

The Santa Claus Incident

by John J. Flynn
Alias Santa Claus

In 1978, my son joined Boy Scout Troop 1 in Pound Ridge, NY. Consequently, I was drafted into being a member of the Boy Scout Committee. Before I knew it, I had volunteered to be the Cub Master. Three years later, I was still Cub Master and my son had quit Scouts.

At that time, Pound Ridge had 11 Cub Scout Dens, each one with a Den Mother and five boys in each Den between 9 and 12 years old. We were not allowed to have 6 members in a Den because it had been determined that six members creates chaos.

Each Christmas season we had a holiday party at the public school—no religious songs, just Jingle Bells, Frosty, the Snowman, and a very popular Rudolph, the Red Nosed Reindeer, which every kid in America knows by the age of three.

On The Stage

I was up on the stage in my Santa Claus suit and beard with my grab bag full of gifts when the first rascals were released from their Den Mother's grasp. The first few came up and took a grab bag toy, thanked me and left.

But then things quickly got out of hand. One charming child went behind me and took my hat off and began tossing it back and forth among his friends. The others took up the cry, "We know who you are—you are not Santa Claus, you are Mr. Flynn."

Still others joined the fray and attempted to pull my beard off. I was defending myself holding onto my beard and chasing my hat around the stage when I noticed the entire audience of parents was hysterical with laughter. It seemed like an

interminable time, but finally some responsible Den Mothers called their boys back, and things quieted down for one more chorus of Jingle Bells before the curtain finally closed.

I Quit!

I fled the stage. When I got into my car, I said to myself (I thought), "I will never do this again. I have never been so humiliated."

I Heard A Voice

Suddenly an audible Voice that seemed to come from within my car said, "Yes, you will because it pleases Me." The Voice then continued, "You wore your red suit while I was covered with My Own blood.

"They took your hat and taunted you with it. They took all My clothes and divided them by lots. They pulled your beard, and it snapped back on its rubber band; they pulled Mine out by the roots.

"You said you were Santa Claus, but you are an imposter. I Am, who I said I was, but they did not believe Me either. And they did not want the gifts I wanted to give them; they scoffed and laughed at Me, too.

"Don't you know that you have been given a very special grace to experience a small part of My humiliation? You will wear that suit again and I will bless you every time you do."

That was 37 years ago. I have been wearing that suit and its successors ever since. I do not preside at children's parties anymore; I go to hospitals and visit the sick and I go down to the streets of Manhattan and walk around. It is amazing the reaction Santa Claus gets in that hard-boiled city. Santa truly is a voice crying, "Glory to God in the Heavens, and peace to people of good will." Merry Christmas to all.

(This is a true story that had happened to John J. Flynn, Rowayton, Ct.) +++

Bernadette Gives Thanks For Her Many Gifts From God

by Fr. Tadeusz Daiczer
Professor of Theology in Warsaw
from Magnificat, 2/16, Vol. 17, #12

For the extreme poverty of my father and mother, the failure of the mill, the wood that brought unhappiness, the wine of fatigue, the dirty sheep, thank You, my God.

For the extra mouth to be fed that I was, for the ragged children, for the long time I had to live away from my family and school to tend other's sheep, I thank You, Lord.

Thank You, my God, for the procurator, the superintendent of police, the policemen, and for Abbe Peyramale's harsh words!

For the days when You came, Our Lady Mary; for the days when You did not come—only in Paradise can I give You thanks!

For the slap in the face,... for the insults, for those who believed I was crazy and should be taken away, for those who believed I was lying, for those who believed I was greedy, thank You, Lady Mary!

For the spelling I never learned, the knowledge of books I never had, for my ignorance and my stupidity, for the belief and disbelief in me of Abbe Peyramale, I thank You, my God!

Thank You! Thank You! Because had there been in this world a girl more ignorant and stupid than I, You would have chosen her.

For my mother who died so far away from me, for my sorrow when my father, instead of opening his arms to his little Bernadette, called me "Sister Marie-Bernard," I thank You, Jesus! +++

It Stopped Ebola

By David J. Dionisi

I am convinced that there is no greater *protection* to save your country, your local government, your home, your family, and your soul, than by praying the Rosary every day. My advice to everyone in these times, and in all times, is to make and take time to pray the *daily Rosary*.

