

Pope John XXIII and the Council

by Dr. Rosalie A. Turton

On September 3, 2000, our Holy Father, John Paul II, beatified Blessed Pope John XXIII. During the steps prior to beatification, Pope John XXIII's body was found to be incorrupt. Later his body was moved to a new tomb on the main floor within the Basilica of St. Peter, to make access easier for the many thousands of faithful who now come to pray at his tomb.

Some forty years have passed since his death in 1963, yet his face has not changed. It has a serene, relaxed look about it, almost as though he were smiling. Long lines often wait to pass by the body of this Holy Blessed.

On January 16, 2000, a medical and canonical 'recognition' of the body was being made prior to preparations for the transfer of his body from the Vatican crypt (located under the Basilica) into the Basilica itself, and, in the presence of Cardinal Sodano and Cardinal Noe, archpriest of St. Peter's basilica, Bishop Sandri, and many others, his body was found to be incorrupt. It caused intense emotion there and around the world.

Pope John Paul II decided on the transfer to the Basilica, as a mark of the holiness of John XXIII. "It was not easy to find a place in the Basilica where we could build a new tomb for John XXIII," said Cardinal Noe.

Indeed, it was necessary that this place be accessible at the same time to the faithful, who will want to venerate the Blessed, and yet out of the way of the crowds which come daily to visit the Basilica.

The choice was made for the St. Jerome crypt, located on the line of the central span, not far from the statue of St. Peter. John XXIII, a specialist in the Fathers of the Church, was devoted to St. Jerome.

In his autobiography, *Journal of a Soul*, Pope John XXIII, questioned himself: "Have I ever offended God by any sin of impurity?"

His answer: "No ... never!"

Many authorities, John Haffert among them, have proposed that there may be a relationship between purity and incorruption, as many of the incorrupt saints have exercised the virtue of purity to an heroic degree.

There are hundreds of cases of incorrupt saints, including Bernadette Soubirous, whose body is perfectly preserved in the convent at Nevers; St. Catherine Laboure in the Rue du Bac; Pope Boniface VIII, who died in 1303, and whose body was found incorrupt in 1605; Jacinta Marto of Fatima; etc. Joan Carroll Cruz has written an interesting and popular book, called *The Incorruptibles*.

The Great Second Vatican Council

In the early 1960's, Pope John XXIII is the pope who called the Second Vatican Council into being. He stated that: "The Council's chief business will concern the growth of the Catholic Faith and the renewal along right lines of the customs of Christian people, and the adapting of ecclesiastical discipline to the needs and conditions of the present times."

He said that: "The Council intends, through Divine Grace, to be the starting point of a general renewal: a new vigorous diffusion of the Holy Gospel in the whole world, with the Church spreading it, making it known, and explaining its teachings."

Our Lady At Garabandal

Our Lady told the children at Garabandal, Spain, that this Council was very great... the greatest Council ever! In ecstasy, Conchita was heard repeating the words of the Virgin, "The Council will be the greatest of all. It will be a success."

Conchita responded, "That is good, so they will know You better and You will be more pleased."

Then Our Lady added, " ... *but only in the future will the significance of the relationship of the Second Vatican Council and the Garabandal apparitions be known.* "

From these words, we can surmise that in the future, the full impact of the positive effects of the Second Vatican Council are still to be realized. Sometimes we hear some negative things about the Council, and undoubtedly, some of them are true. Some current interpretations and important decisions made there, may have not been adopted with the full intent of the Council Fathers.

Reason For Hope

However there is reason for hope. The great renewal of the Church has begun. The renewal along right lines of the customs of Christian people will spring forth by a light from the Holy Spirit. *Lumen Gentium* and *Our Lady of Amsterdam* have called for a mobilization of the laity to work for the good of the Church. It is now happening, and, as *Our Lady of Garabandal* said, in the future it will be evidenced powerfully.

The Coming Triumph

The Church is presently undergoing a period of suffering. Soon, it will realize the Triumph of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. At Fatima, *Our Lady* said, " ... In the end, My Immaculate Heart WILL Triumph." It is a certainty. When that happens, the Church will triumph as well.

