

How Did You Make Her Feel?

by the unknown Cabbie

Twenty years ago, I drove a cab for a living. It was a cowboy's life, a life for someone who wanted no boss. What I did not realize at the time, was that *every job* could and should also be a ministry.

Night Shift

Because I drove the night shift, my cab became a "sort of" confessional. I could not give absolution, but God willing, maybe I could make them feel better. Passengers climbed in, sat behind me in total anonymity, and told me about their lives. I encountered people whose lives amazed me, ennobled me, made me laugh, and also weep.

But, none touched me more than a woman I picked up late one August night. I was responding to a call from a small brick fourplex in a quiet part of town. I assumed I was being sent to pick up some partiers, or someone who had just had a fight with a lover, or a worker heading to an early shift at some factory for the industrial part of town.

When I arrived at 2:30 a.m., the building was dark except for one light in a ground floor window. Under these circumstances, many drivers would just honk once or twice, wait a bit, then drive away.

But, I had seen too many impoverished people who depended on taxis as their only means of transportation. Unless a situation smelled of danger, I always went to the door. I reasoned to myself that this passenger might be someone who needs my assistance. So, I walked to the door and knocked.

"Just a minute," answered a frail, elderly voice. I could hear something being dragged across the floor. After a long pause, the door opened.

A small woman in her 80s stood before me. She was wearing a print dress and a pillbox hat with a veil pinned on it, like somebody out of a 1940s movie. By her side was a small nylon suitcase.

The apartment looked as if no one had lived in it for years. All the furniture was covered with sheets. There were no clocks on the walls, and no knickknacks or utensils on the counters. In the corner, was a cardboard box filled with photos and glassware.

"Would you carry my bag out to the car?" she said. I took the suitcase to the cab, then returned to assist the woman. She took my arm and we walked slowly toward the curb. She kept thanking me for my kindness.

"It is nothing," I told her. "I just try to treat my passengers the way I would want my mother treated."

"Oh, you are such a good boy," she said. When we got in the cab, she gave me an address, then asked, "Could you drive through down-town?"

"It is not the shortest way," I answered quickly. "Oh, I do not mind," she said. "I am in no hurry. I am on my way to a hospice."

I looked in the rearview mirror. Her eyes were glistening. "I do not have any family left," she continued. "The doctor says I do not have very long."

I quietly reached over and shut off the meter. "What route would you like me to take?" I asked.

For the next two hours, we drove through the city. She showed me the building where she had once worked as an elevator operator. We drove through the neighborhood where she and her husband had lived when they were newlyweds. She had me pull up in front of a furniture warehouse that had once been a ballroom, where she had gone dancing as a girl. Sometimes she would ask me to slow in front of a particular building or corner, and would sit staring into the darkness, saying nothing.

As the first hint of sun was creasing the horizon, she suddenly said, "I am tired. Let us go now."

We drove in silence to the address she had given me. It was a low building, like a small convalescent home, with a driveway that passed under a portico.

Two orderlies came out to the cab as soon as we pulled up. They were solicitous and intent, watching her every move. They must have been expecting her.

I opened the trunk and took the small suitcase to the door. The woman was already seated in a wheelchair.

"How much do I owe you?" she asked, reaching into her purse. "Nothing," I said. "You have to make a living," she answered. "There are other passengers," I responded.

Almost without thinking, I bent and gave her a hug and a kiss. She held onto me tightly. "You gave an old woman a little moment of joy. Thank you," she said.

I squeezed her hand, then walked away into the dim morning light. Behind me, a door shut. It was the sound of the closing of a life. I did not pick up any more passengers that shift. I drove aimlessly, lost in thought. For the rest of that day, I could hardly talk.

What if that woman had gotten an angry driver, or one who was impatient to end his shift? What if I had refused to take the run, or had honked once, then driven away?

What Is Important In Life?

On a quick review, I do not think that I have done anything more important in my life. We are conditioned to think that our lives revolve around great moments. But great moments often catch us unaware, beautifully wrapped in what others may consider a small one.

People may not remember exactly what you did, or what you said, *but they will always remember how you made them feel.*

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Rescue on Father's Day

by Don Hawley,
Pocahontas, Illinois

It is the crisis firefighters worry about most — a child trapped in a burning house.

