

"May Memory No Thought Suggest..."

by Rosalie Turton

Many people recall their past, and feel a low self-esteem because of what they have done. They find it difficult to forgive themselves.

They should remember the price God paid for us in His mercy, that we are wonderfully made, and that our souls have been created in the image and likeness of God. We should live in great joy because of God's forgiveness, and cast the remorseful and dreadful memories aside.

Living in sin is like living in slavery. Dwelling upon those sins and not forgiving one's self is still a form of slavery. Cast these thoughts aside! They could diminish our joy and our capacity to soar high in the kingdom of Heaven.

God has forgiven us. Now, let us forgive ourselves and move on with life and its often exciting challenges.

St. Ignatius Loyola penned these profound words:

*May memory no thought suggest,
But shall to Your PURE glory tend.
May understanding find no rest,
Except in You, its only end.*

Pure is Important

The word "pure" is very important, because many of the sins we commit are sins of impurity. Forget them!

Remember what Scripture tells us in Philippians 4:8.

Whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.

Do Not Think About Evil

This means that *you should not be thinking* about lies, injustice,

impurity, coarseness, rudeness, and ugly or dishonorable things. Maybe God is telling you to redirect your time from television and internet, and spend more time thinking about Him, Who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. He is lovely and gracious, excellent and worthy of praise. Our minds and hearts should be fixed on Him... and then comes peace and joy.

The Length of Our Days

We do not know the length of our days. Recently I read about a young man who quit his job at the World Trade Center, where he went to work every day. His last day on the job was September 10, 2001.

He thought, "It was not my time to go," and he was right. However, a month later he was killed in a plane crash.

Another young man, a senior in high school, had a promising future. He had had an excellent academic record, showed leadership abilities, and had been awarded a scholarship at a prestigious university.

Then, at a senior party, someone stole a case of liquor and they got drunk. In the night, they decided to raid their rival school, doing a great deal of damage. This boy was considered one the leaders, and he was sent to prison because of this incident.

His reputation, the scholarship, and good future, were seemingly gone. Yet, after serving his time in prison, he was able to forgive himself and move on to a fine career in teaching, even earning a United States Presidential award.

The MOST Important in Life

Trust the past to God's mercy. It is over. Forget it.

Live the present in God's love, for *this is the most important moment in your life*, and entrust the future to God's providence. And, maybe try to memorize and often

ponder this sweet and delightful little verse and hymn by Loyola (if you need the music, contact me) titled:

I Love You, O My Lord Most High

I love You, oh my Lord most high,
For first Your love has captured me;
I seek no other liberty;
Bound by Your love, I shall be free.

May memory no thought suggest,
But shall to Your pure glory tend,
May understanding find no rest,
Except in You, its only end.

All mine is Yours; say but the word,
Say what You will, it shall be done;
I know Your love, most gracious Lord, I
know You seek my good alone.

Apart from You, nothing can be,
So grant me this, my only wish,
To love You, Lord, eternally,
You give me all in giving this. +++

Humility

*It is perpetual quietness of heart.
It is to have no trouble.*

*It is never to be fretted, or vexed,
or irritable,
To wonder at nothing that is done to
me,
To feel nothing done against me.*

*It is to be at rest when nobody
praises me,
And when I am blamed or despised.*

*It is to have a blessed home in
myself,
Where I can go in and shut the door
and kneel to my Father in
secret and be at peace,
As in a deep sea of calmness,
When all around and about
is seeming trouble. +++*

Padre Pio

Stigmatist, Prophet, Saint

by Joaclyn Lope
from *Witnessing*, July/Sept., 2002

On May 25, 1887 a baby boy was born to a deeply Christian family in Pietrelcina, Benevento, Italy. His parents, Maria Giuseppa de Nunzio and Orazio, named him Francesco in honor of St. Francis of Assisi. He grew up as a frail boy, but still Francesco wanted to become a priest since he was five years old. His father worked in America to finance his studies.

Francis was 15 years old when he left home on January 3, 1903 to join the Capuchins (from cappuccio, a long pointed hood attached to the habit). On his investiture, he chose the name Pio in honor of St. Pius V. He was a fervent religious and tried to master discipline, and he practiced the vows faithfully.

One Of The Greatest Lights

On January 27, 1907, he made his final, solemn profession of poverty, chastity, and obedience. On July 18, 1909, Pio became a deacon. On this occasion, an old abbot foretold that he would some day become one of the greatest lights in the Church. Padre Pio was 23 years old when he was ordained a priest on August 10, 1910.

