

## Pio, Baptism, & Babies

from *Padre Pio of Pietrelcina*, pg. 7  
by Fr. Stefano Manelli & R. Turton

**P**adre Pio was a beautiful baby. He was born in Pietrelcina, Italy on Wednesday, May 25, 1887. The first whimpers of this little creature were heard in the Forgione homestead at about five in the evening while bells were pealing their summons to the faithful to come to church and honor the Blessed Virgin during Her beautiful month.

He was baptized the next day in the old parish church of Pietralcina, which had been dedicated to St. Mary of the Angels, and was named Francis. One cannot help but admire these parents to have their child baptized as soon as possible, so as to free him of original sin and fill him with the grace of God.

Great must have been the sacrifice of the mother bedridden and thus unable to be present at the Baptism in Church. But for her, a Christian rich in wisdom, it was far more important the child should at once be no longer a "child of wrath" (Eph. 2:3) but one reborn of God, a new Christian, a small "temple of God" (I Cor. 3:16), bearing the name of St. Francis, the seraph of Assisi.

### What's In A Name?

There is a happy coincidence about the name given to this child and the name of the parish church, St. Mary of the Angels. For it is well known how St. Francis of Assisi was associated with the little church of the Portiuncula on the verdant plain of Umbria, which bore the same name. Later on when Padre Pio, called "Francy" as a child, learned about the Saint of Assisi, after whom he was named, this knowledge would influence his choice of vocation.

The parents acted wisely. It is no small matter to have the child baptized as soon as possible and to give each child baptized the name of a saint. Surely the child will eventually find in that saint, whose name he or she bears, a heavenly protector and model for life, particularly potent when the name is that of a saint as stupendous as Francis of Assisi.

Meanwhile, Francy developed into a very beautiful infant. His cousin, Grazia Forgione, testified, "He was very pretty. His face was beautiful. He was completely healthy and clear-skinned. He was beautiful in every way."

### In Garabandal

Once when Our Lady appeared to the children in Garabandal, She said to them, "See that baby? It is in the state of sin." The children gasped! How could a baby still in diapers be in a state of sin? Our Lady continued, "The child has not been baptized." Think about it.

And what did Jesus mean when He said to Nicodemus, "Unless one is born again of the spirit and water, he shall not enter the Kingdom of Heaven" (John 3:5)?

Also, "Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning from this scripture, he preached Jesus to him... as they went along the road, they came to some water: and the eunuch said, 'Look! Water! What is to prevent me from being baptized?' ...Philip said, 'If you believe with all your heart, *YOU MAY!*' and he answered, and said, 'I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God'" (Acts 8:35).

"Upon union with Christ, one becomes an heir to the promises made to Abraham" (Galatians 3:26).

Our Lady was conceived *without* original sin (remnant of the sin of Adam and Eve), because no part of the devil could be in Her. St. John the Baptist was relieved of original sin upon meeting Jesus

as infants in the womb. Many religious historians believe that St. Joseph was also relieved of original sin in the womb, in order to be worthy of being the Foster Father of Jesus and the husband of God's pure Mother (see: *St. Joseph, as Seen by Mystics and Historians*).

### Original Sin Versus Baptism

So why keep original sin when it leaves upon a soul:

- 1) an inclination to evil
- 2) deprivation of holiness
- 3) weakness
- 4) ignorance
- 5) death
- 6) separation from Jesus

Baptism, on the other hand, frees a soul and enables it to grow in:

- 1) grace
- 2) belief and love for God
- 3) power over the devil
- 4) strength
- 5) courage
- 6) new life with Christ
- 7) salvation

Also, by being given the name of a saint during the rite of baptism, God then *requires* that saint to become a patron and protector of the person being baptized. It may be one reason why many souls are given the names of Mary, Joseph, and John, or even two or three names!

Let us hope that children given a name of a non-saint will still strive for holiness and then become the *first* saint having that name!

### Levels Of Heaven

There are many mansions and levels of Heaven, Purgatory, and Hell. The church teaches that souls, born and unborn, under the age of reason (age 7) are *not guilty* of any sins. *They all go to Heaven!*

But, to attain the Kingdom in Heaven which *sees the Beatific Vision, baptism* (complete union with Christ) *is necessary.* +++

## The Incredible Story of Colm John Cahill

by Christine Watkins  
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One day when I was seven years old, I was riding in the car with my father. That day would completely change my life. As we made our way home, returning from a sports game at my school, a large truck hit the back of our car, and catapulted us down the road, about thirty feet forward.

