

"A Shooting Star and a Message From Heaven"

by William Fraind

My wife, Diane, was in her late thirties when she began battling breast cancer. For the next six years, we continued to pray for a healing. All the while, she offered her sufferings to Our Lord, in union with His sufferings on the Cross, for all the poor souls in Purgatory.

Throughout the course of her battle with cancer, she was seen with an heroic smile on her face, and laughter in her voice. In the summer of 2002, the cancer stopped responding to chemotherapy, but she continued to play the flute at St. Anne's Church in Hampton, NJ, until she finally could not leave her home.

In late afternoon of December 16, she departed from this world. At the time, I was at home with our two children. Two of Diane's' close friends had come to comfort the family, and our Pastor, Fr. Michael Saharic, had just arrived at our home.

Within a short time of Diane's passing, I noticed a woman standing outside the front door. The woman was weeping, and was visibly shaken.

An Unfriendly Neighbor

At the door, was a woman whom we had not spoken to for several years. Diane had been praying for a restoration of relationships in the neighborhood, but nothing seemed to be changing.

There had been a dispute involving a neighboring farmer who had been receiving complaints from this woman and her husband. It regarded the noises coming from his farm and animals. The farmer had been fined frequently, despite the fact the he had made attempts to quiet down the noises.

Finally, we and some other sympathetic neighbors asked the township officials to stop penalizing the farmer. This act divided the neighborhood. The woman felt betrayed and a certain animosity had developed. Needless to say that, of all people to visit, I was very surprised to see her at the door.

She Was Thinking of Diane

She asked me to step outside to talk to her. She told me that as she was driving her car, she began thinking about Diane, about death and dying, about God, and about the seemingly inconsequential passing of a soul from the earth.

The thought of one's passing, and that the world never stops, disturbed her. She began to petition the Lord, pointing out that the earth does not even flinch with the passing of a soul.

She suggested to God that perhaps it would be comforting if there were a sign that marked the event of one's passing from the earth into Heaven. There were certainly enough stars in the heavens for each one of us! Why couldn't a star fall from the sky with one's passing? This might be a comfort.

A Star ... and a Voice

With that, she immediately noticed a falling star appear in the sky. She was amazed. Then she distinctly heard a familiar voice. It was the giddy and happy voice of Diane.

She heard Diane's voice as if it were all around her within the car. Diane's voice spoke these words: "I made it. I am free, and I am surrounded by an indescribable joy. Go, and tell William."

The woman understood that the voice had to be of a supernatural origin. She heard it, but no one else was in the car. Thus, she was even more shaken, and although she was unaware that Diane had died, this message certainly suggested it.

She Had to Tell William

She knew that she had to tell William, but what would he think? Would he think her to be insane? How could she even approach him after all the animosity! Yet, she knew that she must deliver this message . . .

After she told me what had happened to her, she was not at all surprised when I told her that Diane had died that afternoon.

Filled With Happiness

I was filled with a great happiness for Diane. She was free of her illness. My sorrow was gone. I invited the woman to come inside to tell this occurrence to the five others present, and although she hesitated to come in, she did so.

The woman described to the group what had just happened. When she repeated the words she heard Diane speak, while saying, "I made it," our daughter Noelle had begun to cry.

Noelle explained, "Over the past several months, my Mom told me that she would try to let me know when she entered Heaven, by telling me that she made it." Mom had kept her promise in a most unexpected way.

At the Funeral Mass, Father Michael told of this experience. He said that he had mentioned it to his own family shortly after Diane had died, and his brother said, "But, isn't it sad to die just before Christmas?"

Father Michael pondered it, wondering in his mind, "Sad or glad ... or both?" But, arriving back to St. Anne's Church, as he saw the beautiful Manger Scene lit up in front of the church building, he seemed to recall Diane singing from the hymn, *Hark! The Herald Angels Sing*, "... Mild He lays His glory by, Born that we no more may die, Born to raise us from the earth, Born to give us second birth." ... He knew. +++

Quicksand!

by Jim Ness, Wasilla, Alaska

*I*ts terrible grip had taken many lives. Then a rescue team tried a new idea ...

I had never met her, but her death in 1988 was never far from my mind: Adena Dickison, young and on her honeymoon, hopelessly trapped in muddy quicksand as the incoming Alaskan tide closed over her head.

For hours, 14 men—including her husband—had desperately tried to free her from the silt’s cementlike grip as the tide rose. During that time, those of us too far away to help, kept in touch with the tragedy through our rescue communication network. But, despite all efforts, nothing could save her.

