

Who Was The Nun?

by Denis & Cathy Nolan
from: dnolan@childrenofmedjugorje.com

This event took place in Poland, and was reported by a Polish sister to a French couple who was bringing supplies there in the 1980's.

One night Ewa, a prostitute, was walking in the woods, in great despair. Having reached her limit, she was about to commit suicide. At that very moment, a nun walked toward her and started talking very gently to her, suggesting that she walk to the next town. She gave her precise directions on how to find a house where the lights were still on, and urged her to walk there.

Ewa found everything exactly as the nun had said, and she rang the bell. An old priest, who was still up, welcomed her. He offered to put her up, and the next day she asked him to give her the sacrament of reconciliation, which she had not received since she was a child.

Both were then blessed with a shower of graces. Having decided to change her life completely, Ewa was touched from within by the Holy Spirit, and she found hope and peace again. Then the priest, deeply moved, asked Ewa who it was that had told her to come to his house.

Only then did Ewa realize that it was not very usual to meet a nun in the woods in the middle of the night! But, she told the truth to the priest. More and more intrigued, he asked Ewa to describe the nun's habit. He then showed her pictures of nuns living in the neighboring convents, to find out from which Order the nun came. She recognized the habit of the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy.

With that information, the priest then inquired from the Mother Superior which nun was out in the woods on that night. Of course, none was there, so the priest took Ewa to

the convent, hoping that she would recognize her benefactor.

Upon entering into the parlor, Ewa suddenly stopped in front of a picture hanging from the wall, saying: "There she is! She is the one who talked to me in the woods and showed me your house!" It was the picture of Sister Faustina, who had actually died long before. +++

“You Must Pray, Always”

Luke 18:1

by Dom Augustine Marie, O.S.B.

St. Alphonse tells us, “On getting up in the morning, make the Sign of the Cross, and then say your prayers. He who does not pray damns himself. He damns himself because, if he neglects to turn to God in prayer, God cannot give him His grace...that is, His help in overcoming temptations; and, without the grace of God, temptations cannot be overcome. Moreover, he who does not pray on getting up in the morning, usually does not do it later in the day.”

Pray About Everything

We must have nothing closer to our hearts than acquiring the blessed habit of praying about EVERY-THING. When you get that far, you have the greatest assurance of your salvation that is possible in this world. An excellent way of getting there, beyond morning and evening prayer, is sprinkling each day with several very short, but very beneficial exercises.

For example: good Christians very faithfully recite the ANGELUS three times a day. Let us stick to this custom. They never forget to say Grace before and after meals, even in public places. Let us not forget either prayer.

Holy Souls Powerful Allies

They are lavish in their use of Holy Water in a church or at home, and frequently remember to pray for the Holy Souls in Purgatory. Making friends with the Holy Souls is a most beneficial assistance to us, for they are so grateful to us, that they give us assistance beyond our fondest desires.

Brief Invocations

Before starting any activity, good Christians recite a short prayer. There are even many who raise their hearts to God in a brief invocation each time they hear the clock chime or they notice the hands are on the hour.

Upon hearing a traffic siren, they say 3 “Glory Be’s” for someone who might be in trouble and has an immediate need of prayer. Such a prayer could save a life or lessen a problem, since our God is most attentive to our prayers for suffering souls.

Wouldn't you be comforted if you knew that others were praying for you in your time of need? We could soon pick up the habit if we started today. It is so simple!

Let us not forget that it is not a piece of advice, but a necessity, to pray when we are seriously tempted; for if the temptation is strong, and we neglect to pray, we will certainly and quickly fall into sin.

Likewise, after each sin, we must get used to making a brief act of contrition and going to Confession often. Also, a daily or nightly examination of conscience tends to make our Confessions better, more sincere, more grace-filled, and encourages our repentance and desire to overcome particular predominant sins.

If we pay heed to these recommendations, we can grow in holiness and soar to a higher place in Heaven, which should always be a primary

Franci, the Boy Pio

by Patricia Treece
from *Meet Padre Pio*, pp 8-12

On a hot summer afternoon Mercurio Scocca, a playmate of Francesco (Franci) Forgione, (later known as Padre Pio), buried Franci under corn shucks as he lay sleeping beneath a tree during southern Italy's siesta time. Waking in darkness, Franci, scared, screamed for his mother, to the other boy's roars of laughter.

