

Jakov Colo on Thanking God

by Sean Patrick Bloomfield from
The Spirit of Medjugorje
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I was fortunate enough to stay with Jakov at his home in Medjugorje last year, while filming my ~ documentary video, "Medjugorje in the New Millennium" (new, and carried by 101). I had expected a challenge to get this infamously shy visionary to open up while on camera, but instead he delighted me with a smiling interview and in-depth answers to all of my questions.

"What did we forget today?" Jakov asked me once during the interview, through my interpreter Maria. I remember thinking to myself: Is he talking to me?" I even checked to make sure I had not forgotten to take the lens cap off my video camera!

Finally, Jakov continued: "We forgot to thank God. We are constantly asking something of Him, but we need to start thanking Him, beginning with the small things. You could say, for example, thank You God for the beautiful day today. Or, thank You God for all the people in my life."

Just then, Jakov's 3 children ran past us, happily chasing a butterfly. Jakov smiled as he saw them, then he continued, "But, at the same time, you need to begin to thank God for all the crosses that He gave to us. When we receive a small cross, we usually ask, 'Why are You giving this to me?'"

I remember how hard it was to maintain my objectivity as a filmmaker when Jakov spoke about crosses. In that instant, I began thinking of all the times I had whined to God whenever a minor burden came my way.

"We need to learn how to thank Him," Jakov continued, "because

God gave us too much, and we do not understand that. We are constantly asking for more."

When the interview was over, Jakov shook my hand and went to round up his kids ... but I didn't get up. I just sat there, my camera still running, as I stared at the crucifix on the wall of Jakov's living room. "Thank You, God," I said, and a tear streaked down my face. "Thank You for this moment."

Let us start right now to thank our God all throughout the day for everything! Try it. Gratitude begets joy. +++

WHAT THREE UNIONS DISTINGUISH THE CATHOLIC CHURCH FROM ALL OTHER CHRISTIAN FAITHS?

The Answer: The Pope; No
Divorce; and No Contraception

from The Medjugorje Sentinel
#55, Sept. 2002

All three teachings are fundamentally about UNION. The Pope unifies the Body of Christ in authority and teaching. The indissolubility of marriage ensures the union of man and woman in "one flesh" and is the foundation for all family life and civilization itself. Openness to the transmission of life in the marriage bed ensures that the biological and supernatural union between man and wife will bring new life. The fruit of this union is literally awesome: the marital act may bring forth a unique child who is eternally ensouled.

Write down UNION=LIFE and paste it on your mirror. There is no "life" without 'union.' There is no salvation without union. There is no authority or truth without bishops

who teach and govern in union with the Holy Father.

Conversely, the evil one will always try to destroy supernatural unions by tempting us to divide from each other, by tempting us to divide from the truth, and tempting us to divide from the Church. He will even try to divide us from our wives, husbands, and children. He will try to drive a wedge between Christ's bishops and their flock. Beware of dis-union.

Another word for "union" is "conception." Contra-ception is literally a dis-union between love and life. Conception, on the other hand is life from-love.

The Immaculate Conception, Our Lady, is the fruit of the Holy Trinity's love for us, which bore Jesus in history, and gave the world both the hope and means for eternal life and eternal union with His Father.

The Holy Trinity is union. Even unto Himself, God is both One and a Union of Persons.

Think about what parts of your life are in "union" with truth, with life, with love, with God, and with other souls. +++

God's Light

by Fr. Edwin J. Duffy
from Fr. Duffy's Reflections, p.48

There is a story told of a nun who asked the children in her class: "What is a saint?" One little girl raised her hand and (because her only knowledge of saints had to do with stained glass windows) she replied: "A saint is someone God's lovely light shines through."

What a marvelous description! When we permit the Holy Spirit to take possession of our souls and allow His presence to shine through, that is what makes for holiness and sainthood. +++

The Boy Who Stole The Catcher's Heart

by Johnny Bench

If you had told me that a little boy was going to come into my life, steal my heart and turn me into a person capable of giving and receiving deep love, I would have scoffed at the idea. I was a 25-year-old major-league baseball player for the Cincinnati Reds with one burning ambition - to become the best catcher in the history of baseball.