Because of the Church law concerning "public prayer," it is even better to pray the Rosary together with others, and choosing a set time increases the efficiency. We have learned that with a clock, a call, or a bell, gathering people together at a set time produces the maximum effect and the greatest benefits for all.

Jesus says that, "Where two or more are gathered together in My name, I am there with them," (Mat. 18:20). The Church's "Rule of Public Prayer" states, when two pray together, *each one* has *doubled* his prayers. When 10 pray a Rosary together, God counts it as *10 Rosaries for each one!* So, try often to pray with others *to receive more graces!*

Our Lady's Triumph

God has given Our Lady the role of "Commander in Chief" in the battle against the devil and all of his evil works. His power now is stronger than ever, since sickness, evil, and sin pervade the world as never before.

Likewise, Our Lady is making Her move to win this battle, because at Fatima, Portugal; Akita, Japan; and other places, She said, "*In the end, My Immaculate Heart will triumph.*" I am also convinced that Our Lady's victory is imminently close, and indeed, by employing more Marian prayers, it has already begun!

The Worst Place To Live!

In 2003, I was told that the worst country in the world in which to live was Liberia, Africa; that it was an

immensely suffering nation. With the help of the Franciscan Order, and by God's providence (meeting some government officials on the plane going there helped), I was able to found a non-profit charitable organization called Franciscan Works, <www.franciscanworks.org>.

Our Territory

I was on my way to Liberia to help orphans and poor children. In those days, it was necessary to get a local tribe to serve as our benefactors and protectors. The large Blacktom Tribe became our "associates," and, within their area, we were able to establish a 24.5 acre compound for housing and boarding some 100 destitute youngsters. We were also able to build a "preparatory school" which had about 425 students participating in a number of various education and job-training programs. I went there a number of times during the next 12 years.

Within our compound, we built the large St. Anthony of Padua school, the St. Michael Catholic Church, and some buildings where the orphans and other poor children live. You can see the property by viewing, <https://www.franciscanworks.org/our-work/videos.aspx>.

A map of the Liberia mission can be seen by viewing, <https://www.franciscanworks.org/our-work/liberia-mission.aspx>.

Ebola's Ugly Head

The 2014 Ebola epidemic was very scary. By September 2014, the Peace Corps, most non-profits, and many doctors had left Liberia. While I helped train people on a range of skills to safeguard them against becoming infected, I wanted to help people go on the offence against the demonic Ebola virus in a number of possible and effective ways, both physically and spiritually.

I taught the people how to make chlorine from salt and water. Chlorine kills Ebola. In a country without running water, plumbing, or access to basic cleaning chemicals, being able to make and dispense chlorine is a big deal.

Making Chlorine

Please understand the importance of being able to make chlorine in an emergency. I suggest that one or two members of every household or community should know how (and be prepared) to make chlorine.

Roughly 80% of all disease comes from contaminated water. Water can be disinfected four ways, by: 1) ultra violet light (UV), 2) reverse osmosis (RO), 3) boiling, 4) chlorine.

Why use chlorine? Water can be cleaned by using the methods mentioned, however a dirty vessel, dirty hands, or other conditions may recontaminate the water. With chlorination, the chlorine remains in the water to protect the water against contaminants.

The solution we made was a weak concentration of chlorine to disinfect one's hands and feet without doing damage to one's skin or getting an over exposure to chlorine, in keeping with the World Health Organization's standard.

Once consumed, replacements for chlorine tablets or liquid bleach, in many places or environments, may not be available or affordable.

SWIM Chlorine Producing Unit

A SWIM device makes a 1/100 concentration from a normal chlorine bottle (see www.swimforhim.info).

The SWIM CPU is not a filter. It is a device containing mesh electrodes (powered with 12 volts from a battery) through which a mixture of 1 tablespoon of salt and 16 ounces of water is passed multiple times. The salt water is converted into a chlorine solution, some of which can be used to purify contaminated water.

For poor countries or emergencies anywhere, this device can be very useful. The chlorine becomes a disinfectant with multiple uses.

The SWIM Chlorine Producing Unit uses simple table salt, which is inexpensive and readily available around the world. SWIM offers the CPU to mission organizations and individuals for a recommended donation of \$50, which covers both manufacturing and shipping costs.

If you are interested in doing so, you can contact SWIM to learn more about their charitable organization. To lend them a hand, they can provide you with further information as to how you can help prevent water borne diseases by joining their "mobile build team."

