

echoes

FROM LOURDES

A PUBLICATION OF THE LOURDES CENTER ♦ MARIST FATHERS AND BROTHERS

JANUARY - FEBRUARY, 2018
VOL. IX NO. III



The Cross
is God's
Valentine
to us



FR. GEORGE SZAL, S.M.

Have you noticed that Valentine's Day falls on Ash Wednesday this year? Imagine that, the day of love, candy, flowers and red hearts lands on the same day that we begin 40 days penance, fasting, and almsgiving in preparation for Easter? However, both are feasts of love. According to legend, St. Valentine (whose name means worthy, strong or powerful) was a priest martyred for the faith at around 270 AD. Apparently the emperor really got upset when Valentine tried to convert him too and had him beheaded.

Real love is sacrificial. It involves the decision to give up our own plans for comfort and security – even to the point of giving our lives away – that another person may live. Ask any mom. So, when God humbles himself to become one of us so that we might enjoy eternal life with him, and willingly accepts rejection, torture and death for our sake, that's real love. The Cross is God's Valentine to us. The question is, what are we going to do about it?

Some people have asked why Lourdes water doesn't always do miracles. The answer is that the Blessed Mother never said it was. She simply told Bernadette,

Real Love Hurts

"Drink at the spring and wash in it." Obediently, Bernadette did this. Although a few others were healed after using the water, Bernadette never was. She suffered from asthma for almost her whole life and died painfully of bone cancer at the age of 35.

Since 1860 about 200 million pilgrims have visited Lourdes and used the waters. In all of that time there have been only 68 investigated and certified cures and only 7,000 have been documented. This does not include the thousands of undocumented cures that occurred there, or those received in other places. It does not include the inner healings and conversions of hearts – "*moral miracles*."

The moral miracles are the most important. Only about 15 miracles that Jesus did are recorded in the Gospels. In fact, there were times when he could not or refused to perform a miracle, as in his hometown of Nazareth (Lk. 4:23), for King Herod (Lk. 2:6), because of their lack of faith. In the Bible miracles are done to help the faith of others. When St. Peter healed a lame man in the name of Jesus 5,000 men came to faith (Acts 3:1-4:4). Using water from Lourdes is an act of faith in the love and mer-

cy of God ... whether or not we receive a physical healing.

In the eyes of the world using Lourdes water may seem as silly as promising to stay married for life, to be open to having more than one or two children, or to become a priest or nun. It is a sign that we trust that God exists and that he loves us all and enables us to do "impossible" things, like loving the unlovable, forgiving the unforgiveable and trusting the untrustworthy. If someone asks us how we believe these things, we have a chance to tell them the story of how our experience with God has changed our lives and enabled us to be happy when we can love as God loves – especially when it hurts. That's called "evangelization," sharing the Good News in a world badly in need of some.

Peace,

Fr. George

P.S. Winters in New England are pretty cold and our Center is pretty large. Could you help us out with our heating bill by sending a donation in the envelope included with the copy of the Echoes? *Thank you!*

“We live by faith and not by sight”

2 Corinthians 5, 7

BY FR. FRANCIS A. GRISPINO, S.M.

Our Catholic faith brings us close to Jesus in the holy signs we use, that is, outward actions with their accompanying words. We call them sacraments, but are we disappointed because we don't “feel” anything when celebrating the sacraments? Are we like a convert who, upon making the First Holy Communion, is surprised not to find a special taste? Or a special experience? When it comes to the sacraments, faith is the name of the game. Faith, and not feeling, or special experiences.

Our Hidden God

To us, God may seem to be hidden, even absent in the sacraments and prayer. But God is detectable in his work. It's a lot like taking your daily aspirin or blood pressure pill. You may feel nothing, but the benefits are being delivered. It is only later, in subtle ways, when we might notice their effects.

Lifestyle is Altered

A life of prayer will usually alter behavior, but only in time, not immediately. This is so because contact with the divine through prayer and the sacraments is a lot like a love relationship. It grows with time. The hidden work taking place within surfaces to consciousness eventually. An insight will herald a moral change in our normal routines. We come to the realization that we are lacking in patience and that this disappoints God. It needs to be mastered and expunged. To be critical of others may be another example. Such flaws are impediments to growth in our relationships with Jesus.