Padre Pio's devotion to Our Lady was typically spontaneous. One day, he saw a sign over the faded picture of Our Lady, which said: "See that you don't pass here without saying a Hail Mary." Since then, he not only prayed the Hail Mary, but knelt faithfully before the picture while he prayed.

As a young priest, he was exemplary in piety and the observance of the law, but his fervent life caused him to be often haunted by evil spirits in the night. To combat evil apparitions, he had recourse to fasting and prayer.

One day, a priest-visitor told him that God was not pleased with his penances. Padre Pio challenged the visitor to say the name of Jesus if he truly came at God's request. When he tried to touch the visitor's brown habit, the vision disappeared.

Another time, a beautiful woman entered

his room. She tried to embrace him and massage his body. But, Padre Pio cried out: "Jesus, take away the evil that tempts me on this dark night! Cleanse my heart. Jesus, please!" When his assistant friar, who heard his shouts arrived, the apparition of the beautiful woman instantly evaporated.

First Stigmatized Priest

Padre Pio was 31 years old when he was mysteriously stigmatized in a pool of blood, while praying before a wooden crucifix in the gallery of their monastery. It was September 20, 1918, and the five wounds of Jesus were transfixed into his own body. Padre Pio was the first stigmatized priest. (St. Francis of Assisi, who, much earlier bore the five wounds of Jesus, was a deacon.)

After Pio's stigmatization, everything in his life changed. He was subjected to many examinations. A doctor described the wounds (located one on each hand and on each foot, and a fifth located one inch below the left nipple near the heart). He said, "The contours were so clean that even under a magnifying glass, they produced no edema or reddening. A flow of arterial blood came from the wounds, which were painful at the slightest touch."

Doctors estimated that for the next 50 years, he lost a cup of blood every day. His five wounds were deep, bleeding, and painful, but completely free of inflammation and swelling.

When one of the friars asked if his wound on the chest was situated at the opposite side of the Savior's, Padre Pio said, quietly, "It would be too much if it were exactly like the Lord's."

News of his holiness spread rapidly. Millions of people attended his Masses. He received letters from believers all over the world who asked for his saintly counsel in their times of distress and misfortune.

Countless were attracted to his confessional, where he celebrated the Sacrament of Reconciliation for as many as 16 hours a day. People waited as much as two weeks to have him hear their confession, for they perceived in Padre Pio the true heart and soul of the Gospels, expressed in a simple and uncomplicated manner.

His whole life was marked by long hours of prayer, continual sacri-

fice, and strict austerity. He had a very deep union with God, a burning love for the Holy Eucharist, and a fervent devotion to Our Blessed Mother.

Sweet Odor Of Padre Pio

The suffering caused by the wounds were beyond description. Simultaneously, however, God granted him spiritual gifts. One of these was his perfumed odor, which was called the consolation of his presence.

His grandmother, Grazia Formicelli, told a friar one day: "I was on the mountain picking berries and was walking backwards. Suddenly I smelled the odor of Padre Pio. I lifted my head, turned around, and saw behind me a steep precipice. Another step and I would have fallen into it."

There were many stories of his bilocation. He never left the monastery, but many people experienced his help in many places of the world. For example, he helped a doctor deliver a baby; cured a sick man in the hospital; was present to a dying friend; accompanied a boy lost in the desert to reach home; etc.

Sensed People's Needs

Padre Pio could read minds and sensed people's needs. One day, he asked his superior to contact the pope, because the pope had lost a document of great importance, and Padre Pio knew where it was. Father Raffaele, the superior, refused.

When time and again he received the mental impression about the document, the saintly priest went back to the superior insisting that he sensed precisely where the lost document could be found. Dutifully, Padre Raffaele helped him get the message through to the Holy Office. The lost document was found and it was returned to a grateful pope.

One of his admirers said: "Padre Pio seemed to know everything. He could read minds and the souls of his penitents. He would refuse absolution to those who lie about their sins, and often revealed to a penitent his hidden sin."

Could See Into The Future

He could also see the future. He foretold the defeat of the Germans in the Second World War; the return of Russia to religion and God; worldwide catastrophes; and other future events. But he only revealed what he knew, if it were necessary for the glory of God, and not to satisfy curiosity.

Holy Mass

The center of Padre Pio's life was the Holy Mass. Many pilgrims attended his Mass which lasted for more than an hour. Often one needed a ticket to assist at his Mass, because the crowd of pilgrims was bigger than the number of persons that could be accommodated in the convent chapel.

As expected, it was during the Mass that he lived very intensely the Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Padre Pio's wounds would emit blood, his whole body would ache, as seen through his grimaces and shivers, and he would seem to be too weak to support his own body.

