



*“Run to my Children in the East...”*

A. Matt Werner

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I acknowledge having received advice and having gotten historical accounts from the following dear friends: Rachel Bresnahan, Joe McAleer, Edmund Murphy, Mary Smolczyk, Lee Murphy, Mary Huwa, Beatrice Brusstar, the late Sharon Hosier, the late Fr. Michael Walsh & Fr. Edward O’Connor, C.S.C. University of Notre Dame, and of course my wife, Sylvia Werner.

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### **Front Cover Icon**

16<sup>th</sup> Century “*Listening*” Icon of the Most Holy Mother of God from the Assumption Church in Krylos, in the Halych region (Galicia), Ukraine. We call her: “*She who Listens*”

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*In Memoriam:*

**Father Michael Walsh**

*1928-2013*



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## FOREWORD

On June 6, 1995 I first learned that “*most souls go to hell because of the sins of the flesh*” [Fatima 1917]. Our Blessed Mother had spoken these words to the three little children in Fatima. I had never investigated the Fatima apparitions of the Virgin Mary. My guardian angel told me to turn off Dan Rather. Instead, “*Open your ears to the Blessed Mother.*” I got this wake-up call when I went to the first “**Russia**” conference organized by the Queen of the Apostles Mission Association (QAMA). In Colorado Springs at Holy Apostles Church, I learned about the Virgin Mary’s many recent visits to our verdant planet. She brings messages of great urgency for Her children. I raced off to confession and began working out my own salvation with fear and trembling.

An aura of holiness surrounded the Catholic bishops and priests whom I met that day. I felt ashamed that I had no sanctifying grace in my soul. I learned that QAMA and Holy Apostles Catholic Church had organized the conference to bring succor to the Catholic Church in Russia. In the three years preceding the conference the Virgin Mary had given messages of great urgency to a visionary at Mother Cabrini Shrine near Golden, Colorado. She had also appeared at St. Thomas More Church in Englewood, Colorado. She came as *Our Holy Mother of Virtues*, bringing requests to her children quite like those she gave to the three little children in Fatima in 1917, when she came as *Our Lady of the Rosary*. In Colorado from 1991-1994 she gave many messages to her prophet Theresa Lopez. She asked Her children to consecrate their hearts to Hers. She pleaded with her children to practice the Virtues to avoid eternal perdition--the state of final spiritual ruin.

Let us now define the word **consecrate**. You will read that word many times in this book. *Consecrate: to make or declare sacred; to set apart for a holy purpose; to dedicate to the service of the Blessed Virgin Mary.* When we consecrate our hearts to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, we assist her with her mission as Co-Redemptrix of humanity. We do so by removing our hearts from worldly cares. Especially we must refrain from yielding to impure temptations.

The Virgin Mary also asked the St. Thomas More parishioners to: “*Run to my children in the East who long to hear your hearts. Russia is the ransom for the peace the world yearns for*” [1992]. The late pastor of St. Thomas More Church, Father Michael Walsh, and his parishioners had organized the conference in obedience to this request from Our Holy Mother of Virtues. Soon after the conference I joined Father Walsh’s QAMA committee; and began running to her children in Russia the very next year.

I write this book because no one has yet told the story of *Our Holy Mother of Virtues*. I write it because the venerable Notre Dame Mariologist and author, Fr. Edward O'Connor C.S.C. told me to get it done. I had almost finished this book in 2013. I will finish it now in 2020 since COVID-19 has cleared up my Court calendar.

Some readers have already studied the best seller "*In the End My Immaculate Heart Will Triumph*" [March 25, 1993 Queenship Publishing]. That devotional 84-page booklet publishes meditations the Virgin Mary, as *Our Holy Mother of Virtues*, gave to Theresa Lopez beginning in 1991. Queenship Publishing Co. sold more of these books than any other. The Queenship founder and late Bob Shaeffer told me in 1998 that he had sold 500,000 copies in America, and he believed another 300,000 had gone to print, violating his copyright, in the Philippines and in Africa. He told me he did not object in the least. The booklet prints just the Virgin's words. It does not give a history.

The Virgin Mary first appeared to Theresa Lopez on October 13, 1991 at Mother Cabrini Shrine. As *Our Holy Mother of Virtues*, Our Lady urged her children to cultivate devotion to Her Immaculate Heart. Our Blessed Mother asks us all to consecrate our hearts to Hers. When the world heard that Theresa saw the Blessed Mother, Catholics from everywhere flocked to Denver by plane, bus, and car. Marian (*pertaining to the Virgin Mary*) pilgrims raced to Mother Cabrini Shrine and St. Thomas More Church. The surge of so many fervent souls caused a huge local sensation. TV and newspaper reporters excitedly jumped on their horses.

As we have just written, Mary exhorted Theresa Lopez to encourage the Faithful to consecrate their hearts to hers. Theresa Lopez wrote a small book setting forth prayers and meditations for those wanting to consecrate their hearts to Mary. The Virgin Mary dictated it to Theresa over the course of two or three days. It followed the thirty-three-day schedule that St. Louis-Marie Grignon de Montfort first recommended three hundred years ago in his wildly popular "*True Devotion to Mary*."

Only Theresa Lopez's book "*In the End My Immaculate Heart Will Triumph*" served to distribute widely the messages from *Our Holy Mother of Virtues*. Two other small volumes of Mary's messages to Theresa Lopez went to print in 1992 and 1994. *Messages for the Harvest* volumes one and two, each of 66 pages, contained some of Mary's messages to Theresa. She received them in many places, often while she traveled on pilgrimage. She received them when she visited Fatima, in Italy, in Spain, in Russia, in Slovakia, and especially when she went to pray at St. Thomas More Church in Englewood, Colorado (now Centennial) and at Mother Cabrini Shrine.

*Messages for the Harvest* saw only a limited and local printing. Gary Kuntz from Castle Rock, Colorado edited the volumes with the help of the late Geraldine Kerrigan, founder of Abba House in Pueblo. We will reprint Gary Kuntz' introduction to *Messages for the Harvest, Volume #1* in a subsequent chapter of this book. You cannot find these books anywhere. However, I do have about a dozen copies of both books available.

I write this book to tell the history of *Our Holy Mother of Virtues*. I feel inspiration to do so. I think no one else will do it. God has given me the ability to tell the story well. Finally, the Blessed Mother has personally asked me to serve as the guardian of these apparitions.

Let us return to the beginning. I had heard about the apparitions back in 1991 when I lived in an apartment in the Cherry Creek neighborhood in Denver. I then practiced law in a local firm. I had no interest in what I had read about the apparitions in the local newspapers. I thought they came from fantastic hallucinations of pious but simple-minded people. One afternoon in the summer of 1992 I witnessed firsthand a large throng of pilgrims making their way to Mother Cabrini Shrine above Golden, Colorado. That day I rode my mountain bike on a rugged mountainous peak known as the *Hogback* near Mother Cabrini Shrine. A couple of hundred feet down below, I saw a half dozen police cars and a fleet of school buses in Heritage Square. Orange traffic cones lined the road. Sheriffs directed the vehicles and monitored the hundreds of pedestrians. I saw firsthand the simpletons who had fallen for the Marian hoax I had read about in the papers.