We ate a big breakfast at a local restaurant, like we did every Father's Day. Then off to church. The Pastor talked about how God is a father who never lets His children down. I wanted to be a father like that.

One of the presents my daughters gave me was a T-shirt emblazoned with the words "World's Coolest Dad." That was good enough for me.

After church, I put the shirt on. Then we planned to leave for a car show the next town over. That was also our tradition. Just like any other Father's Day. That's what made it so great.

Just as we headed out the front door, my volunteer fire-department pager went off. Nuts, I thought. Maybe it is just a brushfire and they will not need me.

The dispatcher's voice crackled: "Attention, Pocahontas-Old Ripley firefighters! House fire on Simpson Street. Repeat. House fire on Simpson Street."

"Gotta go," I said. I left my family on the front porch, ran to my car, jumped behind the wheel and took off. Again the dispatcher's voice: "There is a child inside. Repeat. *A child is trapped inside the house!*"

Hoping For A False Alarm

I drove to the firehouse, all the while hoping it would just be a false alarm. That happens a lot. We would get to a house fire and find everyone standing outside in the yard, safe.

I got to the firehouse in minutes. Another firefighter, Tom Smith, and the chief were waiting. "Tommy, Don, take truck two-five-three. Roll!" he ordered. "The rest of the guys will be right behind you."

Tommy and I threw on our fire retardant clothes and boots. "What do you think?" Tommy asked.

"False alarm, maybe?" But it was more of a hope than an opinion.

Tommy and I rolled in truck 253, siren ripping through the otherwise peaceful Sunday afternoon.

As the first on the scene, our job was to make sure everyone was out of the house, locate the nearest hydrant, then wait for backup.

And there was another backup. *Prayer. I always pray before going into a fire.* Our truck screeched around the corner onto Simpson Street.

A small crowd had gathered in front of number 907. They appeared agitated, almost panicky. Smoke billowed from the one-story house's open front door. Tommy grabbed the radio. "Truck two-five-three on scene. Advise all units: We have smoke; this is a working fire!" We lurched to a stop.

The bystanders swarmed us. "*The baby's inside!*" one yelled. "Do something, quick!"

First Tommy and I had to put on our air packs. We would not stand a chance without oxygen. Someone, a neighbor, I figured, stood in the doorway of the house holding a garden hose, a pathetic jet of water spurted in vain. A large man burst-through the door, sputtering and coughing, red eyes streaming with tears. "Please hurry!" he called. "My boy's still in there. I couldn't get to him!"

Tommy and I glanced at each other. I knew what he was thinking. No time to wait for backup. Together we raced toward the house.

We heard a voice behind us. Battalion Chief Steve Brown was on scene. Backup would be here soon. Steve yanked the garden hose from the neighbor and headed inside. "Let's move," he said.

An Inferno!

Tommy and I plunged through the doorway. Curtains of fire ate away at the walls and ceiling. The place was an inferno... and all we had was a garden hose! That would not cut it.

"Lord," I begged, "please get those other firefighters here on the double. Please shield us from the flames and lead us to that child. Please, don't let us die... especially not today."

Tommy and I worked as a pair. We got down on all fours. Every few seconds I reached out to touch Tommy or I felt him touch me. Maintain contact, I reminded myself. That is one of the first rules. Trying to find Tommy, if I lost him, would mean a delay... possibly death... for me, for Tommy, and for the child in the house.

The smoke quickly grew thicker until it was pitch-black. One thing you do not realize about a fire, until you are in one, is how loud the sound is. Flames roared in our ears. Pieces of ceiling smashed down on our backs. Ashes everywhere. The blistering heat sucked sweat from our skin.

"Anyone here?" I shouted. No answer. Tommy and I searched every inch of the first two rooms. No child. My hand knocked into a wall. We followed it down a hallway. I strained to see something through the smoke. I could not make out what it was, so I reached for it.

A table leg. Then a chair. Must be the dining room. Tommy and I felt all around under the table. Again nothing.

"Next room!" I shouted. I knew the layout of these houses. The only room that was left was the kitchen. We crawled from one end of it to the other.

"We Have To Get Out!"

Flames roared louder. How long before the roof collapses? "This is it!" I yelled to Tommy. "We have to get out!"