Alaskan quicksand, which is as deceptive as it is deadly, can be found in coastal areas. Mud that is often firm enough for walking may become a treacherous trap as the tide rises. Inland, similar dangers lurk under stable-looking peat moss.

This gray glacial silt is formed of grains as fine as talcum powder. If your foot sinks in it, the water flows out and the grains lock around your leg, pulling with as much as 500 pounds of suction. The more you wriggle, the more you sink. Once trapped, there’s not a whole lot of hope. One victim was torn in half by a helicopter attempting to lift him from the tenacious muck.

The tragedy of Adena’s death touched many in Alaska, where church services were held all across the state in her memory. So, I was not surprised when Bob Hancock, a fellow member of our Alaska Mat-Su Borough Dive Rescue Team, called me one evening. “Jim,” he said in a voice filled with emotion, “we’ve got to figure out a way to save people trapped in that stuff.”

I heartily agreed, and under Bob’s leadership, we devoted countless hours to a mission that eventually consumed our whole group’s attention. Even my wife, Pamela, a police officer and deputy chief of our team,

along with our young son and daughter, joined in.

Whenever I could spare time from my plumbing business, I was in our garage working on ideas. Nothing seemed promising until Bob came up with the idea of using a long steel pipe jammed into the mud near the victim’s foot to break the suction. Even better, we thought, why not allow a hollow pipe with a flared perforated end, through which air could be pumped?

We tested this device on the muddy coastal flats of Cook Inlet, outside Anchorage. Under carefully created conditions, a team member played victim, with his legs in the mud. Others surrounded him so he could be pulled out if the device failed. They were supported on plastic foam Boogie boards. Using these—on which rescuers could kneel, stand, or swim—was Bob’s idea. As we watched with anticipation, air was forced down the pipe. But other than sloshing up some bubbles, it had no effect.

I Hadn’t Asked God

Again and again we tried new ideas, consulting with many engineers—but nothing worked. There had to be an answer; why couldn’t we find it? Then the thought struck me—I hadn’t asked God about this. So I prayed, believing that when you work with your mind open to God’s presence, illumination comes.

Then, one morning, I stopped at a gas station to fill a low tire on my van. As I pressed the hissing hose against the air valve, I realized the air we had been pumping through the pipe wasn’t powerful enough. Why not blast highly pressurized air from a scuba diver’s tank down the pipe? The operator could use a screw valve to control the air effectively.

Our team felt this might be the answer. But, it was going to take time to develop. Anxiety took over until someone said, “Let’s create with patience—and let God handle the impatience.”

Trusting God to help us reach our goal, we decided to deal with the problem gradually until we had come up with the best lifesaving tool possible.

By early 1994, we were ready to test a new compressed-air pipe we thought would work. On a blustery spring day our team, drenched in icy salt water, labored on a volunteer up to his thighs in gurgling mud, again, under carefully controlled conditions.

“Deeper,” I shouted to the pipe handler. “Get it under his foot. Feel your way.” But the trapped foot wouldn’t budge. Mud had clogged the airholes at the pipe’s flared end. We returned to solid ground disheartened. That night, I prayed desperately for an answer.

As I lay in bed staring up into the darkness, it came to me: “*Drill the holes further up the pipe.*”

I had no idea how this could help. But we decided to try it anyway. We welded shut the bottom holes and drilled five in the shape of a T about an inch and a half up from the flared end. In tests, the modified pipe appeared promising, and by May we felt that our mud rescue tool was as good as we could get it.

A blast of air broke the suction for a short interval, allowing the victim’s foot to rise a few inches. We speculated that a succession of air bursts would do it for a person who was almost entirely submerged. But, until a real-life accident occurred, we wouldn’t know for sure.

The Moment Of Truth

Our moment of truth came with an emergency call on the afternoon of June 15. Kris Armstrong, a 43 year-old carpenter, had been riding his four-wheel all-terrain vehicle on a desolate trail in the foothills of the Talkeetna Mountains. His partner followed on another machine. Neither realized that the wet spot ahead in the moss-covered trail was a death trap.

When Kris’ vehicle hit the mud hole, it lurched forward, throwing him into the muck, which immediately began dragging him down. His partner tossed him a rope and attempted to winch him out. But, as the rope became taut, Kris screamed in pain, “Stop!—you’re tearing me apart!”

His partner raced down the mountain and returned with two men. They

eased a large inner tube around Kris and worked to free him. But, the mud gripped Kris fast. Sinking deeper, he writhed in agony from the fruitless pulling that had already dislocated an ankle and torn knee ligaments.