Three years later the Virgin Mary opened my eyes. I went to a Marian conference and received the graces of conversion.

Two local churches had invited priests and bishops from the Former Soviet Union to come to Colorado to make an appeal, especially for monetary support for the Catholic Church in the East following the recent collapse of the Soviet Union. It was June 1995. I went to the conference because my mother had asked me to meet the emissary from *Aid-to-the-Church-in-Need* to see if they might want some money from The Werner Family Foundation. My late father, Anthony M. (Pat) Werner, had set up an eleemosynary Catholic foundation just prior to his death in 1989. I obeyed my mother and went to the conference.

One lay speaker at the three-day conference spoke about Marian apparitions and messages. He mesmerized me. Ted Flynn, a smart self-assured New Englander, the

sort of guy who would not let wool get pulled over his eyes, laid forth in sixty minutes the mosaic of Mary's apparitions and messages over the past two hundred years. Ted spoke with passion. This was a guy you could not hoodwink. He believed. Suddenly, so did I. At once I knew that the Blessed Virgin had indeed visited Fatima. She had also brought urgent warnings from Heaven to Banneaux, Beaurang, Lourdes, Guadalupe, Pontmain, Garabandal, Akita, and other places. She came to tell us of her prophesied victory in Genesis 3:15 [Douay version]. What a welcome grace!

I suddenly understood that I needed to confess with sorrow my mortal sins. I needed to have a firm purpose of amendment. Mary had told the Fatima children that most souls go to hell because of the sins of the flesh. I had very many sins to tell. Then I thought, why watch TV news or read the newspapers, if in fact the Mother of God now visits the earth bringing us urgent news from heaven? I then began to read voraciously the library of books about Mary's apparitions and messages. I realized that worldly concerns had no importance. We must listen to her voice and do what she asks.

Ted Flynn suggested that I harness my enthusiasm and direct my family's money to good use by joining forces with the people who organized the conference. Who organized the conference? The pious faithful at the two local churches who believed in the authenticity of Mary's apparitions as *Our Holy Mother of Virtues* had organized the conference. The pastor at St. Thomas More Church in Englewood, Fr. Michael Walsh, had responded to Mary's request by incorporating the Queen of Apostles Mission Association to reach out to the Catholic Church in Russia and the East with spiritual and financial aid. The Virgin Mary had said:

*"Run to my children in the East who long to hear your hearts. Russia is the ransom for the peace the world yearns for."*

Father Michael Walsh and his parishioners incorporated the Queen of the Apostles Mission Association Inc. (QAMA) in the autumn of 1992. Scores of parishioners then bonded together in a common effort to bring succor to our Catholic brothers and sisters in the East who had suffered the terrible scourge of atheistic Communism. Communism had suffocated the Church militant in those lands. I joined QAMA at the end of 1995. In 1997 I became their president. Since 1996 I have travelled as missionary and ambassador of Mary's Immaculate Heart to Russia and the Ukraine thirty-seven times. I have walked upon Russian and Ukrainian soil; and have breathed their air while listening to their hearts for almost five years of my lifetime.

From 1996 until 2008 I flew there every spring and every autumn. With much assistance from heaven, we have helped them build and repair several dozen churches and monasteries. Generous donors have given for this mission nearly three million dollars since 1995. Hundreds of priests, bishops, sisters and orphans in the Ukraine and Russia know about the Queen of the Apostles Mission Association. But not so many know that Our Holy Mother of Virtues sent us there.

I met another young woman who had seen the Blessed Virgin while praying together with Theresa Lopez—Sylvia Groeger. Mary spoke some words for my heart that Sylvia wrote down as we knelt in prayer before Mary’s statue in St. Thomas More Church. We gathered there daily at Mary’s request. She spoke mostly words of encouragement, but also words requesting my prayers and my sanctity. She asked me to go to Russia as an ambassador of her Immaculate Heart; and she asked me to be a guardian of her apparitions. I write this book in humble obedience to her requests.

*“Peace my child for I am with you. Every generation has called me blessed, and now you look upon me as your mother! How I have longed for this hour with you. I am truly your mother. I see the anxiety, the hurt and the pain you have endured. Even as a child you suffered many great insults and blows for my honor and the sake of my son’s Kingdom.\* Even now you endure persecution. As all must undergo suffering, I am cultivating a spirit of divine patience in you that, through your suffering and patience, my Father’s Will will be made known to you. Take comfort in knowing that I, your Mother, will supply you with sufficient grace for you to accomplish all that has been required of you.*

*“Seek the face of Jesus, and he will turn his eyes of mercy toward you and all whom you hold dear. Seek the heart of Christ, and all you endure will bring forth the fruit of the Holy Spirit in your midst. I have given you a great spirit of truth and justice that you may be an ambassador of my heart. All those you meet will come to know me through your generosity and joy. The only thing I require of you is prayer. My son Jesus requires faith. Ask for the gift to pray with a steadfast love, and my Son will increase your faith. Ask for a spirit of faith and it will come to you through your thankfulness. Be at peace and joy knowing that I, your most holy mother the Blessed Virgin Mary, am with you always and that you have become very dear to me. I love you and send you forth in peace to serve a world that is longing for hope and truth. You, my son, have been chosen to bring the gifts of the Spirit to the world. Rejoice and be at peace, for my son and I are in your very thought and word. We stand in the midst of your handiwork, and we will bring you to the shores of fulfillment and into the harbor of God. Peace again. Peace!” [April 1996]*

\*At the age of eight I visited our neighbors across the street, the protestant minister George M. and his family. His son Charlie and I had become playmates. One afternoon in their living room while they entertained guests, the Reverend George M. asked me a question about the Holy Eucharist. I defended Catholic doctrine and declared it was the body of Christ. They had a good laugh. The Reverend meant to ridicule me and my defense of Catholic Dogma. Sylvia certainly had no knowledge of this episode of my life when she received this message from Our Blessed Mother



QAMA supported monastery construction in Novograd-Volinsky.

## Chapter 1    The Blessed Virgin Mary Visits Colorado

No one reading the two Denver daily newspapers in the early 1990s could have missed the frequent reports of the “alleged” visits of the Mother of God with Theresa Lopez. The editors seemed incredulous. The reporters showed skepticism that the Virgin Mary would speak to a young woman with a “messy” personal life. Not so for many pious Catholic believers in the region. They soon flocked to the places where Theresa said she saw the Blessed Virgin, and where Theresa heard Mary give messages for her to share with the faithful.