The next day, Franci discovered Mercurio taking his siesta atop a small farm wagon. He pulled the wagon, with the sleeping Mercurio, up a nearby hill and shoved it over the crest. Mercurio suddenly awakened to the ride of his life. Fortunately for both boys, the hurtling wagon ran into a tree, which stopped it before the rider could be hurled off and injured.

Like Other Boys... Yet There Were Signs of Holiness

Luigi Orlando, a contemporary who used to play with Franci, agreed "he was like any other boy," and also recalled a day when they were wrestling. Franci pinned Luigi, who swore in exasperation. Immediately Franci released him and fled. He had been taught by his mother, and strictly followed her injunction, to leave immediately any place where bad language was used. (Can we not teach our children that today, and for that matter, do it ourselves!)

He Loved To Pray

The child also loved to pray, which was not unusual in a family known as "the family for whom God is everything." Yet he went at prayer and religious devotion with an intensity that stood out even in the Forgione family.

The local priest Father Giuseppe Orlando later remembered reprimanding the boy because he disobeyed his mother, who wanted him to sleep in his bed, while he preferred, penitentially, to sleep on the floor, using a stone for a pillow.

Franci, who had already told his parents he wanted to be a priest, also practiced self-flagellation. When his mother reproached him for beating himself, he replied, "I must beat myself the same way Jesus was beaten." Extremely devout, Giuseppa Forgione felt tears come to her eyes, she later said. From then on she did not interfere with this practice.

From the Beginning, So to Speak

Years later, in 1915, his spiritual director learned that from the age of five, when Francesco first had had the idea of consecrating himself forever to the Lord, the boy had had apparitions, seeing Jesus and the Virgin Mary primarily... but also terrible, diabolical figures.

Francesco never spoke of any of it, assuming everyone else also saw the things he did. Only after he had been some years in the Capuchins did he one day offhandedly query his spiritual director, "Don't you see the Madonna?" When the man said that he did not, Pio immediately responded, "You're only saying this out of holy humility."

And then it all came out. Not only had Padre Pio had visions of Jesus, Mary, and devils, but as a child he saw his guardian angel so frequently that he referred to the angel fondly as "the playmate of my childhood." The guardian angel would play such a prominent role in Padre Pio's adult life that one of his Capuchin confreres would fill an entire book with incidents where Padre Pio interacted with his own angel and the guardian angels of others.

He Suffered in Giving up the World

When he moved into adolescence, Francesco Forgione did not long for power, riches, sexual conquests, or wild living. Instead, it was the true riches the world offers that drew Franci... to remain with his family, so strong in their love for one another, and to seize the joys he had learned among them.

Chief among these was family life itself, with its innocent pleasures of laughter, food, a glass of wine, shar-

ing a good story, praying together, and, above all, knowing they were there for each other in good times and bad. To give up all this and leave the ones he so deeply loved to enter the Franciscans and study for the priesthood, seemed beyond the fifteen-year-old's strength.

Christ came to comfort him during his last night at home. He later wrote, under obedience to his spiritual director, speaking of his soul in the third person:

It saw Jesus and His Mother Who, in all Their majesty, began to encourage it and assure it of Their predilection. Finally, Jesus placed a hand on his head, and that was enough to strengthen the upper part of the soul, so as to avoid his shedding even one tear during the painful separation, despite the painful martyrdom which tore the body and soul.

The Whole of His Life

The whole of his life can be summed up in another vision from these final days before his entry into the Capuchin Franciscan seminary. Meditating on his calling by God to become a priest, he suddenly had an unforgettable experience.

Fighting Satan

From the account he wrote under obedience to his spiritual directors, speaking of himself, as always, in the third person:

He saw by his side a majestic Man of rare beauty, splendid as the sun. This Man took him by the hand and he heard Him say: "Come with Me, because you will have to fight as a valiant warrior."

Then he was led to an area of very spacious countryside. Here there was a great multitude of men divided into two groups. On one side he saw men of most beautiful countenance... in snow-white garments. On the other... men of hideous aspect, dressed in black like so many dark shadows.