After that, I began to have seizures. Doctors never knew the exact cause. At first, I would have a seizure once a week. Then they grew worse and more frequent. By age 11, I was having four or five seizures a day.

With each seizure, I completely lost consciousness; my body was thrown into spasms, as I twitched on the ground from ten to forty-five minutes—many times suffering serious injuries. One time, I went from standing at the top of the stairs to my next memory of waking up later that day in a hospital bed.

### Danger Could Strike

I could not live a normal life. Someone had to watch over me at all times. My nerves were frayed from anxiety, as danger could strike at any time. I was forced to scout out every room before I could walk across it, to make sure I would not crash into objects.

I could never freely walk outside by myself, or play sports, or visit a friend's house. Whenever I sat down, I had to have a back support. My every single move was premeditated. I felt extremely depressed. I was worried about my life and what my future was going to be, if any.

I was raised in a Catholic family but found it very difficult to believe in a God who would let this happen to me. I could not see how a child, suffering as I was, could be elated to Love in any way.

At that time, I did not realize how my family was also suffering. I was the middle child of five, and my illness took its toll, not only

on my parents but also on two sisters and two brothers, who had to constantly look out for me, shouldering a lot of responsibility at their young ages.

### British Citizen

I came from one of the Channel Islands off of the coast of Normandy, France, called Jersey—a possession of the English Crown, connected to the United Kingdom. Born in 1996, at the age of twelve in 2003, I traveled all of the time in and out of the hospitals on the island.

Twice, I was airlifted from Jersey to London to see different neurologists, whom we hoped would offer some idea as to the nature of my problem, and, therefore, treat it better. Sadly, this had no result.

From eight-years-old onward, I consumed a daily cocktail of drugs, which changed every couple of months, from epilim to tegretol to lorazepam to diazepam, and so on.

### Helplessness

I lived in a constant critical situation, and there was no hope for the future. I did not feel very many emotions, because any heightened emotional activity could trigger a seizure. The theme of my life and of my inner state was helplessness. I did not consider suicide, because as far as I was concerned, I was living the life of someone who was already dead.

My family tried everything to prevent my seizures and to heal me. They contacted every specialist across the globe, from America to Australia, but to no avail. When I was thirteen, my family reluctantly decided that I would have to be put into an institution. I dreaded this, but agreed to it, knowing there was no way that they could otherwise have one single day of a normal life.

I would still come home at times, and if I were well enough, my parents took me to church; however, my residence was in the institution, under constant 24-hour care and surveillance, until my inevitable death, because one can be on such

drugs, with such an illness, only for a limited time.

### Prayers At Medjugorje

In 2004, a new priest came to Jersey, and my family grew close to him. I met him for the first time when he came to anoint me during one of my hospital stays, but I did not know him well. Later he told me that he was going to a place called Medjugorje. I did not know what or where that was.

He said, "I want to go and pray for you there, but I want to ask something of you. I will send your mother a message from Medjugorje, and at that time, *you have to pray.*"

"Okay," I said, without the least bit of enthusiasm. Remaining helpless and despairing, I agreed. I saw his Medjugorje trip as a "Why not?" Nothing else had worked.

Where the world had completely failed me, perhaps God and Mother Mary could come to the rescue. I turned to Them, but frankly, with little hope, and asked, "Is there anything that You can do to help me?"

### The Next Week

The priest traveled to Medjugorje the following week. I was the prayer intention for his entire seven-day pilgrimage. In every Mass he attended, every Rosary he said, every hike he took up Cross Mountain, every prayer he prayed, he asked that I would be healed!

Several days later, on May 21, 2004, we received a message from him saying that there would be an apparition of the Blessed Virgin Mary to the visionary Ivan that night. It would take place at 10 p.m. in Medjugorje (9 p.m. in Jersey) and *he wanted me to pray at the exact time of that apparition.*

### A Miracle!

Shortly before 9 o'clock, I went into my backyard, which was strange, because the night was dark, and I was alone. In and of itself, this was quite a leap of faith, because I should never have ventured outside. It was far too risky.

Strangely, my mother did not follow me. As an act of faith, she allowed me to go alone. In my arms were a Crucifix, six candles, and a Rosary.

I did not know what I was doing. I wanted to create a sacred setting, so I put together a makeshift altar. Onto the middle of a bench, I placed a Crucifix, with three of the six candles on either side of it. After lighting the candles, I knelt down in front of my "altar," and took out a book on how to pray the Rosary.

That night I prayed the first decade of my life, with a Rosary in one hand and the book in the other. As 9 p.m. approached, I remained in continuous prayer.