A Sad-Looking Kid

That was before I met Philip. He was a sad-looking kid. I remember thinking that, when he showed up at an autograph session I was doing in 1973 as part of a product-promotion tour at a Dayton, Ohio department store.

It was November, so there were not many sun-tans in the group that stood waiting for me to write my name on shopping bags, sweatshirts, ball gloves, even sales receipts. But, Philip's complexion was as white as flour. Skinnier than a stray dog, he seemed to have no hair.

Sue Lilly, an employee of the department store who was helping me work the crowd, whispered that his name was Philip Buckingham. He had leukemia and chemotherapy treatments had left him bald. "Come on here, pardner," I said, with an enthusiasm I did not feel.

It took very little encouragement. Running as fast as his four-year-old legs would go, Philip jumped onto my lap and threw his arms around my neck. For an instant, I started to pull back, then caught myself.

"I Love The Reds"

"I love the Reds, and Johnny Bench best of all," he shouted, beaming.

"Attaboy!" I answered, pulling his Cincinnati baseball cap over his eyes. Then I gave him my autograph and sent him on his way. "Good luck, Philip."

"You better win a pennant next year," he called back. I could not help but wonder if he would even be around next year.

Regardless, I was glad that it was over. It made me nervous to be around sick people, and I'd had enough talk about cancer to last a lifetime.

Late in the 1972 baseball season, I had developed some pain in my back. Doctors diagnosed it a lung lesion, a tumor that would have to be removed. Could it be malignant? Not likely, I was told. Even so, I was enormously troubled, and I let very few people know about the operation.

Couldn't Get Him Out Of Mind

Fortunately for me, the growth was benign, but the emotional shock waves were still reverberating when this four-year-old came along. I was relieved to get him out of sight as quickly as possible. The trouble was, I couldn't get him out of my mind.

Later, I commented to Sue Lilly about "that poor kid." She told me just how poor. Hospital expenses had been so astronomical that the Buckingham family was in danger of losing their home.

Furthermore, they had no car and Philip had to be taken by bus to the hospital for treatments. On the long bus ride, he would often become sick from the chemotherapy and the public ordeal had further embarrassed and upset his parents.

For a month after our meeting, Philip's exuberant hug and brave grin haunted me. I knew that I should do something, yet I was scared of getting involved. I called the store in mid-December and asked for Sue Lilly. Under the guise of business,

I eventually got to the point. "By the way, Sue," I asked, "what do you hear about that little kid - what's his name - Philip - the one with leukemia?"

Sue told me that she had talked with Philip's mother and that he seemed to be doing fairly well. But the best news was that through a local newspaper story, money had been raised to help the family.

"Some of us from the store are going to visit the Buckingham family the day before Christmas to take them a few things. Would you like to come along?"

I frantically groped for an excuse. "Well, you see, I've got this trip ... I really can't because ... 1... 1... I'd love to," I finally heard myself saying.

On the afternoon of December 24, I joined Sue and some others for a visit to the Buckingham family's modest frame home. Philip's enthusiastic greeting nearly bowled me over. "Johnny! Johnny! Johnny!" he yelled, jumping onto my back.

Out came the goodies we had brought for Philip and his older brother and sister. There were bean-bags, a big model airport, building blocks, and a sack of groceries my mother had provided. Grabbing my hand, Philip pulled me down on the floor and together we began building a fort out of blocks.

Suddenly, Philip looked up at me and asked point-blank, "Did you really want to come, Johnny?"

Santa - a friend of Sue Lilly's - pulled out a set of keys to a used car Sue had arranged to buy for Melissa and Carl Buckingham, and an envelope containing a check to keep them from being evicted.

Never A Better Christmas

I do not think I have ever had a better Christmas. I was glad I could brighten Philip's day. But, more than that, I sensed that, I, too, had received something. What it was, I did not know then ... but something significant had happened to me.

When it was time to go to Florida with the Reds for Spring training in February, I called to tell Philip good-bye. "Don't forget to win the pennant," he said to me. "We'll sure try," I told him.