As he stood between the two groups, a giant man appeared with his forehead seeming to touch the heavens and a face that was horrible. This strange personage approached nearer and nearer

and the guide Who was beside the soul informed him that he would have to fight with that creature.

At these words the poor little soul turned pale, trembled all over and was about to fall to the ground in a faint, so great was his terror. The guide supported him with one arm until he recovered somewhat from his fright.

The soul then turned to his guide and begged Him to spare him from the fury of that eerie personage, because he said the man was so strong, that the strength of all men combined would not be sufficient to fell him.

I Shall Be With You

[The guide answered:] “Your every resistance is vain. You must fight with this man. Take heart. Enter the combat with confidence. Go forth courageously. I shall be with you. In reward for your victory over him, I will give you a shining crown...”

The poor little soul took heart. He entered into combat with the formidable and mysterious being. The attack [of the giant being] was ferocious, but with the help of his guide, Who never left his side, [the soul] overcame his adversary, threw him to the ground, and forced him to flee.

As promised, a crown was placed on the soul for a moment... but almost immediately it was removed and the guide said: “I will reserve for you a crown even more beautiful if you fight the good fight with the being whom you have just fought. He will continually, renew the assault to regain his lost honor.

“Fight valiantly and do not doubt My aid. Keep your eyes wide open, for that mysterious personage will try to take you by surprise. Do not fear his formidable might, but remember what I have promised you: that I will always be close at hand and I will always help you, so that you will always succeed in conquering him.”

Now, all the multitude who were in darkness and whose faces were also horrible, after the defeat of the giant, fled with shrieks, curses, and horrible cries, while the oth-

er multitude praised and applauded the splendid Man, more radiant than the sun, Who had assisted the poor soul so splendidly in the fierce battle. And so, the vision ended.

A day or so later a second spiritual experience confirmed that Francesco’s whole life as a priest would require combat with his mysterious adversary from hell. Demons would be present at his battles to jeer, but he must never fear, for the angels would also be there to applaud his victories over the evil one.

He understood furthermore that the heavenly guide was Jesus Christ Himself, Who would sustain him in the battle so long as he trusted in the Savior and fought valiantly. +++

Tattooed Priest

by Denis Nolan

from *The Spirit of Medjugorje*, 4/04

He took out a picture from his carry-on. “This is me before!” Rings were in his ears and nose, and his hair came down to his waist. He was holding a guitar. “My whole life was drugs, sex, and rock and roll.”

Medjugorje Is Responsible

I had introduced myself to this handsome young priest three days ago in the airport as we were standing in line to receive our boarding passes. “This is my first trip to Medjugorje. But...,” he said with a smile, pointing to his Roman collar, “Medjugorje is responsible for this!”

Fr. Donald Calloway, M.I.C., Assistant Rector of the National Shrine of The Divine Mercy in Stockbridge, Mass (USA), told me his story:

“The picture is of me in 1992 when I was 20 years old. My life was a mess. The distress I caused my parents had driven them to become Catholics. One night that year I saw a book lying on the coffee table, *The Queen of Peace Visits Medjugorje*, by Fr. Joseph Pelletier.

“Picking it up, I could not put it down! I finished reading it at 3 a.m., and then just waited for my mother to get up. I knew I needed to see a Catholic priest.

“It was hard for me to get the word ‘priest’ out when I asked my mother where to find one. I kept forming it in my mouth but could hardly say ‘priest.’ I was very prideful.

That Was Jesus On The Altar!

“When I found a priest that morning, he told me he had to first say Mass, and then we could talk. And, so, I sat in the back of the Church and witnessed my first Mass. I found myself telling the priest afterwards: ‘That was Jesus on the altar, wasn’t it!!! That was really Him!’”

“I received my whole formation as a Catholic in one night by reading that book on Medjugorje! It’s really true. I got everything! For instance, I knew then that the Pope is our father... he is ‘Papa!’

“I lost all my friends when they heard I was becoming Catholic. I wrote for information right away on all the orders of priests in the Church. I chose the one that had Mary’s name in it twice: ‘Marians of the Immaculate Conception.’ I had dropped out of high school and so they made me study for 10 years to become a priest! I was ordained three months ago!”

Fr. Calloway added: “Right now we have nine men in formation back in Stockbridge and all their vocations came from Medjugorje!”