As Pope John the XXIII led us in life by establishing the Great Council, now, in another way, he leads us in death ... a death that does not die. We can be certain that the good Pope's body has been preserved through miraculous intervention by looking to the authority of the Holy Roman Catholic Church, which accepts this fact and has put his mortal remains centrally on display for public veneration in the very heart of St. Peter's Basilica. +++

Saint Josephine Bakhita

from Garabandal Journal
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by Mark Regis

*A*s a young black girl she was sold into slavery, only one day to be raised to the altars of the canonized saints ...

Abduction

She relates, "I was about nine years old, when early one morning, a companion and I were walking through the fields some distance from home. Suddenly, two strangers appeared from behind a fence. One of them said to my companion, 'Let the little girl go into the forest and pick some fruit for me while you walk on ahead. We'll catch up with you soon enough.' His objective was to fool my friend so she would not give the alarm while they were capturing me. Since my mother had always taught me to obey, I did as I was told.

"Once we were in the forest, I noticed two men behind me. One of them roughly grabbed my arm while the other pulled a knife from his belt and held it against my side, saying, with an imperious voice, 'If you cry, you die! Follow us!'"

This is how Sr. Josephine Bakhita in later life described her abduction as a young girl. The experience of suddenly being snatched from her family and village was so traumatic that she even forgot her given name. Her captors named her "Bakhita" ("fortunate one"), which ultimately would prove prophetic.

The Slave Trade

Bakhita's actual date of birth is unknown, but it is generally assumed that she was born in 1869 in the small Darfur village of Olgossa in today's southern Sudan. There she lived with her parents, three brothers, and two sisters. One of her sisters was her twin.

The entire Sudan belt, at the time, was vulnerable to armed slave raiders. Even though Darfur nominally belonged to the British-Egyptian Dominion of Sudan where slave trading was prohibited since 1856, it had not been checked by the government.

Outside the colonial centers, the only places with a strong European presence, the trade went on unabated as it had for decades. Only in the early 20th century with the effective occupation of the Sudan interior was the practice of slave trading gradually almost abolished.

Enslaved

Bakhita was taken to the Kordofan town of EI Obeid where she was held for a few years by the Arab slave traders who had kidnapped her. Eventually, she became a human commodity and was sold five times on the slave markets of EI Obeid and Khartoum.

Several times she tried to escape -unsuccessfully. Her fourth owners, in Khartoum, were the most brutal, subjecting her to various forms of humiliation and torture.

Bakhita recorded one incident in her autobiography. "One day, I unwittingly made a mistake that incensed the master's son. He became furious; he violently snatched me from my hiding place and began kicking me and ferociously beating me with the lash. Finally he left me half dead, completely unconscious. Some slaves carried me away and laid me on a straw mat where I remained for over a month."

A More Terrifying Experience

But, she relates still another even more terrifying experience that she underwent at the age of thirteen. "A woman skilled in this cruel art [of tattooing] came to the general's house. Our mistress stood behind us, whip in hand. The woman had a dish of white flour, a dish of salt, and a razor.

"Once she made her patterns, she took the razor and made incisions along the lines. Salt was poured into each of the wounds. My face was

spared, but six patterns were designed on my breasts, and sixty more on my belly and arms. I thought I would die, especially when salt was poured into the wounds. It was a miracle of God that I didn't die. He had destined me for better things."

A Benevolent Owner

Bakhita's fifth and last buyer was the Italian Consul and trader, Calixto Legnani, who bought her on the Khartoum slave market in 1882. It was the first time she was treated well. "This time I really was the fortunate one, because the new master was a very good man and took a liking to me. It all seemed unreal to me, not being punished or whipped, and being able to enjoy such peace and tranquility," she recalled.

In 1884, due to political unrest, Legnani with other Europeans, was forced to flee the Sudan. Bakhita begged him to let her go with him. Her wish was granted, and Legnani, his friend Augusto Michieli, and a few of their servants, set sail for Italy.

Waiting to receive the new arrivals at the harbor in Genoa was Mrs. Michieli, who upon seeing the African servants, pressured Legnani into giving her Bakhita. And so, the future saint went with her new "family" to Zianigo, a village in the province of Venice.

When the Michielis' daughter Mimmina was born, Bakhita became her baby-sitter and friend. In 1888, the acquisition and management of a large hotel in Suakin on the Sudanese Red Sea coast, forced Mrs. Michieli to relocate there to help her husband.