Rooting For Each Other

Philip, I had discovered while in Florida, could talk all day on the phone, and while he was surely feeling pain, he refused to let on. He was a very brave boy, and I found

myself rooting for him as much as he was rooting for me.

I did not hit too well during Spring training, but when I would call from time to time, he would tell me to keep trying. "You, too," I would answer.

Just before the 1974 season began, I asked Philip, "How would you like me to dedicate my first home run to you?"

"Woudja?" Philip shouted so loudly through the receiver, that he nearly popped my eardrum.

First Stadium Visit

In April, Sue Lilly helped arrange Philip's first visit to Riverfront Stadium, home of the Reds. It was a dream-come-true for the little guy, because the only baseball games he had seen had been on TV.

Even though we were beaten by the Dodgers that night, you would never have known it from the way Philip carried on. I met him in the locker room afterward. His eyes were full of excitement and his smile was as wide as home plate.

Blossomed Into Love

"Hey, Phil," I asked, when we left the ballpark, "would you like to take a ride in my car?" He war-whooped his answer. After the ride he gave me a big hug. This time, I squeezed back. "Thank you, Johnny," he said.

"Thank you, Philip, for being my buddy." A relationship that had begun with pity had blossomed into one held together by love. That was the truth. I really loved this gutsy little guy.

As the year went on, the news from Dayton became more and more important to me. "Treatments are continuing," Melissa would report, "Philip is holding his own ... he asks about you everyday."

"Baby Jesus Visited Me"

One morning on the telephone Melissa related something Philip had told her that startled me.

"Mommy," Philip had said to Melissa, "Baby Jesus came to visit me last night, and He told me that

soon I'm going to live in Heaven with Him."

That's a pretty big thought for a boy not yet five, but Philip had experienced a lot in his brief life, so maybe it was not so surprising after all.

Praying For Him

Never big on prayer before, I found myself praying for him all that summer - in airplanes, during batting practice, in the shower ... everywhere.

When Christmas of 1974 came around, I was again drawn to Dayton. Though Philip looked better - golden hair had grown back on his head - I knew the doctors had increased his drug dosage.

For the second year in a row, Sue Lilly and the gang rounded up presents for the Buckingham family, including a Bible that all of us signed and gave to Melissa and Carl.

A China Doll

When we got ready to leave, Philip followed me outside to my car. Reaching into the glove compartment, I pulled out one last present for him - a little china Cincinnati Reds doll, emblazoned with No.5, my uniform number.

"Can you use this, Phil?" I asked. "You bet!" he said, running back into the house with the doll.

Several weeks later I received a telephone call from Melissa Buckingham. "I knew you would want to know right away, Johnny," she said, "Philip died just a few hours ago."

"Thank you," I said, struggling for something to say to her, while at the same time fighting back tears.

"Johnny," she added, "when Philip went into the hospital for the final time, he was clutching that little china doll you gave him. He would not let go of it for anything in the world ... We want to bury it with him."

As she was speaking, Philip's words, "... Soon I'll be living in Heaven with Baby Jesus," flashed through my mind, and then the

tears really started running down my face.

Words could not express the deep loss I felt ... and even today, it is hard to explain what Philip meant to me. How could a skinny little kid with big blue eyes and a half-nelson hug turn me into such a softy?

Be Open To Love

Philip showed me something very important - that we should be open to everyone we meet, no matter who they are. Because I was open to Philip, his love flowed through me, making me vulnerable and more caring, and breaking down my fear of letting my real feelings come out.

Thank God for that little boy. Philip truly opened my eyes as well as my heart, and I will always be grateful. +++

(Perhaps the greatest catcher ever to play the game had his finest moments off the field ... with Philip ...

Cincinnati Reds Hall of Famer Johnny Bench is considered by many to be the greatest catcher of all time. Johnny was selected for 14 All-Star teams, won 10 straight Gold Gloves, and he was chosen most valuable player twice in the National League, and once in a World Series.

Johnny is such a symbol of Ohio sports, that he was chosen to carry the Olympic torch as it passed through Dayton, Ohio, on its way to the 2002 Winter Games in Salt Lake City, Utah.