Quarantine Area

I also established a quarantine area in a facility within our compound for the laborers, students, and residents, as well as for the local Blacktom tribe members, so that all of us could be kept safe.

By using non-contact digital thermometers, we were able to quickly determine if anyone was coming down with Ebola (people with Ebola have temperatures of 101.5 degrees or higher), and then nip the virus in the bud, employing some immediate measures.

Although I trained the people in sterilization processes, I feel that the most effective action we took was praying the Rosary together every day, which gave both the children and the adults a tangible sense of comfort and peace.

What I have told you barely touches the surface of our situation there. You can get more information about what happened to us in Liberia during the Ebola epidemic by viewing www.franciscanworks.org. On a YouTube video which I made during the Ebola emergency, see (<https://youtube.com/watch?v=LNPYrJ1G5A0>).

Mission Territory

For a number of years, Catholic missionaries have been in Liberia, and the fruits of their efforts are taking hold. Some Catholic families are well established, but, by-in-large, many of the people living there neither lived the Catholic Faith nor prayed the Rosary, so we were actually in the nascent stages of Catholic and Marian devotion.

The Three O'clock Hour

At the three o'clock hour, during God's hour of grace, (at a time when we should always pray and expect

miracles... Acts 3:1), we rang a big bell, and about 100 or so workers, students, and tribesmen gathered together to pray the Rosary and invoke the power of Our Lady to have God save us from the terrible Ebola epidemic.

We were asking for a lot (truly an enormous miracle), but to what better place could we turn, than to the One, we know in the end, Whose Immaculate Heart will triumph? This daily recitation of the Rosary became a **powerhouse!** Truly, I had hoped for much, but to my utter amazement, *none of us who prayed the Rosary became sick. None!*

Dare I say it... yes, perhaps some 2000 people in our area were protected by God from the vicious Ebola virus. All around us, other villages succumbed to its malicious, tenacious, and fearsome attacks.

To put this Rosary miracle in perspective, one of our students, Johnson Moore, who went to another town where his poor parents lived and where the Rosary *was not* prayed, died from Ebola.

The place where we were located was right next to communities with many Ebola casualties. Dogs were literally eating dead people in the streets. When a person died of Ebola, no one without special uniforms (covering almost one's entire body) wanted to touch the dead person to bury him. So with sticks, or some other way, the dead body was rolled outside to a ditch or a field, and then left there to decay or to be eaten by hungry animals.

By early October, the spread of the virus seemed unstoppable. At the same time, the virus *was stopped* from reaching us by an invisible Rosary miracle wall.

With people dying from Ebola all around us, I suspected that praying the Rosary somehow miraculously kept Ebola away! Looking back on that time, some two years ago, I know now *with certainty* that praying the Rosary *was* our safeguard!

Daily Now, Without Fail

As a result of the 2014 Ebola epidemic experience, now I pray the Rosary *every day*, and I am often

accompanied by my wife and four children (ages 14, 13, 10 and 7).

Also, I have been motivated to establish and direct an educational non-profit organization called the Teach Peace Foundation (see www.teachpeace.com), to make teaching the Fatima and Akita supernatural *peace solution* the *world's top priority*, and more practiced, at least by all Catholics.

After the Ebola epidemic, I felt called by the Holy Spirit to understand the supernatural events in Akita, Japan, which after Fatima, are perhaps among the greatest miracles of the 20th century.

In 1984, Bishop John Shojiro Ito's Pastoral Letter gave the approval of the Catholic Church to the miracles in Akita. The Holy Spirit helped me to find and meet with Sr. Agnes Sasagawa in Japan on August 2, 2015. She was 84 years old, but her looks belie her age.

I asked her to help me with a documentary so that people around the world could learn about God's supernatural solution for peace. As a result of her assistance, for the first time in decades, you can see and hear Sr. Agnes in the excellent *Akita and Fatima Secret* documentary, online at www.teachpeace.com. We would hope that everyone in the world could view it.

As Our Lady of Fatima said in 1917, "There is *no* problem, I tell you, no matter how difficult it is, that cannot be resolved by the prayer of the Holy Rosary."

Warnings from Heaven are still coming to us, so that means that there is yet time to get the word out that devotion to the Blessed Mother *can be your salvation*.