A gusty wind blew around me, and, nervously, I expected the candles to blow out, but strangely enough, they stayed lit. Then exactly at 9 p.m., the same time as Mary came to earth in Medjugorje, things started to happen.

The wind completely stopped in a split second. It did not die down. It became non-existent! Everything suddenly rested in complete, peaceful stillness!

At this moment, while staring intently at the Crucifix, I called out in a plaintive voice, "Help me!" Those two words were like one hundred. They summed up every cry of my heart. I just wanted to be delivered from my illness.

Then, right in front of my eyes, the six candles, one by one, from left to right miraculously extinguished themselves, with about two seconds elapsing in between each candle! Once all of the candles were out, an incredible energy and peace built up inside of me.

### **Cured!**

I could feel a force pass slowly upward, through my entire body, and out the top of my head. This feeling lasted for about thirty seconds, and then a deep pervasive peace settled within me, as I knelt in the lingering, uncanny stillness.

Since the age of seven, when the accident occurred, I had suffered a constant headache and dizziness

from the many medications I had to take. Suddenly these pains were gone.

Overwhelmed and confused by what I had seen with the candles, and by the intense stillness into the garden, I got up, walked back in the house and went straight to bed. The next morning, when I woke up, a message was waiting for me from the priest in Medjugorje. He said that, during the apparition to Ivan, Our Lady prayed especially for all those who were ill.

### **Seizures Stopped!**

That day passed and I did not have a seizure. Then, the next day passed, and I did not have a seizure. I did not want to get my hopes up, but excitement began building up inside of me.

The following week, when the priest returned from Medjugorje, still no seizures, no headaches, no hallucinations, and no dizziness. It was then that my family and I finally realized what had happened to me in the backyard. *I had been completely healed!*

### **No Explanation**

My doctors could not give an explanation about how the seizures had suddenly stopped, but the priest did offer one to me, saying, "You were healed by God, through His Mother."

Doctor's started to withdraw my medications. With my being on so many, they could not take me off everything at once, as that would have completely thrown off the chemical balance in my body. It took eight months, but by the beginning of 2005, I was free of all medications!

One by one, my family shed any lingering traces of disbelief, and spontaneously released bursts of thanksgiving, praise, and joy. Naturally reserved by nature, I expressed my grateful heart by the big smile plastered on my face. I jumped up and down inside of myself. I felt so happy with life, and I fell deeply in love with Our Lady and Jesus Christ.

With my new-found curiosity, I wanted to explore my faith; I wanted to get to know Our Lady and Her Son, Jesus. I wanted to go to Medjugorje. *All of these desires have happened!*

Exactly one year later, on May 20, 2005, I stepped foot in Medjugorje, on the anniversary of my healing, and I have been returning there ever since. Seven years have passed since then, and I am still completely healthy.

### **Learning About Myself**

These last seven years, for me, have been about coming to know life. Alongside my new-found joy and curiosity, I had my own struggles and challenges. I was not healed into becoming a saint. I was healed into becoming a normal teenage boy, with the heartbreaks and challenges that come with it.

Over these last few years of learning about myself and about God, I have also come to know my vocation. This September I will enter the seminary and *study to become a Catholic priest.*

### **He Gave Me Life**

I now understand that the line, "Nothing is impossible with God" is literal. He means that. When I turned to Him in absolute helplessness, when the greatest specialists in the world could not understand how to cure me, the Almighty gave me life! *PRAISE GOD! +++*

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## **New Item**

We are so happy to be able to provide handmade ladies *long-string Brown Scapulars*. Tell us your dress size and if you prefer white or brown string, if it matters. (S 127)

Price is \$3 and free postage. We will also include a free soft crocheted bedtime Brown Scapular.

Upon request, we will make a handmade Scapular, *any length* for \$3

We are also devising a children's Scapular that they might want to wear, which is not ready yet. +++

# Encounters With People and God

by Dr. Rosalie Ann Turton

Recently, I was on an inspirational pilgrimage to Medjugorje and Austria. At J.F.K. Airport, returning from Vienna, I met Nicola, a beautiful three-year-old child and his dad.

The encounter was very brief, like so many others which resemble ships passing in the night. We see the darkness of ocean water, the brightness of many stars in the sky—and then comes a majestic ship which passes closely by, and we see the swimming pools brightly lit up, the dining room with its sparkling chandeliers, and we sense the joyful activity of the souls on board.

We know that we may never meet again, but we relish this precious moment of light and life. We know that we are not alone on this vast ocean, and we know that there is love and joy in God's world. It is an exciting and unforgettable moment, as it was, for me at least, when I met Nicola.