He also said something that my wife and I very much believe: “Mary has formed an incredible army of little ones throughout the world. Right now they are hidden. One day She is going to let Her Army loose and on that day all the enemy’s victories will be taken back from him! It will be incredible. Her army is already there; it’s just lying in wait!”

You can feel from this young priest a serenity—a strength—a discernable peace. With a faint smile Fr. Calloway pointed to his shoulder: “I still have the tattoos!” +++

Proclamation From Abraham Lincoln

The Children of Mary, Center For Peace
Newsletter, May, 1996, V6 #5

“Dear Friends—I am sure you already know this country is in trouble—spiritually, economically, and morally. The Holy Bible teaches us that fasting and prayer can move the hand of God. Here is a part of God’s promise to Solomon, (2 Chronicles 7: 14), “And, if my people, upon whom My Name has been pronounced, humble themselves and pray, and seek my presence and turn from their evil ways, I will hear them from heaven and pardon their sins and revive their land.” You may also want to read Jonah Chapter 3, and how God spared Nineveh because they prayed, fasted, and repented of their sins.

“It is time for us to do the same; with our whole heart let us ask God for His mercy, peace, and salvation for our nation. Please also keep in mind that this is an election year, and we must pray for a God-fearing, righteous president who will turn the morality of this country back to God.”

April 30, 1863

A proclamation was given by Abraham Lincoln that April 30, 1863, be a National Day of Fasting, Humiliation, and Prayer. This same proclamation is preserved in the Library of Congress as Appendix No. 19 in Volume 12 of the United States Statutes at Large. It was initiated by a resolution of the United States Senate, and was made official by Abraham Lincoln, as President, on March 20, 1863.

Excerpt of the Proclamation:

“We have been the recipients of the choicest bounties of heaven. We have been preserved, these many years, in peace and prosperity. We have grown in numbers, wealth, and power, as no other nation has ever grown. But, we have forgotten God. We have forgotten the gracious

Hand which preserved us in peace and multiplied and enriched, and strengthened us; and, we have vainly imagined, in the deceitfulness of our hearts, that all these blessings were produced by some superior wisdom and virtue of our own.

“Intoxicated with unbroken success, we have become too self-sufficient to feel the necessity of redeeming and preserving grace, too proud to pray to the God that made us! It behooves us then to humble ourselves before the offended Power, to confess our national sins, and to pray for clemency and forgiveness.

“Now, therefore, in compliance with the request, and fully concurring in the views of the Senate, I do, by this my proclamation, designate and set apart Thursday, the 30th day of April, 1863, as a day of national humiliation, fasting, and prayer.”

The Same Need Today

Now, some 141 years later, this same proclamation still deserves the same need we have today. It is no doubt a disaster, that this day of prayer was not implemented by our government on the 30th of April every year thereafter. But, it is not too late to start. +++

He Wants to be Asked

by Amelia Reno, Eldridge, Iowa

I knew it was a crazy thing to do but I did it anyway. I saw the advertisement for a piano teacher nearby. My seven-year-old daughter, Noel, was eager to learn and I did not want to have to go too far for lessons. Impetuously I signed Noel up.

Now for the hard part. We did not own a piano. We had recently moved, I did not work outside our home, and our bills were piling up. “A piano is real far down on my priority list,” my husband said. Over the next few days I contemplated

canceling the lessons. But as I prayed about it, one particular Bible verse kept popping into my head: “Ye have not because ye ask not” (James 4:2).

Ask for what you need, the Lord seemed to be saying. Maybe there was someone in the neighborhood who would let Noel come to her house and practice. Halfheartedly I asked around. Nothing.

Time Was Running Out

Two weeks passed. “Ye have not, because ye ask not,” I kept hearing; but, hadn’t I asked everyone I could think of? Time was running out.

“Okay, God,” I said, finally. “Noel needs a piano. I am asking You to provide one, if it is Your will” Then in a last-ditch effort, I went downtown and placed a one-day-only ad in our local paper:

“WANTED: To borrow in your house or mine a piano for my daughter to practice on.” The lady who took the ad agreed it was a long shot, but I felt better knowing I had tried.

