

St. Joseph Marian Center

The Albany Diocesan Division of
THE BLUE ARMY OF OUR LADY OF FATIMA

Spring Issue 2006



*“Holy Family of
Nazareth, Pray for Us”*

Finding True Love in Our Lives

This issue of the St. Joseph Marian Center newsletter is focused on love. With St. Valentine’s Day past, the start of Lent on Ash Wednesday, March 1, and the coming of Easter, it’s time to get “our hearts in order,” and return to God some small portion of what He gives to us in abundance. Regardless of the time of year, Catholics and non-Catholics alike find themselves questioning, searching and exploring the subject of love continually, often with disappointing or mediocre results. True love is the subject of poets and philosophers, songwriters and moviemakers, and yet it is so vastly misunderstood.

By its very origins, true love is divine and therefore it is mysterious, as are all things with God. True love is also eternal. Even atheists can guess at that. So where do we find it? One glance at the image of Michelangelo’s “Pieta” (above, right) should tell readers that the type of true love we yearn for has very little to do with hearts and flowers. It has to do with commitment, sacrifice, and often pain. But it also brings peace, hope, fulfillment, joy beyond compare, and eternal life.

True love is a conundrum that cannot be solved without deep investigation. To start to find true love, we can begin with the creation of the world. The Catechism of the Catholic Church tells us God created all things from His great love. St. John teaches us that God *is* Love. So the beginning of all true love is the Blessed Trinity. “Everything comes from love, all is ordained for the salvation of man, God does nothing without this goal in mind,” wrote St. Catherine of Siena. That means that as God’s

creations, we are *meant to find* true love and will be unfulfilled until we do.

So why is it so hard to find? True love becomes elusive when we view the world God created through secular eyes and not those of faithful children. The less we pray--the more we seek common entertainment instead--the more true love slips from our grasp. The Church encourages prayer, sacrifice and good works during Lent because these tangibles help us hold on to the great intangible. Our prayer time, our sacrifices, bring us closer to Jesus. Our attitudes change, our virtues grow and we begin to act



more Christ-like. Jesus was sent by the Father to put a human face on the Divine. Once we follow His example and center our lives around the precepts of His Gospel, we find that true love comes to us and fills our souls. If we continue to nurture it, the love stays and matures.

I once heard a priest describe our hearts as sieves, unable to hold love for very long. Depending on the size of the “mesh,” love constantly leaks out, he said, and we are ever in need of “refills.” Once we have found true love, we need to work hard to keep it.

“Our love for God is based upon our will, not upon our feelings,” preaches Fr. John Corapi, SOLT. “True love is not a feeling. It is a decision. *All love is a determination to be God-like.*”

Whether it be friendship, romantic or familial, all love is meant to be rooted in God. Only then can love be true and eternal.

Fatima World Apostolate Approved by Holy See

The World Apostolate of Fatima, an organization of more than 40 nations and millions of members dedicated to the messages of Our Lady of Fatima, has received approval by the Holy See as a Public Association of the Faithful for the Universal Church. Issued on the Feast of Our Lady of the Rosary, October 7, 2005, the decree makes the World Apostolate of Fatima the only organization approved by the Catholic Church to be responsible for the propagation of Fatima's

message. "The Catholic Church has placed a heavy responsibility on the Apostolate to guard the purity of the Fatima message and to propagate it to all the corners of the earth," said Americo Lopez-Ortiz, President. "We undertake this mission with determination and will not rest until the Immaculate Heart of Mary prevails and peace reigns on earth." A ceremony marking the decree was held February 3 at the Aula Magna of the Pontifical Council for the Laity in Rome.

One-Stop Shopping

Our Lady of Grace Gift Shop at 2568 Western Ave. in Guilderland thanks everyone who made their opening a success and reminds shoppers that Easter is on the way and their shelves are full of gift ideas. Whether it be a graduation, wedding/ anniversary or other special occasion, come and find a gift that will make a lasting impression.