## Once In A Life Time

This morning it dawned on me that in our life times, we meet many such people, and it is most unlikely that we will ever see them again. However, we may often continue to vaguely remember them and the sweet influence that they have had on our lives.

We see in them sweetness, beauty, innocence, delightfulness, and joy, and we are filled for the moment with what they represent. Just to be with them, however briefly, makes us laugh and be happy. Encountering Nicola ahead of me in the line was a sweet fascination.

I was not sure if he was a boy or a girl because of his beautiful hair and the name of "Nicola." His father assured me that the name meant Nicholas. The child pulled his own small suitcase, and it was clearly visible that father and son enjoyed

each other a great deal—and so did those of us who watched them.

The father was proud that he had another son 18 months-old, at home. Surely another similar treasure! I could only picture a most loving family environment. As they walked away, I threw Nicola a kiss and he threw one back to me. It filled me with laughter. I waved good-by, seeing his sweet smile and his little hand, which kept waving at me.

Then they were both out of sight. I knew I would never see them again. However, that thought did not sadden me. Life is like that. It is what we expect.

Still, I left the airport full of joy because of these few delightful moments. It was truly a charming gift from God.

Like the ship passing in the night, the many people whom we encounter during an ordinary day, are meetings usually lasting only a moment. We do not even remember them. However, sometimes, particular ones are joyful and pleasant, like my meeting with Nicola—but most times they are insignificant. Generally, and hopefully rarely, some encounters might be negative and painful experiences, such as an accident, robbery, or a physical attack.

## Abused Child

Such was the case with Angela. Sister Emmanuel of Medjugorje tells us about her in *The Spirit of Medjugorje* (12/12 issue). Sister relates that behind their convent in Medjugorje, they have a manger building with beautiful life size statues of the Christmas scene. (Find it when you go there.)

All year around, people from all over the world are attracted to visit this Holy Family. Sister says that, while the people are very different—all have something in common—they come to the Holy Family in prayer. Some suffer from inner troubles that cause a terrible lack of peace, and they seek healing. Others come to hold a statue of the Child Jesus in their arms; still others come to pray for peace in their families.

Angela went to the manger in order to cry. She was a wreck, with

too many interior sufferings to bear. She had been abused by her grandfather at the age of three and never recovered.

She prayed for a long time before the Holy Family, and, in the end, Our Lady won a beautiful victory in this wounded heart. Angela was able to let go of her pain, give it to God, and surrender to the Child Jesus (Whom she held in her arms) the destructive event that had ruined so many years of her life.

That evening, her group could not recognize her; she was completely changed! For the first time, joy was flowing from her eyes and from her lips. The dreadful feeling of being worthless, too despicable to deserve any love, *had left her!*

## Vasada's Family

Mrs. Vasada's beautiful daughter, who dated very rarely and very carefully, had met a holy young man who was considering becoming a priest. They were immediately attracted to each other and both of them, for the first time, seriously thought about marriage.

She told him that she belonged to her father, and that he must get her father's permission before she could think of any serious relationship with him. He did that, and Mr. Vasada agreed that the young man could court his daughter, and if she accepted marriage to the young man, Mr. Vasada would welcome it.

The young couple agreed that they would test their courtship and save their first kiss until they were at the altar on their wedding day. And so it happened.

Now their little three-year-old daughter is the center of the family's activities, and almost weekly, a number of the family members get together for dinner, socializing, and love of each other and the sweet child who has become a treasure for the entire family.

Joy radiates in this home because God is the center of their lives. Praying together brings them peace. The young couple can hardly believe the great love they have developed for each other and all their family members. *God resides there. +++*

# Saint Maria Goretti

from *www.Catholic.org*  
by Dr. Natalie E. White & R. Turton

*I*n a time that had increasingly stressed education as an indispensable need, she knew neither how to read nor how to write; but she knew better than others how to live and how to die.

Her life read like a script for one of those gritty black and white peasant pictures—on the surface. An eleven year old Italian child, knowing nothing but hard labor, born of illiterate farm stock, herself unable to read or write, brutally stabbed to death resisting rape, her reputation attacked by her attacker—what could there be about her then to illumine our lives now?

**October 16, 1890—July 2, 1902**

She was born on October 16, 1890 in Corinaldo, a little town in Ancona, a province of Italy on the Adriatic, the third of seven children of Assunta and Luigi Goretti. When Maria was six, her father, realizing that he could not support his growing family on the barren countryside, took them south, toward Rome, believing that in the rich warm farmlands of the Mediterranean he would find more prosperous living. It took them weeks, by ox cart, and on arrival they found the rich farmlands, but in low-lying malaria country.

