurred during the apparition to Mirjana on September 2. As Mirjana conversed with Our Lady, several times the sun broke through, shining directly on her face. She faces the Blue Cross, and the sun comes up over Apparition Hill in the morning and shines directly upon her. Usually the helpers provide an umbrella to shade Mirjana. But during the apparition on September 2, the sun got through, and shone directly into Mirjana's eyes.

As I watched in astonishment, Mirjana did not flinch, close her eyes, or even blink as the sun hit her full on in the face. She continued to gaze in the direction of Our Lady, as if nothing happened. It happened more than once. I have taken some shots from our video that show the intensity of the light as it shines into Mirjana's eyes.

Why am I bringing this up? I think that the sun in Mirjana's eyes demonstrated that she truly is in ecstasy. She is not seeing what we see here on earth. The sun made no difference to



her, as she was seeing in a different dimension – that of heaven. It is a small proof and encouragement to all of us who believe in the apparitions, and who may find ourselves surrounded by disbelief and doubt. It was a boost to us who believe, and maybe it will be

a reason for those who do not believe to change their minds.

At any rate, I was amazed at that little sign, and it brings light into my heart, strengthening me to stay firm in my faith.

Just thought I would share this with you all. Thank you Blessed Mother,

for being with us, for gathering us around you so that you can help us; help all of your children who thirst for love and truth – who thirst for your Son!

www.marytv.tv

A Few Welcome Restrictions in Medjugorje

By Sr. Emmanuel

Recently, we noticed that a few changes have taken place in Medjugorje. Marija no longer opens the Magnificat Center for her daily apparition. Ivan and Jakov still go to the Rotonda in the afternoon with Father Marinko to pray with the pilgrims, but without giving the messages. The Information Center no longer releases the message received on the 2nd of the month by Mirjana as it did previously. This summer Ivan did not invite the pilgrims to participate in the apparition at night on the mountain with his prayer group, etc.

If the restrictions increase, let us remain in peace; the Gospa has Her plan and She will ensure that it happens. The visionaries know it and they are serene. These restrictions are probably local and prudent measures before Pope Francis' announcement on Medjugorje. In addition, they also help pilgrims who are overly curious about the visionaries and attracted to the extraordinary, to avoid being drawn away from the essential. For those who are far from God, and who need signs in order to encounter Jesus and

follow Him, the "gifts" that Mary has offered us over the years have borne their fruit. Fortunately, God goes where He wants and will never be limited by man. His graces are not going to diminish; on the contrary, they constantly increase during times of adversity!

Pope Francis has not given his word yet on Medjugorje; therefore, no declaration, even from a "Vatican insider," holds any authority. They are simply personal opinions. Beware of falling into the trap of agitation! The announcement will be given on the official Vatican websites. Let us pray in peace for Pope Francis, who holds a grave responsibility, and for his entire entourage!

Let us increase our prayers of thanksgiving, and stay away from bitterness, or worse, criticism, which would sadden Our Lady and delay Her plan. That is where She is waiting for us. Her Heart will triumph!

Children of Medjugorje, www.childrenofmedjugorje.com, September 2015 report

A small, but meaningful anecdote that is worth sharing here: on Wednesday June 17th, Douglas, an old friend of mine who often comes to Medjugorje, met Pope Francis during the general audience following his catechesis about Family. On that day, the Gospel inspired Douglas in a special way – it was about the young man who was being taken to the cemetery and whose mother was widowed (Luke 7:11-15). Douglas said to Pope Francis: "Holy Father, this is exactly what is happening in Medjugorje: some priests arrive, and they are dead inside. And in Medjugorje Jesus resurrects them and gives them back to His Mother." The Pope answered with deep conviction, "I know, I know!" ~ Sr. Emmanuel in her August 2015 report for Children of Medjugorje, *childrenofmedjugorje.com*

As of October 25, 2015, the number of Masses reported for Our Lady's intentions is 12,653.

Early Memories

By Fr. Jozo Zovko, OFM

This recollection by Fr. Jozo was recorded by Pietro Zorza, and appears in the book: Ten Years of Apparitions, by Fr. Rene Laurentin.

