

echoes **FROM LOURDES**

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The Madonna of The Third Millennium





THE DIRECTOR'S LETTER

FR. GEORGE SZAL, S.M.

The Madonna of The Third Millennium: Singing In The Reign

To me it seems a little strange to be wishing you a “Happy New Year” when the year ahead of us seems to promise being just a continuation of bad news of the years that preceded it. Wars, revolutions, mass murders, terrorist attacks, more people leaving the Church than entering it and the continuing disintegration of a society that used to be based on Christian values, etc., are enough to depress and weaken the faith of any thoughtful person. Yet there was another bad time when the total number of Christian believers numbered only one – the Blessed Virgin Mary, and the real “New Year” began 2,000 years ago when she heard the Word of God and let it grow in her heart.

As a peasant girl living in poverty in an oppressed nation, Mary was the first to hear the Good News of the Messiah from the Archangel Gabriel. Nurturing Jesus under her heart, her love for God continued to grow. She became His first disciple. She immediately carried the Good News to her cousin St. Elizabeth and

so became Jesus’ first apostle and evangelist. Then she accompanied Him all the way to His death on the Cross, to His glorious Resurrection and Ascension. She was the support of first Christian community praying in the Upper Room and waited with them to receive the Holy Spirit and be sent on mission to the ends of the earth. Thus, Mary gave birth to the Church and was its support at the beginning and will be so until the end of time.

In 1858, in Lourdes, France, another little girl named Bernadette Soubirous received the Good News from the Blessed Virgin Mary. Poor and uneducated, she could not read or write. At the age of 14, even though she had not learned her catechism well enough to receive her first Holy Communion, the Blessed Virgin appeared to her 18 times! Why was she chosen for this great grace? The reason was that, like Mary, Bernadette was empty of self-concern. Humble and obedient, she was ready to do the will of God. “Behold, the handmaid of the Lord, let it be done to me according to Your word!” This faith that sees everything, even suffering as a grace, Bernadette

saw as an opportunity of self-emptying and opening herself to the will of God. This attitude, like that of the Blessed Virgin Mary, can be seen in some of Bernadette’s prayers:

“For the poverty, in which my mother and father lived, for the failure of the mill, for all the hard times, for the awful sheep, for constant tiredness, thank you my God! Thank you, my God, for the prosecutor and the police commissioner, for the policemen, and for the harsh words of Father Peyramale! For my spelling which I never learned, for the memory which I never had, for my ignorance and for my stupidity, thank you. Thank you for the fact that it is me who was the Bernadette threatened with imprisonment because she had seen you, Holy Virgin; regarded by people as a rare animal; that Bernadette so wretched, that upon seeing her it was said: ‘Is that it’? For this miserable body which You gave me, for this burning and suffocating illness, for my decaying tissues, for my de-calcified bones, for my fever, for my dull

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and for my acute pains, thank you my God. And for this soul which you have given me, for the desert of inner dryness, for Your night and Your lightening, for Your silences and Your thunders, for everything. For You, when You were present and when You were not, thank you, Jesus" ("The Gift of Faith," Fr. Tadeusz Dajczer, In the Arms of Mary Foundation, Fort Collins, CO, 2008, pp.32-33)

This issue of *Echoes* is book-ended by the Feast of the Solemnity of Mary the Holy Mother of God (Jan. 1) and Ash Wednesday (Feb. 26.) In the middle is the Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes (Feb. 11). This is a blessed reminder that in a world that has chased God out the Christian rejoices that there is a God, that He loves us, is not ashamed of or angry at us, and that He has entered into our flesh to suffer and die, to rise and invite us to share in His mission for the salvation of souls. Ash Wednesday reminds that by dying to ourselves and entering into the Cross we find many opportunities while still on earth to be united with Christ and prepared for sharing Eternal Life with Him in the communion of saints. Perhaps one way of doing this is learning not to complain about our sufferings, and not trying to make excuses for our faults and limitations – like Bernadette; to offer our suffering for our own conversion and that of other sinners, and for the perseverance of the just. Finally, to have joy in the companionship we share with

Mary, Bernadette and all the saints on the journey of faith.

AN IMPORTANT NOTE: Our travel agency, The National Rosary Pilgrimage, is being reorganized as a non-profit organization and will be called The National Lourdes Pilgrimage Foundation. Because the reorganization has proved to be a rather complicated process, the next pilgrimage will not be until the summer of 2021. We here at the Lourdes Center hope you under-

stand and will continue to support our mission to the sick and suffering who need help in making the pilgrimage. We also appreciate the help of all of you who help to keep our office open with donations for our maintenance needs. May you have a Happy and Healthy New Year, and a Blessed Lent!

Fr. George Szal, S.M.

Director

To The Madonna of the Third Millennium



*Mary,
House of Benediction,
salvation of our Century,
Earthly dwelling for the
Humble One;*

*As in Cana in Galilee,
when you saw that we
were lacking wine, that
our feast was not a feast,
that our life was not
life because death was
reigning over us and you
brought your Son;*

*Teach us to obey, to do
whatever He tells us, so
that He might change
our water into new wine,
and we might experience
the victory of Resurrec-
tion.*

Alleluia! Amen.