A 911 call brought our rescue team to his side. Four of us—Archie Vasquez, Dave Laba, Ed McCain, and I—tumbled from our trucks with our mud rescue tool. It was a shock seeing Kris, pale, and sunken up to his armpits. Trying to keep my voice reassuring, I called, “We’re going to get you out, Buddy. Just hold on.”

“You helped create this device, Dear Lord,” I prayed. “I surrender everything to You—my hopes, dreams, career. Just let this tool work!”

I shouted directions to the men positioned on the Boogie boards around Kris. Archie calmly and methodically worked the pipe down into the mud, all the way to Kris’ feet.

I called out, “Dave, get the support strap ready. Someone else hold a Boogie board against Kris’ back.”

Kris’ mouth moved but no sound came. By now he had been immersed for more than six hours. We had to work fast. Archie squeezed the hose valve from the scuba tank, blasting 125 pounds of air into the mud beneath Kris. When we pulled at Kris’ arms, he stuck fast, as if encased in cement.

Please, God, Let It Work

“Oh, please, God, let it work.”

Another burst of air. This time, as we tugged at Kris’ body, we felt some movement. His right foot had lifted a few inches! We exulted. But the mud quickly renewed its deadly grip. Again, Archie let loose a blast from the tank. Foul-smelling air bubbled from the brownish-gray mud as we pulled again. Kris was moving!

Gradually, with burst after burst of air, Kris’ body rose. One foot came out, then the other! Strong arms lifted Kris’ mud-soaked body onto a stretcher. The rescue had taken only 10 minutes. “Thank you, God!”

An exhausted but grateful Kris was rushed to the hospital, and we washed the mud from our new life-saving tool. One life had been saved. And, others would be. +++

(Jim Ness got his start in search and rescue in Johnstown, Pa., 30 years ago, when police officers asked his scuba-diving club to help save a fisherman. These days Jim lives in Alaska, where he works in residential construction and teaches rescue techniques statewide.

His dive rescue team will share the plans for its mud rescue tool with anyone who might need it. For a copy of the plans, send two dollars (to cover printing costs), along with a self-addressed stamped business size envelope, to Jim Ness, P. O. Box 870931, Wasilla, AK 99687.)
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Two Days — Trapped in Quicksand

by Bob Sebor, Stillwater, Oklahoma

*T*he full moon shown brightly on the shallow water of the Cimarron River that April night. I leaned against my pickup and pulled on my hip waders, watching the current ripple under the small bridge. It was three in the morning, the best hour for catching catfish. I slid down the steep slope to the water, thinking of my buddies back in Oklahoma City.

They were supposed to have been out here with me, enjoying a fishing vacation before Easter. But, at the last minute, they had both canceled. “They don’t know what they are missing,” I thought, as I sank in the muddy bank.

I’m a bachelor, and I’m used to my freedom. I live by myself and work nights as a computer technician at Oklahoma State University, but I do not get lonely. I like being on my own. As I scouted out a good location along the riverbank where I could drop my line, I started to feel glad my buddies had not come along.

It was the rainy season in Oklahoma, and a heavy storm a few days earlier had left large pools of water about a foot deep on the bank. The largest one was just under the bridge. “I bet there are fish in there,”

I speculated. “I’ll check it out, then go get my tackle.”

I sank into the cold mud with each step toward the pool, first to my shins, then to my knees. Suddenly, something gave way beneath me. It was as though I’d walked over a ledge. I slid straight up to my hips in cold, black mud.

“This is a whole lot deeper than it looks,” I thought, trying to lift my leg. The cold muck gripped it like a vise. I began to shovel the ooze away from my legs with my hands. It was soft, and cleared away easily.

When I had dug about halfway down my thigh, the mud began to feel different. I scooped out a handful and held it up to look. It glittered silver-white in the moonlight, and trickled, thin as water, between my cupped fingers. “That’s not mud,” I said out loud, “That’s quicksand!”

Most people think that if you step in quicksand, you’ll be swallowed up right away. But, I have been caught in it dozens of times, and I usually did not sink lower than my knees. I had always gotten myself out before. One just has to work at it.

I glanced around, looking for something to hold onto to pull myself out. There was nothing within reach. “If I flatten myself out against the quicksand, I’ll be able to swim on the surface.”

Feet Stuck Too Firmly

I rocked back and forth. No use. My feet were stuck too firmly to move. “I guess I will have to shovel my way out after all.” I had to start from scratch, though. The hole I had made before had already filled in.

