

echoes

FROM LOURDES

May-June, 2018

Vol. 9 No. 5

A PUBLICATION OF THE LOURDES CENTER ♦ MARIIST FATHERS AND BROTHERS

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ESTANAS
COMO LA
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THE DIRECTOR'S LETTER

FR. GEORGE SZAL, S.M.

Weaving a Mantel of Mercy

“*I was the support of the early Church at its beginning. I shall be her support until the end of time. My embrace will be to all who wish to come to me.”*

According to the history of the Society of Mary (the “Marists”), these were the words of the Blessed Mother that inspired Fr. John Claude Colin while he was a seminarian in the diocesan seminary of Lyons, France shortly after the French Revolution.

Later, at the Marist retreat of 1844, Fr. Colin wrote:

“We are now in an age of Mary. Yes indeed, for this is an age of indifference, unbelief, an age of crime, of false learning, of this earth. Nowadays, breathing for it alone. That is why in these last times she has appeared with her hands stretched out to the earth, with her hands full of rays, which stand for graces poured forth for men.”

Do the times described by Fr. Colin seem to be much like our own, only 200 years later? These Marian revelations came at a moment when France and

most of the Western world was in chaos. It seems that the 21st century is also “an age of Mary”. About ten years before the apparition of Our Lady at Lourdes, the Founder of the Marists, Fr. Jean Claude Colin commented further: *“The human race appears to me today like an old stump, one whose roots have been eaten into by a worm. That worm is unbelief, the indifference which has made the world pagan for a second time.”*

Fr. Colin thought that the solution for the renewal of the Church and healing of the human race was to rebuild both by taking the spirit of Mary, Mother of Mercy. He wanted to found a society of priests, brothers, sisters, laymen and women – a whole new Church full of those who would think as Mary, judge as Mary, feel and act as Mary the Mother of Jesus. They would do anything, go anywhere and have no special work other than to do the work of Mary as Mary would do it, not triumphal or moralistic, but stressing the love of God quietly and gently, patiently and constantly – like a loving Mother. They would share her



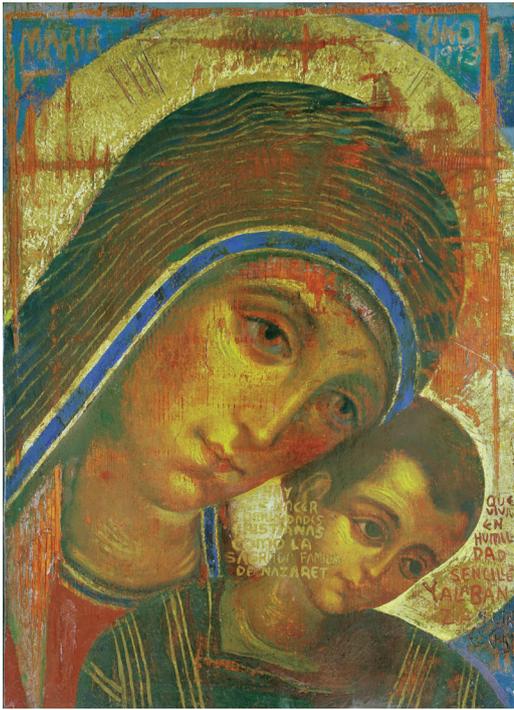
spirit with all whom they met, and bring them home to God. Fr. Colin wanted every Catholic to have this spirit and to reach out to the weakest ones, the lost and forsaken. He even wanted the Pope to be a Marist! With the inauguration of the Monday after Pentecost as the Memorial of Mary, Mother of the Church I think that Fr. Colin has had his wish fulfilled.

The world is hungry for God. Increasingly the youth of the world in larger and greater groups are making pilgrimage to places like Fatima and Lourdes where Mary, Mother of Mercy, holds out her hands to those who cry out “We want God!” Mary, Mother of Jesus and our Mother too, is bringing them back to God. ..through you and me “A shoot is springing forth from the broken stump of Jesse.” Peace

Peace,

Fr. George

In your generosity please remember us by making a contribution for the publishing and mailing of this newsletter by using the envelope provided. We can't do it without you. Thanks!