I was alone, praying in the church. I was praying to God with all my heart to give me a valid sign in order to convince me whether the work was from satan or from Him. Those were the days when the police made the families of the area and the visionaries, the six young people themselves, suffer.

Here many had lost their jobs for having disobeyed the regulations of the police and of the government, for instead of remaining silent, they would tell everyone who came what was happening. All would suffer for defending that the Gospa was there. I, on the contrary, suffered because I did not want to believe. It was then that a strong human voice resounded in the church: "Go out and protect my children. Then I will tell you what you have to do."

Instinctively, I got up and I went to the back of the church. I opened the door on the left when, from the right, like swarming bees, the six visionaries rushed in all around me, tugging and grabbing hold of me. "Save us, the police are chasing us!"

I took them to the presbytery and locked them in. I went outside and down the flight of stairs and, behold, the police came running by and asked me: "Have you seen the young people?" "Yes," I answered. And they, without waiting for the rest of my answer, continued on their way. But I was still not convinced.

That night I talked at length with these young people. It was little Jakov who asked me why I did not believe. I answered him: "Because people do not come to the church, and it cannot be the Gospa who keeps them away."

I referred to the curious people who came from the outside and wanted to see signs, but not to pray. It was then that Jakov told me: "Tomorrow, people will come to the church."

And it was thus so. No one had told them. Before, all went

to the Hill of Apparitions. That day the church was full.

Then the area was blocked by the police and by the army. The visionaries, controlled by the home guards, could not leave their houses. Jakov had the apparition in his home. The Gospa gave a message to him to bring to me that evening at the church for Mass.

He was like a prisoner in his home, for the armed guard was in front of his door. Jakov, so small, felt he should obey the Gospa. He looked through the keyhole. When he saw that the guard had fallen asleep (for here in July it is very warm), quietly he opened the window and jumped out. The guard awakened, entered the house, and saw that Jakov was no longer there. By radio, he informed all the stations of the blockade in the direction of the church.

Jakov changed cars six times in order to escape the stations of the blockade. He arrived at the church as I was finishing Mass. I felt someone pulling on my sleeve. I looked down and saw him. He told me very quietly, "The Gospa has given me a message for the people."

I lifted him up and stood him on the altar before the microphone. He said: "The Gospa told me to come to tell you to pray the Rosary this evening." The people immediately felt that the Gospa was near them. Many began to weep because it was a period of great repression on the part of the police. They looked for the rosary in their pockets.

It was the first parish Rosary which was said in the church at Medjugorje. I put Jakov back on the floor. He was barefooted, dirty and dusty. On the altar cloth remained the imprint of his two little feet.

Then the Gospa came in the middle of the church and thanked me, and added the same words: "YOU MUST SAY THE ROSARY EVERY EVENING."

And since then, in Medjugorje, we always say the Rosary.

The Medjugorje Message, UK, Number 58



Fr. Jozo in 2007

Words of Wisdom from Fr. Slavko Barbaric

The following is an excerpt from a talk given in Medjugorje by Fr. Slavko Barbaric on March 2, 1985.

In February we had many difficulties, and might I tell you they are not over. They still recur. And, we who are here, say that they are, in reality, providential. We must learn how to love before we are faced with other trials. The Queen of Peace is a work of God; She cannot follow another path save the path of Jesus Christ. It would be false if we, like the Pharisees, were expecting a triumph, when instead, they were scandalized by Jesus's death on the Cross. What I mean to say is – every difficulty is in reality a difficulty, but also a grace for us. It is not easy, but it is a grace – something a little difficult for us all, but it is so.

Let me, for example, tell you this: when you return

[from Medjugorje], you will read about other attacks, but remember, without problems, there is no progress. It is sad that it is so, but so it is, and we must not worry. I say to you: be careful and do not discuss those who attacked us, or you will be near passing judgment on them. Quite frankly, I must admit, that for me, it is not important whether a decree will establish or not that the apparitions are authentic, nor how the apparition takes place. If we pray, these things are not important. We have Lourdes that has been approved, we have Fatima that has been approved, we have the Gospels that have been approved... Therefore, Our Lady has not come to cause controversy or to discuss the issue on the apparitions – She has come to invite us. So I ask you: do not be carried away by arguments. Just pray. Our Lady desires

this from me, too. If we start arguing, if we get angry, then we will only start judging. And Our Lady has not come for this.