At this point, let me say that Mary appeared to and spoke to two other young women at the same time and in the same places. All three of these visionaries knew each other and frequently met for prayer, usually at St. Thomas More Church in Englewood or at Mother Cabrini Shrine in the foothills of the Rocky Mountains. Nevertheless, these other two women, Veronica Garcia and Sylvia Groeger (Werner), listening to their guardian angels, sought anonymity, and kept from the limelight. In this book I will refer mostly to the messages received by Theresa Lopez. Her messages and her life received the most media coverage. Only her messages received national attention. And hers led to the printing of the devotional booklet *In the End My Immaculate Heart Will Triumph*. [1992]

The fact of Mary’s appearing near Denver caused both a local, and then later a national sensation. Not everyone showed as much skepticism as the local newspapermen. By the winter of 1992, Pilgrims had begun flocking to St. Thomas More Church in Englewood and to Mother Cabrini Shrine in the foothills of the Rockies. In any other state you would say Cabrini Shrine rested on a mountain. But in Colorado the great 14,000-foot peaks dwarf the smaller mountains, so we call them foothills. From Mother Cabrini Shrine you enjoy a majestic view of Denver and the plains. You have gained better than one thousand feet of elevation once you have reached the Shrine. You might think that you can see as far as Kansas. Maybe you can. You have a magnificent view. I have heard some people call Cabrini Shrine America’s little Medjugorje.

[Author’s note: I have not looked closely into the reports of the Virgin Mary’s apparitions in Medjugorje. God doesn’t ask us to investigate every report of supernatural phenomena. The late Father Malachi Martin, in a 1993 interview with Triumph Communications, gave cogent reasons why we should doubt their authenticity.]

In 1888 St. Francis Cabrini, a pious young Italian woman who wanted to go to the Orient as a Catholic missionary, approached Pope Leo XIII seeking his blessing. Pope Leo XIII instead told her to go to America where Italian immigrants needed spiritual succor. She came to America in 1889 and traveled widely, founding many schools and orphanages. She got buried in Chicago. In Denver she founded an orphanage for young girls. She opened a summer camp for them in the Rocky Mountains where, since her death, Catholics erected a shrine in her memory. She bought the land with little money. It had no water. With Divine inspiration and much faith, she struck a rock on the mountain side with her staff. Since then, the mountain has gushed forth clean sparkling water from an internal spring. Pilgrims flock there for the water and to pray.

Cabrini Shrine sits atop a rocky mountain accessible by a narrow serpentine road that climbs a mile or two above the interstate highway leading towards the West. Until most recently, it served as a monastery for the Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart. It has a conference and retreat center with an old stone house that once served to give room and board to young orphan girls. It has a majestic Way of the Cross. Pilgrims climb 373 steps to the top where a 22-foot statue of Our Lord blesses the denizens of the Front Range and dispenses His Mercy to those who request it. Climbing the steep steps, pilgrims pass first the Stations of the Cross and then the fifteen mysteries of the Rosary. The Shrine welcomes all comers, especially Hispanic families with their many children. At the bottom of the steps, you will find two chapels honoring the saint, which always glow with lighted candles. Near the chapels you find the spring of perpetually flowing water.

When the pilgrims first began to flock to the shrine to consecrate their hearts to Mary and to pray Her Chaplet of Virtues, I remained a skeptic. As I recounted in the Foreword, one Saturday I rode my mountain bicycle on a nearby mountain, the “hogback”, and I beheld below a curious sight. I saw a swarm of pedestrians and a flotilla of busses and many police cars and orange traffic cones. The pilgrims came to the Shrine every second Sunday of each month. Mary’s monthly visits caused a great local sensation. I witnessed it as a doubting onlooker.

Later I learned that St. Thomas More Church also received crowds of pilgrims every second Sunday of the month. The church has several acres of parking lots. They filled to capacity with cars and buses when the pilgrims came. St. Thomas More parish has more than 6,000 families. In those years, it was possibly the largest Catholic parish west of the Mississippi River. When its parking lot fills with buses, you have more than a thousand souls. Why did they come? The skeptical would say they came out of curiosity. The pious would say they came to answer Mary’s call. She calls us all to

consecrate our hearts to Her Immaculate Heart. We also find this consecration theme in the Fatima messages. It was a central theme in the writings of St. Louis Marie Grignon de Montfort of France, three hundred years ago, when he recommended true devotion to Mary as the surest means to grow in holiness.

We will more safely traverse the dangerous roads of our time, if we have our heavenly mother protecting and guiding us. It takes humility to recognize our fallen nature and our weaknesses. It takes trust to give ourselves to Mary to serve as our Protectress, our guide, and our intercessor before her Son our Lord. If you have traveled the path to her heart you will know its treasures. We can pray for those with no Marian devotion, but we cannot take them there. Only she can do so. Often a broken heart and a broken spirit will render the soul amenable to conversion. She asks only for our prayers and penances for those who do not yet know the treasures that await them within her Immaculate Heart. In a later chapter, I will tell of another central theme of the Virgin's message—her request that we pray her Chaplet of Virtues daily.

*“My dear son, take my heart today as a sign that your forefathers who were noble and forthright men have all accomplished a great work in you and through you. Their faith has brought you to this journey, and their devotion and steadfast love has inherited for you a great place in my kingdom. Look only to Me, my son, for guidance as you now feel so alone and unaided in your necessities. I your brother have traveled a great road of abandonment and poverty. In my heart I enkindle the reality of the solitary life I lived and still remember—the days of complete and utter isolation.*

*“My dear son, I your brother and friend **Jesus** walk along beside you and carry you through to do the will of my Father God. Understand this; it is very dangerous for you to boast of the accomplishments you do for me to anyone, because all you do for me should be in secret. I am Jesus your Lord and your brother. Reconcile to Me all of your woundedness. Cling to me in your desolation, for I, your brother Jesus, need you to bear witness to all I have started here in this holy place and in this holy city.*

*“Many will torment you about your choices and your vocation. Many will see your life as a sign of sheer madness. Nevertheless, I, your brother Jesus, need you to complete the mission I have started here; for you have been given the fortitude and knowledge, the strength, and the courage to live out the promises that I have begun through your lineage. You, my son, shall drink from the cup of my Passion, and of my salvation, and together we will build a holy nation.” [October 31, 1996]*

## Chapter 2 Parishioners Respond

The reports of Mary's apparitions at St. Thomas More Church struck a deep resonant chord in the hearts of many parishioners. Just imagine, if the Mother of God paid a visit to your parish, and you believed it to be true. What a privilege! What a responsibility! Under the wise, prudent, yet circumspect guidance of Pastor Fr. Michael Walsh, the parishioners soon organized to receive the thousands of pilgrims who would come, responding to Mary's messages. In brief, Mary made two requests: strive towards personal holiness; and reach out to Her children in Russia "*who long to hear your hearts.*"

First, let me speak a word about Father Michael Walsh. His eyes first saw light in 1928 in County Waterford, Ireland, the tenth of eleven children. Three became priests. Fr. Walsh came to Denver in 1950 with his brother Larry to receive formation at St. Thomas Seminary (now St. John Vianney Seminary) and received the sacrament of Holy Orders in 1956. He served as a parish priest in the Denver Archdiocese for 48 years until his retirement in 2005. He served as pastor at St. Thomas More Church from 1988 until 2000. Father Walsh gained much wisdom through the years. He had savvy, and the gift of picking the right person for the task, time after time. Uncanny!

