

# Echoes from Lourdes

## Dear Friends of the Lourdes Center,

The time has come to say good-bye. I have been feeling poorly of late; and when my skin color took on a jaundiced look, I knew it was time to see a doctor. A CAT-scan and an endoscopic ultrasound revealed that I have pancreatic cancer.

Those of you who know even a little about pancreatic cancer are aware that ahead of me lies a rough patch of road to cross. Once across, I will either be restored to good health or on my way to Heaven. Though hopeful that an operation coupled with chemotherapy and radiation will restore me to health, I am ready for Heaven.

I wish I had time to say good-bye personally, but by the time you read this letter I will have already left the parish for my treatments in Boston. I have been your pastor for the last eight years, and these years have been some of the



happiest of my life. I know so many of you by name. I will carry you away with me in my heart and I promise to pray for your needs and concerns every day. I also ask you to pray for me.

Now let me share with you my spiritual view of this upheaval in my life. I remember once when I returned to my car from shopping

at a mall. I saw that my right rear tire was flat. The rain was pouring down. I hadn't changed a flat tire since I was a teenager. I looked up to the heavens and glared. My thoughts were, "Lord, how could you allow such an awful thing to happen to me!" I didn't hear any inner voice but I did have a clear inner thought. "Ronald, I never promised that you would never have to change a flat tire in the pouring rain. What I promised is that you would never be alone. I will always be with you." I managed to get the jack under the car and to change the flat. And I did it with a grateful heart, knowing that I did it in the company of Jesus.

Changing that flat tire in the rain was a turning point in my spiritual life. I learned then that no matter what befell me on the road of life, Jesus would be there walking along at my side. And so, when bad things happen, I

### New Web-Site!



The Lourdes Center now has a web-site. Please visit [www.LourdesCenter.org](http://www.LourdesCenter.org) to read *Echoes from Lourdes*, order Lourdes Water, share your testimony and submit prayer intentions. Enjoy!

remember that night. I don't expect to be spared the bumps and ruts in the road of life. I do, however, expect Jesus to be there with me.

When I got the personally catastrophic news from my doctor that I had a malignant tumor on my pancreas, for me it was just another flat tire in the pouring rain along the road of life. Jesus, my Teacher and Friend, would be there with me, keeping me company, loving me, and guiding me through the dark that has descended.

Once across this rough patch, I hope to be restored to health. If this rough patch, however, turns out to be the end of the road for me, I am not afraid. I have tried to live close to the heart of Jesus, and to love Him. From my preaching, you are familiar with my personal vision of death. In Jesus, at my baptism I became God's child, with the right to call God, Abba — Father, Daddy; to call Jesus not only my Savior and Friend, but my Brother. In love God called me into being, He has called me to serve Him and His children as a priest. I have been singularly blessed to be called to a life in which through prayer and the sacraments I have come to know and to experience the intimacy of God's tender love.

Death for me, therefore, is simply going back home to be with my Abba who loved me into being and who wants me to bask happily in His joyful and loving presence forever.

Jesus has told us the Parable of the Prodigal Son. From that parable I understand death to be a returning to the Father's home. He will welcome me with open arms, hug me to His breast, forgive all my sins, make me holy and whole, and invite me to His feast.

Pray for me, therefore, that if my Father in Heaven in His wisdom thinks recovery is best for me, His will be done; and if my Father in Heaven thinks it is time to call me home, my mission on earth over, that I may go with hope and faith in my Savior who loves me and gave Himself up for me.

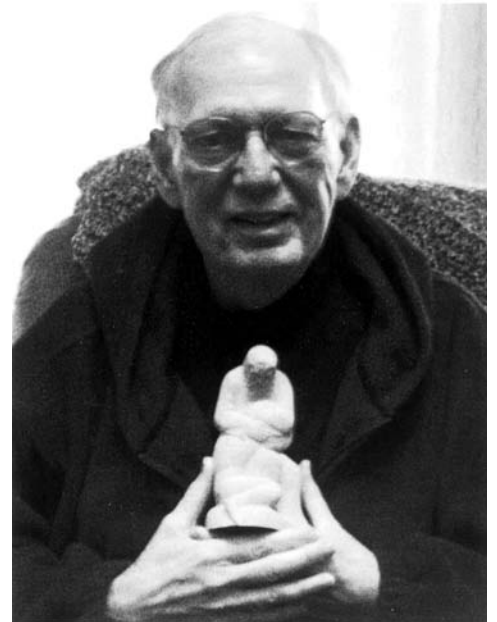
Let me conclude this letter by sharing with you a blessing that my niece sent to me, upon learning of my condition.