I want to invite you to prayer, particularly next week, because there is another meeting of the Commission [March 1985]. What they will do, I do not know. I believe that Our Lady guides everything. I am not afraid because I have decided to follow Jesus, even before the apparitions began. One follows Jesus through difficulties and problems, so that when one comes here, one must look for faith – the same faith as Abraham...Abraham's faith which sees beyond what human eyes can see – taking his son, leading him to a hilltop and wanting to sacrifice him. It sounds crazy, but seen through the eyes of faith, it is a different matter – it is an act of obedience, which becomes salvation. It is with such a faith that we must pray.



Statue of Fr. Slavko at Mother's Village

For us men, it is crazy to accept the Cross, but in the eyes of Jesus, in the life of Jesus, it is something different – it is wisdom that comes from God. So our faith does not take us away from the world, from difficulties, or from problems, but it helps us to go on like a light in the darkness.

Let us go forward like Abraham – pray in the sense that our faith may become more than human reasoning... more than mathematics with God. Abraham is an example of how we ought to behave – to allow ourselves to be guided and see a little further when we meet difficulties, when we meet a cross, when we are

ill... Without this faith which sees a little further, the whole world would be grim. We would all be crazy had this faith not existed. It is for this that fasting and prayer help to purify us and to increase our faith.

God's Choice

By June Klins

On the afternoon of September 2, a friend asked me if I would pray for her daughter-in-law, who had been hospitalized for four days. They suspected MS from her symptoms, but the test was negative. Doctors could not figure out what was wrong. Of course I agreed to pray for her.

That evening, I went to an awesome worship service called "Made2Worship," where, at the beginning, we sing "Veni Sancti Spiritus" (Come, Holy Spirit) over and over, as they do in Medjugorje. (The original founder of this service had been to Medjugorje, where I suspect he got this format.)

After the service, a young man named Nate, who has Down Syndrome, walked up to me with a pamphlet, and said, "This is for you." I was surprised when I looked at the title of the pamphlet, "What's Wrong With Me?" – *Living With a Mystery Illness*. Immediately I thought of the prayer request for my friend's daughter-in-law. I thanked Nate and asked him where he had gotten the pamphlet. He led me to the vestibule and showed me a rack that had about 40 pamphlets on it. Why he chose that specific pamphlet and why he gave it to me, Nate himself probably couldn't answer. I felt that the Holy Spirit was at work, since we did call on Him earlier that night.

Three days later, when I gave my friend the pamphlet and explained how I got it, she took one look at the title and burst into tears at the realization that God hears our prayers and works through others we don't even know to help us. She said her daughter-in-law was out of the hospital now, still without answers, and would be visiting her the following day. When she thumbed through the pamphlet, she said it looked good; then when she noticed where the author of the pamphlet lives, she was dumbfounded. The author, Sr. Karen Zielinski, O.S.F., resides in Sylvania, Ohio – the exact town where her son and daughter-in-law live!!! What are the odds of that? I never even heard of that town. We knew for sure at that point, that this whole scenario was orchestrated from Above.

It was hard for me to contain my excitement as I tried to call Nate's mother to let her know how God used him to hopefully help this young lady. When I was not able to get her by phone, I left a message that I would talk to her before Mass the next day. In the vestibule the following day, I shared the story with Nate's mother, and told another lady standing nearby that she could listen to it also. Nate's mother was actually not surprised at the story, and said that Nate has often given her pamphlets or other things that she needed at that exact moment. She told me that this was not the first time that God had used Nate to convey a message to other people as well. She shared that one day when Nate was about six years old, she had a prayer group in her home; afterwards, the ladies were all complaining about their husbands. All of a sudden, Nate became irate – and she emphasized "irate." Nate screamed at the women to stop, and then yelled, "Seventy times seven!" Of course, at age six, he had no idea that this referred to the number of times Jesus said to forgive (in the 18th chapter of Matthew), but all of the women sure did!