About the Cover

The icon of the Virgin Mary and Jesus on the front cover of this edition of *Echoes from Lourdes* was done by Kiko Arguello, a Spanish artist and initiator, along with Carmen Hernandez, of the Neocatechumenal Way in 1968. After rediscovering his Catholic Faith, Kiko heard that St. Pope John XXIII had said that the renewal of the Church would be found among the poor. So he went to live in the slums of Madrid and at a certain had a kind of inner experience of Mary who said to him, "There need to be Christian communities like the Holy Family of Nazareth who live in humility, simplicity and praise, and where the other is Christ." This locution is written in Spanish on the front of our icon. You will note that Mary and Jesus are looking to the left, which is an unusual positioning in traditional iconography. The left is the place of the sinner, of the goats in Matthew 25, the ones who most need the mercy of God. The blue and the gold in the icon are the colors of Eternal Life, to which every one is called. The Neocatechumenal Way, as Pope Paul VI called it, is a process of Christian formation suitable for our times and the icon has become symbolic of the Virgin Mary's mission for the salvation of souls. Today, ordinary Catholics and priests who have rediscovered their faith have evangelized and catechized hundreds of thousands of people and have formed thousands of Catholic communities in 99 countries all over the world.

Mary Who? Mother of the Church

By Fr. Francis A. Grispino, S.M.

Why does the Church need a mother? The ancient wisdom teachers used to answer a question with a question: Why did Jesus need a mother? He needed a mother to give him life according to the flesh. The Second Person of the Trinity was to become visible in Jesus Christ so as to live among us. Like the rest of us he needed the love and care of a mother. Christ's body is still with us as the Church! We members are also in need of the care and love of the Mother of God.

The Light Has Not Gone Out

The people of India have an expression used when a mother of a family has died. To relate such a tragedy the words said are: The light of the house has gone out. In contrast, the light in the house of God, the Church, Body of Christ, has never been extinguished.

The Body of Christ, the Church, remains in need of maternal love and care that is special to Mary, the Mother of God, and now formally declared the Mother of the Church whose Feast Day is the Monday after Pentecost Sunday.

Story of the Pelican

Nature lovers tell us that this mother bird has an extraordinary way of feeding her young in time of famine. She plucks away the feathers to expose her breast and then proceeds to tear at her own flesh in order to feed her chicks.

I saw such a scene of the pelican feeding her young depicted on a stain glass window in a chapel. The scene was puzzling to me: what is that doing in a religious setting? Then the bulb went on: "Take and eat this is my body; take and drink this is my blood." (Mark 14, 22) The scene was at home in the chapel.

Jesus, Mary, and the Eucharist

Mary's conception of Jesus was not of this world. Jesus was the SON of God, not of Joseph. As we read in Matthew's gospel, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife into your home. For it is by the Holy Spirit that this child has been

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The Lord is very fond of you.



Friends, brothers and sisters in the journey of faith, do you know how to meditate? So many times in counselling people I ask them if they pray. “Do you talk to Jesus? Do you listen for an answer?” Most of the time people tell me that they do pray, but that they never thought of listening for an answer. It only stands to reason that if I am praying to God, to Mary or the saints that I should listen for an answer. God wants to tell you how fond He is of you. Here is one way of listening to God that I learned on the retreat that I took just before my ordination to the priesthood. It goes like this:

THE BASIC PRESUPPOSITION OF PRAYER: God knows me as an individual – personally, intimately, in the most perfect manner of knowing another, that is, BY NAME! Read slowly the following scriptures until you come upon one that really “hits” you. Close your eyes and begin to turn it over in your heart (as Mary turned things over in her heart). If it helps, imagine that you are a child sitting in the lap of your mom, dad, grandma – anyone for whom you felt most loved, comfortable, secure. Let some memories come and “reminisce” in them, “bask” in them as you would in the sun on a warm summer day. See how God’s love has been verified in your personal history, i.e. **RE-LIVE or RECALL WITH CHRIST, PRAYERFULLY:**

1. The joys of good things that you have received or experienced in life – e.g. quiet moments with loved ones, holidays, reunions, wedding day, first communion, etc. God wanted you to have these so that you would know how precious you are to him.
2. The people through whom God’s love came to me – mother, father, siblings, aunts, uncles, teachers, friends, etc. God wanted you to have them too.