Readers Write

A recent pilgrim returned from Lourdes and conveyed to me the following good news. Her young daughter had contracted Lyme disease and was confined to a wheelchair. She took her to numerous doctors in the area (Virginia) and to specialists in New York and Boston...all to no avail. They decided to go on a pilgrimage to Lourdes. Her daughter was assisted into the baths by the workers there. After submersion in the waters she was able to get up and walk out alone, no assistance and no more wheelchair!
NB

I wanted to express my appreciation of what you do, generally, with your newsletters, and more particularly, to thank you for the powerful letter about what happened to the Cathedral of Notre Dame at the start of Holy Week. Of the many responses I read after the fire, yours was the most moving and straightforward, describing it for what it was. And what you went on to write about the overall decline in our culture is very important, as fewer and fewer people seem to be able to recognize what is happening. People do not seem to realize that the casual recourse to abortions in our society is a stepping stone to euthanasia, which for awhile will be voluntary, but I am afraid it will not be too long before there will be medical mandates requiring a "quietus" for older people and those with serious enough physical or mental problems. The younger generations are becoming more and more insensitive to basic human values due to the poisonous effects of perceiving reality through what a computer screen

can show them of life. So, thank you for your strong words and call to prayer and faith. **CS**

(Normally we publish letters about physical healing at Lourdes. But there is another, greater healing, i.e. that of the heart. Although a person may be in perfect health they can still be in sin and despair, a disease that poisons relationships and the institutions we create and inhabit. Our culture is sick because of the many sick hearts looking to find life in this world, in things that pass. If you and I and enough of us convert and are healed of our pride and fear, we can be like yeast hidden in the mass of dough that makes the bread rise. Lourdes is one of those places where the yeast gets together, gathers strength, and goes out to give hope and help to heal a broken and wounded world. — editor.)

UNIQUE IN THE ANNALS OF LOURDES

Guy Ledet was a normal child until the age of five. Then he was stricken with acute meningo-encephalitis - a brain disease that can wreck the nervous system. He came out of it alive, but paralyzed in both arms and legs and subject to frequent convulsions and epileptic fits. Worst of all, he sank into a state of progressive mental breakdown which ended in complete mental failure. "He didn't even recognize us," his mother said, "He couldn't speak at all and lost all the happy little vocabulary that he had before his illness. He forgot how to eat, dirtied himself without realizing what he was doing." This condition lasted for nearly two years. His parents all but ruined them-

selves financially in their effort to cure him - all in vain. The doctors pronounced Guy incurable. Then they thought of Lourdes. They took him to the baths, and while compassionate nurses went to lower Guy into the baths, his father prayed outside on his knees. When they came out and handed him back to his mother it happened. Guy opened his eyes, looked about himself with an intelligent glance, lifted his arms towards his mother and with a clear childish voice cried out "Mama!" He was taken home, and within a year recovered his normal mentality. One year after his cure Guy was examined by 40 doctors and declared "normal," although they declined to proclaim it a formal "published" cure. "What do we care about that," said the mother, "We have our boy, happy and well. Our 'Te Deums' are sung right here at home every day!"
[Excerpted from Echoes of Lourdes Vol. 5, No. 12, December, 1960]

Enclosed is an offering for Lourdes Water for myself and my sick sister who is in a wheelchair with rheumatoid arthritis. It is wonderful to know that Our Lady is so close to us and I am sure God sends us our trials and troubles for some good reason. **ON**

After seven weeks in the hospital I am now bed-confined. I have arthritis of the extremities, uncomfortably sore at times, unable to stand or walk, but am not complaining, because I think it could be so very much worse. In my daily prayers I give thanks to Our Blessed Mother and her Son. I faithfully read my "Echoes of Lourdes" and enjoy it immensely." **NH**

The New Evangelization: Sowing the Seeds of Faith

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

Pope Francis has called us to circle the wagons and take a stand against the world-weary and those who have lost their moral compass. The suggestion offered to the inner circle is simple and doable.

Holy Father's Suggestion

The Pope urges Catholics to tell anyone willing to listen the one thing that he or she loves about the Catholic Faith. You may want to back away from such an invitation. The mere mentioning of sharing publicly something of your inner convictions may cause you to be fearful.

art: elderly couple

Fear of the New

Gideon of the Bible comes to mind. He became fearful when told by the Lord to lead an army into battle. After all, he was just a farmer, with no military experience. His fear was met with these words, "Go with the strength you have....and I will be with you" (Judges 6, 4 & 16.)

St. Peter had the intuition of divine power emanating from Jesus in the miraculous catch of fish and was fearful. Jesus' response was, "Be not afraid, from now on you will be catching men" (Luke 5, 10.) In both instances fear was conquered by reliance on the Holy Spirit, the

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Sowing the Seeds of Faith

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Spirit of Jesus, the same Spirit has been bestowed upon us at our baptism.