When he joined the big leagues, Johnny bragged, "I can throw out any runner alive." The root of his phenomenal skill began in his childhood. "My father taught me to throw 254 feet - twice the distance to second base - from a crouch. "

Johnny was inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame in 1989, his first eligible year. After retiring from baseball, Johnny became active in many charity organizations, including the American Cancer Society, where he served as national chairman of "Athletes vs. Cancer." +++

Miracle of the Cloud

by Spencer January

*I*t was a morning in early March 1945, a clear and sunny day. I was 24 year~ old, and a member of the U.S. Army's 35th Infantry Division, 137th Infantry, Company I. Along with several other companies of American troops, we were making our way through dense woods in the German Rhineland. Our objective was to reach and take the town of Ossenburg, where a factory was producing products that were being used in the war.

For hours we had pressed through an unrelenting thicket. Shortly after midday, word was passed that there was a clearing ahead. At last, we thought the going would be easier. But, then we approached a large stone house, behind which huddled a handful of wounded, bleeding soldiers who had tried to cross the clearing and failed.

Before us stretched at least 200 yards of open ground, bordered on the far side by more thick woods. As the first of us appeared on the edge of the clearing, there was an angry rat-tat-tat, and a ferocious volley of bullets sent soil spinning as far as we could see.

Three nests of German machine guns, spaced 50 yards apart and protected by the crest of a small hill to the left, were firing at the field. As we got our bearings, it was determined the machine guns were so well placed that our weapons could not reach them.

To cross that field meant suicide. Yet, we had no choice. The Germans had blockaded every other route into the town. In order to move on and secure a victory, we had to move forward.

I slumped against a tree, appalled at the grim situation. I thought of home, of my wife, and my five-month-old son. I had kissed him good-bye just after he was born. I thought I might never see my family again, and that possibility was overwhelming.

I dropped to my knees. "God," I pleaded desperately, "You have got to do something ... please do something."

Moments later the order was given to advance. Grasping my M-1 rifle, I got to my feet and started forward. After reaching the edge of the clearing, I took a deep breath. But, just before I stepped out from cover, I glanced to the left.

A Fluffy White Cloud

I stopped and stared in amazement. A white cloud - a long fluffy white cloud - had appeared out of nowhere. It dropped from over the trees and covered the area. The Germans' line of fire was obscured by the thick foggy mist.

All of us bolted into the clearing and raced for our lives. The only sounds were of combat boots thudding against the soft earth as men dashed into the clearing, scrambling to reach the safety of the other side before the mist lifted. With each step, the woods opposite came closer and closer. I was almost across! My pulse pounding in my ears, I lunged into the thicket and threw myself behind a tree.

I turned and watched as other soldiers following me dove frantically into the woods, some carrying and dragging the wounded. This has to be God's doing, I thought. I am going to see what happens now.

The instant the last man reached safety, the cloud vanished! The day was again clear and bright. I could hardly believe it.

Blown To Bits!

The enemy, apparently thinking we were still pinned down behind the stone house on the other side, must have radioed their artillery. Minutes later, the stone building we had just been at was blown to bits, ... but our company was safe, and we quickly moved on.

We reached Ossenburg and went on to secure more areas for the Allies, but the image of that cloud was never far from my mind. I had seen the sort of smoke screens that were sometimes set off to obscure

troop activity in such a situation. That cloud had been different. It had appeared out of nowhere and saved our lives.

Two weeks later, as we bivouacked in eastern Germany, a letter arrived from my mother back in Dallas. I tore open the envelope eagerly. The letter contained words that sent a shiver down my spine.

"Do you remember Mrs. Tankersly from our church?" my mother wrote. Who could forget her?

I smiled. Everybody called Mrs. Tankersly the prayer warrior. Frankly, I sometimes thought she carried it a bit too far.

"Well," continued my mother, "Mrs. Tankersly telephoned me one morning from the defense plant where she works. She said the Lord had awakened her the night before at one a.m., and told her, 'Spencer January is in serious trouble. Get up now and pray for him!'"