All at once a vision was put into my head — that father begging us to save his child. We couldn't give up. *Not today!*

I thought again. There still might be a chance. "All right, Lord," I prayed. "The pastor said this morning that You will never let Your children down. Well, Lord, there is a little boy somewhere in here who needs Your help... *and so do I.*"

I've Got Him!

I tapped Tommy on the arm and motioned him to follow. "Let's try here!" I shouted. I reached out. Thick black smoke flowed through my empty fingers. Then my hand landed on something. Another chair leg? No. Too thin. I squeezed gently. Soft. It felt like... an arm. "Tommy, *I've got him! I've got him!*"

I snatched the boy up in one arm and frantically waved ahead of me with the other, half crawling, half crouching. *Stay low. Move fast.*

My breathing was a roar inside my fire hood. Sweat blinded me. It didn't much matter. I couldn't see anything anyway.

Tommy kept close behind, tapping me again and again. I was out the front door before I could make out a glimpse of daylight. I stood up and ran with the boy to a safe distance. I put him down on the lawn... his face gray, his body limp, his chest still.

Breathe!

He could not have been more than two years old. I tore off my mask and started mouth-to-mouth resuscitation. *Breathe!*

Finally he sputtered and took a breath. Then another. Slowly color rose in his face. Our EMTs started him on oxygen and loaded him into our ambulance. It looked like he would make it.

Once the fire was under control, Tommy and I stripped off our gear and sat in the shade of a maple, drinking some of the ice water that a neighbor had given to us. I looked down at myself. I still had on my new "Coolest Dad" T-shirt.

Filthiest dad was more like it. Those black stains would never come out. "Look at this shirt," I said, out loud. "You can hardly see what it says anymore."

The neighbor who had given us water just smiled. "That's all right," he said. "Today you guys gave another dad the greatest gift anyone ever could... the life of his son. Praise God for sending you, and His goodness to us. *He never lets His children down!*" +++

Satan's Opposition to *The Life of St. Joseph*

by John M. Haffert

J think that Satan played a trick on me, one he often plays to set people against each other. This time it was to set me against the new 400 page biography of St. Joseph had been published by the 101 Foundation.

It was the trick of being convinced about something that is not true. It is a trick played on almost all of us at one time or another, and often we are victims when someone may misunderstand something we have said resulting in conflicts, sometimes in the loss of friendships, and even family relationships.

But this time it was against *The Life of St. Joseph*, to which I will refer below as the LIFE... a book Satan had been trying to suppress for two hundred years!

It Seemed Certain

Although I actually played a part in encouraging Dr. Turton and the 101 Foundation to print the book, I was very disturbed on reading, at its very beginning, that St. Joseph had been born "after his parents had been childless, and had prayed many years." I concluded that what was being said was that St. Joseph was an only child.

But Jesus Had Cousins!

But we know from Scripture that James and Jude were cousins of Jesus. They had to have been born on Joseph's side of the family, because Our Lady was an only child. And, Maria Valtorta says that the father of James and Jude was the brother of St. Joseph.

His name was Alphaeus, and his wife Mary (the mother of the two apostles) was the Mary of Alphaeus, who was with Our Lady at the foot of the cross.

I was plagued by this doubt when, on the actual Feast of St. Joseph, I read the book again. To my surprise, I found that there were

three words I had missed the first time. The LIFE actually reads:

"God permitted, *for a time*, that the marriage of the parents of St. Joseph should prove unfruitful, for He wished Joseph to a child obtained though prayerful entreaty." I had missed the words "for a time."

At once I realized that it is to be expected that a couple childless for a number of years would make sacrifices and pray for this favor. And when, after a long wait, one child comes, often another follows.

From other sources we can see that Alphaeus, the brother of St. Joseph, was younger than he. His parents must have been advanced in years, because there is no mention of them, even when Joseph, at the age of 30, was espoused to Our Lady and brought Her to Nazareth.

When St. Joseph died at the age of 61, Alphaeus would have been in his early fifties.

A Good Lesson

This may seem trivial but it is not. Satan tries to deceive all of us, and he would do just about anything to prevent us from reading such a marvelous book as *The Life of St. Joseph*. It was *revealed by Our Lord Himself to a holy Benedictine Abbess over two hundred years ago!*

Another Lesson

And there is another lesson. Many times we are convinced that a certain person has deceived us, or certain writings or persons cannot be believed, because we have been tricked (either by our faulty nature or by Satan, or both) into misconstruing something written or said.