Second Suggestion

This idea comes from the letter of James. He points out a fault we easily fall prey to and that is to forget our reliance on God who sustains us in all our comings and goings. He complains how we make plans for ourselves, weeks, months, and years in advance with no thought of God. God is shut out of the equation. The suggestion he offers is to mention God upon whom we so sorely depend and say, "If the Lord wills we shall live to do this or that" (James 4, 17.) We can use the short form and simply say

"God willing." So, the next time you plan an activity, for example, "I am planning to visit the Grand Canyon next summer" or, "I'm planning to visit the grandchildren in Omaha" simply add the words, "God willing."

The Big Question

How can such a remark contribute to the New Evangelization? Your use of the word "God" shows consciousness of God in your life and may open the doors in the hearts of the others to be aware of "God" in theirs.

Third Suggestion

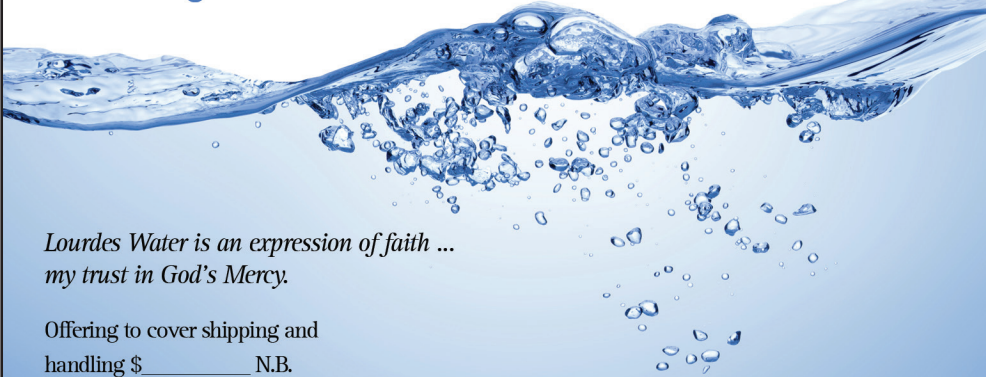
This suggestion is much like the second but for the fact that you add the words, "Thank God." The occasion may arise in

a response to a simple question or greeting, "Hi! How are you doing?" Normally we respond, "Fine, and you?" Why not respond, "I am fine, thank God, how are you doing?" Again, the contribution to the New Evangelization is consciousness of God in your life and may rub off into the consciousness of the other.

Deeper Reason

One other reason comes to mind to give support to the New Evangelization in today's world. You have heard the saying "Out of sight, out of mind." Well, it works in this sense too, "Out of mind, out of heart." This is one of the strategies used by Secular Humanists. By exorcizing the very word "God" from human discourse the death of God will surely take place in the human heart. If so, Secular Humanism wins! The "Sowers of God's Seed of Faith" will not let that happen, will they?

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.
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 allow 3-6 weeks for delivery

Please send _____ bottles of water from the Shrine at Lourdes
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Address _____
City _____
State _____ Zip _____
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Requested by: _____

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

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Postal mail to:
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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.

MARK AND MARIE TOWNER-CU-SUMANO, MA
 SR. DOROTHY LAMBERT, MA
 MARIA CUSUMANO, MA
 CORRINE FINGER, KS
 HELEN HARNISCHFEGER, NY
 CLARA T. ANDREWS, AK
 ALICE CRIST, IN
 PRISCA ARAMBULA, TX
 EWALD HEISLER, ND
 PATRICIA HEISLER, ND
 IRENE M. SMITH, FL
 JANE SEAWARD, MA
 MARIE KNOWLES, MA
 CONSTANCE GRILLO, MA
 RITA COLLINS, MA

IRENE DUFOURE, MA
 IRENE SULLIVAN, MA
 KIM PELOSI, MA
 DR. GERALD DELUCA, LA
 WADE VERGES JR., LA
 MARGARET POSHEFKO, PA
 MILDRED DUNN, IA
 MARGUERITE DUGGAN, GA
 FLORENCE CARR-KELLY, PA
 EVELYN SMITH, FL
 DOROTHY WIBBENMEYER, MO
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 CECILIA S. MAURER, WI
 FRANCIS CHATIGNY, FL
 MARGARET GORSKI, IL
 FERNAND SEVIGNY, MA

SOPHIE M. GODLEWSKI, FL
 PHYLLIS GZOWSKI, SC
 PAT HARMS, PA
 SR. MARGARET JOSEPH, PA
 SR. AGNES MARIE HYGHE, SSJ, PA
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 JOHN FELD, KS
 ARLENE PLACHOWICZ, MA
 DEACON JOHN CRETARO, AL
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Our Gift Center



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

2020 Wall Calendar (Limited Supply).... \$10.00
OUR LADY OF LOURDES MEDAL.....\$5.00
IN GROTTO
BROWN SCAPULAR.....\$2.00
GREEN SCAPULAR.....\$2.00
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*

Purgatorials for the Deceased

Name of Deceased _____

Please send Purgatorial to:

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____

Requested by: _____

Suggested offering: \$20.00 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**

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Phone Number: _____

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Name _____

Address _____

City _____

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On Friday, January 10 and Friday, January 24
and Friday, February 14 and Friday, February 28,
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

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