A few days later a woman called. “I just moved to a trailer,” she said, “and had to put my piano in storage. I would be glad to have it being used in your house instead.”

We excitedly agreed to meet her at the storage place, and we all piled into our van and drove over. The piano was in excellent condition! As Noel tried the keys, my husband said he would be back with our pickup and some friends to help move the piano. The lady thought a minute, looking us over. “I will tell you what,” she said. “If you will use your truck to move the rest of my things into my trailer, you can keep the piano; it is yours.”

Noel jumped up and down. And, I said a quiet thank-you to the kind woman, and to the One I had finally asked for what we needed... He Who provides even the ordinary non-essentials in our lives. In our house, we have proof of that every day.

If you need anything... advice, help, or material things, remember the Source of all good things. He is the only One with the right answers and the power, and He wants to be asked. +++

Sliding On Rainbows

by Terri Deluca
from *Home of the Mother*, 4/04

The nurse asked me, over the telephone, "Are you sitting down? We have got your test results back and they were positive. You are pregnant." I was overwhelmed, sobbing with tears of delight. Never had I been so joyful. We had wanted another baby for two years. Finally God had given us the gift of life again. This was the happiest day of my life!

Eight weeks later, we had our first ultrasound. "It's a girl," Dr. Homer reported.

"Are you sure?" I excitedly asked. "Well, I wouldn't go and paint the nursery, but, yes, I'm sure."

My first born son, Joey, who was two at the time, knew something was happening. He knew mommy's tummy was changing, but of course he didn't know why. I remember getting so much pleasure out of telling him that he was going to have a little sister and how it would be when she came home.

Joey learned to pat my belly and say, "be-be." At mealtimes when we would ask God to bless our food, we also asked him to bless the baby and Joey would pat his own tummy! Me, the mother of two children. I could hardly believe it myself.

When the baby was 19 weeks old in utero, we had another ultrasound to check on her development, "She measures four weeks behind in growth," Debbie, the nurse, told me. She looked confused and at the same time concerned. Dr. Homer then came in.

After close examination, he found the same. "At this point we will not do anything but wait. I believe that babies grow in spurts. Let's get you back here in three weeks and we will see how she's doing," the good doctor said.

After three long weeks, I returned. "She's grown three weeks in size, but is still four behind," he said. "Let us try it again in three more weeks." I felt encouraged. However, something inside of me was not so confident.

My next report confirmed this feeling. Maria was now five weeks behind. "We're going to get a second opinion," Dr. Homer stated. I was concerned, but Dr. Homer assured me not to worry, so I didn't.

High Risk Pregnancy

The next week my husband Phil, Joey, and I went to see Dr. Shaver, a perinatologist, one who specializes in high-risk pregnancies. I had never considered myself "high-risk" until we walked out of the door that day. It was discovered right away by an extravagant ultrasound machine that Maria had an artery missing in her umbilical cord.

Next, they found her club feet, club hands, and an opening in her spine (spina bifida), and a "rocky" shaped head. The nurse and doctor suggested an amniocentesis to see what, if any, chromosomal damage Maria had.

"It would be best if we knew what we were facing here," the doctor stated. "And, it is legally too late to consider an abortion."

"That never would have been a consideration," I firmly replied. The doctor continued with his prognosis. "She could be stillborn or severely retarded," he told us honestly. I looked at Phil and he nodded his head. I reluctantly decided to go ahead with the amnio.

While they were preparing the procedure, we were sent to the genetic counselor's office to go over possibilities of what could be wrong with our baby. In the course of the conversation, abortion came up again.

"Didn't Dr. Homer suggest an amniocentesis to give you the option to terminate your pregnancy?" she inquired.

"It never would have been an option," I stated emphatically. "Dr. Homer knows my feelings... he did not have to ask." I was internally enraged. Phil and I left the doctor's office that day feeling weakened emotionally and physically.

That evening at home, we both felt sick; like we were coming down with the flu. Along with sleepless nights, this indisposed feeling lasted a

couple of days. One week later, our anxiously awaited phone call came.

"Terri, are you alone?" the genetic counselor questioned. "We've got the results of your test and they are not good. Your baby has Trisomy 18 and is going to die." she reported.

My weeping was uncontrollable. Never had I been so crushed, so devastated. I was shaking all over. The muscles in my legs were all wound up. How could this be?