We ourselves are often victims of such machinations of the enemy of souls! Satan needs only to sow a doubt in order to spoil for us a message which could change our lives.

If you have not yet read this revelation by Jesus to the Abbess Maria C. Baij, on *The Life of Saint Joseph*, I encourage you to obtain this great treasure and read it. You will be blessed and happy to have discovered it. +++

What is Love Without Sex?

by Fr. George Amaro, IMC

Working and living for God often requires love without sex. There is an unexplainable freedom in it, and the liberation from one's passions is a marvelous thing. To be free is a great treasure.

To be sure, the Holy Spirit fills us with His love, and thus, celibacy becomes doable, if not even easy. It is immeasurably preferable than the consequences of sin, which is slavery to one's passions, and the loss and grace of God. It requires that one be in love with "the Greater Good," which is also Jesus.

Heros Of Westerns

When I was a little boy, I loved to watch Westerns. Now, looking back, it is clear to me that those movies influenced, and even shaped my future as a missionary for Jesus Christ.

You might ask: What in the world does a missionary and a hero cowboy have in common? Actually, they are not that different. They share a common vision, and their mysticism is realized in similar ways.

Most of the Westerns follow a similar story pattern: The hero cowboy is riding towards a town. When he arrives, he finds out that something is wrong. The streets are empty and people are hiding behind their windows. There is a sense of panic in the air as they suspiciously spy on him, watching him as he moves towards the saloon. There, he meets the outlaws that have overpowered the town's people and have killed the sheriff.

One of the outlaws approaches him and challenges him. From the confrontation, it is evident to everyone that the hero cowboy is a tough guy, and unlike many others in the town, he is not easily intimidated.

Then, walking out of the saloon unshaken and composed, the cowboy meets the town folks, and by listening

to them, he slowly learns about their desperate situation. He inspires hope and courage in them, and together they begin to work towards the liberation of the town.

Oftentimes, a local town's woman falls in love with the hero cowboy, and their love story unfolds simultaneously with the work of liberation. Eventually, the long awaited day arrives. Together with the town's people, the cowboy defeats the outlaws and drives them away.

In some Westerns, it is then that the town's people come to thank the hero cowboy, only to find that he is already gone. Only his silhouette on the horizon, against the light of the sunset, can be seen.

In other movies, the hero cowboy remains just long enough to bid good-bye to the people that he has loved, and for whom he has risked his life. They want him to be their new sheriff, but he refuses. He is neither looking to settle down in the town, or to marry the woman who loves him. He is offered power, money, and love.

What else can a man wish for under the sun? Yet, he refuses it all and does not stay. He is married to adventure and risk, in the name of justice and peace. If he remained in this town, others would not be liberated.

A Universal Love

Like the cowboy, the missionary loves universally. The whole world is his motherland, and humanity is his home. He hungers for justice and thirsts for peace, and those are found only in Christ.

For these things, he devotes every moment of his life and stands ready to sacrifice all of it in the face of injustice and misery. Over the course of his entire life, the missionary struggles to love everyone freely, equally, and non-exclusively. His goal is not to belong to any one person, but to be one with everyone, as a reflection of Christ.

In today's society, which puts so much emphasis on sex, and where masculinity has become a synonym for one's sexual performance, a missionary, like Jesus,

brings to the stage a non-erotic way of loving. *In a world where so many people seek sex without love, missionaries strive to love without sex.* And that becomes wonderful!

Although today's society tends to put "sex" on the same level as other physical needs, such as eating and drinking, the right perspective is that sexual intercourse is not so much a need of human beings as individuals, but a need of the human race to survive. Therefore, an individual *does not need* the act of sexual intercourse, to preserve, affirm, or increase his or her masculinity or femininity.

Happiness Is A Result of Love

No person will ever reach full maturity as a human being if he is not loved unconditionally during his childhood, and then manages to love unconditionally when he becomes an adult. Without this basic psychological maturity, a person cannot find happiness. It is always the consequence of something good or something bad that one does to others.

Therefore, a person will not attain happiness by acting upon himself. Instead, he has to act for others. The more one looks for his own happiness, the less he is likely to find it. When a person starts to look for another's happiness, then he will most certainly find his own, too, because, "to live is to love."