3. The good that you have done to or for others that gave them joy, consolation, help, etc.

The fruit of this meditation should be the experience of the JOY of being loved personally by God. This experience should have its origin not so much from your own reasoning as a fruit of the Holy Spirit, that is, a “felt-knowledge”, or the deep down assurance that comes from the profound feeling that I am precious and unique to God, SPECIAL, MOST PRECIOUS, MOST IMPORTANT to Him, and consequently that God is most concerned about me. As Sister Maxine told us in the 3rd grade, “If you were the only person in the whole world that needed Jesus to come and die out of love for you on the Cross, He would have done it a thousand times. God is searching for you to tell you this, so read some of the following quotes (don’t spend time on the chapters from which they are collected):

Isaiah 41:13-14 “I am holding you by the right hand; do not be afraid, I will help you.”

Isaiah 43:1 “Fear not, I have redeemed you, called you by name; You are mine!”

Isaiah 49:15-16 “I have written your name on the palm of my hand. Can a mother forget the child within her womb? Even if she could, I will never forget you!”

Hosea 11:3-4 “I was like someone who lifts an infant to his cheek.”

John 15:16 “You have not chosen Me; rather, it is I who have chosen you.”

Readers Write

(Correction: In the March/April 2018 edition of the Echoes in the Readers Write column the year of Honore de Monteley's birth was incorrectly noted to be 1928, which was actually the year of his conversion at Lourdes. He was born in 1900 and executed by the Nazi's in 1941. Ed.)

In the Jan./Feb. 2018 issue Fr. Ron Nissen, S.M. asked for prayers through the intercession of Venerable Jean Claude Colin for Hannah Bennett who has Multiple Sclerosis. He replied:

Hello from Sidney, Australia...and many thanks indeed for "Echoes of Lourdes" It is very pleasing to know that the request for Hannah Bennett is now reaching your readership. I copied the "Echoes" today and shall pass it to Hannah shortly. I know she will be grateful and encouraged. This week I prepared a little update on Hanna's journey...and shall be having this translated in coming days,

then circling it through our various units. With warm regards and renewed thanks, and asking the Lord's blessing on your important ministry.

Fr. Ron Nissen, S.M.

Dear Marist Fathers,

May Our Lord bless you all! Keeping you all in prayers. Please pray for my family and I, we are in great financial need. For health also and spiritual too!!! Please pray for my sister Isabel to be well and for her children to help her more and for my children to help her as much as they can. They are also trying to care for me. I am bedridden. We are so grateful for the many graces and little miracles received through the Lourdes miraculous water. Please pray for my grandchildren and daughter and her husband and my brother too!!! Could you please send me some more of the Lourdes miraculous water? I am sending you a donation of \$20.00. May Our Lady pray for you always!!! Thank you so much, HF
(Please note, as it says in our brochure, "Lourdes Water is not

Holy Water, nor is it a medicine or something supernatural, but Our Lady has granted special favore with its use. It is an object of faith meant to encourage prayer and good works.)

Dear Fr. Szal,

Hi! I hope all is well in Boston. I'm sending this donation to help with your heating bill. We used to live in New Jersey and moved to Sun City in October 2005. My parents retired here in 1975. They and my brother are gone. We are living in their house and love it here. Thanks for the Lourdes Echoes. I never knew that St. Bernadette died of bone cancer. That is such a horrible disease. My husband had colon cancer and I had breast cancer two times. So far, so good. Sincerely, MG

Continued on next page

Mother of the Church

Continued from page 3

conceived in her.” (1,20)

While Mary contributed her flesh to Jesus, the male component was not of man but of God. This made it possible for the God-man to transform his body as spiritual food for believers.