My mother went on to explain that Mrs. Tankersly had interceded for me in prayer until six o'clock the next morning, when she had to go to her job. "She told me that the last thing she prayed before getting off her knees was this," - here I paused to catch my breath - "Lord, whatever danger Spencer is in, just cover him with a cloud!"

The Exact Time!

I sat there for a long time holding the letter in my trembling hands. My mind raced, quickly calculating. Yes, the hours Mrs. Tankersly was praying for me would have indeed corresponded to the time we were approaching the clearing.

And 6:00 a.m. ? With a seven hour time difference, her prayer for a cloud would have been uttered at one o'clock-just the time Company I was getting ready to make its daring dash.

From that moment on, I intensified my prayer life. For the past 52 years I have gotten up early every morning to pray for others. I am convinced there is no substitute for the power of prayer and its ability to comfort and sustain others, even those facing the valley of the shadow of death. +++

Mamie In the Home of Our Lady

from Home of the Mother
#108, Sept./Oct. 2002
by Fr. Rafael Alonso Reymundo

She was a visionary and a victim soul. We called Elisabeth Van Keerbergan, Mamie, a French nickname, and she lovingly assisted us with heavenly spiritual counseling. She told us our threefold mission was: 1) the defense of the Eucharist, 2) the defense of the honor of Our Mother, especially in the privilege of Her virginity, and 3) the conquest of the youth for the Lord ...

No, I'm not mistaken. Mamie was in the home of Our Lady, that is, in the house that is conserved in Loreto, Italy. She and I went there. I do not remember the year now, but the month, without any doubt, was August. The year was probably 1976, but I'm not sure.

However, I can testify to what I saw there. She had told me that the Blessed Virgin had asked her to receive the Eucharist kneeling down. I don't wish to say with this, that everyone should be obligated to receive Communion kneeling down, but it is one of the ways in which the Church permits the faithful to receive Communion, and Mamie was asked to do so in this way.

Some will see this as a bad joke. I can already imagine one or two people frowning and saying: "It's not possible that Our Lady would concern Herself with such nonsense."

Always Obedient

But that is how it was. This had happened to her, and she, who was so obedient always to Our Blessed Mother, couldn't receive any other way. We went to Mass there in Loreto and the priest of the Order that was running the Shrine told her at Communion time to stand up in order to receive.

Mamie told him that she could not ... that she had to receive kneeling down. The priest refused to give her the Communion and passed on. For Mamie it was a great suffering not to receive Jesus in the home of Mary. But, she was the kind of person who suffered in silence rather than make a fuss.

So, without saying a word, with tears in her eyes, she withdrew from the area where the Communion was being given out and retreated to the back of the little house of Our Lady and recollected herself in intense prayer. She did not reprimand, she simply prayed. She prayed intensely.

As usual, she held in her hands the crucifix that her spiritual son, Fr. Enzo Bianchi, had gifted to her. She pressed it against her heart and grieved over being refused the Communion.

The priest who had refused her the Communion kept looking towards her. I do not know if he was touched by that woman's humility and capacity to suffer.

When the Mass had ended we headed for the Blessed Sacrament Chapel to spend a little time in prayer, and to leave the house of Our Lady free for other pilgrims. We prayed intensely there, offering up the sufferings of that day. I have to recognize that back then, I did not have as much resignation as Mamie in these matters.

I suddenly noticed the movements of the priest who had refused Mamie the Communion. He wanted to speak with us and to explain to us that he had refused us the Communion because perhaps we belonged to Mons. Lefevre's movement.

I simply told him: "If you in your conscience believe that you have acted well, then you have nothing to worry about. But, you should know that we have nothing to do with Lefevre, and never will have. We are Catholics, and, I believe that you have gone too far in your zeal to impose your way of seeing things ... but we also are capable of making mistakes. In any case, I would be grateful if you would permit us to continue praying to the Lord."

This religious, perhaps moved by what we said to him, told us that if we wished, we could receive the Communion kneeling down, and that he himself would give it to us. Effectively, we received from his hands.

We retained no feelings of rancor from this occurrence. On the contrary, we believe it may have been due to a historical time of confusion Mamie came away filled with consolation and joy at having received in her heart the One Who is God, and Man under the veil of bread. +++

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Marian Apparitions at Emmitsburg

by Fr. John B. Wang, Ph.D., I.U.D.