A missionary also has his own way to realize the natural vocation of becoming a parent. He does not do so by bringing more children into the world by procreation, but by raising and educating those who already exist. It can be said of the missionary, what was said of Jesus: "He passes through this world doing good."

In his book, *The Prophet*, K. Gibran gives an apt description of a "could well-be" profile of a missionary. "Before departing from the town of Orfalis, a man named Almustafa says: 'We globetrotters, looking for the way of solidarity, do not begin a new day where we have finished the previous one, and no dawn will ever find us in the same place where sunset has left us.'" +++

Miraculous Medal Split the Bullet

by Kate Pipkin
Catholic News Service, Baltimore

If she had not been wearing her Miraculous Medal, 53-year-old Lennis Fewster of Shrine of the Little Flower Parish in Baltimore, might not be alive today. The Miraculous Medal was the only thing that came between her heart and a thief's bullet.

The incident began about 1:30 p.m. on Aug. 9, her birthday. She was waiting for a bus in Baltimore, on her way home from her part-time job at a public library. She was silently praying the Rosary as she stood at the bus stop.

Suddenly a thief, trying to grab her pocketbook, yanked her around as she clutched the pocket-book. Then she heard a loud crack.

"I thought he just set off a fire-cracker or something like that to scare me," Ms. Fewster said. "I did not realize that he had shot me."

When she still refused to give over her pocketbook, the thief punched her in the stomach and knocked her to the ground. At that point he got the pocketbook and ran off.

Still unaware she had been shot, she climbed unsteadily to her feet and went back to the library to get help. It was not until she arrived there that she noticed blood and knew she had been hurt. Paramedics soon arrived and took her to Johns Hopkins Hospital. The Miraculous Medal had been split in two by the bullet, and the bottom half was embedded in her chest. The doctor said the medal saved her life. She was barely hurt. The police recovered Ms. Fewster's Rosary and a bullet casing at the bus stop.

"I think this was more than just coincidence," she said. "I learned, again, that Mary is protecting me."

Dates Back To 1832

The Miraculous Medal dates back to 1832, when the first medals were

struck from instructions received by St. Catherine Laboure in a vision in 1830 in Paris, France.

On the front of the medal, Mary stands upon a globe, crushing a serpent under Her feet. The reverse side shows a cross on a bar surmounting a capital M, and the hearts of Jesus and Mary. St. Catherine said a voice told her that, "*Those wearing a medal bearing these images will receive great graces.*"

So many remarkable favors were associated with the medal, originally called the Medal of the Immaculate Conception, that it quickly was labeled "miraculous." Soon devotions linked to the Miraculous Medal were approved by the church.

The Rosary Every Day

Ms. Fewster is a member of the Blue Army, an international organization of Roman Catholics who 1) pray the Rosary daily, 2) wear the Brown Scapular, 3) confess monthly, on or near the First Saturday, 4) and offer their Communion and a 15 minute meditation on that day, in reparation for sins committed against Mary's Immaculate Heart.

Mrs. Fewster said, "I also pray for the thief. He needs a lot of help." Her favorite words from the Miraculous Medal novena are: "Ever while wearing it, may we be blessed by Your loving protection." +++

Good Advice

If you are persecuted, let them say all they have to say. When they have said all they have to say, there will be no more to be said, and they will be silent. (Cure of Ars)

Nothing afflicts the Heart of Jesus so much as to see all His sufferings of no avail to so many. (Cure of Ars)

There is but one road which reaches God... and that is PRAYER.

If anyone shows you another, you are being deceived. (St. Teresa of Avila)

Pray the Rosary every day. (Our Lady of Fatima)

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Pio's Social Action

from *The Life of Padre Pio*, pp 178-9
by Gennaro Prezioso

We know Padre Pio as a man of prayer and a man of suffering, but few know him as well as a man of intense social action.

Various sects were very active in proselytizing the Italian people. One of these groups wanted to build a meeting hall near the friary in San Giovanni Rotondo, but they ran into obstacles. They finally settled in the district of Sant' Onofrio. In a short time, they had constructed a place for their gatherings and for organizing their campaign for the "reeducation" of the people. They also opened a kindergarten.