Heaven and hell are real. Wake up and realize that your soul is your most valuable possession. **You must save it, at all cost! +++**

With a donation of \$35 or more, ask the 101 Foundation to send you the NEW auto-biography of Sr. Lucia, called "*Pathways*" AND the tremendous John Bird, 101 minute DVD, about Sr. Agnes & Akita, Japan, "*A Hill Of Redemption*." +++

God Is Love

from *Scripture Lk. 7:36-50*
by Ann Voskamp & Rosalie Turton

Oh, how often we find that love solves all evils. It wipes away all tears of sorrow and replaces them with tears of joy. So it was with the young, beautiful, but sinful Magdalene, when she exchanged sin for the love of Jesus Christ. So, too, it is for us when we return to Jesus.

St. Luke, (7:36-50) tells us: A certain Pharisee invited Jesus to dine with him, and He entered the Pharisee's house and reclined at table.

Now there was a sinful woman in the city who learned that He was at table in the house of the Pharisee. Bringing an alabaster flask of ointment, she stood behind Him at His feet weeping, and she began to bathe His feet with her tears. Then she wiped them with her hair, kissed them, and anointed them with the ointment.

When the Pharisee who had invited Him saw this, he said to himself, "If this Man were a prophet, He would know who and what sort of woman this is who is touching Him—that she is a sinner."

Jesus said to him, "Simon, I have something to say to you." "Tell me, Teacher," he said. "Two people were in debt to a certain creditor; one owed five hundred days' wages and the other owed fifty. Since they were unable to repay the debt, he forgave it for both. Which of them will love him more?"

Simon said in reply, "The one, I suppose, whose larger debt was forgiven." He said to him, "You have judged rightly."

Then He turned to the woman and said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? When I entered your house, you did not give Me water for My feet, but she has bathed them with her tears and wiped them with her hair. You did not give Me a kiss, but she has not ceased kissing My feet since the time I entered. You did not anoint My head with oil, but she anointed My feet with ointment.

So I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven; hence, she has shown great love. But the one to whom little is forgiven, loves little."

He said to her, "Your sins are forgiven." The others at table said to themselves, "Who is this Who even forgives sins?" But He said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace."

The Sinful Woman

(Ann Voskamp, whose book, *One Thousand Gifts* was a New York Times best-seller, says this about the Magdalene, *Magnificat* 9/15, p. 257):

A dark storm, she cries. She wets Jesus' feet with her tears. She "rains," it reads: in the original Greek *brecho*. She rains, she's this *brecho* that breaks. She's this full rain, falling. She's this heart-water let loose. He so pure and His feet so dirty. She so filthy and He, her only purity. Will anyone wash His feet with their love?

And that woman, she has no pitcher but she has passion—the kind no Pharisee could ever understand, and she has no water but she has her heart.

She pours it out. *She pours it out.*

And with no towel but tresses, no hand cloth but her hair, she does the unthinkable, the scorned and the disgraced. When all Jewish women were required to keep their hair done up, lest they be seen as shameful and loose, she lets her locks down.

Rabbis, men of the law, said that if a woman loosed her hair in public, let her hair flow mingled down, it was grounds for divorce. Grounds to be shamed and sent away.

But there is a love far greater than law.

That Luke woman, she lets her hair loose, lets her love loose, and she looks loose and there are always Michals who will scorn David's dancing to be shamed and sent away—but Jesus lets her kiss Him.

It seems shocking, appalling, too intimate, and this *kataphileo*, these kisses, this is the same word of the father kissing the prodigal son, a symbolic picture of God embracing,

the father falling on the neck of his child and kissing, and doesn't the whole realm of earth need to be seized with a power of a great affection? +++

God's Love

There is a great book that I once read called *The Great Flaming Furnace of the Sacred Heart*. (What a wonderful book! It may now be out of print. We gave most of our books to the new Seminary, so if anyone has two copies, please send one to Rosalie.)

There, Jesus said that human love and God's love differ drastically and predominantly in three ways. No matter how ardent, how constant, or how long human love exists, even to the greatest measure, compared to God's love it is always ice cold, horribly inconstant, and terribly short. He explains it, but think about it.

Fill Your Heart With Love For Jesus And Mary

A Jesuit priest friend of mine told me of a revelation that Mother Nadine, foundress of the Intercessors Of The Lamb told him about while she was speaking with Jesus.

She asked Jesus, "Did you ever consider getting married?"