Padre Pio suffered not only from his wounds, but from the misunderstanding that surrounded his stigmata and his many miracles. Unfavorable reports were sent to the Holy See and examiners were sent from the Vatican to prove the genuineness of the stigmata.

Falsely Accused

Books about him were, for a time, banned. He was accused of cultivating an affair with women. He was suspected of keeping the money collected for the construction of his hospital. For some periods, he was denied access to the people who visited him, and was prevented from saying Mass in public, or from hearing confessions.

But, people loved him and esteemed him as a saint. When rumors came that he would be sent away from San Giovanni Rotondo, the people rioted and demanded that he remain in that place. They patrolled at night outside the convent, and refused to go without being assured that the good Padre would stay.

Home For The Suffering

Padre Pio was very sensitive to the sufferings around him. In 1925, he constructed a small hospital, but it was too small for the sick who needed help. A few years later he had a hospital built in San Giovanni Rotondo, which cost \$5 million dollars. It is called Home for the Relief of Suffering... 45,000 square feet, a building with 300 beds. It was dedicated on May 5, 1956. Today this hospital is much larger than its original size.

This great project which Padre Pio called a "home," not a hospital, was a common undertaking of many people. The money came from a few rich persons, from mandated organizations, from people of the middle class, but the greater sum came from the poor.

One very touching incident was the contribution of fifty lira (a very small amount) from a poor and sick widow of the district. She handed it to him hesitantly, embarrassed about the small amount, but it was all she could afford. Upon receipt of said amount, Padre Pio cried out, and said: "Give it to me at once, it is the 'handsomest offering' I have yet received."

Padre Pio's desire to bring a multitude of souls to God, urged him to form Prayer Groups, composed of men and women who dedicated themselves to prayer, to the work of Christian perfection, and to works of charity.

They are not an association or confraternity, but merely "spiritual children." The membership usually meet once a month in the church, have Holy Mass, prayers, and Benediction. Today these groups are spread all throughout the world.

Padre Pio died on September 23, 1968, at 81 years of age, after having borne the wounds of Our Lord for 50 long years. He was canonized as saint on June 16, 2002 in Rome by Pope John Paul II. The Church is much honored to proclaim him as a stigmatist, a prophet, and a saint.

The Holy Mass was the center of Padre Pio's life. It was the time when he lived more intensely the Passion of Christ. His life suggests to us that if we wish to become closer to God, let us also put prayer and daily Mass as the center of our

lives. Try it. By God's grace, it will bring you a happiness you could never have imagined. +++

Message of Hope from Fatima and Akita

by John M. Haffert

We do not know if Jonah gave any specific hope to the people of Nineveh. Certainly hope was implied in his words, "Unless you repent." But Jonah himself felt certain that the chastisement was going to take place. When it did not, he felt that he had failed as a prophet.

Like Jonah, should we think the chastisement is inevitable because people are NOT listening, or should we believe that if we spread this message effectively, the chastisement will be lessened or averted?

Our Lady Herself gives the answer both at Fatima and Akita. She CAN prevent the chastisement. She has already held it back through the Passion of Her Son, and by the cooperation of some generous souls. At this moment, She seeks souls...groups together in prayer, a cohort of victim souls... to soften or avert the chastisement.

But at the same time, Akita is saying that *too few* are responding, because too few realize the urgency of Our Lady's words: "The chastisement is ready." Monthly confessions can hold it back. In the third secret of Fatima, the angel of God called for *Penance, Penance, Penance!* +++

Letters to Mary

by Dr. Rosalie Ann Turton

On our delightful pilgrimage to France in May of 2004, we visited the shrine of Pellevoisin, where visionary Estelle Faguette had 15 apparitions and visions of Our Lady in 1876.

Our pilgrims read the letter below that Estelle had written to the Blessed Mother. At the time, Estelle was very ill and doctors gave her only a short time to live.

In spite of her grave illnesses, she was still responsible for the support of her poor old parents and a young niece, daughter of her sister Genevieve, who had recently died. Estelle wept frequently at the thought that she would die and that her parents and niece would be left destitute.

Mary Read The Letter To Jesus

We learned that Mary read the letter to Jesus, and each person in our group decided to write a personal letter to Our Blessed Mother and put it in the same place where Estelle had placed her letter, which was a miniature grotto in honor of Our Lady of Lourdes in the grounds of a chateau where she had been employed. We were confident that The Blessed Mother would present our petitions, as She had with Estelle's, to Her Son, Our Lord.