An Affective Relationship

When our prayer lives involve mainly the Rosary, daily Mass, weekend Mass, meditative reading of the Bible, or quiet time with the Lord, we may find ourselves experiencing “consolation” in prayer. This means that God is bestowing his attention on us in a way that brings warmth to the heart. We are aware of this because we wish this phenomenon to be repeated. It's called “affective” prayer because we find affection for God and a certain delight in the things of God. Affective prayer may not always be present, and its absence may signal another important stage, called “effective” prayer.

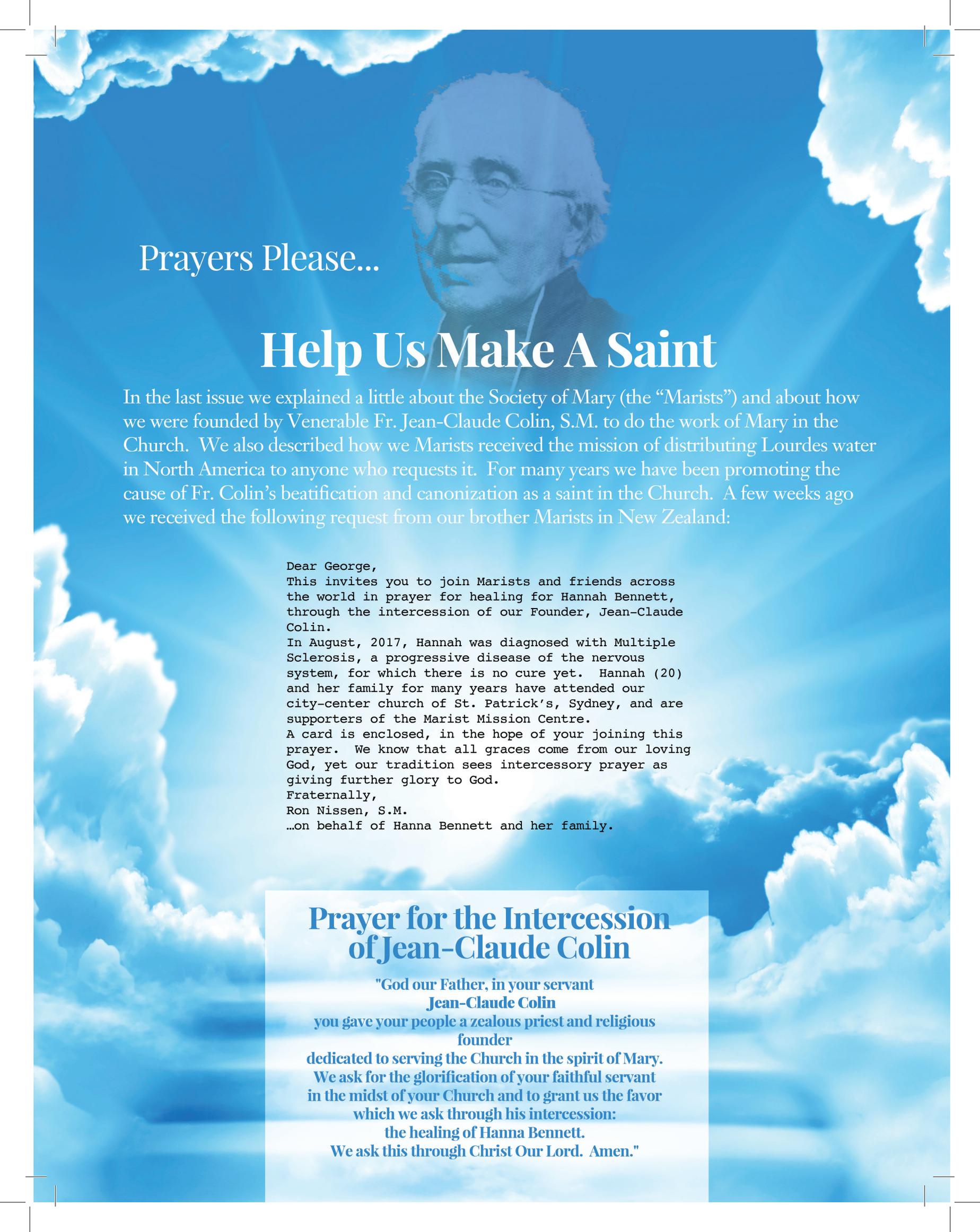
Effective Prayer at Work

The following depiction of a pastor at his desk may help understand the idea of perseverance in prayer without any kind of payoff by way of sensible reward. The pastor is seated behind his desk, and at his fingertips lies a huge pile of mail. No doubt there are more bills to be paid than “kudos” on his homily. With the heap of mail there is a desk plate clamoring to be noticed; it reads: “Praise the Lord, anyway.” Effective prayer is like that. You go ahead and carry on with your devotional prayer even if bereft of consolation.