The other lady who was standing with us in the vestibule said that what came to her as she listened to these stories was how precious every life is to God – that nowadays many medical professionals would suggest and even coerce women who are pregnant with babies who may have Down Syndrome or other disabilities to have an abortion. But no, God has a plan for every life. This lady quoted St. Paul, who wrote, "...God chose the weak of the world to shame the strong, and God chose the lowly and despised of the world, those who count for nothing..." (1 Cor 1:27-28).

In this month of October, which along with being the Month of the Rosary, is Respect for Life Month, we remember the words of Our Lady: "Pray that you may be able to comprehend the greatness and the beauty of the gift of life" (1/25/90).

Editor's note: To obtain a copy of the pamphlet in the above story, you can visit www.carenotes.com.

Mother Mary's Success Story

By Louise Lotze

I was in Office Max making copies of Our Lady's messages from Medjugorje to pass out to friends, when I noticed a church member, Patrick, at the counter. Over the past 12 or more years, I had observed this man and his wife bringing their children to Mass, and they struck me as being very responsible parents in raising their children in the faith. Patrick and I began talking about what we were doing there in Office Max, and when I mentioned Medjugorje, he told me that it was because of Our Lady's messages that he had returned to the Catholic faith! I was intrigued, and asked him if he and his wife would be willing to do an interview with me. He agreed. So, eventually, I typed up some questions that they could respond to in writing. Here is their story.

Patrick and Marlo have been married for 25 years and have 12 children (6 boys and 6 girls). They had been making 50-mile round trips from Orwell, Ohio to attend separate Holy Hours each week at the Ashtabula Adoration Chapel, when Patrick noticed the house for sale across the street from the Chapel. He was certain it would be the perfect move for his family. And it was. They have lived there for 16 years.

Patrick shared that he was raised Catholic and went to a Catholic school growing up. As a teenager he quit practicing his faith, and stated he felt he was on the road to hell. After the birth of his first two children, for their sake and his, he felt compelled to come back to God and His Church. Patrick said that he had undergone several short-term conversions back to the faith during a 10-year period, but none of them ever lasted more than a week or two. He eventually began to pray a daily Rosary and finally his conversion stuck. He stated, "I began to realize that there was something about the Rosary that kept me in the Church and seeking Jesus. It somewhat puzzled me how I suddenly cared about what the Church taught. I felt a great love and respect for the Pope. I never gave any of these things a second thought until I picked up the Rosary. I began thinking, 'Who is this Mary, anyway, and why am I now so interested in Jesus and His Church?'"

Patrick first found out about Our Lady of Medjugorje from Fr. Albert Shamon's book series, *Our Lady Says*. When he heard about a one-day seminar on the apparitions of Mary being held at the Servants of Mary Center for Peace Shrine in Windsor, OH, he took the day off work to attend. Patrick stated: "At the seminar, not really understanding what I was doing, I consecrated myself to Jesus through Mary. I felt the Holy Spirit was calling me to give my life to Jesus through Mary, so I did." He went on to describe it as a personal Pentecost for him. He experienced a massive outpouring of grace which he says changed his life and the life of his family. Patrick states: "I began attending daily Mass, weekly Confession, praying 15 decades of the Rosary every day, daily Eucharistic Adoration, reading Scripture, and studying the Catechism." Because of these changes, his Protestant wife was shocked and perplexed, but very much



"If you convert, all those around you will also be renewed, and prayer will be a joy for them"
(Our Lady, 5/25/03).

pleased with this sudden change in his behavior. She then slowly began to consider the teachings of the Church. Eventually she became Catholic.

In answer to my question about how she lives Our Lady's messages of family prayer, Marlo wrote: "Our family prayer begins every day together with the Morning Offering, giving all of our thoughts, words, and actions of the day to Jesus through Mary. We read the daily Mass readings together and interpret them in the light of authentic magisterial teaching (the Catechism of the Catholic Church is a sure norm for Scripture interpretation). We read

about the Saint of the day, and really encourage the kids to study and befriend the saints. In the evenings, we pray the Rosary together. Going to Confession is mandatory in our family. Everyone must go at least once per month and are encouraged to go every other week. Attendance at Mass on Sundays and Holy Days is, of course, obligatory, and daily Mass is encouraged. We also make a weekly visit to the Adoration Chapel together."