I scooped up handfuls of the stuff and flung it into the river. Fast as I dug, more quicksand just seeped in to take its place. I shoveled hand over hand, fast and furious. Soon my fingers ached, then my arms, then everything. By the time the sun came up, I was exhausted. I could see that for all my work, the hole I had dug only reached to my knees. And, it was quickly filling in again, even as I watched.

“This is not like any quicksand I have ever seen,” I thought. The stuff I had encountered before had been

thick enough to shovel up and push aside, so that getting myself unstuck was just a matter of time and elbow grease. But, digging in this stuff was like trying to dig a hole in water. "Water!" I thought longingly, remembering the bottle back in my pickup truck.

From where I was standing, it was only about three feet to the river, and I reached it easily by stretching. I cupped some of the dark river water and held it up. Scraps of leaves, sticks, and dirt swirled around on the surface. I knew that if I drank too much, it would probably make me sick. "Just enough to wet your whistle," I told myself, rubbing the water over my parched lips. I swished some around in my mouth, gargled, then spit it out, feeling only a little better. "How am I going to get out of here?"

Nobody Will Miss Me

It was then, as the birds started singing, and the sunlight warmed my face and arms, that I realized how bad my situation was. It was Easter week, and I had taken a short vacation from work. No one was expecting to see me at my job for the next three days.

I did not have a roommate or girlfriend to wonder why I had not called. My parents were used to me taking off, and so they would not be alarmed if they could not get in touch with me. "Nobody will miss me." Funny, that thought never bothered me before. Now it seemed kind of sad.

"Okay, Bob," I said, "you are all alone out here. Pull it together. There has got to be some way out of this mess!" I was at a narrow bend in the river. The steep embankment dropped about 15 feet from the sparse forest above. The only sign of civilization was the bridge that also hid me from being viewed from the road.

The bridge's piles began to vibrate, and I heard the hum of a car passing overhead. "Help!" I yelled, as loud as I could. Then it struck me that there was no way the driver could hear me. "But, he is bound to notice my truck," I thought-ignoring the voice in my head that asked me who, on this busy stretch of highway, would think twice

about an old pickup parked off the road.

The piles shook again, and I started to yell as a heavy truck rumbled by, my voice feeble against the roar of its engine. "Yelling is better than doing nothing." Another car crossed the bridge and I cupped my hands over my mouth, preparing to shout once more.

Deadly Snake!

But my voice caught in my throat when I saw a V shaped ripple in the water, just three feet away. "Water moccasin!" I held my breath and stood motionless as the deadly snake's bobbing head slid silently past me. I started to dig again, faster. Periodically, I stopped to rest. I even dozed, though only for five minutes at a time.

Cars passed all day, but I gave up yelling for digging. Late in the afternoon, the sun sank into a stack of ominous gray clouds that had been gathering on the horizon. Spring storms regularly swell the Cimarron to two to three times its normal volume, so I watched the light fade with apprehension. "If it rains, I'm a goner," I thought, imagining the river rising up to my chest and over my head.

The cold night breeze cut through my cotton T-shirt. I listened to more cars passing overhead. "Anyone of those people could save me," I thought, "if only they knew I was here!" But, again there was that disconcerting idea: "Nobody will miss me."

God Is Always With Us

When I was a little boy, my grandfather had told me that God is always with us. In a thin, hoarse voice, I prayed: "*Lord, be near me. Bring help, and, please ... don't let it rain.*"

I was beyond the point of exhaustion, unaware of the passing time. My arms and back ached from bending to dig. "If I could only lie down!" Instead, I shoveled furiously all night, just to keep myself warm in the chill April air. Bright stars reflected in the water. Owls hooted, and bats fluttered overhead. Then it

was light again. More cars rumbled on the bridge, so close, yet so unreachable.

I must have passed in and out of consciousness. A dozen times I was sure it was raining and that the water was rising. Then I would come to, and realize not a drop had fallen. Other times, the water seemed full of V-shaped ripples, all of them moving towards me. The water moccasins passed so close, I could see their cold, steely eyes. Then they would vanish.

I thought I heard voices, speaking in a language I did not recognize. I saw several small cabins on the bank. I squeezed my eyes shut and shook my head. I looked again and saw that the cabins were gone. "Am I going Mad?" Panic set in. "I have to get out!"

I started tearing up my hip waders, shredding the tough plastic with my bare hands, despite my bleeding fingers. I managed to rip the plastic all the way down to my knees, but I couldn't pull my legs out of the boots. The pressure of the quicksand had severely swollen my feet and lower legs.