Faith is Challenged

It is the very nature of growth in the spiritual life to give love rather than to receive it. As in a natural love relationship so also in a spiritual one. The maturity of love is demonstrated by altruism; that is, one wants to benefit the other, not oneself. The other becomes the sole target of one's love.

God works in a hidden and profound way. We do not have the capacity nor are we so privileged to feel the full effects of God's love. That held in reservation for the next life. Until then, we live by faith.



Prayers Please...

Help Us Make A Saint

In the last issue we explained a little about the Society of Mary (the “Marists”) and about how we were founded by Venerable Fr. Jean-Claude Colin, S.M. to do the work of Mary in the Church. We also described how we Marists received the mission of distributing Lourdes water in North America to anyone who requests it. For many years we have been promoting the cause of Fr. Colin’s beatification and canonization as a saint in the Church. A few weeks ago we received the following request from our brother Marists in New Zealand:

Dear George,

This invites you to join Marists and friends across the world in prayer for healing for Hannah Bennett, through the intercession of our Founder, Jean-Claude Colin.

In August, 2017, Hannah was diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis, a progressive disease of the nervous system, for which there is no cure yet. Hannah (20) and her family for many years have attended our city-center church of St. Patrick’s, Sydney, and are supporters of the Marist Mission Centre.

A card is enclosed, in the hope of your joining this prayer. We know that all graces come from our loving God, yet our tradition sees intercessory prayer as giving further glory to God.

Fraternally,

Ron Nissen, S.M.

...on behalf of Hanna Bennett and her family.

Prayer for the Intercession of Jean-Claude Colin

"God our Father, in your servant

Jean-Claude Colin

**you gave your people a zealous priest and religious
founder**

dedicated to serving the Church in the spirit of Mary.

**We ask for the glorification of your faithful servant
in the midst of your Church and to grant us the favor
which we ask through his intercession:**

the healing of Hanna Bennett.

We ask this through Christ Our Lord. Amen."

Readers Write

My father passed away at the age of 89 on November 26 after a long battle with Alzheimers. He was the lead physician for 8 pilgrimages to Lourdes, France via the Lourdes Center in Boston and certified several healings recognized on the official Lourdes Medical Cures list. At the age of 15 I myself went to Lourdes responsible for the total care of a teenager with Muscular Dystrophy. I had to bathe, dress, feed and take him to the Shrine every day. It changed my view of life and deepened my faith. Years later when I was on a ski trip my parents went to Lourdes and lit a candle for my safety. Along with 50 other skiers I got lost in a blizzard, took shelter in a snow cave for 36 hours and almost died. Thirty three others did, but by the grace of God I was rescued and was able to help rescue a few others. It greatly deepened my faith, my love for Lourdes and my desire to help others. Thanks be to God! – **DE Lourdes has had a**

Dear Fr. George, My sister Capella, niece Natalya and I were in Boston in August and had the pleasure of attending – and helping – with Mass on the Feast of the Assumption. I don't know if you remember us, but I just wanted to let you know that it was truly a bless-

ing to be there. My sister is still fighting glioblastoma but is doing well. I hope that we are able to visit Boston again, not only to watch the Red Sox, but to celebrate Mass at the Lourdes Center. Blessings! -- **AN**

Enclosed you will find \$15.00 for 5 bottles of Lourdes water. Thank you one and all for sending out Lourdes water to us all. Thank God for this priceless gift. May our Lady ask her Son Jesus to bless us all! Thank you again! -- **RB**

Iam 65 years old and have been disabled for 10 years. In February 2014 I had serious brain surgery for a subdural hematoma from a tumor that bled and a stroke. Five weeks in rehab and physical therapy and am now living with an aunt while I recover. Just a few days ago I had a checkup and all went well! I have been ordering Lourdes water for a long time. Enclosed please find payment for 4 bottles of Lourdes water, and pray for Lisa who has intestinal problems. Thank you and God bless you! -- **DQ**

My husband Harold was diagnosed about a year ago with cancer. He had a good sized tumor on his rectum. It meant an operation and colostomy bag. He went for treatments and used Lourdes water faithfully. He went for his cat

scan and scope. They both showed that the tumor is gone. No sign of it. He goes in 4 months for another cat scan and scope. Thanks be to God and Our Lady of Lourdes. He still uses the water faithfully. -- **JT**