Finding God

Meanwhile, on the advice of their administrator, Mimmina and Bakhita were entrusted to the Institute of the Daughters of Charity in Venice. This congregation, more commonly known as the Canossian Sisters, had been founded in 1808 by St. Magdalena Gabriela di Canossa. Their work included the education of poor girls, service in hospitals, and catechetical instruction in parishes.

It was there that Bakhita came to know about the God Whom “she had experienced in her heart without knowing Who He was” ever since she was a child, and Who had given her strength when she was in slavery.

“Seeing the sun, the moon and the stars, I said to myself: Who could be the Master of these beautiful things? And, I felt a great desire to see Him, to know Him, and to pay Him homage.”

On January 9, 1890, after several months in the catechumenate, Bakhita was baptized, and received on the same day, her First Communion and Confirmation from the Cardinal Patriarch of Venice.

Her new Christian name was Josefina Margarita Afortunada. She hardly knew how to manifest her joy as her large, expressive eyes sparkled, revealing deep emotions. From then on, she was often seen kissing the baptismal font, and saying: “Here, I became a daughter of God!”

Freedom

When Mrs. Michieli returned from Africa to take her daughter and Bakhita back with her, the latter, with unusual firmness and courage, expressed her desire to remain with the Canossian Sisters, and to serve the God, Who had shown her so many proofs of His love.

Mrs. Michieli was said to have been furious, and demanded that Bakhita go with her. The Superior of the institute referred the case to the Cardinal and Royal Governor. It was decided, since slavery was illegal in Italy, that Bakhita was free to make her own choice, and therefore, she chose to remain in Italy.

Bakhita stayed in the institute where she experienced the call to be a religious. On December 8, 1896, she was consecrated forever to God, Whom she called “the Master,” and remained a faithful and humble Daughter of Charity for the next 50 years, until her death.

In 1902, she was transferred from Venice to Schio where she performed various tasks for the community: cooking, sewing, embroidery, and attending to the door. She accepted

all of her assignments, no matter how menial, with an admirable equanimity.

She used to tell the teachers in the community: “You teach catechism; I will stay in the chapel and pray for you, that you may teach well.”

When she was on duty at the door, she would gently lay her hands on the heads of the children who daily attended the Canossian schools.

Her gentle presence, her amicable voice, which had the inflection and rhythm of the music of her country, and her willingness to help with any menial task, made her a great favorite of all those who knocked at the institute’s door.

Soon her reputation as a holy person began to spread, but it was a holiness that did not manifest itself in miracles or supernatural experiences, but rather in the loving way she embraced all of life’s daily routines.

Her humility, simplicity and constant smile won the hearts of all. Her Sisters in the community esteemed her for her constant sweet nature, exquisite goodness, and deep desire to make the Lord known. She often said, “Be good, love the Lord, and pray for those who do not know Him. What a great grace it is to know God:!”

Bakhita The Traveler

Being of a modest and reserved nature, it was difficult for Bakhita when she was ordered, under obedience, to write her autobiography. She began her memoirs in 1910, and they were finally published in 1930.

In 1929, she was sent to Venice to speak about her life. Once the autobiography was released, she became famous throughout Italy and had to travel around the country filling speaking engagements and collecting donations for the Order.

Final Years

As she grew older, Bakhita’s health deteriorated. She experienced long, painful years of sickness, and was confined to a wheelchair.

Nevertheless, her faith, goodness, and hope never faltered. To those who visited her and asked how she was, she would respond with a smile, “As the Master desires.”

A Sister once asked her, “Do you wish to go to Heaven soon?” She answered, “I neither wish to go nor to stay. God knows where to find me when He wants me.”

During her agony, she relived the terrible days of her slavery, and more than once begged the nurse who assisted her: “Please, loosen the chains ... they are so heavy!”

Graces Received

It was the Blessed Virgin who finally released her from her agony. Her last words were, “Madonna! Madonna!” And, her final bright smile testified to her encounter with the Lord’s Mother and ours.

Mother Bakhita died on February 8, 1947, at the Canossian convent in Schio, surrounded by her Sisters praying and in tears. A crowd quickly gathered at the convent to have a last look at their “Madre Moretta” (Black Mother) and ask for her protection from Heaven.

For three days she lay in state and mourners were amazed to find that her limbs remained flexible. Mothers lifted her hands and placed them on the heads of their children, praying for her blessing. Large crowds followed her hearse to the cemetery.