Before The Apparitions

On September, 1875, when Estelle was 32 years old and just before the Marian apparitions began, she wrote this letter to the Blessed Virgin:

"Oh, my good Mother! Here I am again, prostrate at Thy feet. Thou canst not refuse to hear me. Thou hast not forgotten that I am Thy daughter and that I love thee. Obtain for me then, from Thy Divine Son, health of my poor body, for His glory.

"Look, therefore, upon the grief of my parents. Thou knowest well that they have no one but me to support them. Shall I not be able

to finish the work I have begun?

"If Thou canst not obtain a complete cure because of my sins, Thou canst at least obtain for me a little strength to enable me to make my living and that of my parents.

Remember Thy Sufferings

"Thou seest, my good Mother, that they are on the point of being obliged to beg for their bread. I canst not think of it without being deeply afflicted. Remember then, the sufferings Thou didst endure the night of the Savior's birth, when Thou wast obliged to go from door to door seeking shelter! Remember also, what Thou suffered when Jesus was nailed to the Cross.

"I have confidence in Thee, my good Mother; if Thou willest it, Thy Son can cure me. He knows that I have ardently desired to be numbered among His spouses (in a convent), and that it is to please Him that I have sacrificed my life for my family, who need me so much.

His Will Be Done

"Deign to listen to my supplications, my good Mother, and repeat them to Thy Divine Son, that He will grant me health, if it be pleasing to Him... but His will, not mine, be done.

"May He at least grant me perfect resignation to His designs, and may this tend to my salvation and that of my parents.

"Thou dost possess my heart, holy Virgin; keep it always, and may it be the pledge of my love and my gratitude for Thy motherly kindness. I promise Thee, my good Mother, if Thou grantest me the graces I ask, to do everything in my power for Thy glory, and that of Thy Divine Son.

"Take my dear little niece under Thy protection, and shield her from bad example. Grant, Oh Holy Virgin, that I may imitate Thee in Thy obedience, and that one day I may possess Jesus, with Thee, for eternity."

Jesus Responds

Jesus heard Estelle's prayer, and despite her serious ill health, she was cured and was to live for another fifty-odd years. She died at Pellevoisin on August 23, 1929 at the age of eighty-six.

Other Love Letters

On Sister Emmanuel's CD called "Portraits of Mary," she relates the story of a man who lived in Medjugorje, and who loved Our Lady very much. He loved Her so much that for years he wrote Her love letters every day and hid them in a special place.

I Am Not That Important

Then one day he thought, "Who do I think I am that Our Blessed Lady would take any notice of my letters?" So, he stopped writing. However, after one week, and having a certain concern, he felt that he just had to write Her another love letter. He did so, and he put it in the same place. Then he went to Marija's home for her evening apparition.

She Missed His Letters Badly

Afterwards, Marija looked for him because Our Lady had asked her to find him and say to him, "How happy I am for his letter today, because for one week I have missed his letters so badly."

Sr. Emmanuel says that Our Mother *loves to have letters from us*, and wherever we put them, *She will read them*. Imagine that!

Our Lady also asked us to write to our Guardian Angels, because this brings us closer to them. We forget them too easily, and we are not grateful enough for all that they do for our welfare.

It is all food for thought... and action. If it worked for others, it may work for you. You just might receive joyful answers that you never expected.

Think about it. Try it, even if it is just a note to say, "I love You,"... or perhaps something more. +++

Devotion to Mary

by Mary Windeatt
from *The Cure of Ars*, pp. 199-202

The Cure of Ars relates: Now, as I grew older, and realized that my time on earth was drawing to a close, I redoubled my efforts. In fact, hardly a day went by that I did not mention Our Lady's name, either in the pulpit or in the confessional.

Yet, despite all my work in the Blessed Mother's cause, I continued to meet people who professed that they did not love Her, and who certainly never gave Her a thought from one day to the next.

"What a dreadful pity!" I told one of these poor souls, a young woman who came to me one autumn day in the year 1858. "My child, don't you know that Our Lady loves you more than any creature in the whole world loves you? That She is kinder and more eager to help you to be happy than your best friend?"

She is Too Cold

The newcomer looked at me respectfully, then sighed and shook her head. "It may be as you say, Father, but somehow I just cannot feel any devotion to the Blessed Virgin. She seems too far away. She... She's too cold!

"My poor child, you are the one who is cold," I said. "Tell me, do you ever say the Rosary?"

"Sometimes, Father, but without much interest. And, with many distractions."