"What is Trisomy 18?" I asked?

"It is a chromosomal abnormality which has caused your daughter severe mental retardation. As a result, her brain cannot tell her body how to function. Usually in these babies the heart stops or they just discontinue breathing."

"How long can she live with no life support?" I reluctantly asked.

"If she survives the birth canal, Terri, she could live a few moments or hours. I've seen one baby live 7 days." Needless to say, I was in a state of shock.

After 7 years of being together, Phil and I had never been faced with such a trauma in our lives. God had always been so good to us and had given us everything that we needed. You could say that our life together was perfect... until now.

God's Healing Power

One night soon after, Phil came home from work, walked in the back door and declared, "Honey, we are going to set up the bassinet and get ready for Maria to come home. If we believe that she will be healed, then God will heal her."

I had already made funeral arrangements and so we decided at that moment to bury (so to speak) plans for Maria's death and concentrate totally on praying for a miracle.

I immediately thought of the woman in the Bible who believed that if she could only touch Jesus' cloak, that she would be made well.

And, so it happened. I became that woman. I believed without a shadow of a doubt that Maria was going to be perfectly normal at birth. "I tell you solemnly, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours,

says the Lord” (Mk 11:23,24). I confidently clung on to these words.

The next day I typed up a novena to Blessed Margaret of Castello, a woman who was cast out by her parents for her severe deformities, I asked that they pray it for 9 days and if they would like to begin it again, all the better. I also requested that they please make copies to pass along to others.

The Power of Prayer

After two months, we had over 200 copies in circulation that we knew of, and an unknown amount distributed by our friends. Soon we counted people in 19 states who were praying for little Maria.

We began receiving cards and letters from people we did not know saying that they were praying for us and for little Maria. These were people of all denominations, some who went to church, some who didn't. *But the bottom line was that they were praying.*

There was a congregation in England praying. A woman in Italy lit a candle each day for Maria. This child had hundreds upon hundreds of people on their knees... and she had not even emerged from the womb! This show of support through prayer only strengthened my belief that Maria was surely going to be a Christmas miracle.

Then on December 11th, 4 days before Maria's due date, an article came out in our local paper, *The Charlotte Observer*, which told the story of a woman who had a third trimester abortion. Her baby was hydrocephalic and had been given 6 months to live after he was born.

The mother searched and found a doctor in Wichita, Kansas who performed late term abortions. He ended the baby's life through an injection of saline solution and then had to drain the baby's head, as it was too big to get through the birth canal.

The reporter labeled the procedure “a miracle.” The mother praised her abortionist claiming him to be a “gift from God,” applauding his qualities of “skill and courage.”

How distorted can you get? How much “skill” does it take to kill an innocent baby? And isn't the 5th commandment from God, the Giver of gifts, “Thou shalt not kill”?

Calls from strangers were on our answering machine when I arrived home from work that day saying that they, too, were praying. This led to a newspaper column in which our story, of praying for and believing in a miracle and the integrity of life in the womb, became widespread. In this article, my views on abortion and why I hadn't had one, were probed.

The columnist, Dannye Powell, gave my two reasons, which were accurately published. “First, Terri believes abortion is murder. Second, to abort the baby would be to fail in trusting God's power to work a miracle.”

“Maria is already a miracle,” the article reported. “She's already made a statement on preservation of life in the womb. If she can save one life, that's why she was created.”

The pro-life movement had made the front page of the local section of *The Charlotte Observer*! Glory be to God! And, from that article, there began a besieging of prayers. Baby Maria had touched thousands of souls to love her, pray for her, and trust in God's wisdom and His will for us.

“Impressively precocious for one who has yet to emerge from the womb - certainly marvelous, if not miraculous,” wrote a Dominican Brother whom I did not know, Brother Martin Martiny, O.P.

The miracle had begun. An infant in the womb was gathering the faithful in prayer, changing lives, changing hearts and changing minds to say “yes” to life. Oh, how blessed we were to be her parents!

She Was Alive

People began to feel as if they knew Maria. Praying for an infant seemed to create a love and closeness, as if she were their very own child. Maria gave humanity to life inside the womb.