Fr. Walsh would be the last person to be duped. You could not fool him or take advantage of him in any way. He had a great intellect. He had wisdom and wit, with a wonderful Irish sense of mirth. That the Virgin Mary would visit his parish was not just a shock to him; he had a most difficult time believing it. He was on the lookout for shams, fakes, and charlatans-- and his pride would not allow for the possibility of being taken in by a fraud.

Nevertheless, he witnessed firsthand the many blessings that came to the parish in the wake of the reports of the apparitions. He oversaw the organization of the various committees necessary to receive the pilgrims and to show them hospitality. He incorporated the *Catholic Evangelization Mission for the Conversion of Russia* (CEM/COR). Two years later CEM/COR became *Queen of the Apostles Mission Association, Inc.*

At first the parish's committees formed under the umbrella of *Apostles for the Triumph* (of the Immaculate Heart of Mary). But later they divided the effort to work on those two fronts: the spiritual and the corporal.

The Apostles for the Triumph gathered in prayer, praying as Our Holy Mother of Virtues asked. Certainly, hundreds gathered for regular prayers to the Blessed Virgin, in the church and in private homes. They prayed Mary's Chaplet of Virtues, and the Rosary. They made regular consecrations of their hearts to her Immaculate Heart. They strove to evangelize others on the importance of Marian devotion, and they received the flocks of pilgrims with great enthusiasm, charity, and hospitality.

Fr. Walsh and the parishioners also incorporated CEM/COR, on the other hand, to help evangelize Russia with a bricks and mortar approach. Their early efforts in 1993 through 1995 included organizing pilgrimages to Russia. They went to St. Petersburg and Moscow to meet first hand our brothers and sisters in the East. They organized clothing drives and shipped many pallets of used clothes to the East. They shipped many rosaries and religious books. They shipped donated used medical equipment from local hospitals. They began to publish and mail a periodic newsletter to friends and supporters, begging financial donations to support the missionary priests and sisters in Russia and the East.

Then in 1995 they organized the "*First International Conference to Assist the Catholic Church in the Former Soviet Union.*" [Hereinafter the "*Russia*" conference, for brevity.] They brought from Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan and elsewhere many priests and bishops to speak at a three-day conference at Holy Apostles Church in Colorado Springs. The visitors from the East told of the many privations the Church suffered under atheistic Communism since the 1917 revolution. They asked for material and spiritual support. I attended that conference. I went not as a believer, for I was then a most wayward Catholic. I attended the conference as a favor to my mother. My late father had left better than a quarter of a million dollars in a charitable trust earmarked for the support of the Catholic Church. My mother sent me to the conference to meet the delegate from *Aid to the Church in Need* to learn if they needed any support from our family foundation.

We will revisit this conference in a following chapter wherein I give the reader my brief autobiography and my conversion story. For the moment it suits our purpose to inform the reader of the scope of the efforts of the parishioners at St. Thomas More Catholic Church to respond to the requests of Our Holy Mother of Virtues.

In Chapter 21 of this book, I will tell of my mother's support for QAMA. The reader will get an understanding about how we traveled through the countryside, from village to village, most often by rail. That chapter telling of my mother's generous support for QAMA went to our friends and supporters last winter. We reprint here the newsletter

they received last January. It served as our Lenten issue of *The Breaking Dawn* in 2020.

[**Jesus** for Matt:] *“My son, I only call you to a heavenly task that you and I shall carry together. Today in this place Our Lady of Virtues has come to you in a special way. Do not be afraid, my son, to speak of the truth of my mother’s visits here. They are true and holy. Many will not understand your sudden prompting to go forth. Yet, in all you do they will see the glory that God has granted to my Queen and Holy Mother of Virtues. Mary, my mother, has no one but you to speak of her truth and her messages here.*

*I will guide you to those who will accept this message. You are my obedient servant in whom I am well pleased. Your daily faithfulness and prayers have afforded me the grace to give you a glorious mission from my Father God. Dwell on this message for one month, and then give it to a spiritual director. See how I will grant you the grace and joy to go forth and tell the world of Our Holy Mother of Virtues.”*

[November 2, 1996]



Collaborating with Bishops and Priests from the U.S. and Ukraine

### Chapter 3 Our Holy Mother of Virtues' Messages

Through her Fatima prophecies and through the teachings of St. Louis Marie de Montfort, hundreds of years ago in France, the Blessed Virgin Mary stressed the importance of consecration to her Immaculate Heart. In fact, the pilgrims came to Denver specially to make their consecration. On one momentous day on March 25, 1993 on the Feast of the Annunciation, pilgrims crowded St. Thomas More Church one Thursday afternoon and recited the consecration prayer that Mary gave to Theresa Lopez. The church, which seats 900, overflowed with pilgrims. Hundreds had to stand. Everyone had prepared for the consecration by following a prayer manual that Mary had given to Theresa. They had prepared for 33 days with daily readings of instructions, guidance, direction, and meditations given by Our Blessed Mother.

Each day everyone would have said the Chaplet of Virtues that Mary gave to Theresa. After some formalities and preliminary prayers, they invoked Mary's protection and guidance by reciting the following Consecration prayer. It reads:

*"In our awakening to the dawn of your Triumph, we your children united in the response to your maternal call, make our promise of consecration to your Immaculate Heart, thus partaking in your Triumph.*

*I pray, dear Mother, to be carried within your maternal arms to be presented to God Father in heaven, to be chosen and placed in the service of your Son in a special way through accepting the sacrifices of the Triumph of your Immaculate Heart.*

*In this solemn act, I, as your child, offer to you my YES in unison with your own, to be fortified and stand strong in this final battle for the fulfillment of the promises you gave in Fatima: the conversion of Russia, the land of your greatest victory, through this the conversion of the entire world and the reign of global peace.*

*Queen of the Apostles and Co-Redemptrix, guide us in the midst of darkness in this time, where the rays of your dawn come to give light to our horizon. With the refuge of your Immaculate Heart as our beacon, lead us in to the field of this battle, send us forth with your sword of truth and the armor of virtue, to be the example of the infinite mercy and love of God Father.*

*We promise to you, our Mother, our fidelity to Our Holy Father as our divine representative of Christ among us, may this consecration give to him the unity of our hearts, minds, and souls to bring the reality of the Triumph of your Immaculate Heart,*

*that it may descend upon the earth under his pontificate.*

*As an apostle of your Triumph, I pledge to you, Mother, to give witness to the divine presence of your Son within the Holy Eucharist, the unifying force of your mighty army. May we find conviction, confidence, and a single-minded focus before the Blessed Sacrament. May He create in me a soul of perfection, from me I pray shall His reflection shine forth to all.*