I was silent for a moment. Then, as I had done thousands of times before, I suggested that my young friend make a novena to the Heart of Mary, the Immaculate Heart which, of all human hearts, has ever been a worthy temple of the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of Love.

"Ask Our Lady to warm your coldness with that perfect love of God that burns within her," I said. "After all, she is the most wonderful mother who ever lived. Her Heart is so tender that those of all other mothers are but a morsel of ice in comparison.

Later in the day I felt impelled

to speak publicly on the Blessed Virgin, for surely there were also other souls in the congregation who did not know or love Her?

"Oh, my friends, devotion to Our Lady softens the heart!" I cried. "It is sweet! It is stimulating!"

Then again: "When our hands have touched perfume, they perfume everything with which they come in contact. If we pass our prayers through the hands of the Blessed Virgin, they will assume a fragrance they lack at present."

Finally: "One would not enter a house without a word to the doorkeeper. Well, the Blessed Virgin is the doorkeeper to Heaven. She is all mercy and love. She only desires to see us happy. All we have to do to be heard, is to turn to Her."

Through God's grace my little talk touched many hearts. Then some weeks later, the young woman who had insisted that she had never had any devotion to the Blessed Mother sought me out a second time. But now her whole being radiated a peace and joy that were wonderful to behold.

"Father, for the first time in my life I feel that I have a friend who will never fail me," she declared earnestly. "For the first time in my life I feel really secure."

My heart sang at these happy words. "Child, tell me all about it," I urged. "Tell me everything!"

There was not much to tell. For nine days, as I had suggested, my young friend had offered a decade of the Rosary in honor of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. She had recited the Hail Marys as carefully and as fervently as possible, without experiencing anything unusual.

She had also made a second novena, and a third, still without feeling any particular attraction for the Blessed Mother. Then suddenly, everything had changed.

"It was just as though something melted inside me, Father," she confessed. "In a flash I understood about the Blessed Mother."

"You understood what about her?"

"That She is kind! That She loves us! And that She never punishes us, no matter how dreadful our sins,

but only pleads with Her Son for forgiveness!"

"Ah, so you no longer think that the Blessed Mother is far away from you? That She is... well, cold?"

She is the Truest of Friends

"Oh, no, Father! She is near! And the best and truest of friends!"

"And what caused this... this change?"

"I think that it was saying the Hail Mary, Father, as carefully and as fervently as I could. Oh, what a wonderful little prayer it is!"

Naturally my heart rejoiced over the conversion of my young friend, and I continued to advise all those who came to me to have a great faith in the Blessed Mother and to increase this faith by praying the Hail Mary frequently and fervently.

But even as I did so, a certain anxiety filled my heart. Surely my days on earth for working for souls were just about over?

"I am seventy-three years old," I told myself one night when I was worn out after more than eighteen hours of hearing Confessions.

"Dearest Mother, I do not think I can do much more... even for You."

Then I thought, if someone should die as a result of his labors and sufferings for God's glory and the salvation of souls, it would not be a bad thing. +++

After Sorrow, Grace

by Fr. Edwin J Duffy
from *Fr. Duffy's Reflections*, p. 102

St. Rose of Lima, in one of her mystical experiences was told by the Lord: "Let all know that after sorrow, grace follows. Let them understand that without the burden of affliction, one cannot arrive at the height of glory. The measure of Heavenly gifts is increased in proportion to the labors undertaken. This is the only ladder by which paradise is reached. Without the cross, there is no road to Heaven." +++

Letters & a Shy Young Girl

by Marilyn K. Strube

(Some 35 years ago, four young men serving in Vietnam gave a confused and lonely teenager an unforgettable gift.)

In the lunchroom that day I surreptitiously studied the cool girls, hoping to figure out their secret. Was it their skirts, rolled to mini length? Or their boyfriends, who trotted beside them carrying their books? Mom made me wear my skirts at my knee, and Dad said I was not allowed to date until I was 16, a whole year away.

The other girls at this huge high school always seemed to be surrounded by friends. Meanwhile, I sat alone day after day... my diary my only confidant.

"I can't stand being my boring old self anymore, God. Can't you make my life more exciting?" With a sigh, I went back to the letter in front of me. At least my 18-year-old brother, Dave, appreciated me, sort of. He was serving in the Army in Vietnam, and wanted me to write to a couple of the guys in his platoon. What could I possibly tell them that would be of any interest?

One of my classmates sauntered past. I thought I heard her snicker. I hid my burning face behind my hair, and wrote Dave, "Maybe I can see if some of the popular girls will write to your friends."