Jesus answered, "No. It was not God's Will for Me."

She asked, again, "If you would have married, who would it have been?"

He answered, "Mary Magdalene, because she had a heart full of love, most like Mine."

Surprised

I was surprised with this answer. Now I know that Jesus has many "spouses" who are holy religious people. They often take marriage vows to Christ. In Siena, Italy, in Catherine's home, there is a large painting of her accepting a wedding ring (which only she could see) from Jesus, and Our Lady is standing by. St. Catherine was a third-order Dominican living in her own home! We as well can *all* give our love to Jesus and Mary. Let's do it! +++

Fr. Jozo's Dilemma

from *The Spirit of Medjugorje*
by Fr. Jozo Zovko, OFM

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 this work was from the devil 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.

On the contrary, I was suffering 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."

"Save Us!"

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, pleading "Save us; the police are chasing us!"

I took them to the presbytery and locked them in. Then 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.*

"Why Don't You Believe?"

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 so it was. No one had told them. Before that time, everyone went to the Hill of Apparitions, but on that day, the church was full.

Area And Homes Were Blocked

Then the area was blocked by the police and the army. The visionaries, controlled by the home guards, could not leave their houses. Jakov had the apparition in his home, and when the Gospa appeared, She gave him a message to give to me for the people who would be in the church that evening for the Mass.

He was like a prisoner in his home, for an armed guard was in front of his door. Yet, small ten-year-old Jakov, felt he should obey the Gospa, and he began looking through the keyhole. When he saw that the guard had fallen asleep (for in July Medjugorje can be very warm), he quietly opened a back window and jumped out.

However, awakened by the noise, the guard entered the house and searched it. Finding that Jakov was no longer there, he called by radio to inform all the stations of the blockage in the direction of the church.

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

On The Altar

I lifted him up and I 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 barefoot, dirty, and dusty. On the altar cloth remained the imprint of his two little feet.

Then, the Gospa appeared in the middle of the church and, through Jakov, thanked me, repeating, once again, almost the same words, that She had spoken earlier in the day, adding one word, "*You must pray the Rosary every evening.*"

Since that evening, in the church at Medjugorje we always say the Rosary there *every evening*, as Our Lady wants all of us to do. +++

Power Of The Rosary

by Fr. Joseph M. Esper, p. 125
from *Spiritual Dangers of the 21st Century*

Second only to the Mass, the most powerful prayer is the Rosary. Our Lady is supposed to have revealed, "I will bind satan in chains made up of the thousands of Rosaries said by My children."

Sister Lucy of Fatima, in her 1957 interview with Fr. Augustine Fuentes, stated, "The Most Holy Virgin, in these last times in which we live, has given a new efficacy to the recitation of the Holy Rosary. She has given this efficacy to such an extent that there is no problem, no matter how difficult it is, whether temporal or above all, spiritual, in the personal life of each one of us, of our families, of the families of the world, or of the religious communities, or even of the lives of peoples and nations, that cannot be solved by the Rosary."

This prayer is a particularly powerful weapon against evil. For example, Fr. Gabriele Amorth, chief exorcist of the Vatican observed, "One day a colleague of mine, during an exorcism, heard the devil say, "Every Hail Mary is like a blow on my head. If Christians knew how powerful the Rosary was, it would be my end." +++

The Glory On Highway 69

by Mrs. Ruby Swindle

On the night of December 1, we will turn on the Christmas lights, the ones that take us three months to put up each year. I hope our married daughter will be able to make it over from Talladega, Al. for the lighting. After all, she is the reason for the lights.

Her name is Ruby, same as mine, but when she came along, a girl after three boys, everybody called her "Sis," and the name stuck. Sis was five when she started saying how she wished other people could enjoy our lights. We had just one string then, on the tree in the living room.

"They are so beautiful, Mother! I want everyone to see them!"

That was Sis, always wanting good things for others. Well, the next year we bought a second string and hung them on the bush by the front door, where they glowed warm and cheerful for folks driving by on Highway 69. Sis was beside herself with excitement. "I wish we could put dozens of lights out there!"

Lights cost money, of course, and we have never had a lot of that. Harold's a cook at a roadside restaurant, and I am a seamstress at Oneida Mills. Still, Sis enjoyed the lights so much that each year we managed to buy a few more.