In the decades that followed, many graces were received through her intercession, attested to by the hundreds of letters received at the Mother House. Her fame has spread all throughout Africa, the European continent, and indeed, throughout the entire world.

Freedom of The Saints

Josephine Bakhita was beatified on May 17, 1992, and canonized October 1, 2000, by Pope John Paul II, who said: “Rejoice all of Africa! Bakhita has come back to you; the daughter of the Sudan, sold into slavery as a living piece of merchandise, and yet still free ... free with the freedom of the saints.” +++

Make Friends

by Rosalie A. Turton

In the Marian Helper, Fall 2003 issue, in a column called Ask A Marian, Fr. Joe Roesch, MIC answers the following question:

Q. "Can you explain to me why, when entering a church, we bless ourselves by making the Sign of the Cross with holy water?"

A. "Your question reminds me of a tradition that my mother learned from the Sisters who taught her in Catholic school. The good Sisters instructed their charges to dip their fingers in the holy water font and then sprinkle a drop of water downward toward the floor to remember the souls in purgatory before blessing themselves.

"Now to your question. A priest has blessed the water that we bless ourselves with when we enter church. That makes it a sacramental. These are 'sacred signs which bear a resemblance to the Sacraments. They signify effects, particularly of a spiritual nature, which are obtained through the intercession of the Church. By them, men are disposed to receive the chief effect of the Sacraments, and various occasions in life are rendered holy' (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1667).

"In the case of holy water as a sacramental, it reminds us of our Baptism and the call to be holy. So it is a very good practice not only to bless yourself at church, but to have a holy water font for use at home. It's also good to have your house blessed by a priest and to periodically sprinkle holy water around your home as a protection from evil. All these are ways of extending the kingdom of God by bringing God's blessing into our lives and our homes."

Pilgrims Don't Know

In our travels all over the world, I notice so few pilgrims using holy water when we enter a church or a home with a holy water font, and fewer still sprinkling a few drops downward for the benefit of the

poor souls. I keep reminding them to do this, but it seems that many of them have never heard of the practice. Some say, "That would be wasting holy water," or "Water on the floor could be dangerous, causing someone to slip and fall."

To answer the first comment, we do not mean that you should use more water on your fingers, than you would have if you just blessed yourself. Even a few drops- from one or two finger tips suffices.

Remember the words of the rich man in hell to Father Abraham when he asked that the beggar Lazarus, now resting on Abraham's bosom, asking for Lazarus to place ONE DROP on the tip of the rich man's tongue. You know the answer, but can you imagine that even a single drop would have been such a tremendous comfort to him!

Sprinkle Us!!

One day a contemporary visionary was begged by the holy souls to sprinkle holy water on them. She responded, "How can I do that? I see you inside, but I must sprinkle the water on the outside."

They responded, "Just do it!" and she did. To her joy, she saw them filled with great happiness as the holy water touched them.

Now this visionary tells people, "Make friends. Give the holy souls in Purgatory holy water, prayers, and sacrifices, and they will be quick to help you in your needs."

A Year and a Half!

When I was a child, I too, remember learning that to sprinkle holy water downward for the holy souls would provide them with a 500 day indulgence. I figured out that that was about a year and a half of released suffering, so I started to do it frequently, hoping that when I am in that confinement myself, as most of us will be, others in the same way will "shorten my term."

Of course, in these days we do not number the days of indulgence any more, but we can be sure that the practice still has great merits and benefits for the souls there. And

then, they will pray for us, so it benefits us as we help them.

As far as the floor being slippery or dangerous, remember we said only a few drops, not a bucketful. A few drops surely pose no danger.

Make Friends

Yes ... make friends. The holy souls are powerful in helping their benefactors. A holy Jesuit who sometimes travels with us, Fr. James Mattaliano, tells us some fantastic stories about how the holy souls have helped and continue to help him.

The apparition at Knock took place after the pastor, whose life had been threatened by revolutionaries, made a novena of 100 consecutive Masses for the souls in Purgatory.

There is a very popular little book by Sister Emmanuel titled *The Amazing Secret of the Souls in Purgatory* (the 101 Foundation carries it) which sheds more light on the effects of devotion to the holy souls.