We heard from Dave that Sunday, one of his infrequent calls from Vietnam. "Mare, don't give my buddies' names to the popular girls," he said. "They used to have girlfriends like them, but got dumped for guys who are stateside. You always ask if there's something you can do for me. Well, this is it. You write to them. Okay?"

That night, instead of writing in my diary, I took a sheet of paper from my loose-leaf binder and started a letter. "My name is Marilyn. I'm Dave's sister. But I guess you know that. Ha ha. I like English and art, but hate geometry. I feel like my life's on hold. I can't wait to be a grown-up. Sorry I don't have any-

thing interesting to write about. P.S. The leaves have turned orange and red. I love crunching through them in the park!"

Too Boring??

A few weeks passed. Guess I was too boring to deserve an answer. Then I got two letters.

"My name is Jerry. I know how you feel. I am a grown-up, I guess, but my life is on hold too, until I go home. Being an adult is not all it is cracked up to be. Don't be in such a hurry. P.S. We used to make huge piles of leaves and jump in them! I miss autumn bonfires. Thanks for reminding me."

Mike's letter was pretty much the same except he wanted to know what we were having for supper.

Every week I wrote Jerry and Mike, as well as two other guys, Steve and Tom. Now, I never seemed to run out of stuff to tell them. I wrote about funny things, and sad things too. "I saw a dead cat today in the woods where our art class went to sketch. I felt so stupid because I started to cry."

The guys told me about the pets they missed back home. Steve added a P.S.: "I used to cry every night when I first came over here. Now I never cry and I wonder what's wrong with me. Be thankful you still cry."

We Wrote For A Year

For almost an entire year, from 1968 to 1969, I confided in Steve, Tom, Mike and Jerry. They wrote me the same way, sharing whatever was on their minds. As awkward as I felt with the kids at school, I felt comfortable talking to these guys I had never even met.

You Are Who Your Friends Are

During study hall one day I wrote, "Sister Judith Ann handed out a book called *Who Am I, God?* My mom says, 'You are who your friends are.' My best friend moved away. We used to love to walk to the movies on Sunday afternoons. I haven't made any new friends since I started high school.

I guess I am nobody."

Tom replied, "I like to think I am who I am in spite of my friends! Seriously, a lot of people will want to tell you who you are. Don't let them. It is something you have to figure out for yourself. P.S. I loved movies on Sunday afternoons, too! What I would give for a box of Milk Duds!"

His letter made me feel better. Still, it did not stop me from wondering as I lay in bed at night, dreading yet another lonely lunch at school... "Who am I, God?" No answer seemed to be forthcoming. I guessed God had more important things to worry about, like the war in Vietnam.

Why Am I So Weird?

But my classmates seemed pretty clear on who I was: an outsider. It had its advantages. It was easy to observe the different cliques. In each, the kids all thought the same about everything. I just could not bring myself to act that way.

That is not to say I did not want to fit in. I tried to connect with people I knew from grammar school. But they said there wasn't any room left at their lunch table. Another time a group of girls invited me to go to a dance. They seemed kind of tough, but I was grateful to be included. Afterward they wanted to vandalize a cemetery. "No," I said. "I just want to go home." They made fun of me the rest of the semester. I wrote the guys and asked, "Why am I so weird? Why can't I be like everyone else?"

They answered in one letter, the way they did when they had something really important to tell me. "You are not weird; you are brave. It takes guts to be different." It was nice to know there were people on my side, even if they were half a world away.

That night I wrote an opinion piece about Vietnam for composition class. It was not a difficult assignment because I knew guys who were serving there. What was hard was reading my essay in front of the class the next day. I kept my eyes riveted to my paper.

"My brother is there and I write to four guys in his platoon. At first,

I did not think I would have anything to write about, but after a while, I found we had lots in common."

I quoted from one of Steve's letters: "Some of us enlisted and some of us were drafted. It doesn't much matter anymore how we got here. We just look forward to when we are not."

Surprisingly, my classmates were not wearing their usual expressions of disdain; they were actually listening. I took a deep breath, and concluded, "Maybe instead of war, enemies should be required to be pen pals. I don't know. I'm confused about Vietnam... and life in general. I just hope the ones who are in power are not."

"You guys should have seen it!" I wrote when I got home. "The class just sat there gaping at me. Then one of the kids got up and started clapping, then another joined him, and then the whole class gave me a standing ovation! My face got really hot, but boy, it was great feeling accepted! P.S. A girl invited me to a party at her house. I used to think she was stuck up, but she's just shy. I bet I've been wrong about a lot of kids. Maybe today they thought the same about me."