Luigi became a share-cropper of Count Mazzoleni at Ferriere and lived with his family in the La Cascina Antica, the old cheese factory, an oblong building set on a rise of ground in a swampy farm. Since his portion of land had been neglected, Luigi spent himself digging ditches, preparing the land for sowing, repairing the roofs, cleaning lofts, and finally sowing eight acres in barley and wheat.

By harvest time, he had worn himself out and should have hired help, but he knew that if he could bring in his crop alone, he could

better provide for his family. However, malaria was taking its toll and Count Mazzoleni brought two men to help him: Giovanni Serenelli and his 18 year old son, Alessandro.

## They Wanted To Move In

The Serenellis were from Ancona, and using their common background as a wedge, Giovanni insisted that he and his son move into the home of the Gorettis. He played on their sympathy, telling how his wife had died in an insane asylum and one son was still there. He wanted a home for himself and young Alessandro. They were penniless.

Giovanni, under the play for sympathy, was shrewd. He told Luigi that the Count had proposed sharing work and profits on a fifty-fifty basis, and refused to discuss the details. He and his son moved into the Goretti home, making extra work for Assunta and Maria, who fed them, washed and mended their clothes, and kept their rooms.

Fortunately, a good harvest was gathered, and, during the weeks of the heavy work, all went well. But with winter the men were confined indoors and Giovanni spent his money on wine and became irritable and overbearing. His son Alessandro turned to lurid magazines and decorated the walls of his room with pornography.

Assunta was shocked when she saw them, but knowing complaints would make their lives more difficult, she kept the knowledge even from her husband. Luigi began to suspect Giovanni of selling grain from their common store and tried to separate the lots of the two families, but Giovanni and his son opposed him.

Already weakened by the malaria that would sap his life, Luigi Goretti could not stand up to them, and life in La Cascina Antica deteriorated. By the end of April, 1900, Luigi was in the throes of the four terrors of the marches: malaria, typhus, meningitis, and pneumonia.

He died May 6th, the feast of the Beloved Apostle before the Latin Gate. His last words were for his loved Assunta: "Go back to

Corinaldo. Take the children and go—Assunta mia."

It was not possible. Giovanni was now in control and Assunta was penniless. He gave her an ultimatum: unless she took Luigi's place in the fields and Maria took her place in the household, he would turn them out.

With no place to go, Assunta, responsible for six living children, the eldest being 13 year old Angelo, could only submit to Serenelli's unreasonable demands. And this man, in complete charge of all their lives, increased his tyranny, keeping the key to the cupboard so that there was never enough for the Gorettis to eat.

## Silent Suffering

Maria, now a 10 year old child, was doing the work of a grown woman, suffering hunger and mortification daily, for Giovanni continually found fault with everything she did. She suffered in silence, knowing that complaints would only enrage Giovanni and increase her mother's difficulties.

Although the first harvest after Luigi's death had been good, when Assunta paid the landlord and Serenelli demanded his share, she was fifteen lire in debt! After all her work, and that of Angelo and Maria, she still could not feed her children!

For two years this continued, a time of utter misery, of unceasing labor and deprivation. Assunta was driven like a slave under Giovanni, and he continually found fault with Maria. Neither could speak out, for to oppose Giovanni was to make him worse. So, for each other, they endured.

## Increasing Terror

Then in June, 1920, when Maria was 12, Alessandro became increasingly aware of her loveliness (and his mind inflamed with the pornography with which he surrounded himself) he began first to flatter her, and then to urge her to give in to him.

Sensing rather than understanding his meaning, at the beginning, she

repulsed him and he threatened her with death if she told Assunta. Although she was alert to avoid being alone with him and ignored his open taunting, she lived with increasing terror of the hour when he would find her alone and helpless.

### He Planned It Well

It came quickly. Alessandro planned it well. Her mother in the fields... his father asleep in the shade beside the house... Maria, trapped alone in the kitchen, struggled to avoid sin. Finally, forced to choose between death and sin, she chose death, and it was a terrible death. Alessandro ripped her body fourteen times with a sharp blade and left her bleeding and unconscious.

While no effort could have saved her, the long delays in getting help increased her suffering. It was over an hour before she was discovered by Giovanni. At his calling, Assunta rushed from the field.

Then a neighbor was sent to Nettuno for a doctor. The doctor asked for an ambulance, which arrived at six o'clock. Maria had been bleeding since two o'clock. During the seven miles over rough road in the horse-drawn vehicle, every jolt was ripping her body with fresh pain.