Marlo and Patrick decided long ago that it would be better to sacrifice material possessions in order for her to be home with the kids. This also allows her to be available to do things with their grandchildren. Marlo states: "I think having fun together while practicing the faith is a very important aspect to raising kids who will desire to remain in the faith of the Church as adults." Some of Marlo's grandchildren are the same ages as her children. When they get together, they often do things faith-related: go to Mass, pray the Rosary, learn about saints and the faith. Marlo says it is almost like a party! On Thursdays at 11 a.m. in the Adoration Chapel, Marlo leads the Rosary. She brings about eight of her children. Frequently, her daughter comes and brings her own three young children. The Chapel is family-friendly, and has a corner with puzzles, books and stuffed animals and a table and chairs for young children.

Marlo shares that she enjoys reading the Medjugorje newsletters each month. "It, along with other things, confirms for me that Christ is continually at work in the world. God is not dead, by any means. That is very encouraging for me."

In closing, I asked her if she had any advice or tips she would like to pass on to other parents who may be struggling in raising their children in the faith. These were her comments: "I strongly advise all parents raising their children in the faith to personally take their children to Confession on a regular basis, and to pray with their children, especially the Rosary. They need to be willing to teach their children about their Catholic Faith and not count on others to do it for them. If parents live the Faith joyfully and teach it to their children consistently, they will embrace it on some level. I think it is dangerous to hand them off to a CCD program and call it done. The Faith is best accepted and learned when it comes from the parents within the home."

"Dear children, let your family be a place where holiness is birthed" (Our Lady, 7/24/86).

My Stone Rosary

By June Klins

On August 2, my friends and I took a bus trip to Pittsburgh, where we visited St. Anthony's chapel, which houses the largest collection of relics outside the Vatican. We also went to St. Patrick's Church where the Holy Stairs are located (one of six replicas in the world of the 28 steps Jesus climbed to meet Pilate). It is the best-kept secret in Pittsburgh.

Upon returning home late, I learned that my family had a surprise for me in the back yard, but I had to wait until morning to see it. I couldn't wait! At dawn, I peeked out the window and there in place of some old overgrown ugly bushes was a beautiful statue of Our Lady and a bench nearby to sit and pray! What an awesome surprise!

Soon the story began to unfold. Since I would be away that whole day, my family knew that was their chance to clear out the shrubbery to make room for the statue. After purchasing the statue, they had to go to three churches before they could find a priest available to bless it. What a witness, as Our Lady rode in the back of the truck to the three churches! Although they were not aware of it at the time, the priest they finally found to bless the statue was in agonizing pain, and was scheduled for surgery days later. And he did not just give a quick blessing. My sons said he read the prayers from the book of blessings, which took much longer than usual. Thank you, Fr. Dan!

The day after my family put some finishing touches on my shrine, it came to me in Adoration to make a rosary of stones around the statue. The area around the statue was the perfect shape for a rosary. A few days after this idea came to me, one of our subscribers sent me information about a *stone rosary* made with stones from Medjugorje, which was available through a Marian Shrine in Illinois! This seemed like a confirmation for sure!

Six large stones were needed for the Our Father beads and 53 smaller stones for the Hail Mary beads. I found out quickly that stones cannot be removed from beaches or waterways. That was actually a blessing, because then my friends and family began helping me to collect stones and I think they rather enjoyed it. I joined in the fun also by looking in the wooded area behind my own house, and I found five stones. It did not dawn on me until later that this was significant, because I promote the "five stones" of Medjugorje (prayer, fasting, Confession, Eucharist, and Bible reading). Before long, there were more than enough stones.