Padre Pio suffered very much as a result of those developments. He knew, for example, that the children were exposed to virulent criticism of the faith and rejection of the Madonna. Red with indignation, he went to the superior, and said: "Do something quickly! Go in my name to the archbishop and get permission to open a kindergarten right near theirs. And, do not be afraid! The Madonna will be with you."

Padre Carmelo went to Archbishop Andrea Cesarano and he got the permission, but he was still perplexed and confused. Once more Padre Pio went on the offensive and promised to pray, saying that it was necessary to do and act as Moses did.

The school was opened in a rented locale and was later transferred to the residence of the Capuchin Sisters, who had come from Sicily. As a result, the offending group had to close their kindergarten and move to another area. Then, through the efforts of Padre Pio, a third school, *Pace e Bene*, was opened in that same place... and not only a kindergarten, but a professional training school for girls.

Thus, Padre Pio carried on the attack, not only with prayers, but with action. His example prompted some of his spiritual children to say:

"Now is the hour to leave the warmth of the sacristy and fight like lions!" Padre Pio's activity in the social sphere was supernaturally motivated and evangelically justified.

It Is Necessary To Act!

One day he noticed a long line of young people at the friary. When he asked who they were, he was told that they were unemployed young people who had come to the friary asking for help. Padre Pio was surprised and indignant. "What! Young people only twenty years old begging for alms? And, when are they going to work?"

Then, going to the superior, he said: "It would be better if you would teach them an art or a trade. Do something! Go to our friends in Rome. It is absolutely necessary to act."

Padre Carmelo encountered any number of obstacles and difficulties, but with the help of Padre Pio, he was able to overcome them, one by one. On January 26, 1958, thanks to a concession by the military, a professional training school was opened on the site of the Amendola airfield. Later the school was moved into new and more ample quarters, so that it was able to provide employment for hundreds of young men from the region.

Padre Pio also inspired a number of other enterprises. Among them were: a cooperative for foodstuffs, a cenacle for Franciscan culture, a center for auto repair, a monastery for Capuchin nuns, a monumental Via Crucis, a home for old people, a hospital of the relief of suffering, schools for handicapped children, and more. All of these activities were the result of his exceptional apostolate and his ardent charity.

We, also, must pray and act to help others who are in spiritual or social need. God provides that *a cause is always before us*. He gives us an opportunity to practice charity in prayer *and* social action. Let us remember that at Garabandal, Our Lady said that when the Warning occurs, *our sins of omission will be the most prevalent*. +++

Seven Habits of Highly Apostolic Catholics

by Fr. C. J. McCloskey
from *The Medjugorje Sentinel*, #61, 3/04

Sanctification is a work of a lifetime and it requires our determined effort to cooperate with God's sanctifying grace coming through the sacraments. It should be our first priority in life, because our place in eternity depends upon it.

It means putting God first in our daily activities, and to make doing that an habitual practice. It also means helping others to realize the importance of this wonderful and deeply satisfying life-style, which is also known as evangelization.

God expects this behavior of us. Whenever it is possible, we are to teach others. Also, we are always to set a good example before them.

Work At One At A Time

If all these religious practices are not yet included in your daily living, work on one thing at a time. Begin to incorporate that devotion into your life. When you accomplish one goal, then start working on another.

It is not difficult, as God and all of Heaven will help you, but you must sincerely begin and pray for Heaven's help. If you ask, God, the angels, and the saints will be pleased to assist you. The seven *daily* habits towards holiness that I propose are these:

- 1) The Morning Offering; 2) The Angelus; 3) Mass and Holy Communion; 4) The Rosary; 5) Spiritual Reading; 6) Mental Prayer, 7) and an Examination of Conscience.

If you want to bring Christ to others through your friendship, these are your tools. All the saints incorporated all these habits, in one way or another, into their daily routine. Your goal is to be like them,

contemplative in the middle of the world.

Growing in these habits is a gradual process. These habits cannot be acquired on the run. They must be done when we are most alert, in a place without distractions, where it is easy to put ourselves in God's presence and address Him.

You might say that you do not have the time to do this, *but nothing is more important*. God rewards those who put Him first, and the reward comes in three specific ways.