Please accept this donation in thanksgiving to Our Lady of Lourdes for favors received. She has heard my prayers for my family. Thanks and God bless you! -- **MS**

Continued on next page

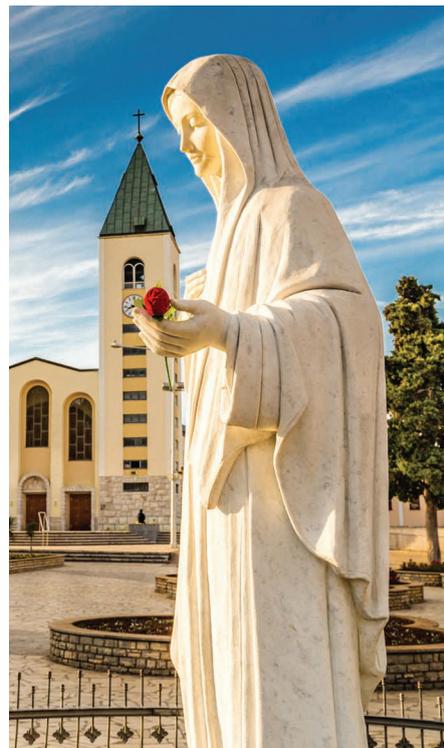
Papal envoy has compared Medjugorje to Lourdes

A papal envoy to Medjugorje has compared the controversial pilgrimage site in Bosnia-Herzegovina, where the Virgin Mary has allegedly been appearing since 1981, to Lourdes in France, a widely celebrated and officially approved Marian sanctuary, at the end of his first visit.

Though the comparison doesn't amount to something definitive, it will most likely be taken by Medjugorje supporters as a positive indication about the envoy's attitude.

Polish Archbishop Henryk Hoser was appointed by Pope Francis in February to review the pastoral situation for the residents and the 2.5 million faithful who arrive on pilgrimage at Medjugorje each year.

It's not the scope of Hoser's mis-



A statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary holding a red rose stands in front of Saint James Church in Medjugorje.

sion to determine the veracity of the alleged Marian apparitions at Medjugorje. The Vatican's doctrinal office set up a commission in 2011 for that purpose, which allegedly finalized its work in 2014, but to this point, nothing has been announced.

"The same as you, I expect a final decision from the commission, and of course the Holy Father Pope Francis," Hoser said at an April, 2017 press conference in Medjugorje. Speaking in French, he also said that he has no knowledge of where Francis stands regarding the apparitions.

The local bishop, Ratko Peri of Mostar-Duvno, who unless the Vatican says differently is the Church authority who has to rule over the alleged apparitions, has repeatedly said that there's no truth to them. In fact, he did so again last February, two weeks after Francis tapped Hoser to determine the pastoral situation of the pilgrims.

— From *Crux*

Order your Lourdes Water

Lourdes Water is an expression of faith ... my trust in God's Mercy.

Offering to cover shipping and handling \$ _____ N.B.
 A donation of \$3.00 per bottle is suggested to cover our expenses. We 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 allow 3-6 weeks for delivery

Please send _____ bottles of water from the Shrine at Lourdes

Name _____
 Address _____
 City _____
 State _____ Zip _____
 Phone _____

Requested by: _____

Does this person receive this newsletter? Yes No
 If not, should we send Echoes from Lourdes to them?
 Yes No

A Gift from You...

Give someone you care about a FREE SUBSCRIPTION to Echoes from Lourdes!

Name _____
 Address _____
 City _____
 State _____ Zip _____

Name _____
 Address _____
 City _____
 State _____ Zip _____

USE SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY
E-mail to: ourlady@lourdescenter.org
Postal mail to:
 LOURDES CENTER
 P.O. Box 15575
 698 Beacon Street
 Boston, MA 02215-2594

Our Deceased

We have been notified that the following friends of the Lourdes Center have passed away. Please join us in remembering them in your prayers.