*O Holy Virgin of Purity, Mediatrix of all heaven's graces, dwell within my heart, bring with you your Spouse, the Holy Spirit, so that this my consecration will be fruitful through the gifts infused by His coming.*

*In the power of His presence, we shall remain firm in trust, strong and persistent in prayer and flow into total abandonment to God Father. May the Holy Spirit be manifested as a ripple of pronouncement throughout the world of the union of hearts.*

*I, \_\_\_\_\_, your child, in the presence of all the angels of your Triumph, all the saints in heaven and in union with the Holy Mother Church, renew into your hands the vows of my Baptism. I offer to you dear Mother, all my past, present and future, joys and sorrows, prayers and sacrifices, all that I am and all that the Father shall mold me to become. I give to you, Mother, my love and commitment so we may be forever bonded together in the Yes of eternity, in the depths of your Triumphant Immaculate Heart. AMEN.”*

Mary also requested that the faithful recite her Chaplet of Virtues daily. In that compact chaplet we pray to the Virgin Mary to help us increase in the virtues of Faith, Hope, Charity, Humility, Patience, Perseverance and Obedience. It begins with the Apostles Creed. Next you pray the consecration prayer to Mary's Heart. After that you pray the Angelus. Then you pray for the seven virtues—praying an Our Father, a Hail Mary and a Glory Be for each virtue. In conclusion, you pray to the Holy Spirit and to God Father. Finally, you say a prayer to Mary, asking her to surround our hearts with a wreath of virtues. [See Chapter 11 for a complete wording of these prayers]. The parishioners set to work constructing chaplets of virtues from beads and wires.

I have particularly selected the following samples of Mary's messages given by her, as Our Holy Mother of Virtues, because they have much concordance with the messages of Our Lady of the Rosary at Fatima. They also speak to the mystery of Russia where we have labored as missionaries and ambassadors of Mary's Immaculate Heart these past twenty-five years.

*“I am the Queen of purity and the example of all virtues. It is when these gifts are infused upon your soul that my Triumph may be realized.”*

In many messages, Mary announced how Her Immaculate Heart would eventually triumph over Satan, evil and sin. She would triumph when her little children would look to her with great humility acknowledging their weakness and their concupiscence. Her triumph would come when her children would renounce Satan and embrace a life of prayer, penance, and purity. She asked that we pray her Chaplet of Virtues and that we make a daily consecration to her heart.

The Blessed Virgin Mary often spoke of Russia and Her desire that we fly to her children in the East.

*“My dear child, I desire for you to make haste to reach Russia. My Immaculate Heart must triumph in this land before the conversion of the United States shall begin. Russia has spread her errors far and wide and has not slowed in this horrible feat. If the consecration of Russia to my Immaculate Heart is incomplete, there is less chance for the Americas to lessen their own chastisements..Satan is in many shadows in the East. He waits for the people to be asleep and shall come to steal even their breath away.”*

*“In the East, they deny the existence of God; but in the West, far worse than this, they replace God with material desires and accomplishments. My heart is in grief for the loss of so many souls in this way. Pray for my children in the East. Times of great difficulties are upon them, but the glory of God for them is just beyond the horizon. Speak of my tears for my children in the East. The unity of the prayers and works of mercy around the world shall save my angels in the East and my heart shall triumph to open the door for the Reign of my Jesus’ Sacred Heart.”*

*“My Dear Child, I am filled with joy. The meeting which took place on this morning has brought the world one step closer to the Triumph of my Heart. Through this group (QAMA) shall come many gifts for my children in the East. Go forth to them and teach them of my desires to live their lives according to the virtues. You shall grow in holiness from this teaching. They shall obtain conversion from learning. Each shall grow in the eyes of God.”*

*“My Jesus began this mission by my presence in Fatima. The fullness shall now be realized globally. There shall be a great uniting of the flock. All hearts shall turn to God or be barren of His love and be cast away. Here beneath the signs are hidden the*

*Triumph of my Heart in Russia. Man cannot understand this, cannot perceive this, but through a lively faith and trust in the divine power and miracles of God, which are outside the natural course of things, one will receive enlightenment and understanding. It is in a culmination of all these moments that the conversion of Russia shall be complete among the people. This conversion shall bring a chain reaction throughout the world.”*

*“My child, remain steadfast. The evil one is greatly angered in losing his grasp in the East. I assure you; he shall leave no means untried to prevent my Triumph. My Jesus will always conquer in the end, but it is the battle that will take its toll. I ask you to spare no moments of prayer; offer all suffering up for my angels in the East. I will remain a whisper away from your lips. I surround you in my mantle of love and protection. Remember to remain focused on my Jesus, just on the horizon.”*

*“The snowflake can come in the violence of the wind, but in this way it is seen as a nuisance. But if the snowflake comes with tenderness, love, and tranquility, it is seen as beautiful. My children, you are part of this beautiful blanket of snow. Just as the snow comes to be melted to give life to the earth, you will come into my heart to be melted to give life to my children in the East. In the snow that penetrates the ground will come the beauty of the Spring. You are the same life-giving source to the children in the East, once you have come into my Heart and are melted.”*

*“My Beloved Lambs, I have come to impart my most holy and special blessing upon each of you. My dear ones, know this is not the end of your mission, but only the beginning. Your presence here has been requested by the Father, for the gifts you behold shall bring, also, the Reign of the Sacred Heart. He has placed you here (Moscow, Russia) to give you all that is necessary to fulfill His plan of the Triumph of my Heart here in this land so ravished with sin and suffering.”*

*“Remember, always, only a few shall hear and accept my words, but do not let this hinder you. From these few, a mighty army shall be brought forth; from a small seed shall grow a great forest; in the smallest of virtue, continuously given, shall come my Triumph. My mantle of love and protection shall remain here with this prayer group and those who have been chosen to be in authority of it.”*

**From St. Cyril and Methodius Church in NY:** *“From these saints has come the beginning of the conversion of hearts. From them came the understanding within the church of the need for the missionary effort of these messages. From this place shall stem the evangelization of Russia. The effort of the Americas will be witnessed from*

*this land, and from here shall it come forth to my children in the East. From the edge of the sea to the shore on the side they are present shall the hands reach from the West to the East. This mighty bridge shall find its foundation in my Immaculate Heart and shall be built on the virtues from heart to heart. Though the winds of Satan shall come to sway it and the waters of evil will crash upon its structure, it is guarded by all of heaven's archangels, and they stand to defend what we together have built."*

**At Saint Thomas More Church:** *"My dear ones, I have come to teach you of the need to make reparation to my Son for the evil that is abundant in this time. I have called you to this day of great grace to fulfill my request of Fatima. On the first five Saturdays of the month, I ask you to come to my heart and give to me the things I have requested. In the completion of these Five Saturdays, grace shall be given to your soul as a gift from my Immaculate Heart."*