As darkness closed in again and thick clouds passed over the moon, I wondered groggily, "What day is this?" I figured that it was Wednesday, two days before Good Friday. Easter was coming. "Only then," I thought, "will anyone notice that I am missing." And again that thought tore at me.

"Lord, I know that You are here, but I need people. Please help someone find me."

Then there came voices from somewhere up the riverbank. Was I hallucinating again? The voices seemed to get closer. Then I saw a man and a woman walking slowly in my direction. Summoning all the energy I had left, I croaked, "Help! Help!" Two heads looked up, faces full of surprise. The people hurried toward me.

"They are real! Thank You, Lord. Thank You Good God for answering my prayer!"

The man shouted, "We will go to get help."

By the time the first police officer arrived on the scene, I was spent. But,

just knowing I was not alone anymore, that someone knew my predicament and was there to help me out, seemed to give me new strength. And, when the policeman gave me a drink of cold, clean water, it seemed to course through my whole body, making me realize how sweet it was to be alive.

Pretty soon, there were more than 30 people-police officers, firemen, and paramedics-working to free me, encouraging me with friendly words while they cleared the sand away with a highpowered hydraulic pump. "All these people here to help me!" I thought, with astonishment. "*How good God is!*"

They pulled me out of the mud with ropes attached to the bridge above and, as I felt my legs finally slip free of the quicksand, I relaxed for the first time in two days. I did not have to fight for my life anymore; other people were fighting for me.

At the hospital, I was treated for dehydration, hypothermia, and drastically swollen lower limbs. I was released two days later. Back home on Easter Sunday, while I soaked my sore legs, I thought of how sure I had always been that I could take care of myself. But, that kind of thinking had gotten me trapped in quicksand.

I am still amazed by how many people worked to set me free. I really should .not be. After all, I have always believed that God is with me. Those two days on the Cimarron taught me that sometimes the best way He is there is through the people He sends our way. +++

(Getting unstuck: When fine sand becomes saturated with water, the water surrounds the grains of sand and separates them, making the sand unstable. This is quicksand. Sand, clay, swamps, and silt can all become "quick." Quicksand can be found on riverbanks and beaches, prairies and mountains. You could even find it in your backyard.

Should you ever step into quicksand, the first rule of thumb, according to Otto Muller, geology professor at Alfred University, is: Don't panic. A solid will sink only if its density is greater than that of the liquid, and the human body is less dense than a sand-and-water mixture.

To loosen yourself from quicksand, squirm out of anything heavy, such as a backpack, and swim slowly to solid ground. By moving slowly, you enable the quicksand to flow around your body, making swimming or floating possible.

Rule number two: Do not struggle! You will only sink deeper if you do. Instead, slowly bring up your legs until you can float on your back. By spreading yourself over a large surface area, you will not put as much weight on one spot, which will hold you up better.) +++

The Weapon of Virginity

from Russia of the Third Millennium, p. 51;
e-mail: sun@savelovo.net

Archbishop John Bereslavsky belongs to that Russian orthodoxy which refused to submit to communism and went underground during the 1920s. As a result, the communists massacred some 100,000 of the faithful in Solovki.

In the city of Tver, some 100 miles north of Moscow, in the New Martyrs Sanctuary, a number of crucifixes and quite a few statues miraculously pour myrrh from them, which brought a lot of healing.

Archbishop John has been inspired to write 33 books on revelations he received, mostly from the Virgin Mary, since 1984. He tells us:

"There is a most powerful weapon against the perversion of modern devil:civilization that is opposite to it - virginity. Virginity will save the world. Virginity will reveal the true image of God. Virginity will unite all world religions and abolish all interfaith conflicts. One virgin's prayer is enough to save a city. The future depends on virginity.

"Look how wonderful is an innocent mind, virginal heart, how marvelous is the face color, what serene light comes from the one who gave promise to keep purity. How wonderful purity is in general! ... Oh mankind, aspire to virginity. Oh, borrow this ideal from Her, the ever Virgin Mother." +++

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Wounded By Love

The Transverberation

from *The Life of Padre Pio*,
by Gennaro Preziuso, pp. 98-99.

Gazing on the Cross being carried by his Beloved Jesus, Padre Pio realized its immense value. Jesus told him about His great suffering and, “with words that were at once a prayer and a command, He invited him to attach his body to the Cross in order to alleviate the pain for Jesus.”