Clarification: The Winter 2005 issue included a quote from Conchita Gonzalez. The Worldwide Apostolate of Fatima reminds readers that the Catholic Church has made no official statement regarding the events at Garabandal.

Thanks to Donors

We extend a sincere thank you to everyone who has donated to our newsletter and for the many kind notes about its inspirational articles. With the rising costs of printing and mailing, this newsletter can only continue with reader support. Your contributions make this publication possible! Please consider sending a donation today. All donations of \$20 or more receive a complimentary copy of "**Mary, the 21st Century Woman**," written by Mildred Breitenbach, co-founder of the St. Joseph Marian Center.

Our Mission

St. Joseph Marian Center represents the Albany Diocesan Division of The Blue Army, the worldwide apostolate of the faithful, responding to the requests of Our Lady of Fatima. The Mother of Jesus appeared to three shepherd children in Fatima, Portugal in 1917 and asked for prayers, penance and reparation for sins, giving us the means to change the world and to turn the hearts of men and women back to God, particularly through daily recitation of the rosary, Eucharistic adoration and a generous acceptance of the duties of our state in life. St. Joseph Marian Center promotes the lessons of Fatima and the spread of devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary through home enthronements, family consecrations and visitations of the Pilgrim Virgin Statue of Our Lady of Fatima to homes, schools and parishes.

Contact Us

For information, to make a donation, or to request a visit from the Pilgrim Virgin Statue, please contact us:

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Newsletter

All articles written by Doreen M.
Truesdell, Editor.

Filling Your Heart With the Love of Christ

The late Pope John Paul II spent an hour before the Blessed Sacrament daily, no matter where in the world he traveled. The great communicator, Archbishop Fulton Sheen, spent a Holy Hour with Our Lord every day of his priesthood and claimed that all of his talents and

strength came from the devotion. When we meditate before the Blessed Sacrament, we are in good company. Like the Magi, we come to adore the Real Presence. For inspiration, here's an excerpt from *Eucharistic Vigil Guide*, prepared by the Apostles of Our Lady of Mount Carmel:

"Do not fear, ask for much; I love generous hearts, which, forgetting themselves, wish well to others. Ask of Me many graces for yourself. Are there not many you would wish to name that would make you happier, more useful and pleasing to others, and more worthy of My love? Tell Me them with humility, knowing how poor you are without them, unable to gain them by yourself; ask for them with much love, that they may make you more pleasing to Me...With a child's simplicity, tell Me how self-seeking you are, how proud, vain, irritable, how cowardly in sacrifice, how lazy in work, uncertain in your good resolutions...And then ask Me to bless and crown your efforts. Poor child, fear not to blush at the sight of so many failings; there are saints in heaven who had the faults you have. They came to Me lovingly, they prayed earnestly to Me and My grace has made them good and holy in My sight. You should be Mine, body and soul--fear not, therefore, to ask of Me gifts of body and mind, health, judgement, memory and success....Return soon to Me again. But come with your heart empty of the world, for I have many more favors to give, more than you can know of. Bring your heart so that I may fill it with many gifts of My love."



"Mary, The 21st Century Woman" Wins Readers

Anyone who knew Mildred Breitenbach before she passed away, knew that mingled with her spirited personality was a healthy dose of humility. How would Millie feel about her book, **"Mary, The 21st Century Woman,"** becoming so popular? What would Millie say about the many letters and notes we've received that laud the book's simplicity and straightforwardness? How would she react to the news that William Donohue, President of The Catholic League, calls the book "splendid" and recommends it to readers? She'd probably throw all the praise back on the Blessed Mother, as always!

"I just finished reading (it) and I came away with

an all-new level of admiration for Mildred, who mustered up the courage to face challenge after challenge in defending the faith and preserving the dignity of womanhood," wrote one reader. "Surely God and His Holy Mother spoke through her to uphold the moral teachings of the Church and to bring comfort and consolation to many souls she encountered..."