We strung them along the porch and wound them around the fence post. One year, Harold figured out a way to get lights high up in the old oak tree. He tied a length of string to a metal nut and fired it into the tree from a slingshot.

When the nut dropped down over a branch, he attached a string of lights to it and hauled it up. Another year he made a frame to hold a star up on the roof. Then we saved up and bought a lighted Nativity scene for the year so people would not miss the reason for the celebration.

After a while, folks started driving by just to see our light display. "Mother!" Sis would call as a car's

tires crunched on the driveway. "Here comes another one!"

As years went by, it took more and more time and effort to get those few thousands of lights up. Electric bills were bigger, too, to keep the lights burning every night for a month. But we managed fine.

So many people started coming that Harold cleared a place for parking behind the house and looped the driveway back out to the road so traffic could move in a circle. Still, some nights, the line of cars stretched clear down 69, and folks waited half an hour to get close!

Twenty Years Ago

Sis got married after high school and moved to Talladega, ninety miles away. That was twenty years ago, but these are still "Sis's lights," and while we are getting them out in the Fall, she comes over whenever she can, to help us connect the strings and check for burned-out bulbs.

It takes every night after work and all day weekends to get hundreds of strings up on the roof and around the chicken house and out in the trees by the first day of December, when Harold throws the switch.

Then a month later, we start taking them down, wrapping each string separately in a plastic storage bag, storing them in the attic with the Baby Jesus and the sheep and the angels. It is almost the end of February—that is nearly six months—before we are done.

Not As Much, Any More

Five years ago, I had a heart attack, and now I do not do much climbing and hammering. Nothing slows down Harold, though, and there are many things that I can do sitting down, such as to check the wiring and replace bulbs.

We can no longer find the old-time bulbs that were shaped like flowers and Christmas figures. (Maybe they will be made again.) They were Sis's favorites.

Still, she said as she fingered each bulb (the big flame-shaped ones that can burn one's fingers,

the sharp pointed miniatures), "But I love them all, Mother!"

You see, Sis's fingers tell her when a bulb is burned out. It is cold. Sis can not actually see the light; never could. She was born blind.

That is why every light we hang is for her. For the little girl who squealed with happiness as I guided her hands along that first string, telling her, "This bulb is red... this is yellow..." For the girl who said, "Oh, Mother, they are so beautiful! I want everyone to see them, too!" +++

Gift Wrapped Prayers

by Mary Brown

I poked among toy shelves in a discount store searching for the perfect gift, a present for our two-year-old godson, Ryan: a fun toy, yet educational... a special one to remind him of his Uncle Alex and Aunt Mary. Picking up box after box, I grew more discouraged.

Then I caught a few words of the Christmas carols playing in the store: "*How silently, how sliently, the wondrous gift is given.*"

"Oh Jesus," I breathed, "Yes, You are the only perfect gift. Help Ryan to know You and love You." Then I went back and peacefully chose some building blocks.

Later, I spread shopping bags across my bed, and as I taped Ryan's box of blocks, I found myself praying again for him.

Picking up another parcel, I thought... "Why pray only for Ryan because he is my godchild? Why not pray for Aunt Helen, who is battling Parkinson's disease, as I wrap her gift... and for the new job my husband Alex started... etc.?"

As I wrapped the gift for each recipient, love for each one of them swelled in my heart. God's presence filled the room and surrounded me. From now on, I shall remember to wrap every gift, *for all occasions*, along with the most important gift of all... the gift of a prayer! +++

We Are Here For A Little While

from *Lourdes Echoes*, p. 3
by Fr. Roland Lacasse, S.M.

While we are here on earth, hopefully we are improving things for ourselves, our neighbor, and the world. However, what is happening in our society here in America? A heroin epidemic has been raging, suicide has been legalized in some parts of our country, road rage has become more and more common, and even prescription drugs have been more and more abused. I ask myself, "What is happening to us?"

Coping has become so difficult for so many people, I have to wonder why. Is there a connection between this and the fact that religion is at an all-time low?

Where do most people find the inner strength to go on, once they have given up on church attendance? People like Martin Luther King found it by embracing a cause to which he felt was worth dedicating his life. He was reported to have said that he would like to live to a ripe old age, but there are things *more important than that*.

Others have said that the secret to happiness is to live for something bigger than oneself. But what did Jesus and His followers say? Does anyone remember *or care*?