She endured this, as she endured all things, without complaints. Then the surgeons were afraid to give her an anesthetic, and, for the second time that day, knives cut into her body. The next day she died.

### Why A Saint?

That is the brief story of her life, on the natural plane—what the scientists would call the facts. But the facts, of course, do not explain her sainthood. She is, in a special way, a child of the Church and a child of Mary. She is the voice of Mary recalling the church to Prayer, Penance, and Heroic Virtue. In addition, it was her special vocation to live the uncompromising absolute: to choose to die rather than to sin, and to become the shining lovely saint of Purity, as was the pure Holy Virgin.

Born in October, the month of the Rosary, and named after Our Lady, she was consecrated to the Madonna and baptized the next day, to be free from Original Sin at the earliest possible moment. To that family, Original Sin was a fact! Each evening Luigi led the family Rosary.

Assunta was Maria's teacher. She could neither read nor write, but she understood her religion and she taught Maria what she knew: to love God; to die rather than to offend Him.

### Virtue Must Be Lived

But, no matter how well one is taught, no matter what Graces are offered, the life of virtue must be lived, emotional responses must be trained, challenges must be met daily, and after Luigi's death, Maria's life was a strong preparation for her sainthood, which she accepted and embraced.

It was not just the uncomplaining acceptance of long hours of hard labor daily, and the substitution of the Serenellis' snarling domination instead of the loving concern that Luigi had showed for his wife and children, that helped her prepare, but her additional, unasked sacrifices.

She gave her own portion of food to her mother and brothers and sisters, trying to keep the children joyful at all times, relieving her mother of every possible chore she could, and teaching the children the Bible stories Assunta had taught her that they might grow in love and understanding of Jesus—on these Maria's sanctity fed.

### She Desired More

But she desired more. In June, 1900, although she was only ten, and twelve was the accepted age of First Holy Communion, Maria desired to receive her Lord, and began a preparation that lasted eleven months.

Since she could neither read nor write, she could not learn the Catechism, then a requisite. But she found a well-to-do woman who needed a girl for housework and she made a bargain: she would do the

housework mornings if the woman would teach her the catechism.

It meant getting up at 3 o'clock in the morning to do her own housework, then walking seven miles to work and study at Nettuno, and walking back seven miles in time to finish the chores at home.

She did this every day for six weeks, then was able to join the First Communion class at Our Lady of Grace in Nettuno. During this time of study, she intensified her piety and recollection, her obedience to her mother, her care of her brothers and sisters, and her nightly examination of conscience.

### Corpus Christi, 1902

On the beautiful Feast of Corpus Christi, Maria received her First Holy Communion. The priest spoke to the children on Purity, on avoiding sin, and added: "A Catholic will always prefer to die than sin against God."

When, after Mass he gave each child a little Rosary and asked what they had desired of Jesus at Holy Communion, the others asked for good homes, good husbands, etc. But Maria startled the priest when she replied: "I ask to receive Jesus again." So he gave her permission to receive the following three Sundays and on the Feast of the Precious Blood.

This was before St. Pius X encouraged Catholics to receive Holy Communion frequently. The laity received only three or four times a year!

So the priest who told her to die rather than sin, and then granted her request to receive again and again, was one of the instruments of Holy Mother Church to strengthen her for martyrdom.

### It Came Fast

And it came fast, only days after Corpus Christi. Maria was stabbed on the afternoon of the Vigil of the Precious Blood and died on the Feast Day.

Although she was dying a martyr for Purity, the church, in the person of the same priest who gave her

First Holy Communion (and was privileged to give her Last), asked of her a second martyrdom: *Charity*. With the hanging of a medal of the child of Mary around her neck (the symbol of her consecration to the Virgin by her parents at birth), he saw the sudden strength it gave her.

The priest reminded her of how Jesus forgave the penitent thief, promising him paradise, and he asked, "Mariettina, do you forgive your murderer with all your heart?" She replied instantly that she did, and she added, "And I want him to be with me in paradise."

### 67 Years Of "Penance"

On trial for his life, Alessandro tried to save himself by accusing Maria of having willingly succumbed to him many times and that last time, after having teased him to madness, she had refused him. To save his life, he would destroy her character—but the medical evidence was against him. Still he would not retract his lies, telling worse ones!

He pleaded temporary insanity. The court knew he was lying, but because of his youth and the insanity in his family, instead of death, his sentence was thirty years in prison, the first three of which were to be in solitary confinement.