Biography:

Fr. John B. Wang was born in 1932 in China. Father was raised in a very devout Catholic family which produced two priests and a religious sister. He was educated by the American and German Franciscan Missionaries. In 1949, he was sent to Spain to continue his seminary training.

Then, in 1954, he was ordained a priest in the Basilica of Our Lady of Pilar in Zaragoza. Father has several academic degrees including a M.A. T. (Master of Arts in Teaching) from the University of Florida, a Ph.D. (Doctor of Philosophy) from the University of Maryland, and a J. U.D. (Doctor Utriusque Juris, Doctor of Both Canon and Civil Law) from St. John Lateran University, Rome.

Over the years, he has taught courses in philosophy, moral theology, canon law, languages, literature and culture in various institutions. He retired from teaching in 1992 and has been engaged in promoting Eucharistic and Marian devotions through spiritual direction, retreats, conferences, pilgrimages, and prayer groups. (He has been a chaplain a number of times on 101 Foundation pilgrimages.) More than 80 cenacles have been established through his encouragement. Father Wang can be reached through his email address: jbyesheng@montana.com.

Throughout the ages, not only in biblical times, God has tangibly communicated with the human race, for He created us and loves us. God communicates in various ways, such as in apparitions, visions, or locutions. To judge the authenticity of these divine communications, the Catholic Church has issued criteria which must be followed.

The Ecumenical Council of Trent, in 1563, required the establishment of a diocesan commission to study alleged apparitions. Recently, on Feb. 25, 1978, the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith prescribed norms for the proceed-

ings of a diocesan commission. The commission is instructed to study four major areas:

- a) the moral certainty of the miraculous and exceptional occurrence beyond human explanation;
- b) the honesty, sincerity, mental soundness, and moral conduct of the seers;
- c) the content of the messages received by the visionaries;
- d) the fruit generated by the claimed apparition.

The final evaluation is to fall into one of three categories:

- 1) *Constat supernaturalitas*, that is to say, the apparition is recognized, approved, and declared "worthy of belief" by the Church.
- 2) *Non-constat supernaturalitas*, which means the supernatural character of the apparition in question is not evident. The Church takes a neutral stance in this case. The apparition is neither approved nor condemned.
- 3) *Constat non-supernaturalitas*, which would mean the claimed apparition is false, and hence, not worthy of belief.

Apparitions to Gianna

Gianna Talone-Sullivan, Pharm. D., has been experiencing unusual phenomena which began in Scottsdale, Arizona in 1987. She goes into ecstasy when she sees and converses with our Blessed Mother, who remains invisible to others present.

These experiences continue, now in Emmitsburg, Maryland. Gianna has received numerous messages from Heaven, which have been printed in several volumes of books entitled, *I Am Your Jesus of Mercy*, formerly published by the Riehle Foundation, and Queenship Publishing Company.

Gianna's story has been told in three books (as far as I know): *Our Lady Comes to Scottsdale*, and *Return to God*. Both were written by Robert Faricy, S.J. and Lucy Rooney, S.N.D. de N. The third book, *Our Lady of Emmitsburg*, was written by Don Forker. A video, *Unbridled Mercy*, gives valuable information about the messages of our Blessed Mother and Jesus, in addition to the work of Drs. Michael and Gianna Sullivan.

Commission of Investigation

A commission to study Gianna's mystical experiences was established by Cardinal William H. Keeler, Archbishop of Baltimore, under whose jurisdiction falls the Catholic parish in Emmitsburg. The Commission, consisting of three priests: Frs. Morrissey, Gill, and Maruca, has concluded its work and made recommendations to Cardinal Keeler. The commission's report has not been made public.

To date, the only information available, regarding this matter, is a letter written by His Eminence Cardinal Keeler to Fr. William O'Brien, CM, pastor of St. Joseph parish Emmitsburg, dated Sept. 27, 2002, and a brief communication sent by Msgr. Jeremiah R. Kenney, Cardinal Keeler's Delegate for Canonical Affairs, to Dr. Gianna Talone-Sullivan on Sept. 24, 2002.