I had only had a few days to enjoy my newfound social life when Dad took me aside. "Dave's been injured," he said. "He's going to be okay, but they're sending him home." My brother was coming home!

Then I started trembling. "What about the rest of the guys?" I asked. "Are they coming home too?"

My dad was silent for a moment. When he spoke, his voice sounded strange. "Dave will tell you about it."

He did not need to. The next day my letter came back, unopened and stamped "Return to Sender."

I stood at the mailbox, tears falling on the envelope and smearing my friends' names. They would never know how they had helped me be somebody... somebody I had been trying to find for a long time... myself.

Oddly enough, I got a letter from the guys a week later. They had mailed it the day of the deadly ambush. "It won't be long now un-

til our tour of duty is up and we will be going home. We wanted to tell you good-bye. Thank you for writing us. We don't know if you figured out who you are yet. Sometimes it's just a matter of knowing who you do not want to be. Your brother is a nut. He is always singing Dean Martin's *You're Nobody, Til Somebody Loves You*. If that's true, you definitely are somebody. We all love you."

After school I told Sister Judith Ann about the guys. "I'm sorry," she said. "I know you will miss them."

I nodded. "Writing them was like writing in a diary that could talk back."

God Answers With His Word

"I have a diary like that," she said. She showed me her Bible. The margins were filled with her hand-writing. "I write down my thoughts, and God answers with His Word."

I know He does, because ever since, I have kept a diary like Sister Judith Ann's.

Last summer I visited the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C. At the wall I found the 1969 section. I kissed my fingertips and touched them to the names etched in the smooth, cold granite. Jerry, Mike, Tom and Steve were home with God, and I had a feeling that somehow they would get the long-overdue letter I was writing them in my heart:

"Whenever my life seems on hold, I try to live the in-between moments the way you guys did. You taught me to value ordinary things, like autumn leaves and movies, faithful pets and letters from faraway friends... and even what's for supper.

ThesedaysIwritewhateveris on my mind in my Bible. God is faithful about listening and answering, just like you guys were. Thanks for believing in me. I love you. P.S. We're having spaghetti tonight." +++

Free copies of *The 101 Times* for your conference, church or group are available upon request. Indicate #. (All information and articles in *The 101 Times* may be reproduced without prior permission. Do evangelize.)

WANTED:

INFORMATION — About apparitions taking place throughout the world.

PRAYER CARDS — To be used as bookmarks and for redistribution.

VOLUNTEERS — We are desperate for envelope stuffers. Come for a few hours or a few days. Temporary housing available.

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NAMES AND ADDRESSES — Of friends to receive a *FREE* copy of *The 101 Times*.

Free — Laminated Akita Eucharistic Prayer Card and Certificate of Membership in the Associates of Akita to all those who are willing to make the following commitments:

- A) I will recite the short prayer daily.
- B) I will say the Rosary daily.
- C) I will wear the Brown Scapular.
- D) I will make at least one sacrifice daily in reparation to the Sacred Hearts.

Sign here: _____

Free. Limit of any three items.

Check only three:

- 1) ___ *Seven Graces of the Seven Sorrows of Mary* laminated prayer card
- 2) ___ "*Hail and Blessed*" St. Andrew Advent laminated prayer card
- 3) ___ *Spirit of St. Joseph* prayer card (3"x 5")
- 4) ___ *The Joyful Pilgrimage Rosary*, audio tape by John Haffert
- 5) ___ *Our Lady of Soufanieh* prayer card
- 6) ___ 40 prayer cards of our choice
- 7) ___ *Moving Statues of Ireland* audio tape
- 8) ___ Audio tape of 101's choice
- 9) ___ *31 Day Novena to St. Joseph* booklet

Pope John XXIII

from: *Pray to Love, Love to Pray*,
by Graser

He was one of 20 children of poor, devout parents. When he entered the seminary at age 14, he became known for his scholarship, but also for his cheerfulness and concern for others. He had a deep devotion to Jesus, Mary, and Joseph.

As Bishop, people everywhere recognized him as a simple, gentle and spiritual man. No one ever guessed that he would become Pope John XXIII, one of the best loved and most influential pontiffs of this or any other time.