Remember. .. make friends by helping them, and you can be sure they will assist you in your problems when you call upon them. Try it. It works. +++

I Said a Prayer for You Today

by Helen Steiner Rice

*I said a prayer for you today;
I know God must have heard.
I felt the answer in my heart,
although He said no word.*

*I didn't ask for wealth or fame;
I knew you wouldn't mind.
I asked Him to send treasures
of a far more lasting kind.*

*I asked that He'd be near you
At the start of each new day,
To grant you health and blessings,
and friends to share the way.*

*I asked for happiness for you
In all things great and small.
But, it was for His loving care
I prayed the most of all. + + +*

Just A Monk Who Prays - St. Padre Pio

adapted by Pam Taig from an article by Fr.
G. Biacamelli in *Il Cuore di Padre Pio*

Padre Pia was canonized on June 16, 2002. - "They seek God in books; but He is found in prayer," said St. Padre Pio one day to his spiritual children.

"If no one believes today, it is because no one prays. God is not found in books, but in prayer. The more you pray, the stronger your faith gets, and the more you find God My children, do not ever neglect your prayer. Pray often during the day. Do a bit of meditation, too. You will find and you will see God." He would often say: "Prayer is bread and life for the soul; it lets the heart breathe; it is an intense and prolonged encounter with God."

The Bible is full of people who conversed with the Creator. Jesus prayed and urged us to pray. Early Christians were called men and women of prayer. Prayer must be intense because you cannot pray without preparation when you are full of your own problems, worries, and concerns.

It must be prolonged because you cannot pray in a second ... it takes time to turn inward. It often happens that as we begin to pray we stop, for we have to go to do something, but when we go, also our prayer goes.

To pray is to love. We cannot fool ourselves. Just as there is no love without suffering, neither is there prayer without suffering, because to pray is to love. A person who loves God prays; a person who says words to God does not pray.

When a person loves God, everything becomes prayer, every moment is a prayer. The reason is because when you love, you think constantly of your Loved One, and want to be with Him. So, your heart breaks out with a song, words of praise, of thanksgiving, a good deed, etc.

Prayer was Padre Pio's daily bread. A few years before he died,

he said: "All I want to be is a monk who prays." And, where do we remember Padre Pio? ... at the altar, in the chancel, on his knees, in the confessional, and always with Rosary beads in his hands.

On the subject of prayer, Padre Pio wrote on November 1, 1913, to Padre Benedetto, his spiritual director: "When I pray, my soul loses, itself in God ... other times it consumes me with love for God ... I perceive within my soul that it ardently desires being loosened from life ... I feel that time gets away so quickly; there is never enough time to pray ..."

Prayer for him meant to be lost in God, to forget oneself so as to find oneself in God, to consume oneself for love of God, and the most ardent desire to be in communion with God. It was leaving this time behind, so as to participate in a reality that was way beyond time.

Prayer is indispensable for every day life. This is what Our Lady has been telling us for centuries. Padre Pio paid heed and put Her calls into practice, and for all of us, he became a teacher of prayer. Not that he attended courses to specialize in prayer, but because, with great humility, he prayed.

Our Most Effective Weapon

He would say: "When you are feeling discouraged because of doubt, anxiety, pain, or sorrow, it is then that you need to have recourse to the Lord through prayer, and find in it support and renewed courage." And: "Prayer is our most effective weapon; it is a key which opens God's heart."

Padre Pio started prayer groups. He said: "If you are my children, be united to me, and together we will respond to Jesus' commandment and to the Pope's invitation and desire to pray together. When my children will be united in groups to pray, Jesus will be amid them, and also Jesus' Mother will be with them. I, too, will be with them in spirit, and united in prayer."

Prayer is not an end in itself. If praying is encountering God, then

a prayer meeting must change us, and make us witnesses of the Gospel in the family and in the world, and be for us a fount of joy and good, of charity and peace. Padre Pia would often say: "If you are my children, I want you to pray together in the evenings, as a family; and together recite the Holy Rosary in honor of Our Lady."

To know Padre Pia is to know God's love for mankind and the love that a person can have for God. From Padre Pia, we can learn to be true Christians and to understand that prayer must lead to charity, and that without prayer, charity does not exist.