From these letters, it appears that the Morrissey-Gill-Maruca Commission has experienced some difficulties and misgivings in Gianna's case. I shall indicate the main objections raised by the commission and present a few, very brief, replies.

Clarification of Difficulties

1) The Church teaches that upon one's death, the deceased will clearly see his/her life story, in the Light of the Lord, and accept the consequences. This is the "private judgement," one of the theological "Novissima," the last things of life.

Now, the Commission finds it difficult to believe God would grant a "universal revelation of everyone's state of soul and subsequent conversion" before death. This, of course, is something really extraordinary, to say the least.

Here, we are describing the so called "aviso" or "Warning," communicated by our Blessed Mother to the children at Garabandal, Spain" in the early 1960's, or the "Mini judgment," recorded in several messages received by Fr. Stefano Gobbi, in his book, *To the Priests, Our Lady's Beloved Sons*.

This great event has also been called "The Illumination of Con-

science,” or “The Illumination of Souls.”

Nobody can prove or disprove the actual occurrence of this extraordinary happening—this veritably stupendous and miraculous phenomenon. Only time will tell. We do know, however, that our Merciful Father can, and would, use any means to bring us to conversion to save our souls.

Supreme Act of Mercy

Should this revelation happen, it would, indeed, be a supreme act of God’s love and mercy. Frequently, we hear testimonies of near-death experiences, in which people have been shown their own sinful lives, convert and, through the mercy of God, are then sent back to live a new life in the Lord.

2) The prediction of forthcoming catastrophic events, chastisement, persecution, and purging the world from its crimes is another area of uneasiness for the Commission. Personally, I have no difficulty, whatsoever, accepting these predictions. In salvation history, we have already experienced God’s loving touch of purification as He has drawn His people back to Himself.

Consider the flood in Noah’s time, the warning given to Nineveh by the prophet Jonah, and the punishment of Sodom and Gomorrah. The present world situation needs God’s special intervention. Our Good Lord can purify us through heavy-handed ways. It would, indeed, be a rude wake-up call.

Again such fatherly chastisements would be acts of Divine love and mercy. These predictions are consistent with the content of the Church approved messages received in apparitions in Fatima, Akita, and Amsterdam.

~ 3) The third objection of the Commission involves “Jesus, return as a child.” At the end of the world, as recorded in the Gospels, our Lord Jesus Christ will return as Judge accompanied by angels. Certainly, He will return in His glory as an adult.

I would like to offer some thoughts on “Jesus, return as a

child,” and invite people to ponder them. In apparitions, Jesus, Mary, angels, or saints can appear in any way they choose, according to the specific purpose of the visit. Our Blessed Mother often appears wearing a crown of twelve stars to denote Her Queenship; sometimes, with only a veil to emphasize Her motherhood; a titted in white or gold to show Her purity or happiness; in red to inspire love, or in black as the Sorrowful Mother.

Angels have no material form. They can assume the body of a child, as in the apparition to St. Catherine Laboure in Rue du Bac, or take the form of a young man, as recorded in the diaries of St. Faustina Kowalska.

Our Lord Jesus can appear as the Risen Lord, as the Crucified Victim, or as a Child, as depicted in St. Anthony of Padua’s arms.

I believe, that when the Blessed Mother tells about Jesus coming as a Child, She is NOT referring to the Last Coming of Jesus as Judge at the end of time. She is referring to the “Second Pentecost,” the “Coming of the Kingdom of God,” the “Inauguration of the Eucharistic Reign,” the “Triumph of the Immaculate Heart of Mary,” or the “New Spiritual Springtime.”

In this Era of Glory and Peace, we, the humans, would be blessed with child-like characteristics and virtues, such as innocence, candor, guilelessness, love, meekness, purity, and honesty, with absolute trust and confidence in God, as little children trust their parents. This is the spirit that our Lord will come to bring to the world.

A restoration of creation to pristine beauty? To the way God created humans in the first place? A kind of paradise restored? Ojala. A mere utopia? I think not.