The desire to suffer in order to be purified yields to the desire to suffer for love. God willingly accepted this intense sentiment and bestowed on Padre Pio the gifts of the Spirit: substantial touches, fusion of hearts, and wounds of love.

An Extraordinary Phenomenon

On August 5, 1918, an extraordinary phenomenon occurred at San Giovanni Rotondo. This is how Padre Pio described it to Padre Benedetto:

“I was hearing the confessions of our boys at five o’clock in the afternoon, when all of a sudden, I was filled with extreme terror at the sight of a Heavenly being who presented himself to the eye of my intellect. He held some kind of weapon in his hand, like a long metal lance with a sharp point at the end, and it looked as if fire were shooting out of it.

“At the very moment that I saw all this, the Heavenly being thrust the weapon into my soul with all his might. It was only with the greatest difficulty that I refrained from crying out, for it felt as if I were dying. I told the boy to leave the confessional because I felt ill and did not have the strength to continue.

“This agony continued with out ceasing until the morning of August 7. I cannot tell you how

much I suffered during this period. Even my internal organs felt torn and ruptured by that metal weapon. Since that day, I am mortally wounded. It feels as if there is a wound in the center of my being that is always open and it causes constant pain” (Epistolario, I, 1065).

A Justified Punishment

Padre Pio believed that he had been the recipient of “a new punishment inflicted by Divine justice,” but Padre Benedetto reassured him by saying that what had happened was not a “purgation” but a “painful union, and an effect of love.”

As a matter of fact, Jesus had bestowed on the Capuchin mystic one of His most marvelous gifts: the Transverberation. The term is used in mystical theology to describe the extraordinary phenomenon in which a spiritual being, such as an angel, is seen in an intellectual vision and seems to pierce the heart or side of a mystic with a lance or sword.

St. Teresa of Avila experienced the same phenomenon and describes it in her autobiography (Life, chap. 29). Some authors go so far as to specify that the angel who performs the Transverberation is a seraph, because the seraphim are angels of the highest order and relate to fire, purgation, and flames of love. Although the pain of the Transverberation is extreme, it is also accompanied by a sweetness and joy that can only be described as excessive.

A Prelude To The Stigmata

A few days later, on August 24, 1918, Padre Agostino wrote to Padre Pio: “From the evening of August 5 to the morning of August 7, Jesus gave you a proof of His special love for you. Have you not noted that August 6 was the feast of the Transfiguration of Our Lord? Jesus wanted not only to transfigure your spirit, but to inflict on it a wound that only He can heal” (Epistolario, I, 1067s).

Padre Pio, being confused, simply replied: “May He Who caused the wound, heal it.” However, it was only the prelude to the stigmata, for it seems that God does not grant an extraordinary gift to the body without first preparing the soul.

Therefore, it seems that Padre Pio was now spiritually purged and strengthened, and was ready to receive the marks of the wounds of Christ. And, those marks would, in turn, be a confirmation of his interior likeness to Christ.

Padre Pio had asked to share in the sufferings of Jesus, and he had spiritually shared in the Passion of the Son of God. Now he could incarnate the marks of the Passion in his body and become, as it were, a living reproduction of Jesus, Our Redeemer. +++

Mass and the

Holy Eucharist

by Dan Lyons
from *The Spiritual Newsletter*, 1/02, #1

It is the Mass and the Holy Eucharist that bring Catholics to Church in such large numbers. A nationwide poll showed recently that the average Catholic parish in the United States has 1,800 people in attendance every Sunday, while the average non-Catholic church has 200. Within 150 miles of New York, there are ten million Catholics,---

Only Catholic parishes have daily attendance. It is the presence of Christ in the Eucharist that makes the difference. As Christ told the Apostles at the Last Supper, when He gave them His Body and Blood: “Do this in memory of Me.”

The Catholic Church is doing what Christ commanded: consecrating bread and wine by validly ordained priests, and distributing Holy Communion. Nothing else is so connected to our redemption on the Cross. The Mass is the renewal of Calvary. There is no better way to receive His love, and to return our love to Him. +++

The Chaplet of the Divine Infant Jesus

by Pam Taig
from: The Medjugorje Sentinel,
#50, June 2001

The statue of the Infant Jesus of Prague, originally created as a royal wedding gift, is nineteen inches tall, and made of wood and wax. It represents the Infant Jesus dressed in royal robes, wearing a crown. Later it had been discarded in war, and the hands on the statue were destroyed. A Carmelite later found the statue and returned it to a place of honor in the Carmelite Chapel in Prague.