For Jesus, Himself, tells us: "Without Me, you can do nothing!" It is only when we are in communion with Him that our deeds become efficacious. Only God can teach us how to love. God is love. Love is found in Him alone.

Prayer radiates love. One day, one of Padre Pia's spiritual daughters was half awake when she had a vision. In this vision she saw that in the middle of the sky there was a priest dressed in richly adorned robes. Then she saw his face: it was Padre Pia's. He became like a sun, and from this sun myriads of rays radiated in all directions. The rays were made up of little white and red roses.

When she asked Padre Pia what it meant, he replied: "The rays made up of roses represent the prayer groups which are springing up all over the world. The white roses represent those souls which strive to live in the grace of God, and be loved by God, and to practice fraternal charity. The red roses represent those souls which bear with joy the cross of suffering, and united to Jesus and to me, they collaborate in the conversion of sinners and in the salvation of our brethren."

This is what Padre Pia wants from each of us. We are called to become roses ... either white or red roses ... but roses in any case. Padre Pia is with us; he will not abandon us; but, he cannot respond for us. He has already done his part, now it is up to us to do ours. +++

Our Lady of Laus

by Kay Mule
from *The Medjugorje Star*, #17, 8/03

An apparition of Our Lady occurred in a small town in France, some 350 years ago.

On September 7, 1871, Pius IX declared the visionary Benoite Rencurel venerable, the first step to sainthood, and in 1893, the church was declared a minor basilica by Pope Leo XIII.

Today, thousands of people visit this shrine each year.

High in the Mountains

Benoite Rencurel was born in 1647, in a small French village high in the Alps, near the border of Italy. Her beloved father, Guillaume Rencurel died when she was only seven years old, leaving her mother and two sisters impoverished.

Unable to go to school, Benoite, a poor illiterate girl, then became a shepherdess for a well-to-do family. She was a contemplative soul, and loved to pray for long periods of time. This awakened in her, a desire to see Our Lady.

Benoite often led the flock to pasture at the Vallon des Fours (Valley of Kilns). There, one day in the early spring of 1664, she noticed a Beautiful Lady with a Child by the hand. Since they were near the lime kilns, she asked the Lady if She wished to buy lime.

Two Months Without Speaking

After a while, without answering Benoite's questions, the Lady disappeared. However, the Beautiful Lady continued to appear to her each day for two months without speaking. Benoite was so happy just to see the Lady.

Even if she was told to be humble and meek, she could not hide what was happening to her for long. Very soon the authorities, too, got involved, and curious people asked for details and an explanation.

Her employer forbade her to go the valley, because people said it was not good grazing land for the sheep. Although Benoite tried to obey, the sheep went to the valley anyway!

The employer, deciding to see about it himself, went to the valley and tried all day long, but could not get the sheep out! Then he noticed that the sheep were as healthy as could be, so he let Benoite take them there.

Eventually, the judge of the district told Benoite to ask the Lady who She was. The following day the Apparition answered, "I am Mary, the Mother of Jesus. My Son wishes to be honored in this valley, but not on this spot." Then She vanished and did not appear again for a month.

A month later, while Benoite followed the Avenche River, she beheld a dazzling light on top of the Pindraux rocks. She crossed a rustic bridge, but the light disappeared. A delicious perfume pervaded the spot. Following the scent, she found a little thatched covered chapel of Notre Dame de Bon Rencontre (Our Lady of Happy Meeting).

Sinners Will Repent

When she entered, she saw a bright light with the Virgin standing over the altar. Seeing the dust lying on the altar, Benoite began to remove it with her apron, but Mary stopped her, saying, "Soon nothing will be wanting here ... neither vestments, nor altar linen, nor anything necessary for divine worship. On this spot I wish a church to be built, a privileged sanctuary, wherein many sinners will come and repent.

"Here I will often appear to you. Means will not be wanting, despite the poverty of the country people around you."

Every day Our Lady came to Benoite and guided her, giving her the exact dimensions of the future shrine. But, Laus Valley stands high up on the mountain-side, entirely surrounded by wild

and rocky hills, up which no horse can climb.

Mary, however, had said it was to be ... and, with hardy good will, the pious peasants carried the stones up the mountain. And, increasing numbers of pilgrims came to help.

Some people donated building stones, others donated money. One day a roll of gold coins was found in the donation box, even though the slot on top was not large enough for the roll.