*"I also ask that you prepare to be consecrated to my Immaculate Heart on my feast day in March. You shall proclaim your "yes" with mine on this day. Gather together all my children. I ask for a unified consecration. In the moment of this "yes," each shall be fortified to stand strong in the battle of my Triumph. The dragon shall be slain, and my heart shall be victorious."*

*"Place into effect, dear ones, the requests of my Immaculate Heart. I await your response in the land of my greatest victory, Russia. Go to the land of His request for global peace, given through me in Fatima. The unity of your hearts, minds, and souls shall bring conversion in a land Satan has worked to withdraw from my Son's love. Run to my children who long to hear your hearts. Russia is the ransom for the peace the world yearns for."*

**In Florence, Italy:** *"Now is the time of twilight upon the earth. The faint glow of my heart may be seen as if in the distance, but as more hearts are opened to receive me in every day, I assure you of the break of day. Very soon my Heartlight may no longer be hidden by the ploys of evil. It shall rise in the East to give light to the West. As in the beginning of the dawn, my Triumph shall be seen as the morning light in the East. It shall rise in every moment as it crests over the darkened horizon. It shall find its greatest glory and brilliance in the center of the hearts of my children. My triumph shall then fill the heavens and shine across the earth, and no man shall be able to doubt its victory, and darkness shall not overpower it."*

## Chapter 4 Graces, Healings & Pilgrims' Testimonies

At this juncture, let me say that I witnessed some of the events in this book, but not all of them. Much of what I have written I learned only after my 1995 conversion at the “*Russia*” Conference in Colorado Springs. Much of the history I have learned from many eyewitnesses. Following my conversion, I began to attend Mass at St. Thomas More Church and to volunteer my time at the Queen of the Apostles Mission Association. Every weekday morning after Mass our large basement offices, consisting of two adjoining rooms, would fill with volunteer workers who would do a lot of visiting and a lot of praying. For instance, in the late morning hours some of us would run back up to the church for another Rosary or a Chaplet of Virtues before the Marian Alcove at the front of the church to the right of the altar, where the Virgin Mary had appeared so many times.

Our volunteer board members and office workers performed many tasks. We organized, for instance, clothing drives. We shipped religious goods and rosaries to the missions in Russia and the Ukraine. We corresponded with the priests and religious sisters overseas. We received frequent pilgrim visitors. We shipped donated hospital and medical supplies to Russia. We planned our next conference. We approached Catholic foundations seeking grants. I began writing our quarterly (later bi-monthly) newsletter. I took upon myself the role of publicist and fund raiser. I come from a newspaper family, and I had had quite a bit of communication experience. I had worked as an attorney in the USAF from 1982-1987, and as a civilian attorney since 1989. Our volunteers worked numerous other sundry projects. Each time we had to relocate our offices in 2002 and in 2007 we had to downsize our footprint by jettisoning many thick files and dozens of boxes into the church dumpsters.

In the QAMA offices we received an endless stream of visitors, both parishioners and pilgrims from afar. Week after week, month after month, and year after year I heard the stories of the graces that followed upon the visits of the Virgin Mary to the parish and to Cabrini Shrine. I heard numerous stories of physical and spiritual healings. Some told of leaving their sinful ways and their lukewarm Catholicism to embrace the Sacraments and Marian devotion. I and the officers of the apostolate and other volunteers made ourselves available to explain Marian devotion and to encourage it to our endless visitors. We often prayed with our visitors, usually taking them upstairs into the church where we would pray Rosary or a Chaplet of Virtues.

The QAMA offices served not just as a workplace, but also a place of prayer and a place to evangelize. We kept a large lending library of Catholic devotional and Marian

books and videotapes. We had boxes of rosaries and Bibles that kept arriving from all over the country. Fr. Michael Walsh instructed us to order large shipments of Marian devotional literature and to distribute it locally, nationally, and internationally. We especially began to distribute the aforementioned bestseller *“In the End My Immaculate Heart Will Triumph.”* Written and copyrighted in 1992, it went to its 15th printing in 2007. Queenship Publishing has certainly sold more than one million copies to date.

Father Michael Walsh immediately took a liking to me. He treated me like a beloved son, and often sought both my company and my advice. He admired me for my past legal accomplishments, and he took great delight that I wanted to give my heart and soul to the mission of evangelizing Russia through the work of QAMA. He often took me to lunch or had me over for dinner in the rectory. He often called me to his office to discuss the apparitions and their fruits. He dearly loved QAMA and its fruitful efforts. He took delight when we began to raise well over \$100,000 per year over a string of many years with which to help the suffering Catholic Church in formerly Communistic countries. Since 1995 we have taken in almost \$2.8 Million for the mission.

Father Walsh had three big cardboard boxes in which he stored the written testimonies of pilgrims to St. Thomas More Church or to Cabrini Shrine. They typically came from out of state, and Canadian pilgrims who wrote the pastor or the apostolate to tell of their gratitude and to share their joyful news of spiritual and physical healings. These letters came from pilgrims who had made their consecration to the Virgin Mary’s Heart at St. Thomas More Church or at the Shrine. The authors of these letters gladly told us of the gratitude and joy in their hearts. I have read these letters. I have them in my custody. Father Walsh entrusted them to me when he left the St. Vincent de Paul Parish in 2005, the year of his retirement. He then returned to his homeland of Ireland in 2007. I make them available to anyone who has an honest purpose in wanting to read them.

Some of the letters tell of miraculous visions that the pilgrims had when praying at Cabrini Shrine. Some pilgrims saw Our Blessed Mother, and Jesus and Joseph in the sky. Some saw other heavenly scenes. Some told of healings from diseases like cancer, impairment of the senses, paralysis and so forth. Father Walsh, always cautious and circumspect, had to admit that there was something going on here. Still, he was reluctant to state his belief openly. Often, he would turn to me and say, *“Well Matt, what do you make of all of this?”*

Father knew that the Archbishop of Denver at the time, Francis J. Stafford, did not believe in the authenticity of the apparitions. This explains Fr. Walsh's reticence in the matter. Archbishop Stafford thought Theresa Lopez fabricated the truth, or she suffered delusions. Perhaps if Archbishop Stafford and his investigation commission had had the opportunity to read my box of testimonial letters, they might have drawn a different conclusion regarding the authenticity of the reports of our Blessed Mother's appearances at Mother Cabrini Shrine and St. Thomas More Church.