"*Mary, The 21st Century Woman,*" is available for \$8.50, including shipping. Donations to the St. Joseph Marian Center of \$20 or more receive the book as a gift of thanks. Please send a check or money order to Saint Joseph Marian Center, P.O. Box 472, Altamont, NY, 12009.

Did You Know? The Marian Movement of Priests Cenacle of Our Lady of the Eucharist meets every Tuesday at 7 p.m. at St. Anthony's Church, Seward Place and Nott Street, Schenectady. In addition, St. Anthony's has a Holy Hour for Life, every First Sunday, from 3 to 4 p.m. All are welcome!

Reflecting the Eternal Love of Christ

The following was written by Jessica Breitenbach, granddaughter of Mildred and Ed Breitenbach

The other day, a friend asked me what my favorite memory of my grandma was. At the time, it was too painful to talk about, but I've had a memory that has been brewing...may I share it with you?

Most of you didn't get to meet my grandma, Millie. For the most part, she was the typical grandma. A bit taller than me. A perfectly coifed updo. A shape slightly softened by age. This is my favorite memory: When I would walk through the porch and into my grandparents' house, I'd always yell, "Hi, Grandma." Inevitably, I would hear the shuffle of her slippers as she'd come dashing down the hallway and around the corner into the livingroom. She'd be so excited to see me. She'd open her arms wide, pull me in tight, and I'd get a big, warm, soft hug. I'd take in the smell of Mary Kay, Aquanet, and a hint of eau-de-mothballs. The she'd pull back just a bit, put my big, chubby cheeks in her hands, gaze deep into my face with all the love a good grandma can muster, and she'd say, "Ah, there she is, my beautiful granddaughter."

Now, I'm not saying this to brag--grandmas often see their own kind of beauty. But there are few other things that make me feel as special, as loved and as invincible as the unconditional love of

a grandma. Most of you who know me well, know that I don't sermonize often and I almost never let people read things that I write. Maybe it's my seminary training kicking in or I've eaten one too

many bran muffins before trying to go to sleep, but I felt a burning need to share my devotional thought today on my grandma's birthday (January 24). My memory of my Grandma Millie has reminded me a little bit about Jesus' love. I have a Jesus that comes dashing towards me, arms open wide, ready to hold me tight, like the father welcomes home the prodigal son, He puts my big, chubby cheeks in His hands, gazes deeply into my face, and says, with as much love as any good grandma, "There you are, my beautiful child."

To this day, when I walk into her house, I still half expect to hear the slipper-shuffle coming down the hall and see her turn the corner. Some days I could use my grandma to remind me that I'm loveable. I'm sure you could too.

This hasn't been an easy year for many of us. We've lost loved ones, lost direction, had broken relationships, financial strains, struggles with schoolwork and self-esteem...wondering if we're lovable. And I want to remind you, we have a Jesus that can take our face in His hands, show us His unconditional love, and whisper the words, "Ah, there you are, my beautiful child."



Truths to Ponder During Lent

"I believe in Christianity as I believe that the sun has risen; not only because I see it, but because by it, I see everything else."

C.S. Lewis

"At the end of each day I ask myself just two questions: What did I do for Jesus today? What did I do to Jesus today?"