After the stones were arranged, it came to me how really

awesome this is to have such a variety of stones – flat stones, round stones, smooth stones, jagged stones – a landscape artist would be horrified! But my stone rosary is not a work of art – it's a "work of heart." The stones came from people I pray for – friends, family and neighbors, and that will always be special to me. The difference in the stones says to me that when we pray the Rosary it is always different. The beautiful stones remind me of the Joyful Mysteries, while the jagged stones remind me of the Sorrowful Mysteries. There is a sparkly stone that reminds me of the Glorious Mysteries. And the most unique one of them all – one that is not a stone at all, but a seashell given to me by a friend because I live near a lake – reminds me of the Luminous Mysteries. There is a stone that has fossils in it, which to me says that the Rosary is a prayer that has been around for a long time. There are stones I cannot pick up because they are so heavy – they suggest to me how much weight the Rosary carries. There is even a stone from Medjugorje!

After the stones were in place, all that was left to complete the rosary was the crucifix (a cross in this case). Several ideas were tossed around, but the idea I liked the best was that the cross be fashioned from branches behind a hunting camp in the family, since the hunting camp was on *Jerusalem Road*!

One Monday in September, my son called to say that they would be delivering the cross that evening. The timing could not have been more perfect, since that day just happened to be, unbeknownst to them, the feast of the *Exaltation of the Holy Cross*! I told them about a neighboring church which had relics of the True Cross displayed

for veneration that day, so they took the cross there, asked the priest to bless it and touched the cross to the relics.

The next day, which was the feast of Our Lady of Sorrows, a few friends joined me at my shrine to pray the Rosary for Our Lady's intentions. It was awesome! After praying, as we made our way back towards the house, we could see the sun as it was setting over Lake Erie. It was a magnificent sight to behold, and one of the ladies even saw a pulsating rainbow around the sun. I think Our Lady was happy with Her shrine and all the prayers that were, and will be, said there.

No words can express how grateful I am to my family for all their efforts to make this lovely place of peace and prayer.

"May your prayer be as strong as a living stone..." (Our Lady, 1/25/13).



St. Rita, a Powerful Intercessor

St. Rita, our patron saint this year, was a real prayer warrior. She once said, "Since we offend our sweet Jesus every day in thought, word, deed and the omission of good works, we should pray every day and every hour of the day and week for offenses against so kind and loving a Father, Master, and Spouse." According to her biographer, her prayers were so efficacious that she obtained from God whatever she asked.

The power of St. Rita's prayers over evil spirits manifested itself many times, especially when she was engaged in prayer and meditation. The devil tried to disturb her while she was at meditation, trying to frighten her with loud howls and shrieks, and even appearing to her in the most hideous form. But St. Rita did not fear him. She always drove him away with the Sign of the Cross and continued her meditation or prayer as if nothing had happened to disturb her.

"...you do not need to fear, because the one who prays is not afraid of evil" (Our Lady, 9/25/01).

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MARY IS CALLING YOU

On June 24, 1981 in Medjugorje, Our Lady appeared to six children. She identified Herself as the Blessed Virgin, Queen of Peace, and has continued to appear daily. Her message is PEACE, peace with God and man. Her words to the visionaries, "I have come to tell the world that God exists. He is the fullness of life, and to enjoy this fullness and obtain peace, you must return to God."

Today, all but three of the visionaries have daily apparitions of the Blessed Mother. During the apparitions, the visionaries do not react to light, don't hear any sound or react to being touched. They feel that they are outside of time and space. All the visionaries declare to see the Blessed Virgin as they see other people - in three dimension. They pray and speak with Her.

The Blessed Mother is confiding ten secrets to each visionary (some are chastisements for the world) and promises to leave a visible sign at the place of the apparitions in Medjugorje for all humanity. This time, this period of grace, is for CONVERSION

and a DEEPENING OF FAITH. After the visible sign, those still living will have little time for conversion.

Father Jozo Zovko, who was the pastor of St. James when the apparitions began, has spoken about what he calls "the weapons" or the "the five stones" of Our Lady. They are: prayer with the heart, especially the Rosary; Eucharist; Holy Bible; monthly Confession; and fasting.

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

To borrow an original prayer cloth from Medjugorje for a week, send a self-addressed stamped envelope to the address below. You must include your phone number. If you want a prayer cloth we made to keep, send a self-addressed stamped business size (4 1/8" x 9 1/2") envelope with \$.71 postage on it.



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