

St. Joseph Marian Center

The Albany Diocesan Division of
THE WORLD APOSTOLATE OF FATIMA, U.S.A.

Winter Issue 2007



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

Words of Wisdom & Truth: A Very “Mary” Christmas to All

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

This year, and every year, let us have a very “Mary” Christmas. Let us spend the days of Advent waiting, praying and pondering the miraculous birth of Our Savior, the coming of God Among Us. Let us imitate the Blessed Mother who is our most perfect example, so that we may be ready for the life-changing beauty of Christmas the way it is meant to be experienced--in our hearts, in our minds and in our souls.

Fatima has much to teach us, even 90 years after Our Lady appeared there to the three child visionaries. The most important and astounding revelation of the Fatima message was not the Miracle of the Sun, witnessed by 70,000 people, although that was perhaps the most spectacular event. The keystone of Fatima’s purpose was the Angel’s act of suspending the Precious Body and Blood of Jesus in the air and PROSTRATING HIMSELF ON THE GROUND, thrice repeating the prayer of profound adoration: *“My God, I believe, I adore, I hope and I love Thee! I ask pardon for those who do not believe, do not adore, do not hope and do not love Thee! Pray thus. The Hearts of Jesus and Mary are attentive to the voice of your supplications.”*



The prayers and lessons learned in a small village in Portugal almost a century ago are the very signposts we need for Advent and throughout the Christmas season. The Angel told the children to prostrate themselves

on the ground before the Blessed Sacrament; we prostrate ourselves in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. The Angel directed the children to sacrifice to expiate their own sins and the sins of others; so we offer ourselves completely to God. The Angel assured the children that the Hearts of the Blessed Mother and Her Son are open to our needs. So we turn to Jesus and His Mother who welcome us to kneel at the Christmas crib in adoration and supplication.

It never ceases to amaze me that the all-powerful, all-knowing God lowered Himself to take the form of a baby, accepting all of the humbleness and dependency inherent in infancy. It is a love we cannot understand because we are not all-loving as He is. It is a miracle unending because He is eternal. This Christmas, let us follow Mary to the stable to behold Emmanuel, “God Among Us,” and to share in Her wonder and joy as She offers Her Son to the world. A Very “Mary” Christmas to you and your loved ones.

Pilgrims Honor Our Lady at National Shrine



More than 5,000 people honored Our Lady on the 90th Anniversary of the Oct 13th Apparition at the National Blue Army Shrine of the Immaculate Heart of Mary in Washington, New Jersey (photo at left). These faithful pilgrims attended Holy Mass and honored the Mother of God during a day-long spiritual celebration of Her appearances at Fatima in 1917. The main celebrant for the day was the Most Reverend Thomas J. Welsh, with Rev. Ronan Murphy serving as homilist and concelebrant. (For photos and information about St. Joseph Marian Center's local celebration of Fatima's 90th Anniversary, please turn to page 5).

Thank You to Donors

We extend a sincere thank you to everyone who has donated to our newsletter and for the many kind notes about its contents. 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 copy of "**Mary, the 21st Century Woman,**" written by Mildred Breitenbach, co-founder of the St. Joseph Marian Center.

Don't Forget to Add Us to Your Will

When you are writing or updating your will, please remember the St. Joseph Marian Center and its mission to spread the Gospel of Christ and the messages of Our Lady of Fatima. A bequest made to this non-profit organization is a "lasting treasure."

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

Doreen M. Truesdell, Editor/Writer

Welcome the Infant Jesus into Your Home

At Christmas our thoughts and hearts naturally turn to the Baby Jesus and His presence in our lives. But members of the faithful who cherish a devotion to the Infant Jesus of Prague enjoy His Holy and loving company every day of the year, no matter the season. We know from the Gospels the importance of the child-like qualities that one needs to adopt in order to enter into God's kingdom: simplicity, trust and humility. We can ask the Holy Infant to teach us how to surrender all things to God's will and place our needs in His little hands.

The popularity of the Infant Jesus first grew in Spain, caused in a large part by St. Teresa of Avila, who carried an Infant statuette as she traveled and founded convents. Devotion to the Infant of Prague began in the 17th century when a statue was brought into Bohemia (now the Czech Republic) by a Spanish noble lady and given to the Carmelite priests and brothers at the Church of



the Virgin Mary the Victorious, as a spiritual treasure. "As long as you venerate this image you will not be in

want," she prophesied. Her prediction held true until wars came and the church was pillaged, forcing the Carmelites to leave. The Statue was thrown upon a heap of rubbish, both hands broken off, and lay forgotten. In 1637 the Carmelites returned and found their lost treasure, renewing the devotion. In a vision to the priests, the Infant spoke these words "Have pity on me and I will have pity on you. Give me my hands and I will give you peace. The more you honor me, the more I will bless you."

After much hardship, the Statue was indeed restored and the "Little Prague Baby" has since been worshipped in homes and families around the world.

Many miracles and extraordinary events have been attributed to the devotion and the Holy Infant continues to bless those who Honor Him.

*Dear little One! How sweet Thou art, Thine eyes how bright they shine.
So bright they almost seem to speak when Mary's look meets Thine!*

Advent Longing: Keeping Watch for Christ

Advent is the season of longing, weeks of vigil kept in the quiet of our hearts amid the busiest time in our culture. Holy Mother Church bids us to keep watch in prayer for signs of Christ's coming to bring us peace, not in the past or in the future, but in our present-day world. We are an Advent people by our very nature. We live not satisfied but in constant thirst for God. Too often we do not recognize the source of our restlessness but seek to satisfy it with all sorts of emotional and material things that anaesthetize our inner longings but do not fulfill them. Here we find the great gift of Advent: to stir us and focus our attention on recognizing what we truly yearn for, a personal relationship with Christ, through His Church. During Advent, the hours of

darkness continue to lengthen, and night seems to consume day. Darkness can settle in our hearts as we contemplate the state of our families, our nation and our world. We long for the day Christ will dispel the darkness with His radiant glory and we wait for an unseen dawn, certain in His promises that He will not forget mankind. As the days towards Christmas approach, we await the rising of the Sun of Justice.