He endured the solitary, where guards came three times a day to make certain none of the ten men there had committed suicide. Of them, three killed themselves and six went mad. Alessandro alone survived.

### Influence For Good

It was important to have a retraction from him because the number of miracles that had come from Maria's intercession from the time of her burial had caused the Passionists to try to promote her cause in Rome. They were handicapped by the sensationalism of the trial. Realizing that her purity and martyrdom had a strong influence for good, anticlerical and other evil forces joined the Serenellis to blacken her name and try to destroy her influence.

Then, in 1908, six years after her death, Maria came to Alessandro in a dream or a vision so real, it was for him reality. His prison cell was transformed into a beautiful garden filled with fragrant flowers and surprising masses of lilies.

A figure in white was gathering the lilies. She turned to him and he cried out, "Maria! Oh, Mariettina!" and she came to him carrying an armful of white lilies, which she handed to him, one by one (which burned immediately in his hands) each representing a wound he had inflicted upon her. And, she repeated her dying wish that *one day his soul would reach her in Heaven*.

### Totally Changed!

From that time Alessandro was a model prisoner, he served twenty-seven of his thirty years. He retracted his story of the killing, swore that Maria was not only entirely innocent and died protecting her Virtue, but that during the attack she was concerned with the soul of her attacker. It was his testimony that cleared the way for her beatification, for only he was witness to her innocence.

When he was released from prison in 1929, he tried to work, but no matter how hard he labored or how conscientiously, as soon as his story was known he had to move on. Feelings against the assassin of the saint ran high, and it was to protect his life that Pope Pius XI forbade him to come within fifty miles of Rome.

Eventually he found peace as a gardener in a Capuchin monastery and as a lay brother of the Secular Third Order. His favorite flower was the lily.

### Assunta's Forgiveness

But Alessandro could not be entirely at peace until he had seen Assunta. He knew she had forgiven him, but he wanted to hear it from her and to ask her forgiveness. So on a Christmas Eve he went to the rectory of Our Lady of Sorrows in Corinaldo, where she was the housekeeper. Not only did she forgive

him but she took him to her home, with her daughter Ersilia, where he was made welcome, and where it was easy for him to speak of his prison life and his vision of Maria. At Christmas Mass he and Assunta knelt side by side to receive Holy Communion—the mother of the saint, the penitent of the saint.

### Gate Of Heaven

For if Maria's sanctity was the fruit of Holy Mother church, equally was the repentance of Alessandro. When Maria came to him in the vision it was not to save him, but to show him that the Gate of Heaven was open and that beyond it she waited. It was for him to come to her, and he did. He could not restore the life he had taken, but he could make reparation.

He publicly retracted all he had said against her, restoring her reputation and laying the foundation for her canonization and earthly glory. Now the Church could hold up to its youth the example of Saint Maria Goretti, so souls would be attracted by her purity and strengthened by her prayers.

For Alessandro those long years of repentance passed slowly and, in the end, painfully. But from the time of his reparation he did not doubt that his soul would be saved by his repentance, because he had a saint in Heaven praying for him.

He said, "Each night I pray, awaiting the promise the little girl made on her deathbed to receive me in paradise, that soon I will leave this mortal flesh and rise to the radiant and serene dawn where she is—in the Kingdom of God."

On June 24, 1950, 500,000 people (a majority of youth) were present in the "Piazza San Pietro" outside of Saint Peter's Basilica at the canonization of Maria Goretti. Alessandro Serenelli stood next to Assunta Goretti and her children, and Pope Pius XII spoke out, "*Young people, pleasure of the eyes of Jesus, are you determined to resist any attack on your chastity with the help of God?*"

...Their answer was a resounding "YES!" +++

## Wedding Garment

by Eileen Krause  
72, Georgia

I stole amongst the Wedding guests, as the door to the hall opened wide. The Host had prepared a Feast. I'd misplaced my invitation. But tho improperly clad, I'd hoped to go unnoticed. But when the Host viewed the guests, His gaze fell upon me. I was unprepared and shamed.

His Mother was seated next to Him. She quickly noticed my dismay. She walked over and placed Her beautiful mantle around me. How could our Host turn away His Mother's special guest—the Feast continued. I'd become a welcome guest dressed in the perfect garment. +++

## Garment Removed

We expect Our Mother Mary to always be our advocate and protectress, and truly She is, but in order to obtain Her help from God, we need to obey Her requests. She told us that a great part of the world will be annihilated if we do not obey. She tells us now to remain under Her mantle, but it seems that America has largely chosen to remove it.