Old and New Bread

Like the Israel of old, the new Israel, the Church, will find nourishment and strength for its spiritual journeying. It will not be like the bread associated with Moses in the desert but the true bread that came down from heaven, “I am the living bread that came down from heaven; whoever eats this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh for the life of

the world.” (John 6, 51)

No Mary, No Eucharist

The true mother, like the pelican, will go to the limits to provide nourishment for her offspring. Mary, at the foot of the cross witnessing the agony of her son’s death was the integral cause, because of her motherhood, in bestowing his “flesh for the life of the world.” (John 6, 51) If no Mary, where would this bread come from?

Mother of All the Living

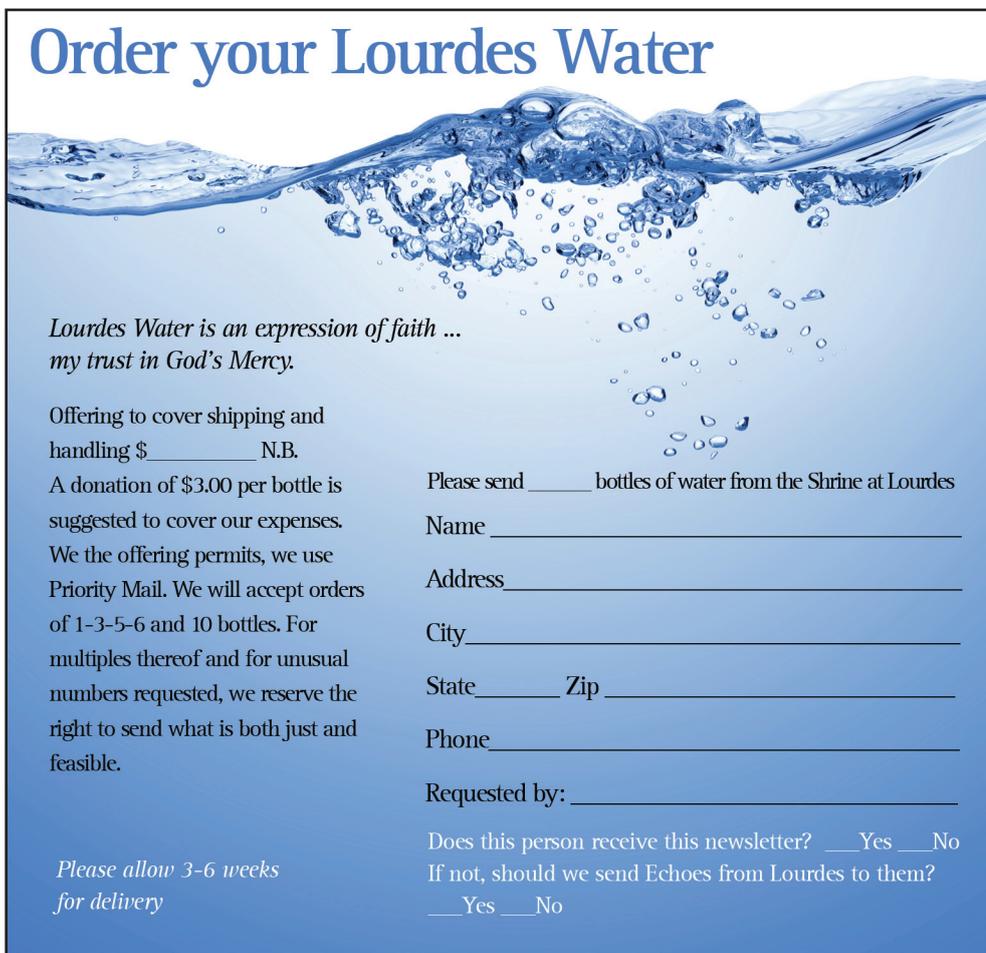
Eve deprived her children of access to the fruit of the tree of life and brought death to all. (Genesis 3, 22-24) Mary replaced the lost fruit with the fruit of her womb, Jesus. The tree of the cross becomes the restored tree