Blessed Teresa of Calcutta

*"Sin begins inside us, before the actions start. What we think matters, what we want matters, what we say matters, what we own matters, what we wish we owned matters, **and the human heart takes the shape of what it loves.**..We live in a constant tension between the call to live nobly and justly, and the temptation to make ourselves the center of the universe." Excerpt from *Revisiting the Journey**

False Compassion: True Love's Greatest Enemy

It's one of the mysteries of God that the Almighty allowed Lucifer to retain a very high intelligence after his defeat and fall from heaven. Good Catholics are well aware that the "father of all lies" is extremely clever in the destruction of humankind. Satan twists truths into lies and lies into pseudo-glory. His greatest achievement of this century, particularly the past 50 years, has been a wholesale campaign of promoting false compassion as true charity and love. This campaign has found a stronghold in the U.S., where our historical (and often hysterical) efforts at authentic democracy seem to demand compassion and tolerance at all costs. It is false compassion that has our tax dollars funding the murders of millions of unborn babies each year, making abortion the number one cause of death in the U.S. It is false compassion that allows euthanasia to be dubbed "death with dignity," and praises its proponents. It is false compassion that allows a culture of death to propagate in our schools, universities, workplaces and even in our families.

One of Satan's trickiest and most effective ruses against the truth is to place compassionate love in juxtaposition to it. But the premise is false-- truth and authentic compassion are one. To separate them, or to choose love over truth, is to lose both. Where love goes, truth must follow. To divorce them means you have forsaken them.

The enemies of the Catholic Church repeatedly point to Her doctrinal truths and shout "intolerance," hoping to make us cringe in shame. Many within the Church would like to emphasize a "love" at all costs, even at the cost of sin. Let's not forget that God speaks only one Word, love, and it is a sacrificial love. If we want to understand the Father, and become truly compassionate people, we must give up the impulse to reduce His eternal love

to a feel-good emotion that confuses tolerance with license. In practicing compassion, we must first

learn humility, which leads to obedience. Our obedience will then bring us to a true understanding of the justice of God's laws. The fruit of this journey will be true love, both for God and for each other. This is the way to bring about God's kingdom on earth.

The war to defeat traditional Judeo-Christian ethics is reaching a crescendo and the enemy's trump card is false compassion. How many more Christians and Catholic Christians will he ensnare through persuasion, ignorance and a disordered sense of compassion will depend upon how well we arm ourselves and our families to speak and live God's revealed truth, which is the heart of love.



St. Augustine, pray for us

Plain Speaking

"There is no such thing as being a good Catholic and being disobedient to the Holy Father. There is no such thing as being a good Catholic and being a dissident when it comes to faith and morals. There is no such thing as dissent from authentic and authoritative Church teaching. No such thing. Those who do that separate themselves from Christ and His body. They become dead members of the body of Christ. You should avoid such people like the plague and you should keep your children from such people as though keeping them from the worst contagion, because contact with such people can poison their minds, poison their souls and kill them morally and spiritually...that is not lack of charity, that is not lack of pastoral concern. That IS charity, that IS being pastoral and that IS being merciful." quoted from Fr. John Corapi, SOLT, from a speech, *Dissent Poisons*.



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Words of Wisdom & Truth

A Message from Fr. Walter F. Baniak, Spiritual Director, St. Joseph Marian Center

The message of this issue of our newsletter is love, true love that can come only from a knowledge and belief in Jesus Christ. This is also the message at the core of Our Lady's teachings at Fatima. Remember, to Jesus, through Mary! The Blessed Mother always leads us to Her Son and salvation.

So how does the Fatima message lead us to love? By showing us the steps up the ladder to where Christ bows down to us. The message contains lessons we may not want to hear. Prayer, repentance, and sacrifice for sins are the rungs we must climb. And the climb continues all of our lives. So many people reject the true love found in Christ because they aren't willing to make the climb.



Our Lady knows that without this ladder to Christ, we will fail in our sin. She knows, as only a Mother knows, the weaknesses and foibles of our human nature that will hinder us in our climb. So Mary holds out Her Motherly hand to us and the Queen of heaven pleads with us to listen to Her directions.

True love costs truly. Anyone who contemplates a crucifix can see how high the price is. The message of Fatima is love, a love that costs us dearly. The return is eternal and perfect love which

one day will carry us back to where we were created, to the very heart of God. In the meantime, heeding Our Lady's words at Fatima, we take a deep breath and keep climbing.