They thought that the 78-year-old priest represented little more than a compromise between the Church's moderates and conservatives. He would surely be a transitional pope. Yet, when he died after a brief five year pontificate, he had convened Vatican II to encourage ecumenism, and he inspired the world with his concern for peace and the dignity of every individual. +++



In Akita, Japan, on September 28, 1981, Sister Agnes suddenly felt the presence of the Angel at her side during the Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. She did not see the Angel in person, but a Bible appeared open before her eyes and she was invited to read a passage (Genesis 3:15)...the voice of the Angel was heard explaining in sort of a preamble that the passage had relationship with the tears of Mary, then continued:

"There is a meaning to the figure one hundred and one. This signifies that sin came into the world by a woman and it is also by a woman that salvation came to the world. The zero between the two signifies the Eternal God Who is from all eternity until eternity. The first one represents Eve, the last the Virgin Mary." +++

Pilgrimage Program:

SEND FOR COMPLETE ITINERARIES

Medjugorje & Prague — Mon., March 7 to Wed., March 16, 2005 (10 days), \$1198. (One day in Prague.) +++

Betania, Venezuela — Tues., March 29, to Mon. April 4, 2005 (7 days) \$1689.

Fatima — Tues., April 19, to Tues., April 26, 2005 (8 days) \$1399. Visit **Aljustрал, Lisbon, Santarem, Coimbra, Fatima, Ourem**, and the Shrine of Our Lady of Nazareth at **Nazare**. +++

France — Mon., May 2, 2005, to Wed., May 18 (17 days), \$2699. Visit **Paris, Chartres, Paray-le-Monial, La Salette, Ars, Chateaufort-de-Galaure** (Marthe Robin), **Pellevoisin, Nevers, Lourdes, Normandie, L'ile-Bouchard, Mont St. Michel, Pontmain, Lisieux, St. Baume, Carcasson** & more. +++

Poland Shrine Tour — Sun., May 22, to Sat., June 4, 2005 (14 days), \$2499. Includes **Warsaw, Zoliborz, Krakow** (Corpus Christi Procession), **Niapokalonow, Zakopane, Zelazowa Wola, Wagnivniki** (Divine Mercy Center), **Wadowice** (birthplace of John Paul II), **Kalwari Zebrzydowska**, and the beautiful Shrine at **Lechen**. +++

Fatima — Marian Conference and Retreat. (Topic: *Our Lady and the Reality of Heaven, Hell, and Purgatory.*) Internationally guest speakers. Thurs., July 7, to Thursday, July 14, 2005 (8 days), \$1799 (Land only, \$1299.) July 13 anniversary celebration. +++

Fatima and Lourdes — Wed., July 20 to Sat., Aug. 6, 2005 (18 days) \$2599. Our most popular pilgrimage. Feast Day visit to **Santiago Compostella** (Shrine of St. James), **Pontevedra, Zaragosa, Avila, Braga, Santarem, Covadonga, Fatima, Ovieto, Lourdes, Garabandal, etc.** +++

Ireland — Fri., Aug. 12, to Wed., Aug. 24, 2005 (13 days) \$1998. Visits to **Knock, Melleray Grotto, Ballinspittle, Inchigeela, Attymass** (home of Fr. Patrick Peyton), **Achill Sound House of Prayer, Dublin**, & more. Meetings with visionaries Mary Casey, Tom Lennon, & others. +++

Shrines of **Italy** — Wed., Sept 7, to Fri, Sept. 23, 2005 (17 days) \$2699. Visit **Milan, San Damiano, Montichiari, Fontanelle** (Rosa Mystica), **Padua, Venice, Florence, Siena, Cotrona, Assisi, Loreto, Osimo** (St. Joseph Cupertino), **Cascia, San Giovanni Rotonondo, St. Michael's Cave, Avellino, Pietrelcina, Mugnano** (St. Philomena), **Pompeii, Rome, & Civitavecchia**. +++

Medjugorje & Prague — Mon., Nov. 7 to Wed., Nov. 16, 2005 (10 days), \$1198. (One day in Prague.) +++

Guadalupe, Mexico — for Feast Day celebrations. Dec. 6 thru 13, 2005 (8 days) \$1299 (Land only, \$899). Feasts of the Immac. Concep., Juan Diego, Our Lady of Guadalupe, and visits to **Ocotlan, Puebla, St. Michael's Well, & Our Lady of Good Remedies**. +++

Germany, Austria, & Switzerland—(including Tyrolian Passion Play) June 15 to June 16, (12 days).

Ulm, in 2008, \$3399,
Oberammergau, in 2010, \$3699

(deposit now or by 2 years in advance).
+++

All pilgrimages include: priest on each bus, daily Mass & four Rosaries, breakfast & dinner, and a blue 101 jacket. Non-refundable deposit is \$150 per person.

Spend a few quiet days near the Blue Army Shrine in Washington, NJ.
Call 101 Foundation for details.

Write for information regarding the **Garabandal** Miracle Flight.

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