She was not just “a blob of tissue” as some pro-abortionists may argue. She was a living, loving human

being crying out to the world saying, “I'm alive! I am God's creation! Don't give up on me! Hope in me! Love me!” And, they did.

Maria was born on December 21, 1995 around 8:00 a.m. She departed for Heaven around 4:00 p.m. All I could think about when the doctor said, “We've lost her,” was “She's in Heaven, happy, and at peace. I had no grief at that time, shed no tears. And, when I finally held my 3 lb. 9 oz. 15-inch baby girl, my tears were of sadness *and* joy. Sadness for obvious reasons, joy for Maria. I wanted what was best for my child. What mother doesn't? And what life could be more superior to eternal life with God?

I couldn't help but think of Mary, Jesus' Mother, when She held the body of Her Son after He was taken down from the cross... His open wounds... His bent, broken body. Maria had spina bifida and a hole the size of my palm in her back. She was also bent at her hands and feet. She resembled the crucified Christ... the OneWho came and gave His life for us. I was holding in my arms one who gave of her life for others. How privileged I was to be her mother!

On Friday, the day after Maria's ascent into Heaven, I spoke with Dannye, the columnist with *The Charlotte Observer*. She told me that there were thousands of people calling her wanting to know about “Baby Maria.” Dannye wanted to do a story. So did I. But her editor said, “No. It is too soon. Give Terri a week to sort out her feelings.”

I was disappointed. I told Dannye that this was a Christmas story. “It needs to be told,” I pleaded. “My feelings are not going to change in a week.” So Dannye went over her editor's head, and only through the grace of God, she got permission to do half of her column on Maria.

I told her, half-jokingly, that I wanted the whole column. We were grateful for what we got. I relived the story of Maria's death, and birth, to Dannye. We cried together. I shared that Maria was our Christmas present to Jesus. We cried some more. Following our phone conversation, I was on the phone with the

funeral service when the nurse brought me a hand written message on a sticky note. It read, "Dannye called: it's the *whole column!*"

Like Jesus, Her Death Brought Life

So, on Christmas Eve, another story was written about a baby being born; a baby who brought people to their knees in prayer; a baby who changed hearts, lives. A story about a baby who lived, loved, and died. This story proclaimed that Maria's life and death were indeed a miracle. It reported on my labor; Maria's sporadic heartbeat and the heartbeat that was no longer. It told how Maria accomplished more "for God and against abortion than most of us do in a lifetime."

This Christmas story put it all into perspective. Christmas is not about "Santa Claus and giving your husband a pair of socks he will never wear. It's about giving of your greatest gift, back to God." Maria lived a perfect life. She existed nine months in her mother's womb and went directly to her Mother and Father in Heaven.

Maria's reason for being is clear to me now. Her death brought life. Her vocation was to give of her life for the sake of others; specifically mothers contemplating abortion. As a result of Maria's story in *The Charlotte Observer*, and the grace of God, Maria will be remembered and many mothers will say "yes" to the life within them. If one life has been saved as a result of Maria's death, then her existence was all worthwhile. I believe that Maria saved more than one life.

I Asked For a Sign

So, I asked Our Lord if He would give me a sign... some indication that Maria was okay, in Heaven, and happy.

A couple of weeks passed, and I received a phone call for my husband from, once again, someone I didn't know. During our conversation the woman happened to mention a dream that her 12 year-old daughter, Holly, recently had.

Over the Rainbow!

Holly dreamed that she went to Heaven. There were rainbows everywhere with puffy clouds, a big gate and Jesus and Mary were there sitting on thrones that were made of clouds. And, there were babies everywhere sliding down the rainbows!

I didn't think much of it at the time, and after we hung up I returned to what I had been doing. I started thinking about the babies and picturing them in my mind sliding down rainbows. I suddenly realized that I was hearing the song, *Somewhere Over the Rainbow!*

After my phone call, I had put on *The Wizard of Oz* for Joey! That was it! That was my sign! I burst into tears of ecstasy. Thank you, Jesus! My little girl is okay, she is blessed, she is bounteous in Heaven with all of the other babies who have moved on. And, she is running, jumping, and sliding down rainbows all the day long!