Our Lord will multiply our time as He multiplied those few loaves and fishes that fed the multitude. "How?" you might ask. 1) He will bring us helpers when we need them, 2) He will allow us to make better decisions and make fewer mistakes, 3) He will give us fewer problems.

1) *The Morning Offering* — Kneel down and using your own words or a formula, briefly offer up all the day ahead for God's glory.

As Blessed Josemaria Escriva explained it: "Conquer yourself each day *from the very first moment*, giving yourself and the entire day to God. If, with the help of God, you conquer yourself in the moment, you have accomplished a great deal for the rest of the day."

2) *The Angelus* — This takes but a few moments. Each day in the morning, at noon, and in the evening, just stop what you are doing to pray the Angelus or Regina Coeli (Easter season) to Mary.

This custom, which goes back centuries, is a wonderful way to greet Our Lady. We meditate on the universal greatest act of humility, the Incarnation; the universal greatest act of sacrifice, His Passion and Death; and the universal greatest act of victory, the Resurrection of Our Lord, which gives meaning to our entire existence.

3) *Mass and Holy Communion* — This is the most important habit (see Jn 6:22-65), the most intimate act possible to people. There we encounter the living Christ, and participate in the renewal of His sacrifice for us.

As Pope John Paul II has said: "The Eucharist is the living and lasting center around which the entire community of the Church gathers."

4) *Pray the Rosary* — Meditate on the mysteries in the life of Our Lord and Our Lady. The Rosary is a habit that, once acquired, one usually has a strong desire not to break.

Requested in *EVERY* Apparition

In every major Marian apparition, *Our Lady has requested the recitation of the Rosary*. She knows its power to help save our souls, and to save the entire world. Take Her word for it that the Rosary is powerful against Satan, and is one of our most important means of defeating him.

Repeating words of love to Mary and offering up each decade for Her, or our, intentions is the shortcut to Jesus. He cannot refuse Her anything.

5) *Spiritual Reading* — Spend a few minutes of systematic study of the Bible, and also a classic book of Catholic spirituality recommended by a spiritual person, or a book or an article placed into your hands somehow by the Holy Spirit.

Over the course of the years, we will read the life of Christ many times and acquire the wisdom of the saints by reading dozens of books that enlighten our intellect with ideas we can put into action.

6) *Mental Prayer during the day* — This can be done at various times of the day, but it good to set a specific time that you just relax, say for 15 minutes, with Jesus. Over time you may want to augment this with an extra 15 minutes at other times during the day.

Prayer is simply a one-on-one conversation with Jesus, preferably before the Blessed Sacrament in the tabernacle.

Speak silently about what is on your mind and in your heart. Acquire the habit of listening carefully for what Jesus is telling you, asking of you, and what He wants to give

to you. Do not be surprised to discover that *He is actually talking to you*. It is a wonderful realization.

7) *Examination of Conscience* — It is best said at night before going to bed. Sit down, call on the Holy Spirit for light, then go over your day in God's presence, asking if you behaved as a child of God at home, at work, with your friends.

Look, too, into one particular area which you know you need to improve. Then make an Act of Gratitude for all the good you have done and an Act of Contrition for those areas in which you have willfully failed.

These habits, lived well, give us the strength we need to obey the second part of the great commandment: "to love our neighbor as ourselves."

We are on earth, as was the Lord, "to serve and not to be served." This can only be achieved by our gradual transformation into another Christ through prayer and the sacraments. To live the seven habits will enable us to become holy and apostolic. +++

A Prayer Away

by Fr. Edwin J Duffy
from *Fr. Duffy's Reflections*, p. 36

During World War II, the buses in Honolulu were overly crowded due to the military presence. A soldier, trying to exit, had his foot caught in the center door. The bus started, and all he could do was hop on one foot with nothing to hold onto. The bus picked up speed, and he knew he was going to die. He yelled, "God help me!"

A woman, who saw the impending tragedy, screamed and frantically waved her arms at the bus driver. The bus stopped. The door opened and the soldier's foot was released. He went to Our Lady of Peace Cathedral to give thanks. The old axiom holds true; "God is never more than a prayer away." God helped him. +++

April 22, 1984, in Akita, Japan

In the Japanese village of Akita, a statue of the Blessed Mother, according to the testimony of more than 500 Christians and non-Christians, including the Buddhist mayor of the town, had shed blood, sweat, and tears.