My heroes are not modern-day athletes but people like Mother Teresa of Calcutta and St. Bernadette. They did not live for themselves alone or for this life... but for God and for others.

When you are lonely, discouraged, and depressed, do you reach out to others to make *their* cares lighter... their days brighter? Or rather, do you wallow in self-pity and lament the fact that nobody seems to care?

Beauty Of Living For God

When we say the "Our Father," what do we mean when we pray, "Thy Kingdom come?" Does it not mean that we are willing to work for a better world, that we are

willing to forget our troubles and help others to solve theirs? That is what made the saints, like St. Bernadette, so attractive.

Inner Strength

While we are here on earth, we should be trying to improve things, and God knows that we have plenty of opportunities to do so. We need inner strength to wage war on the forces of evil that surround us, such as greed, selfishness, crime, immorality, and terrorism.

Where does one acquire that strength but from a personal relationship with God? Where does one nurture that relationship but by prayer and church attendance? People who say that they do not need God or to attend Mass to be happy are only fooling themselves.

Not only that, but they are missing the point. Life is more than seeking personal gratification. It is also to make a contribution toward the betterment of this world of ours, saving souls, and earning for ourselves a higher place in Heaven. *We were born for those purposes.*

Pity the person who at the end of his life laments the fact that he has done little or nothing to make the world a better place in which to live, to make others happier and become closer to God—and to bring more souls, along with himself, to a higher place in Heaven for all eternity. Do not approach death and eternal life with "empty hands."

Our Lady said to the three children at Fatima, "If you knew what eternity and Heaven are like, you would do everything possible to go there. Heaven, Purgatory, and Hell really do exist, and no sinful desires or actions should be in your short life. A resolve to come back to God, a sincere repentance, and a firm purpose of amendment will put you back on the correct road to "home." No illicit pleasure or sinful behavior is worth losing the joys of Heaven, and experiencing the pains of Hell.

My favorite radio announcer, closed off by saying: "Keep well, so that you can do good." This is good advice. The Saints took it to heart, and so should we. +++

Reward!

by Rosalie Turton

I am searching for two things important to everyone, and I cannot seem to find where to purchase them. The first person who reponds positively with the information as to where we can obtain these items, and we are successful in doing so, will be given a modest monetary reward.

#1) We are looking to buy this quarter sized medal (or where we can have it reasonably made). I have only one medal in my possession. On one side it is witten:

Jesus
in the
Blessed Sacrament
Have Mercy On Us

300 days indulgence
each time

The other side has a picture of Jesus touching His Heart, and Mary holding a chalice to catch the Precious Blood coming from His Heart. It is simple, but beautiful, and probably old.

It is strung with 33 beads that look like small beans for the entire above prayer, and a thirty-fourth connecting bead for another prayer.

#2) I have written a nice article about "My Mother, My Confidence." At the end, it states that we will give away one quarter sized badge to anyone who requests it. I cannot make this promise or yet print the important article, because I cannot find out where to purchase the two plastic coverings with small holes around the perimeter for some decorative stitching, and the two sided picture with a light background, of:

"My Mother
My Confidence"
and the words:
300 Days Ind.
Pope Benedict XV

If necessary, call Rosalie for pictures or more information: (908-689-8792)

A Note to 101

from a Member

Just a quick note before I drop this envelope in the mail. I had Masses said for my daughter Tammie. Her month was July 1 to July 30, 2015.

A super storm hit our city on July 12th. She was in a camp ground about 12 miles from here. With winds of 100 miles an hour, the devastation was terrible. Her camp ground was all but wiped out. She was the only one there who sustained no damage, absolutely none, to her camper or truck, and she was safe. Thanks be to God, and thank you for your prayers.

Betty Johnson, MN, 56401

P.S. Fr. Varghese C. was the priest. Thought you might like to know.

Being a Slave to All

by St. Teresa of Avila

Keep in mind that I cannot not exaggerate the importance of this. Fix your eyes on the Crucified and everything will become small for you. If His Majesty showed us His love by means of such works and frightful torments, how is it you want to please Him only with words?

Do you know what it means to be truly spiritual? It means becoming the slaves of God. Marked with His brand, which is that of the cross, spiritual persons, because now they have given Him their liberty, can be sold by Him as slaves of everyone, as He was. He doesn't thereby do them any harm or grant them a small favor.