Charlotte Pavlovsky, from Regina, Saskatchewan wrote a letter to Fr. Walsh on June 29, 1994. One paragraph of the letter reads as follows:

*"I was coming down from the hill about 4:00 p.m. and I met some people from our bus. Suddenly a lady said to look at the sun. The sky was blue, and it was about 22 degrees Celsius. The colors around the sun were a kind of pinkish red and were quickly changing to every color of the rainbow. The colors were very strong. Everything around the sun was moving in a circular motion. The sun was covered with a pale turquoise disc. The sun was also twirling rapidly. The disc had a Holy Host type of texture. Then the sun seemed to detach itself from the sky and move towards the earth. This happened twice. Afterwards, a dark path appeared and led from the horizon up to the sun. Then, five dark discs appeared grouped together in a 3 + 2 formation and were visible for about 5-6 minutes. The dark path and the five discs disappeared, and the twirling of the sun and colors continued. I was looking at the sun for about 25 minutes with my naked eyes."*

Sharon Dauk, from Estevan, Saskatchewan sent a letter to the Queen of Peace Center in Denver on June 16, 1994. One paragraph reads:

*"My eight-year old daughter saw clouds in the shape of an angel and a dove. Shauna and her friend saw a chalice under the sun. The sun was white like a host on top of the chalice. There was a thin rainbow color dancing around the host. What looked like red blood was dripping down into the chalice."*

Elsie Lesyk, of Regina, Saskatchewan wrote Fr. Michael Walsh a letter on June 10, 1994 that reads in part:

*"The rain stopped and immediately everyone shouted, 'The sun, look at the sun!' The sun was visible to the naked eye, pulsating, spinning, and gentle rays of different colors radiated from it. Then golden rays formed a cross from it, as well as two longer and broader rays that descended over us. The colors of the faces of our group were of*

*a brilliant golden light.”*

Joe Derringer of Regina, Saskatchewan wrote Fr. Walsh a letter on June 10, 1996 that read in part:

*“I am 75 years old and have always been a devoted Catholic. Many people were looking at the sun. When I took my first look at the sun, I could see golden rings around the sun. And from then on things started to happen. The sun started to change to different colors—first to blue, second red, pink, black, and grey. It seemed to roll towards the earth and started over again doing the same rotation. Then the sun was hidden, and a sign appeared like the exposition of the Blessed Sacrament surrounded by diamonds and pearls around the Host, and everything in the area, as far as I could see, turned to pure gold that seemed to last for at least a minute.”*

*“Then the sun changed to a pearl color, and Jesus with the Sacred Heart showing from the head to bust appeared in the sky, and also the Blessed Virgin Mary beside. This was showing on the righthand side of the big monstrance. Then everything in the heavens as far as the eye could see, turned into the most beautiful colors I have ever seen—like you would see in the Vatican Churches in Rome on the glass windows but even more luxurious in splendor.”*

Irene Phaneuf of Regina, Saskatchewan wrote a letter to the Queen of Peace Center in Saskatchewan on June 3, 1994 that reads in part:

*“At first, I was unable to see anything out of the ordinary, but I felt such a peace come over me. But later what I saw was a sight I shall never forget. In front of the sun there appeared a deep beautiful, indescribable blue disc that would pulse like a heartbeat, but did not change shape. The disc turned a light blue in color and pulsating all the while. Then as if I had taken a black marking pen, a black cross appeared in the upper right-hand corner. From this pulsating disc or host, as I saw it, a triangle of solid gold descended from the sun to the top of the mountain, one on the left and one on the right. Later there appeared three gold ovals. If one could draw a line from one oval to the other, it would form a triangle. To me this represented the Blessed Trinity. I could see all of this for one half an hour with my naked eye. I would look away now and again to be sure it was not my imagination. What a joy. I wept with joy!”*

Jeannette Siemens of Saskatoon on June 14, 1994 wrote a letter to the Queen of Peace Center in Saskatchewan that reads in part:

*“My experiences at the Mother Cabrini Shrine hill were many. Just before the alleged apparition, the youth on the hill began hollering and screaming “Look at the Angels! There is the Blessed Mother!” One teenager said an Angel had spoken to him saying “I am St. Michael the Archangel.” While I stood in awe, a ten-year old girl at the fence said to the boy beside her “Do you see the Blessed Mother? She is right here. Don’t you see? She touched your Rosary and said, ‘I give you a special blessing.’” His Rosary changed color.”*

*“A lady with an instamatic Polaroid took a picture of the Sun. As it developed, we saw on it a circle. Inside the circle appeared a door, and inside this door a heart. The crucifix on my Rosary turned pink. Jesus’ body on the crucifix was all slashed as with blood.”*

*“That night at a meeting with Veronica in school—the smell of roses as if falling in front of me nearly suffocated me. This continued for twenty minutes or so. This morning as we were leaving the motel, I could look at the sun. It moved from side to side. It stopped. A host appeared in the sun and rays around it. Many, if not most, of us on the bus saw this.”*

*“Here it is nearly two years later. I will never be the same. I have had a deep emotional healing. Many of my family commented on this. I have been able to make my five first Saturdays since then. My confessions are good confessions. Commented as such by a priest. I can hardly wait to be reconciled to my Jesus.*

*“Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament is my profound joy. There are so many things about my relations with God that have changed that cannot be put into words. I speak about Jesus to people more freely now. I brought some water from the fountain at the Shrine. Last fall there was a health crisis in my life. I live alone. My teeth had to be removed as I had pyuria and abscessed teeth. About this time something went wrong with my eye. Clouds were flying by in my eye.*

*“I went to my optometrist. I could see blood in my eye. A specialist said I had a detached retina and needed laser surgery. I came home very dejected. I thought of Jesus and the “Holy Water” from Denver. I blessed myself with the water asking Jesus to heal me if it was his wish. Three days later I went to the specialist. He could find nothing wrong and my eye had perfect vision. Praised be to God. Today Jesus has a very personal place in my life.”*I pulled these testimonial letters randomly from a fifteen-pound box stuffed with many hundreds of such letters and assorted files Fr. Walsh kept in his office.

*“My son, I am with you. Even now as you are unsure and unaware of my presence with you, I am with you. Every generation has called me blessed. In this generation all rejoice at the multitude of my visitations. I am here in a special way as Our Holy Mother of Virtues. For it is to this end that I come into the world, to bear witness to the truth and joy of living a virtuous life. In patience and humility, I come to you to ask in a humble way that **you be the guardian** of all I have started in this place. You have many tasks and duties, but the one thing I need the most is your dedicated heart surrendered in prayer that you may fully know the generosity of God and the true wonders he has bestowed on this land.*

*“Many will come against you and many will defend you. Your open heart united in prayer with mine will minimize your adversaries and polarize your alliances into a fortified foundation of support and dedication to assist you in your efforts. Remember that silence is often a powerful weapon and the choice to remain at peace a heaven from the turmoil that surrounds you. For now, I call you to begin to reflect on the Psalms. Read one each day to find your comfort and peace. Meditate on the marvels of God and offer him thanksgiving and praise. For in this way, you will perfect and hone the spiritual acts of charity that I require of you. Peace my son, for your generous heart affords me a multitude of grace that draws the hearts of many to the everlasting overflowing fountain of God’s divine mercy.”*

[December 12, 1996]



Mary’s veil appeared in this instant Polaroid photo, Mother Cabrini Shrine, CO.