A nun, Sister Agnes Katsuko Sasagawa, received the stigmata and messages from Our Lady. Sr. Agnes is now in her mid 70ys.

Most Rev. John Shojiro Ito, Bishop of Niigata, Japan, after extensive investigation, declared that events of Akita, Japan, to be of supernatural origin, and authorized throughout the entire diocese, the veneration of the Holy Mother of Akita.

On April 22, 1984, after eight years of investigations, and after consultation with the Holy See, the messages of Our Lady of Akita were approved by Bishop Ito. +++



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 repre-

Pilgrimage Program:

SEND FOR COMPLETE ITINERAR-
RIES

Shrines of *Italy* — Wed., May 10, to Fri., May 26, 2006 (17 days) \$2899. Visit **Milan, San Damiano, Montichiari, Fontanelle** (Rosa Mystica), **Padua, Venice, Florence, Siena, Cotrone, Assisi, Loreto, Osimo, San Giovanni Rotondo, St. Michael's Cave, Pietrelcina, Mugnano** (St. Philomena), **Pompeii, Rome, & Civitavecchia.** +++

Poland Shrine Tour — Sat., June 10, to Fri., June 23, 2006 (14 days), \$2749. Includes **Warsaw, Zoliborz, Krakow** (Corpus Christi Procession), **Niapolonow, Zakopane, Zelazowa Wola, Wagnivniki** (Divine Mercy Center), **Wadowice** (birthplace of John Paul II), **Kalwari Zebrzydowska**, and the beautiful Shrine at **Lechen.** +++

Fatima — Marian Conference and Retreat. (Topic: *Our Lady and the Reality of Heaven, Hell, & Purgatory.*) **International guest speakers.** Fri., July 7, to Friday, July 14, 2006 (8 days), \$1799 (Land only, \$1299.) July 13 anniversary celebration. +++

Fatima and Lourdes — Thur., July 20 to Sat., Aug. 5, 2006 (18 days) \$2799. Our most popular pilgrimage. Feast Day visit to **Santiago Compostella** (Shrine of St. James), **Pontevedra, Zaragosa, Avila, Braga, Santarem, Covadonga, Fatima, Ovieto, Lourdes, Garabandal, etc.** +++

Ireland — Sat., Aug. 12, to Thurs., Aug. 24, 2006 (13 days) \$2399. **Knock, Inchigeela, Ballinspittle, Melleray Grotto, Attymass** (Fr. Patrick Peyton), **Achill House of Prayer, Dublin,** & time with visionary Tom Lennon. +++

France — Mon., Sept 11, 2006, to Wed., Sept. 27 (17 days), \$2899. Visit **Paris, Chartres, Paray-le-Monial, La Salette, Ars, Chateauneuf-de-Galaure St. Baume, Lisieux, Pellevoisin, Nevers, Lourdes, Normandie, Mont St. Michel, Pontmain, Carcasson & more.** +++

Medjugorje & Prague — Mon., Nov. 6 to Wed., Nov. 15, 2006 (10 days), \$1499. (One day in Prague.) +++

Guadalupe, Mexico — for Feast Day celebrations. Dec. 6 thru 13, 2006 (8 days) \$1499 (Land only, \$1099). 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.** +++

Medjugorje & Prague — Mon., March 5 to Wed., March 14, 2007 (10 days), \$1499. (One day in Prague.) +++

Betania, Venezuela — Tues., March 20, to Mon. March 26, 2007, (7 days) \$1689. We will be there for the March 25 anniversary celebration. +++

Fatima — Mon., April 23, to Mon., April 30, 2007 (8 days) \$1399. Visit **Aljustral, Lisbon, Santarem, Coimbra, Fatima, Ourem,** and the Shrine of Our Lady of Nazareth at **Nazare.** +++

WHITE MARTYRDOM PEACE FLIGHT, Oct. 5 to Oct. 23, 2007, (19 days) \$4499 (if deposit is paid by 12/31/06). We visit Fatima, Rome, Turkey, Lebanon, the Holy Land, Medjugorje, & Lourdes. +++

Germany, Austria, & Switzerland—(Passion Play) **Ulm,** 2008, \$3399, **Oberammergau,** in 2010, \$3699. +++

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.

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

Write for information regarding the
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