In 1637, as Fr. Cyril prayed before the statue, he was filled with wonder contemplating the loving God Who became a Child for His people. Suddenly the statue spoke to the stunned Carmelite: "Have mercy on Me, and I will have mercy on you. Give Me hands, and I will give you peace. The more you honor Me, the more I will bless you."

The Chaplet

The Chaplet of the Divine Infant Jesus owes its origin to the zeal of the Venerable Sr. Marguerite of the Blessed Sacrament, who died in the odor of sanctity at Beaune, France, May 26, 1648, aged 27. She was distinguished for her devotion to the Holy Child Jesus. Her writings have received ecclesiastical approbation, and the cause for her beatification is now pending before the Holy See in Rome.

Inspired from above, Venerable Marguerite made a chaplet consisting of three Our Fathers in honor of the Holy Family, and twelve Hail Marys in memory of the twelve years of the Sacred Infancy of our Divine Savior. To this chaplet of fifteen beads, is attached a medal of the Holy Infant Jesus. During the lifetime of Sr. Marguerite, the chaplet received the approbation of Superiors, and on August 9, 1885, Pius IX granted an Indulgence applicable to the souls in purgatory, for its devout recitation.

The Divine Infant revealed to Sr. Marguerite how pleasing to Him is this holy practice. He promised her that He would grant special graces, above all purity of heart and innocence to all who carried the chaplet on their person, and recited it in honor of the mysteries of His Holy Infancy. As a sign of His approval, He showed her these chaplets shining with a supernatural light.

Our Lord, likewise, revealed to Venerable Marguerite of the Blessed Sacrament that those who piously recite it in memory of His humble life at Bethlehem, in Egypt, and at Nazareth, would not fail to receive divine assistance in their spiritual and- temporal necessities. Many miracles have occurred through intercession to the Divine Infant.

For almost four centuries, this promise has inspired devotion and love of the Infant Jesus. The original statue has been restored and is preserved in the Church of Our Lady of Victory in Prague.

Family Devotion to the Infant Jesus celebrates the "Child in God"—the great mystery of the Incarnation. The child in all of us believes in the humanity and the divinity of Christ, and rejoices in God's caring love for us. This is an excellent devotion for the entire family, because it is fast, simple, and everyone can relate to the love of a little child—and especially this loving and all-powerful Child.

How to use the Chaplet:

On the medal say: *Divine Infant Jesus, I adore Your Cross, and I accept all the crosses You will be pleased to send me. Adorable Trinity, I offer You, for the glory of the Holy Name of God, all the adorations of the Sacred Heart of the Holy Infant Jesus.*

Before each Our Father and Hail Mary, say: *And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.*

On the medal, say: *Holy Infant Jesus, bless and protect us.*

Three Our Fathers are said in honor of the Holy Family. The twelve Hail Marys are said in honor of the twelve years of the Childhood of Jesus. +++

What the Media Won't Tell Us

by Dan Lyons
from The Spiritual Newsletter, Nov. '02

Every day 8,000 teens in this country are diagnosed with a sexually transmitted disease. Far more are not diagnosed. One out of every five of our adolescents already has a venereal disease. Forty-six percent of girls are likely to become infected with V.D. in their first sexual encounter.

TV, radio talk shows, movies, and magazines keep pretending that unmarried sex has no consequences. Dr. Ruth-wrote, "No one ever died from Herpes." No one was ever cured of it, either.

The media keep pushing what they pretend is "safe sex." But, condoms offer little or no protection from diseases. Neither does the Pill. The Center of Disease Control lists 25 different sexual diseases. Eighty percent of infected teens do not yet realize that they already have a venereal disease.

Sex educators mislead students, giving too little, or false, information about V.D. Nor do they explain that sexual diseases can be transmitted very easily through the mouth.

Sex Becomes An Addiction

Immorality is not only evil, but avoiding disease is far more important than "sexual freedom," a "freedom" that becomes an addiction. Percentagewise, nine times more homosexuals get HIV than do heterosexual individuals. That is the price of promiscuity. Such "freedom" not only means living your life with venereal disease. It means passing it on, as a very annoying "wedding gift" to one's spouse.

A growing number of doctors are promoting abstinence as the best way to avoid venereal disease, and for every other reason. A poll printed recently in Time magazine showed that 56 percent of teens in this country now say they "want to abstain from any sexual intercourse" until they marry." +++

Our Lady of Akita

The statue of Our Lady of Akita was carved in 1963 by Mr. Saburo Wakasa, a sculptor in Akita City. This wood sculpture shed tears 101 times from January 4, 1975 to September 15, 1981. The phenomenon was witnessed by a total of 2,000 people.