I pray that you will have the blessing of being consoled and sure about your own death. May you know in your souls that there is no need to be afraid. When your time comes, may you be given every blessing and shelter that you need. May there be a beautiful welcome for you in the home that you are going to. You are not going somewhere strange. You are going back to the home that you never left. May you have a wonderful urgency to live your life to the full. May you live compassionately and creatively and transfigure everything that is negative within you and around you. When you come to die may it be after a long life. May you be peaceful and happy in the presence of those who really care for you. May your going be sheltered and your welcome assured. May your soul smile in the embrace of your dear Jesus, your Soul Friend.

And so, good-bye, dear friends. Good-bye is a blessing, you know, and it means "God be with you." And may I add, "Until we meet again," for one day we shall joyfully greet one another again when the love of Jesus Christ, which conquers all things will conquer even death itself.

In Jesus who loves and saves us,  
*Fr. Ron Saunders, S.M.*

*(Editors Note: Fr. Ron Saunders, S.M. passed away on August 17, 2005. He will be remembered for his love for people, joyful spirituality, and devotion to Our Lady of Lourdes.)*



**Rev. Ronald Joseph Saunders, S.M.**  
**October 12, 1931 - August 17, 2005**

**Available from  
the Lourdes Center**

- Crystal Rosaries  
(with water from Lourdes)  
(rose, blue, clear  
black).....\$6.85
- Brown or Green  
Scapulars.....2.00
- O.L. Lourdes or  
St. Bernadette pins.....3.50
- Lourdes Grotto medal  
and chain.....3.00

## Readers Write:

**PA:** This letter and this donation are both long over due and should have been written years ago. I owe so much to Jesus Christ, Our Mother of Perpetual Help, and the water from Lourdes for so many favors granted to me over the years. Since 1989 I have had three cancer operations, one hernia operation, one carotid artery operation, and pneumonia. I am now 72 years of age and have the normal pains and aches of a 72 year old man. I have been using Lourdes Water on almost a continual basis since 1989, and I will continue to do so as long as possible. Once again I wish to thank Our Lord and God in Heaven, Our Blessed Mother, and the Lourdes Center for supplying the Lourdes Water **G.B**

**FL:** Enclosed is a small gift in thanksgiving to Our Blessed Mother for being with me for my mammogram. My test came out well. Please say some prayers for my daughter who is terminal. Pray that she will not suffer too much. **L.V.**

**LA:** Please accept the enclosed gift from me. I was very close to having kidney dialysis and used the Lourdes Water, and said the Lourdes Prayer to Our Lady and promised to send a gift if I did not have to go on dialysis. I went back to the doctor and six weeks later my kidney function had gone from 10% up to 34% function. Thank you Blessed Mother and all of you for your prayers. **S.G.**

**MD:** Enclosed is a gift promised to Our Lady of Lourdes, as well as to her mother St. Anne and the blessed Kateri Tekakwitha for watching over us during the purchase and move into a wonderful new home, and

selling of our previous home. During this stressful time I almost fell asleep at the wheel while driving on three separate occasions due to exhaustion. Twice when my two young sons were with me, but due to the intercession of those in heaven we avoided accidents each time. I am forever grateful. **D.W.**

**MA:** I recently had a small disaster in my house. I worked night and day to clean it and restore it to its previous good condition. During that period of restoration I prayed to Our Lady of Lourdes. She answered my prayers. Yesterday the fire department inspected my home and gave it a clean bill of health! Please continue to pray for my special intentions, my children's happiness and peace of mind **J.G.**