One life saved: Some months later, a fellow Oblate of St. Benedict, sent Maria's newspaper articles to someone in New York with a problem pregnancy. It seems she had been diagnosed with a Down's Syndrome baby. The doctor recommended an abortion. After reading Maria's story, the woman chose life and delivered a *perfectly healthy baby!*

The story goes on.... To this day (July 16, 2003) a genetic counselor in New York City has Maria's newspaper articles on file in her office. When someone comes in who wishes to terminate their pregnancy, she shows them Maria's story.

Lives are still being saved through the intercession of my sweet baby Maria! To God be the Glory! +++

In A Garden

by Dorothy F. B. Gurney

*The kiss of the sun for pardon,
The song of the birds for mirth, —
One is nearer God's heart in a garden,
Than anywhere else on earth. +++*

Free copies of *The 101 Times* for your conference, church or 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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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.

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Free. Limit of any three items.

Check only three:

- 1) ___ *Seven Graces of the Seven Sorrows of Mary* laminated prayer card
- 2) ___ "*Hail and Blessed*" St. Andrew Advent laminated prayer card
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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.

Time For Prayer

by Rosalie Turton

When I had the opportunity to meet and interview Sr. Agnes Sasagawa, with Fr. Gerard McGinnity from Ireland, and with Sr. Kashiwagi, the Superior of the convent in Japan at that time, a question regarding prayer arose. Fr. McGinnity asked if Sr. Agnes prayed the Rosary each day.

The Superior answered that Sr. Agnes prayed 20 Rosaries in a day! I was astounded! I could not understand how a busy person could pray that many every day. I had heard that Padre Pio said some 30 Rosaries daily, and a certain Mr. Woolsley from Ireland, who had 15 children, said one Rosary a day for each one of them while going to and from work.

But Sr. Agnes' reaction to the Superior's answer to that question was even more revealing to me. She only shook her head, and kept saying, "Not enough... not enough." I never forgot my deep impressions at that moment, and my keen awareness that I certainly do not pray enough.

Recently the actor, James Caviezel and his wife, visited Medjugorje. He had the opportunity to speak to the visionary, Ivan Dragicevic. Caviezel said, "I met with Ivan a couple of times, and during an apparition, I felt a physical presence. Ivan told me two things that really hit me.

"He said, 'Jim, man always makes time for what he loves,' and 'The reason man does not make time for God, is that he does not love God.' Then, he talked to me about praying from the heart. That became like a beginning of a mission for me — to always pray from my heart."



In Akita, Japan, on September 28, 1981, the Angel said:

"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 and Lourdes — Tues., July 20 to Fri., Aug. 6, 2004 (18 days) \$2699. Our most popular pilgrimage. Feast Day visit to **Santiago Compostella** (Shrine of St. James), **Pontevedra, Zaragosa, 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., Nov. 1 to Wed., Nov. 10, 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 Feast Day celebrations. Dec. 6 thru 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.** +++

Betania, Venezuela — Tues, March 29, 2005 thru Monday, April 4, 2005, (7 days) \$1689. Includes visits to Los Teques (so see the Miraculous Host), Maracay, Tomero, and more.

Fatima, Portugal — Tues., April 19, to Tues., April 26, 2005 (8 days) \$1399. Visit **Aljustral, Lisbon, Santarem, Coimbra, Fatima, Ourem,** and the Shrine of Our Lady of Nazareth at **Nazare.** +++

France — Mon., May 2, 2005, to Wed., May 18 (17 days), \$2799. Visit **Paris, Chartes, Paray-le-Monial, La Salette, Ars, Chateaufort, La Salette, Marthe Robin, Pellevoisin, Nevers, Lourdes, Mont St. Michel, Pontmain, Lisieux, St. Baume, Carcasson, & more.** +++

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.** +++

Fatima, Portugal — Thurs, July 7 to July 14, 2005 (8 days) \$1799. **FATIMA MARIAN CONFERENCE AND RETREAT.** Also visit the Shrine of Our Lady of Nazareth at **Nazare.** +++

Germany, Austria, & Switzerland — (including Tyrolian Passion Play in Ulm) June 15, to June 26, 2008 (12 days) \$3399, and also Oberammergau in June 15, to June 26, 2010 (12 days) \$3699. Deposits for these two events may be paid now and are necessary in Europe about 2 years in advance. +++

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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