LOUISE DANIELS, AZ
 LAWRENCE CARNEY, NC
 HARRIETTE KENNEDY, IN
 REV. L.P. KELLERMANN, OH
 MARTIN MOORE, JR., AK
 NATHAN J. LACROIX, NH
 FRANCIS PUNCH, MA
 ARLENE P. THEISEN, MN
 FLORENCE KEMPSKI, NY
 ANNA E. SAVOIE, FL
 SR. M. CECIL AMONE, CT
 JENNIFER MAIOLA, MA
 LAWRENCE CARNEY
 RAUL CHAPA, TX
 HELEN ZANGHI, PA
 MATTHEW J. CONIGLIO, NC
 HAROLD J. JOHNSON, SR., LA
 BOBBY CAMPAGNA, IN
 JULIA KUNDRIK, PA

DOROTHY SCHLAF, MI
 LENNY KONIECZNY, TX
 LEONOR C. PARKER
 VERONICA FORCIER, MN
 VIVIAN J. KEMP, ME
 BETTY ROSS, MA
 CECILE PARANTEAU, VT
 NANNETTE NAUMANN, SD
 WILLIAM MEDITZ, OH
 FRANCES ZIGICH, MI
 HELEN FINCH, MD
 EDWARD KARCZEWSKI, OR
 MATILDA CZAMIAK, MI
 LINDA LEE STAFFORD, FL
 ROBERT BARCLAY, MA
 EULA HARRISON, MT
 PAULA FOURNIER, NH
 MICHAEL J. MCGUIRL, NY
 DONNA SLATES, CA
 BETTY YATES, NY
 NATY FONTANILLA, NJ
 DECEASED LIST CON'T
 MARGARET GALLANT, NY
 NANCY M. DEFOE, MA
 LOUIS T. MIGALSKI, PA
 AURELIA A. O'BRIEN, IA
 ANTHONY PIRENE, NJ
 BURTON MATTE, LA

WILLIAM JACOBS, TX
 REV. MR. EDWARD A MORIN, SR., NE
 JOHN DOOLEY, CT
 HENRIETTA BEZAIRE, CANADA
 CHUCK SMITH, IN
 LEO KLUG, PA
 KATHLEEN DOBBINS, NJ
 KATHY NIEHAUS, OH
 THERESA AYULUK, AK
 FRANCISCO AQUINO, CA

Spiritual Opportunities

Purgatorials for the Deceased

Name of Deceased _____

Please send Purgatorial to:

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____

Requested by: _____

Suggested offering: \$10.00 perpetual

Our Lady's Purgatorial Society

Each year, your enrolled deceased and loved ones are remembered during the 365 daily Masses celebrated by the Marist Fathers. An attractive certificate framed in a blue folder with a colorful picture of Our Lady is sent to the donor or recipient.

Please mail responses to: Marist Fathers, 698 Beacon St. P.O. Box 15575, Boston, MA 02215-0010

Our Gift Center



The following gift items are available for order from the Marist Lourdes Center in Boston.

2018 WALL CALENDAR\$5.00
Limited Supply!

OUR LADY OF LOURDES MEDAL.....\$5.00
IN GROTTTO

BROWN SCAPULAR.....\$2.00

GREEN SCAPULAR.....\$2.00

ST. BERNADETTE PINS.....\$3.50

OUR LADY OF LOURDES PINS.....\$3.50

BOOKLET: "LOURDES AND OUR LADY".....\$4.00
BY FR. JOHN LYNCH, S.M.

*Please send your order with payment to:
 P.O. Box 15575, 698 Beacon Street, Boston, MA 02215-2594*

Affiliations

*Remembrance in 50 Masses Yearly
 and at our Weekly Perpetual Novena*

Requested by: _____

Phone Number: _____

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

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

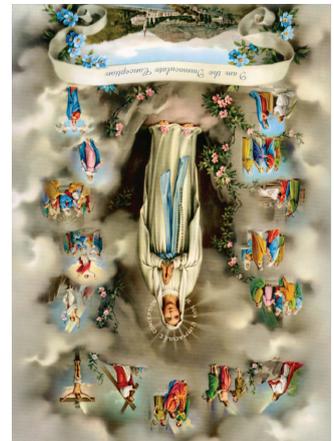
State _____ Zip _____

On Friday, January 11 and Friday, January 25
and Friday, February 8 and Friday, February 22,
The Marist Fathers and Brothers of the Lourdes Center
will be praying for you.

*You can count on it, on the second and the fourth Friday of every month, we hold a special prayer day
when we say special prayers and offer Mass at our chapel for our extended Lourdes family
... including you.*

Please send us your intentions: _____

Please direct your intentions, and any offering you'd like to send, to: Marist Fathers,
698 Beacon Street, P.O. Box 15575, Boston, MA 02215-0010



Lourdes Echoes

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

Director: Rev. George Szal, S.M.
Printed with Ecclesiastical Approval

**Lourdes Center
Marist Fathers
Lourdes Bureau
P.O. Box 15575
698 Beacon Street
Boston, MA 02215-2594
www.lourdescenter.org
OurLady@LourdesCenter.org**

Address Service Requested