As soon as the church was begun, a miracle took place: the cure of a young man, son of a doctor from Gap, who had been ill from birth.

During the first summer, as many as 60 cures were recorded by officials. Stillborn infants, when placed on the altar, came to life and received baptism. Laus became a pilgrimage site for people coming from far away.

Our Lady continued to appear to Benoite every day for fifty-four years. Often Our Lady appeared with the Infant Jesus ... and many times Benoite beheld the Divine Child in the Sacred Host. (Many people see this today!)

Saw Heaven & Could Smell Sin

Our Lady showed Benoite Heaven, and she received the gift of discovering all kinds of sin by the sense of smell. The hidden secrets of many lives stood out clear as daylight before her.

She was thus able to warn sinners who were encouraged to repent and to receive the sacrament of Confession. She brought countless souls to the practice of virtue.

Benoite took to heart the mission she had received from the Most Blessed Virgin - to prepare sinners to receive the sacrament of Penance. She often encouraged the two priests who were assigned to the sanctuary to receive the pilgrims with gentleness, patience, and charity, treating the greatest sinners with particular kindness so as to encourage them to repent.

On frequent visits, Benoite's Guardian Angel once told her: "When a person is joyful, every thing he does is pleasing to God. When a person becomes angry, he does nothing that pleases Him."

While many believed Benoite, some sought to discredit her by accusing her of pride and hypocrisy. Often, her most bitter enemies were priests.

Some of these went so far as to imprison her. But, after fourteen days spent in fervent prayer and without tasting food, Benoite was released. Her persecutors declared their doubts unfounded, because the prison cell had been filled with the most Heavenly perfume during all that time.

Stigmata and Incorrupt Body

Benoite was favored with five apparitions of Christ, who revealed Himself to her in a state of suffering, so that she might participate in the sufferings of His Passions. She became a Dominican Tertiary [Lay Dominican] and suffered the stigmata for twenty years. No illness preceded her peaceful death in 1718.

Despite the snow-covered mountains and Alpine glaciers, people from far away villages somehow knew of her death and flocked to the funeral. She was buried in the church at the foot of Our Lady's altar.

Seventy years after her death, a workman repairing the sanctuary dropped a marble tablet on the tomb. The tombstone was raised and a portion of the wooden coffin was found broken. The splinters caused a wound on Benoite's cheek from which issued blood, as fresh and red as if she were still alive. When the lid was removed, the body was perfectly preserved.

In 1854, some hundred and thirty years after her death, the coffin was again opened, and Benoite's habit found intact, though, of her precious body, nothing remained except the bones.

In 1995, Bishop Georges Lagranges from Gap, France, visited Medjugorje for a week. He was asked, "What does the fact that the apparitions here in Medjugorje are continuing so long, mean to you, and do you find this surprising?"

Lasted to the End of Her Life

The bishop answered, "No, not in the least, because this happened to us some 350 years ago in my diocese. The Blessed Virgin appeared to a young girl who was only 16 years old, and those apparitions lasted to the end of her life. She died at the age of 72.

No one ever counted how many times she saw the Blessed Virgin! Our Lady began speaking to her by teaching her how to be a patient little shepherdess. She continued and ended with mystical visions of the crucified Christ and His sufferings, in which the visionary herself participated.

The Theme of Reconciliation

"It is interesting to note that Our Lady led the little girl to a place of abundant water. She told the girl that a house for priests had to be built there, where they could receive pilgrims who would come to be *reconciled with God in the sacrament of Penance*. That is how the Marian Sanctuary of Our Lady of Laus began.

"I want to say that there exists today numerous conflicts between religions and nations, and they have become especially prominent in these regions. I believe it is exactly for that reason the Blessed Virgin chose Medjugorje as a place of complete and sincere reconciliation."

The sacrament of Penance plays a very important role in all places where Our Lady has appeared. In the third secret of Fatima, the threatening angel calls out, *Penance, Penance, Penance*. It is time for everyone to go to confession at least monthly, and even more often, if possible. +++

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

WANTED:

INFORMATION — About apparitions taking place throughout the world.

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

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

Sign here: _____

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Check only two:

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- 4) ___ *The Joyful Pilgrimage Rosary*, audio tape by John Haffert
- 5) ___ *Our Lady of Soufanieh* prayer card
- 6) ___ 40 prayer cards of our choice
- 7) ___ *Moving Statues of Ireland* audio tape
- 8) ___ Audio tape of 101's choice
- 9) ___ *31 Day Novena to St. Joseph* booklet

Contribution for postage required.