So be it. God will never take away our free will, and He will always give us what we deserve, good or bad. Is it too late? Prayer and sacrifice will never cease to mitigate, so keep those avidly in your life,

## The Chip Has Come

In early November, 2013, the Radio Frequency Identification Device (Chip) Mascot began a nationwide tour in Wyoming to help alleviate children's fears of implantation, and now the children can't wait to receive it! See *Chippie The RFID* on internet.

A new law has just been passed requiring all people receiving federal funds to have the chip implanted or face termination of their jobs or benefits. Sometimes the chip has been inserted *by force!* +++

# Pilgrimage Program:

SEND FOR COMPLETE ITINERARIES  
*Discounts for early payments!*  
(NO EXTRA TAXES OR HIDDEN COSTS)

**Medjugorje** — Sun., May 4 to Sun., May 11, **2014** Sat. evening, May 10, in **Vienna** (8 days), \$2299. +++

**U.S. East Coast Shrines & Canada** — Thur., June 12, to Tues., June 26, 2014 (15 days, 14 nights) \$2190. Yes, it is in June this year, and not in May. Bus to many **holy shrines**, including **Lancaster, Pa.**, to see the grand production of "Moses," **Syracuse, Rochester, Buffalo, Niagara Falls, Toronto, Montreal, Quebec, Three Rivers, Auriesville**, as well as **Stockbridge**, and more. +++

**Prague and Catholic Shrines of the Czech Republic & Poland**—Sat., July 19 to Wed., July 30, 2014 (12 days, 11 nights) \$3599. Visit **Prague, Infant Jesus Shrine, important shrines in the Czech Republic**, and various **Divine Mercy and John Paul II locations in Poland**. With Fr. Peter. Zivny & Ria Music Ministry. +++

**Ireland** — Wed., Aug. 13, to Sat., Aug. 23, 2014 (11 days, 10 nights) \$2999. Apparition Anniversaries at both **Knock and Melleray Grotto, Ballinspittle, Attymass**, (Fr. Patrick Peyton), guided tour of **Achill Island**, and more. Meet visionaries, including Tom Lennon, and Anne of **Direction For Our Times**. +++

**Shrines of France**—Mon., Sept 15, to Fri., Sept. 26, 2014 (12 days), \$3680. Includes **Anniversary Celebration at La Salette**, as well as **Lourdes, Ars, Paray le Monial, Nevers, Paris, Montmartes, Notre Dame, Sainte Chapelle, Rue Du Bac, St. Baume, Orleans, Marsailles, Laus, & more**. +++

**Holy Land Healing Retreat** — Mon., Oct. 6 to Thu., Oct. 16, 2014 (11 days, 10 nights) \$3499. **Healing retreat with Fr. "Bing" Arellano**, and with Ria Music Ministry. Visits to many holy places of the Holy Family. +++

**Medjugorje, option Prague**— Sun., Nov. 2 to Sun., Nov. 9, 2014 (8 days, 7 nights), \$2199 just Medjugorje. Optional add-on Prague, Nov. 9, 2014 to Thurs., Nov. 14, 2014, \$930 (5 days, 4 nights)

(Med. & Prague). Both options, \$3129.+++

**Guadalupe, Mexico** — for Feast Day celebrations. Fri., Dec. 6 to 13, 2014 (8 days) \$1599 (Land only, \$999). 3 Feasts of the Immac. Concep., Juan Diego, Our Lady of Guad., and visits to **Ocotlan, Puebla, St. Michael's Well, Shrine of Our Lady of Good Remedies**, and more. +++

**India** — Fri., Jan 16 to Fri. Jan 30, 2015, (15 days, 14 nights) \$3699, with Fr. Antony Thekknath & Ria Music Ministry. We will be touring through Southern India, visiting locations made famous by St. Thomas and Mother Teresa. +++

**Medjugorje** — Sun., May 4 to Sun., May 11, **2015** Sat. evening, May 10, in **Vienna** (8 days), \$2399. +++

**U.S. East Coast Shrines in NY/PA area**—Sun., July 12, to Wed., July 22, **2015** (11 days, 10 nights) \$1599. Bus to shrines.

**Shrines of Italy**—Tues., Sept 15, to Sat., Sept. 26, **2015** (12 days), \$3780. +++

**All pilgrimages include: priest on each bus, daily Mass, Rosaries, Divine Mercy, all side trips, breakfast & dinner, and a blue 101 jacket (while they last). Non-refundable deposit is \$300 per person.**

VISIT FATIMA HOUSE  
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 the  
**Garabandal** Miracle Flight.

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