of life heavily laden with the precious fruit “for the life of the world.” (John 6, 57) If Eve is called, “Mother of all the living,” (Genesis 3, 20) the New Eve, Mary, is more deserving of the title. How very fitting that Jesus from the tree of life gives the New Eve to the Church represented by the disciple, John, in these words, “Woman behold your son.” Then he said to his disciple, “Behold your mother.” And the disciple took her into his home.” (John 19, 26-27)

Conclusion

The Church is a goldmine ready to be explored and its riches mined in order to have her secrets revealed. To give the Church a Marian motif such as Mary, Mother of the Church, is most appropriate. It gives the Church the face of a Mother who is solicitous about restoring the harm done by Eve. While it is true that

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If not, should we send Echoes from Lourdes to them?
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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.

BRADLEY MIKE, AK
 DOLORES SCHUSTER, NM
 VERONICA COYLE, FL
 MARY BRODERICK, OH
 TILLIE PIMENTEL OR
 RUTH WONG, HI
 ANN BUCHER, KY
 STELLA KONOPKA, IL
 JENNIE LOMBARDI, MI
 M. DEUTSCHMAN, NJ
 SYLVIA ROWE, MA
 CLAIRE & HARLAN GOLDSMITH, CA
 ODELIE CASTONGUAY, ME
 HELYN HEIER, WI

CATHERINE L. CAMPBELL, NJ
 SHIRLEY WALL, OK
 ROSALIE SMITH, MI
 REGINA JOZWIAK, TX
 PATRICIA KERNS, WA
 CHESTER SKILES, WI
 FLORENCE BYLEBYL, NY
 ALDA DANIEL, TN
 BOB & VIOLETTA BRUMFIELD, OH
 IRENE R. MAKOWIEC, PA
 ANNE MCGEAGH, NY
 RUTH RYAN, NJ
 RITA M. CAPALBO, RI
 ANNE M. HUMMEL, NY
 WINIFRED M. FARRELL, ME
 LUCILLE FRIEDERS, IL
 MARJORIE CUTTER, MA
 VALARIE P. CARLTON, NC
 WILLIAM D. RICE, IL
 MARIA AMSTADT, NC
 MATHIAS BRUSSO, NY

Mother of the Church

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Mary lives in heavenly bliss, she yet remains ardent in her care for the Church founded by her Son. In this Church, the maternal light is ever lit, ever bright, awaiting the homecoming of each member of the Body of Christ, the Church. Mary, Our Mother, deserves special gratitude for her role in every rich and sumptuous Eucharistic meal we celebrate. ■

Purgatorials for the Deceased

Name of Deceased _____
 Please send Purgatorial to:
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Requested by: _____

Suggested offering: \$10.00 perpetual

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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

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IN GROTTTO
- BROWN SCAPULAR.....\$2.00
- GREEN SCAPULAR.....\$2.00
- ST. BERNADETTE PINS.....\$3.50
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**On Friday, May 11 and Friday, May 25
and Friday, June 8 and Friday, June 22,
The Marist Fathers and Brothers of the Lourdes Center
will be praying for you.**

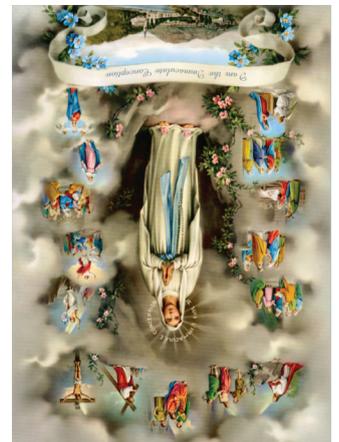
You can count on it, on the second and the fourth Friday of every month, we hold a special prayer day when we say special prayers and offer Mass at our chapel for our extended Lourdes family ... including you.

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

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Lourdes Echoes

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