**MA:** I am writing to request Lourdes Water on behalf of my family and friends who are ill and would greatly benefit from it. I heard about the miraculous healing power of the Lourdes Water from a friend who has now fully recovered from his illness. Enclosed please find a donation which I hope is acceptable. **L.C.**

**TX:** Thank you for all that you do at the Lourdes Center. For about two years I had a spot on my left breast. Screening diagnostics and a mammogram were conducted after the first time it was suspected. After a second screening the spot was smaller, and the last time about a month ago it was not even visible. I remember putting Lourdes Water on the location of the spot. This is the second time Our Lady of Lourdes and the Lourdes Water has blessed me. May God bless all of you. **I.S.**

**OH:** I had successful lung cancer surgery on July 12th and I used Lourdes Water daily and prayed to Our Lady of Lourdes. I take chemotherapy and pray to Our Lady of Lourdes for successful treatment. I am grateful for every favor granted by Our Lady of Lourdes. **N.R.**

## Affiliations – for Living



**Remembrance in 50 Masses  
yearly and at our  
weekly Perpetual Novena**  
(Please Print Clearly)

Requested by:

Offering: 1 year \$2.00, 3 years \$5.00  
Lifetime \$10.00

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

## Lourdes Water...

**...is an expression  
of my faith...  
my trust in God's mercy.**

Offering to cover shipping & handling \$ \_\_\_\_\_

N.B. A donation of \$2.00 per bottle is suggested to cover our expenses. When the offering permits, we use Priority Mail. We will accept orders of 1-3-5-6-and 10 bottles. For multiples thereof and for unusual numbers requested, we reserve the right to send what is both just and feasible.

Please send \_\_\_\_\_ bottles of the water from the Shrine at Lourdes

Name (Please Print Clearly) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Does this person receive the "Echoes from Lourdes?"  Yes  No  
If not, should we send the "Echoes?"  Yes  No

PLEASE ALLOW 3-6 WEEKS FOR DELIVERY

## Our Deceased

LOUISE D. WALSH, LA  
 JOSEPH H. FINKEN, MN  
 SR. CLAIRE AREL, MN  
 CATHERINE SALARCZYK, PA  
 WALTER SCHAETZLEIN, OH  
 METZEL SIMMONS, IN  
 RICHARD GILLESPIE, PA  
 ALBERTA LE CLERE, IN  
 ETHEL E. ROHR, NY  
 MARY SULFSTED, OH  
 JEANNETTE SEARLES, MA  
 TILLIE KOSTELECKY, ND  
 ERLINDA D. FERNANDEZ, CA  
 EDWARD DESPARS, CA  
 CHARLES PAWLOWICZ, IL  
 SOPHIE PAWLOWICZ, IL  
 LEO GIARD, MA  
 EMMA J. BREINDEL, PA  
 GEORGE VIDA, PA  
 EMELIA BUCHKO, IN

EVELYN M. FITZPATRICK, MN  
 ELSIE LORENZO, TX  
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 HELEN KOLSON, WI  
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 CAMILLA RIMOLDI, CA  
 HELEN TAYLOR, WA  
 DORIS KELLER, OH  
 KAREN LEWIS, IN

## Together in our Prayers

Please remember my intentions on:

- October 10th  
Holy Rosary
- November 1st  
Holy Souls
- Thursday: Perpetual Novena  
to Our Lady of Lourdes
- First Fridays: Cancer and  
Life-threatening diseases
- At Daily Masses:  
(Living and Deceased)

Intentions

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Name

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Address

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City

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State

Zip

- Please indicate here if offering is enclosed. Thank you. God Bless.

## The Charitable Gift Annuity

### *The Gift that Gives... to You!*

The Lourdes Center now offers Charitable Gift Annuities.

Receive an income for life while contributing to the Lourdes Center.

For information on how a Charitable Gift Annuity may benefit you and the

Lourdes Center, please email the Marist Fathers: [marist@charter.net](mailto:marist@charter.net)

or call at 508-879-7223.

## Echoes from Lourdes

Published monthly to promote devotion of Our Lady and interest in her shrine at Lourdes.

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 Printed with Ecclesiastical Approval

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