"I know well the plans I have in mind for you...plans for your welfare, not for woe! Plans to give you a future full of hope... When you call me, I will listen to you. When you look for me, you will find me."
Jer. 29, 11-13

Praising the name of Jesus with the “O” Antiphons

Late in Advent, during the Christmas Octave from December 17 to December 23, the final preparation for the coming of Christ begins with the great “O Antiphons.” These prayers are seven jewels of liturgical song, one for each day until Christmas Eve. They seem to sum up all our Advent longing for the Savior in poetic and ancient language that is truly inspiring.

Traditionally, the “Great O’s” are intoned before the Magnificat during Vespers of the Liturgy of the Hours, but Catholics today may recognize the O Antiphons as the verses of the Advent hymn, “O Come, O Come Emmanuel.” Based on scriptural texts, the O Antiphons’ importance is twofold: each one is a title for Christ, and each one refers to the coming of the Messiah. Jesus is invoked by various titles from scripture, beginning before creation and leading up to the very gates of Bethlehem. It is especially in the final week of Advent that our attention is fixed on the messianic promises proclaimed by the ancient prophets of Israel. The ancient O Antiphons add a spirit of eager expectation to our prayers throughout the final week before Christmas.



Each O Antiphon begins with an invocation of the expected Messiah, followed by praise of Him under one of His particular titles. Each ends with a petition for God’s people and the cry for Him to “Come.” Tradition has it that Benedictine monks arranged these antiphons with a definite purpose: starting with the last title and taking the first letter of each one - Emmanuel, Rex, Oriens, Clavis, Radix, Adonai, Sapientia - spells the Latin words “Ero Cras,” meaning, “Tomorrow, I will come,” the Lord Jesus’ glorious promise.

Dec. 17 - O Sapientia: “O Wisdom, O holy Word of God, you govern all creation with your strong yet tender care. Come and show your people the way to salvation.”

Dec. 18 - O Adonai: “O Sacred Lord of ancient Israel, who showed yourself to Moses in the burning bush, who gave him the holy law on Sinai mountain: Come, stretch out your mighty hand to set us free.”

Dec. 19 - O Radix Jesse: “O Flower of Jesse’s Stem, you have been raised up as a sign for all peoples; kings stand silent in your presence; the nations bow down in worship before you. Come, let nothing keep you from coming to our aid.”

Dec. 20 - O Clavis David: “O Key of David, O royal Power of Israel controlling at your will the gate of Heaven: Come, break down the prison walls of death for those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death; and lead your captive people into freedom.”

Dec. 21 - O Oriens: “O Radiant Dawn, splendor of eternal light, sun of justice: Come, shine on those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death.”

Dec. 22 - O Rex Gentium: “O King of all the Nations, the only joy of every human heart; O Keystone of the mighty arch of man, Come and save the creature you fashioned from the dust.”

Dec. 23 - O Emmanuel: “O Emmanuel, king and lawgiver, desire of the nations, Savior of all people, Come and set us free, Lord our God.”

A Special Celebration Honoring the 90th Anniversary of Fatima

The St. Joseph Marian Center celebrated the 90th Anniversary of Our Lady’s appearances at Fatima with a Capital District Rosary Rally on October 13 at the Shrine of LaSalette in Altamont, New York. This faith-filled day was led by our main celebrant and speaker Rev. Jeffrey M. L’Arche,

MS, the shrine’s director. The celebration included a Consecration of America, Rosary Procession, the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass and Benediction. In addition, the St. Joseph Marian Center’s Pilgrim Virgin Statue of the Immaculate Heart of Our Lady of Fatima was venerated by visitors of all ages. The statue contains a reliquary with fragments of the holm oak tree over which Our Lady appeared.

October 13 marks the date of Her sixth apparition, during which occurred the Miracle of the Sun and the appearance of St. Joseph and the Child Jesus.



“When you pray the Rosary, say after each mystery: O my Jesus, forgive us our sins, save us from the fires of hell. Lead all souls to heaven, especially those in most need of Thy mercy.”
“In the end, My Immaculate Heart will triumph.”

Our Lady at Fatima





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Advent & Christmas Blessings to Our Readers

The St. Joseph Marian Center, our diocesan's division of the World Apostolate of Fatima, asks God's blessings on all of our supporters, readers and those who have participated in our events, as well as their families and loved ones. May the peace of the Divine Babe of Bethlehem come and take birth in our hearts throughout this Holy season!

"Hail and Blessed be the hour and the moment at which the Son of God was born of the Most Pure Virgin Mary, at midnight, in Bethlehem, in the piercing cold! In that hour, vouchsafe, O Lord, to hear our prayers and grant our petitions, through Christ Our Lord. Amen."

A Traditional Christmas Hymn

*All my heart this night rejoices
As I hear, far and near, sweetest angel voices:
"Christ is born," their choirs are singing,
Til the air, ev'rywhere, now with joy is ringing.
Come, then, let us hasten yonder
Here let all, great and small, kneel in awe and wonder.
Love Him who with love is yearning
Hail the Star, that from afar, bright with hope is burning!
Ye who pine in weary sadness, weep no more
For the door now is found of gladness.
Cling to Him for He will guide you
Where no cross, pain or loss, can again betide you.*