And if souls are not determined about becoming His slaves, let them be convinced that they are not making much progress, for this whole building, as I have said, has humility as its foundation. If humility is not genuinely present, for your own sake the Lord will not construct a high building lest that building fall to the ground.

Thus, that you might build on good foundations, strive to be the least and the slaves of all, looking at how or where you can please and serve them. What you do in this matter, *you do more for yourself* than for them and lay stones so firmly that *the castle will not fall*. +++

Pilgrimage Program:

SEND FOR COMPLETE ITINERARIES
Discounts for EARLY reservations!

(NO EXTRA TAXES OR HIDDEN COSTS)

Quito, Ecuador—Thurs., May 12 to Fri., May 20, 2016 (9 days, 8 nights) from **\$1599**. **Healing retreat with Fr. "Bing" Arellano, & Fr. Peter Zivny**. See the miraculous statue of *Our Lady of Good Success* with anniversary celebrations.

U.S. East Coast Shrines in New York and Pennsylvania area—Wed., June 8 to Wed., June 15, 2016 (8 days, 7 nights) from **\$1699**. Bus to **holy places** including **Lancaster, Pa.**, to see the live musical "Samson" and shrines in NY City, Phila, & Scranton, etc. With Ria Music. +++

Fatima, Portugal—Fri., July 22 to Fri. July 29, 2016, (8 days, 7 nights), from **\$2299**. +++

Ireland—Sat., Aug. 13, to Tues., Aug. 23, 2016 (11 days, 10 nights), from \$2999. Apparition Anniversaries at both **Knock and Melleray Grotto**. +++

Holy Land—Tues., Oct. 4 to Fri., Oct. 14, 2016 (11 days, 10 nights), from \$3499. With **Fr. Peter Zivny**.

Medjugorje—Sun., Nov. 6 to Sun., Nov. 13, 2016 (8 days, 7 nights). Sun. evening, Nov. 8, may be in **European city, such as London**. \$2199. +++

Guadalupe, Mexico—for Feast Day celebrations. Sun., Dec. 6 to 13, 2016. **\$1699** (Land only, **\$999**).

Guatemala—Tues., Jan 10, to Tues, Jan 17, **2017** (8 days, 7 nights), from \$1599. **Feast Day Celebration** at the Shrine of Crucified Black Christ of Esquipulas. One million pilgrims annually. Countless cures. See historic churches & sights in Antigua, San Felipe, as well as Guatemala City. +++

Garabandal, Spain—Possible Special Events. Holy Thursday. Sat., April 8 to Sat. April 15, **2017**. from \$3899.

Medjugorje—Sun., May 10 to Wed., May 17, **2017** (8 days, 7 nights), May 17, may be in **European city, such as Vienna** from \$2599. +++

Fatima 100th Anniversary—Tues. July 10 to Tues. July 17, **2017**, (8 days), from \$2699. Reserve as early as possible.

Medjugorje—Mon., Nov. 6 to Mon., Nov. 13, **2017** (8 days, 7 nights). \$2199.

Guadalupe, Mexico—for Feast Day celebrations. Sun., Dec. 6 to 13, **2017** (8 days) **\$1699** (Land only, **\$999**). 3 Feasts are the Immac. Concep., Juan Diego, & Our Lady of Guad., and many other important shrines near Mexico City.

Marian Shrines of India—Mon. Jan. 15 to Mon. Jan. 29, **2018** (15 days) from \$3599. Fr. Zivny, Fr. Sunil, Fr. Provincial & Ria. Repeat spectacular pilgrimage.

Lima, Peru—Tues. Mar. 6, to Tues. Mar. 13, **2018**, from \$1699. 8 days. "The City of Eucharistic Adoration and Saints." Healing Masses and sessions with well-known healing priests.

Medjugorje—Sun, May 6 to Sun., May 13, **2018** (8 days, 7 nights), Sat. evening, May 12 may be in **European city, such as Vienna** from \$2599. ++

All pilgrimages include: priest on each bus, daily Mass, Rosaries, Divine Mercy, all side trips, breakfast & dinner, t shirt (while they last). Non-refundable deposit is \$300 per person.

Visit FATIMA & LOURDES Houses and the St. Joseph Great Room. Spend a few quiet days near the Blue Army Shrine in Washington, NJ. Call the 101 Foundation for details.

Write for information regarding
Garabandal

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