Concluding Remarks

The evaluation of Dr. Gianna Talone-Sullivan’s mystical experiences by the Commission falls with in the second category of “Non constat supernaturalitas.” Gianna’s honesty, sincerity, mental soundness, and moral conduct have never been questioned by the Committee.

No proofs were given to demonstrate any heretical content of the messages received. The moral certainty of the miraculous and exceptional occurrence beyond human explanation cannot be denied. (Keep in mind the vigorous scientific tests administered to Gianna.)

Finally, the spiritual fruit of the prayerful gathering of the faithful in the parish church was acknowledged. Cardinal Keeler only forbade the Thursday evening meetings at St. Joseph Parish Church in Emmitsburg and the use of the church properties as a platform for activities associated with the apparitions.

Catholics and non-Catholics can still read and meditate on the messages received by Gianna. (These publications have not been placed on the index of forbidden books!)

You can view the film or videotape, “Unbridled Mercy,” communicate with Gianna (she is not an excommunicata vitanda!), invite her to speak at conferences, love, and pray for her.

I personally believe that Gianna is a chosen soul of our Lord. She is a designated tool to convey God’s Mercy and Love. Please continue to support the Sullivans’ wonderful labor of Mission of Mercy.

To conclude, I would like to express my sincere wish that, in the near future, His Eminence Cardinal Keeler, the Ordinary of the Archdiocese of Baltimore, would appoint another investigative commission to make a serious, in-depth study of Gianna’s mystical experiences.

The new commission should consist of experts in Mariology and Mystical Theology, and be endowed with the Holy Spirit of Discernment, for at stake are God’s glory, our Blessed Mother’s honor, and the spiritual welfare of innumerable souls. +++

Two Smiles Meet

Helen Steiner Rice

*Just like a sunbeam brightens the sky,
A smile of the face of a passerby
Can make a drab and crowded street
A pleasant place where two smiles meet.*

+++

Mary

by St. Bernhard

When you follow Her,
you will not go astray.
When you pray to Her,
you will not despair.
When you think of Her, y
ou will not err.

When She holds you up,
you will not fail.
When She protects you,
you will not fear.
When She leads you,
you will arrive safely.

She keeps Her Son
from striking us.
She keeps the devil
from hurting us.
She keeps our virtues
from escaping us.
She keeps our merits
from being destroyed.
She keeps our graces and our souls
from being lost. +++



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

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. Philomena), **Pompeii, Rome, & Civitavecchia.** +++

Bea. 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), \$979. +++

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. +++

Betania, Venezuela - Mon. March 22 to Sun., March 28, 2004, (7 days), \$1689, with Msgr. Joseph James, gifted confessor.

Fatima - Tues., April 20, to Tues., April 27, 2004 (8 days), \$1299. Visit **Aljustrel, Lisbon, Santarem, Coimbra, Fatima, Ourem,** and the Shrine of Our Lady of Nazareth at **Nazare.** +++

Montichiari/Fontanelle, Italy - Retreat for priests, religious, and prayer warriors with Frs. DeGrandes & Henry Bordeaux, also Janie Garza. Sun. evening, May 2, to Fri., May 7, 2004 (6 days) \$1299.

France - Fri., May 7, 2004, to Tues., May 27 (17 days), \$2699. Visit Paris, Paray-le-Monial, Taize, La Salatte, **Ars, Chateauf-neuf-de-Galaure** (Marthe Robin), **Nevers, Lourdes, Mont St. Michel, Pontmain, Lisieux,** & more. +++

Poland Shrine Tour - Sun., June 13 to Sat., June 26, 2004 (14 days), \$2399. 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, & Switzerland (including Tyrolian Passion Play) Sat., July 3, to Wed., July 14, 2004, (12 days), \$2699. +++

Fatima and Lourdes - Tues., July 20 to Fri., Aug. 6, 2004, (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, Lonrdes, Alba de Tormes,** and **Garabandal.** +++

Ireland - Tues., Aug. 17, to Sun., Aug. 29, 2004 (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. +++

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 ner the Blue Army Shrine in Washington, NJ
Call 101 Foundation for details.

Write for information regarding the
Garabandal Miracle Flight

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