Bishop Ito's Approval of Akita

In his pastoral letter approving the events of Akita as supernatural, the Bishop John Shojiro Ito of Niigata said, "After the inquiries conducted up to the present day, one cannot deny the supernatural character of a series of unexplainable events relative to the statue of the Virgin honored at Akita (Diocese of Niigata). Consequently, I authorize that all of the diocese entrusted to me venerate the Holy Mother of Akita."

Concerning the messages, His Excellency said, "As for the content of the messages received, it is no way contrary to Catholic doctrine or to good morals. When one thinks of the actual state of the world, the warning seems to correspond to it in many points."

His Excellency explained that he had taken eight years to give this judgment because of the importance and the responsibility in question.

The Bishop said, "that only the bishop of the diocese in question has the power to recognize an event of this kind." +++



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 20, to Tues., April 27, 2004 (8 days) \$1299. Visit **Aljustral, 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 Fr. Henry Bordeaux, also Janie Garza. Sun. evening, May 2, to Fri., May 7, 2004 (6 days), \$1299.

France ----: Fri., May 7, 2004, to Sun., May 23 (17 days), \$2699. Visit **Paris, Chartes, Paray-Is-Monial, Taize, La Salette, Ars, Chateaufort-de-Galaure (Marthe Robin), Pellevoisin, Nevers, Lourdes, Mont St. Michel, Pontmain, Lisieux, Dozule, St. Baume, Carcasson, & more.** +++

Germany, Austria, & Switzerland - (including Tyrolian Passion Play) Tues., June 15, to Sat., June 26, 2004 (12 days) \$2699. +++

Fatima - Marian Conference and Retreat. (Topic: Our Lady and the Reality of Heaven, Hell, and Purgatory.) Internationally known guest speakers. July 7, to July 14 (8 days) \$1799 (1 free for 10 paying, or a group of 11 @ \$1699 each.) Land only, deduct \$500, or \$1299. July 13 anniversary celebration. +++

Fatima and Lourdes - Tues., July 20 to Fri., Aug. 6, 2004 (18 days) \$2599. Our most popular pilgrimage. Feast Day visit to **Santiago Compostella** (Shrine of St. James), **Pontevedra, Zaragoza, Avila, Braga, Santarem, Covadonga, Fatima, Oviato, Lourdes, Garabandal, etc.** +++

Ireland - Fri., Aug. 13, to Wed., Aug. 25, 2004 (13 days) \$1998. Visits to **Knock, Melleray Grotto, Ballinspittle, Inchigeela, Attymass** (home of Fr. Patrick Peyton), **Achill Sound House of Prayer, Dublin, & more.** Meetings with visionaries Mary Casey, Tom Lennon, & others. +++

Shrines of Italy - Wed., Sept 1, to Fri., Sept 17, 2004 (17 days) \$2699. Visit **Milan, San Damiano, Montichiari, Fontanelle** (Rosa Mystica), Padua,

Venice, Florence, Siena, Assisi, Loreto, Osimo (St. Joseph Cupertino), **San Giovanni Rotondo, St. Michael's Cave, Pietrelcina, Mugnano** (St. Philomena), **Pompeii, Rome, & Civitavecchia.** +++

Medjugorje & Prague - Mon., Oct. 18 to Wed., Oct. 27, 2004 (10 days), \$1198. (One day in Prague.) +++

Holy Oil - Thur., Nov. 11, to Tues., Nov. 23, 2004 (13 days) \$2599. Visit **Beirut** in Lebanon, **Damascus** in Syria, and Cairo in Egypt. +++

Guadalupe, Mexico - for Feas Day celebrations. Mon., Dec. 6 to Mon., Dec. 13, 2004 (8 days) \$1299 (Land only, \$899) Feasts of the Immac. Concep., Juan Diego, Our Lady of Guadalupe, and visits to **Ocotlan, Puebla, St. Michael's Well, & Our Lady of Good Remedies.** +++

Poland Shrine Tour - Sun., May 22, to Sat., June 4, 2005 (14 days), \$2499. 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.** +++

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

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

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

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