Ten days after the 101 st and final weeping of the statue of the Blessed Mother, during Adoration Sr. Agnes Sasagowa saw the vision of the open Bible. Afterwards, she came at once to the office of Father Teiji Yasuda, asking him to read Genesis 3: 15 to verify the passage.

He took out the modern Japanese translation by noted theologian, Fr. Barbaro, and read the following passage carrying God's prophetic announcement that He would send the Holy Mother to deal a crushing blow to Satan.

It read, "I will place enmity between thee (Satan) and the woman (Mary), between thy seed and Hers. She will crush thy head, and thou shalt lie in wait for Her heel." +++



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

Fatima - Tues., April 22, to Tues., April 29, 2003 (8 days), \$1199. Visit **Aljustral, Lisbon, Santarem, Coimbra, Fatima, Ourem**, and the Shrine of Our Lady of Nazareth at **Nazare**. +++

Montichiari/Fontanelle, Italy - Retreat for priests & religious. Fr. Henry Bordeaux & Janie Garza. Sun. evening, May 4, 2003 to Fri, May 9, (6 days) \$1299.

France - Fri., May 9, 2003, to Tues., May 27 (19 days), \$2899. Visit **Paris, Paray-le-Monial, Taize, La Salatte, Ars, Chateaufeuf-de-Galaure** (Marthe Robin), Nevers, Aix, (St. Eugene Shrine), **Lourdes, St. Anne d'Auray, Mont St. Michel, Pontmain, Lisieux**, & more. +++

Akita, Japan - Fri., May 30 to Thur., June 12, 2003, (13 days), \$5699. +++

Poland Shrine Tour - Sun., June 15 to Sat., June 28, 2003 (14 days), \$2199. Includes **Warsaw, Zoliborz, Krakow, Niapokalonow, Zakopane, Zelazowa Wola, Wagnivniki** (Divine Mercy Center), **Wadowice** (birthplace of John Paul II), **Kalwari Zebrzydowska**, and the beautiful Shrine at **Lechen**. +++

Germany, Austria -(Passion Play) Sat., July 5, to Wed., July 16, 2003, (12 days), \$2799. +++

Fatima and Lourdes - Sat., July 20 to Tues., Aug. 6, 2003, (18 days), \$2399. Our most popular pilgrimage.- Feast Day visit to **Santiago Compostella** (Shrine of St. James), **Pontevedra, Zaragosa, Avila, Braga, Santarem, Covadonga, Fatima, Ovieto, Lourdes, Alba de Tormes**, and **Garabandal**. +++

Ireland - Sun., Aug. 17, to Fri., Aug. 29, 2003 (13 days), \$1898. Visits to **Knock, Melleray Grotto, Ballinspittle, Inchigeela, Attymass** (home of Fr. Patrick Peyton), **Achill Sound** House of Prayer (Fr. McGinnity & Christina Gallagher), **Dublin**, & more. Meetings with visionaries Mary Casey, Tom Lennon, and others. +++

Shrines of **Italy** - Wed., Sept. 3, to Fri., Sept. 19, 2003 (17 days), \$2699. Visit **Milan, San Damiano, Montichiari**,

Fontanelle (Rosa Mystica), **Padua, Venice, Ferrara, Bologna, Florence, Siena, Assisi, Loreto, Osimo** (St. J. Cupertino) **San Giovanni Rotondo, St. Michael's Cave, Pietrelcina, Mugnano** (St. Philomina), **Pompeii, Rome, & Civitavecchia**. +++

Rea. of Mother Teresa - 5 days, Fri., Oct. 17 to Tues. Oct. 21, \$1299. **Rome** only, **OR** 15 days, Tues., Oct. 7 to Tues., Oct. 21, \$2599, **Medjugorje, Italy**, etc.

Medjugorje - Tues., Oct. 21, to Tues., Oct. 28, 2003, (8 days), \$1979. +++

Holy Oil - Thur., Nov. 13, to Tues., Nov. 25, 2003 (13 days), \$2599. Visit in Beirut, in Lebanon, **Damascus** in Syria, and Cairo in Egypt. +++

Guadalupe, Mexico - for Feast Day celebrations. Dec. 6 thru 13, 2003, (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**, and **Our Lady of Good Remedies**. +++

Medjugorje & Prague - Sat., Feb. 14 to Sat., Feb. 21, 2004, (8 days), \$999. +++

All pilgrimages include: priest on each bus, daily Mass, three Rosaries, breakfast and 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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