Trip to Denver <sup>starte</sup>

July 1 1993

by carlie jane maria letts

CANADA DAY

On October the 2<sup>nd</sup> ~~week~~ <sup>weekend</sup> witch was a Thursday 1993. My Grandmother and I went down to Denver. It was a very long trip down. We drove my Grandmother's car to Regina. Then we got on the bus. When we got to Denver we went to St. Thomas Moore. We heard Veronica and April to hear about their Miracles. When ~~we were~~ ~~down~~ ~~there~~ they were ~~to~~ ~~finish~~ ~~the~~ ~~trip~~ we got back in the bus. When we got back to the hotel we went to sleep. The next day we went to church. At church the priest decided to say the rosary. April was sitting beside me and she thought that I said it very well so she gave me a rosary from Maguereville. It is very pretty. ~~the next day~~ we went to the shrine. When we were at the shrine we went to the top of the hill and we prayed and prayed. And I saw a Miracell. I saw a halo on the top of

An eight-year old's handwritten testimony describing the miracles he saw. Page 1

Jesus's head. It was  
the most beautiful sight  
I have ever seen. It was  
golden and it saw beautiful  
I when we got back to  
Regina we got in my Grandma's  
car and went to Saskatoon.  
When we got there I saw a  
rainbow on top of the  
rainbow was a cross.

Thank you for  
reading my  
Story of Denver

by Carl

I am <sup>8</sup> years old  
Carl Marie

An eight-year old's handwritten testimony describing the miracles he saw. Page 2

## Chapter 5 Theresa Lopez

[Reprinted with permission from Gary Kuntz' Introduction to *Messages for the Harvest* Volume 1 – 1992]

On October 13, 1992 600-1000 people gathered to pray at the Mother Cabrini Shrine west of Denver. They were answering a call to prayer supposedly issued by Mary, the mother of Jesus, through Theresa Lopez, a Douglas County mother of three. During prayer, the Blessed Mother said to Theresa through an inner locution (voice), "My child, I am very happy to see so many children gathered. I give a special blessing to each one present. This blessing is given to be passed to another. I offer the sick and suffering up to my Son. I desire you to all gather on the second Sabbath of the month."

On November 10th, the crowd at the Mother Cabrini shrine grew to approximately 3,000. They jammed the chapel, halls, stairs, and basement to pray rosaries and litanies and to hear the Mass in the tiny chapel. Then they joined in a rosary procession up the 373 steps to the 22' statue of Jesus' Sacred Heart, where most devoutly recited prayers. But others were looking for a miracle, the appearance of the Blessed Mother.

At the conclusion of the group prayers, one of the leaders read the message given by Our Lady to Mrs. Lopez. Mary purportedly said, "Dear Children. You are chosen by God to encourage others to be a light for children in darkness. Keep the faith, fast, and pray. I have come to save the world through you, dear children. Carry my Jesus in your heart. Great favors will rain upon you on my feast day (the feast of the Immaculate Conception on December 8th). Gather together in my presence, for you, my children, are my angels!"

Wait a minute! Isn't this the kind of thing you read in the National Enquirer or the Globe? Denver is known more for skiing, stock shows, and dismal Super Bowl appearances, than for religious revival. But to apparition followers, the message, except for the Americanized "keep the faith," sounded very much like the messages coming from Medjugorje, Yugoslavia, where Mary has purportedly been appearing for over 10 years. Did anyone else see her at Mother Cabrini Shrine? Testimony is building that there were supernatural signs to prove her presence.

I was at the shrine on Nov 10, and quite frankly, I was skeptical. I had been to Medjugorje and had felt a spiritual presence there that I did not feel at Mother Cabrini Shrine. And at Medjugorje, I had witnessed miracles, supernatural events not

explainable by science. As I was leaving the fog-enshrouded shrine, I heard several people talking about seeing the Blessed Mother on the hillside between the chapel and the statue of Jesus. They were pointing up the hillside at a shape in the dense fog. And it looked like pictures I had seen of the Blessed Mother!

More curious than awed, a friend and I gingerly picked our way onto the grassy hillside and took a few hesitant steps. That was all we needed. What appeared to be Mary's head was the top of an eight-foot pine tree, and what looked like shoulders were actually branches. Convinced that nothing supernatural was happening, we walked away.

The next day, I called Dick, a Lakewood retiree with a special devotion to Mary. He, a lady friend, and several others had seen Mary, just before my brave encounter with the tree! He informed me that she had appeared in silhouette for about 15-20 minutes to the south of the tree above the power lines, and that she moved to their left. They did not even see the tree until after Our Lady had disappeared. The tree was pointed and bent, while she had rounded human features. And others had seen her in front of the tree.

In another chance conversation, a friend from Denver told me about a four-year-old boy who had described the Blessed Mother at the shrine. Ironically, I had met Michelle, the tot's mother, at the Pueblo Marian Peace Conference in October. I called her in Colorado Springs and asked about the boy's experience. She said that they had arrived late, around 3 PM, and upon arriving, Jimmy was tired, so she and her husband stretched their legs while he slept in the car. A woman pointed out Theresa Lopez, the attractive, 30- year-old woman who claims to be seeing Mary, and Michelle approached and introduced herself.

Michelle described the situation, "Theresa spoke briefly of Mary's appearance several hours earlier at the shrine, but I'm a real doubter. It was hard to believe that Theresa had actually spoken with the Blessed Mother. Then we went to the car, got Jimmy up, and climbed the steps to the shrine. When we got to the statue of Jesus, we went through the bushes to where Theresa had said Our Lady appeared to her."

"We sang the Hail Mary song, then said an Our Father and a Hail Mary. Others were standing around. It was totally silent. People were really meditating and praying. I knelt, hugged Jimmy, and asked the Blessed Mother to pray for him. He was premature when he was born and had weighed only two and a half pounds, and recently he started wearing these thick glasses."

"He walked to the fence, stood a minute, then turned and said, 'Can you see her?' Nobody said anything. 'Can't you see her sparkling?' He asked. 'See who sparkling?' 'It's the Blessed Mother. She's sparkling.' 'Really? What is she wearing?' 'Well, she's changing colors, but she's very pink.'"

"Jimmy, what does she look like?' 'She's changing colors. It's sparkling on top of her head. She has a towel on her head. There are stars under her feet.' He came back to me and told me the colors. 'Pink, red, white, blue.' Then he went back down there. I followed him and knelt down next to him. There were two kids on either side of us. I said to him, 'Let's say a prayer.' We said a spontaneous prayer like, 'Help us to be good and follow the footsteps of your son.' He looked at me and said, 'Did you hear her?' She said she would.'"

People behind us could hear what he was saying to me. I turned around and saw people's eyes filled with tears. We kept asking him what he was seeing. He answered, "The Blessed Mother is changing colors. She has a rosary in each hand."

His mother told us: "He had been asleep in the car and couldn't have heard what Theresa said. And on his way up the hill, he was playing with his cousins and wasn't near anyone who could have told him anything about how Mary appeared to Theresa. We really questioned whether he could have made it up, but there's just no way he could have done that on the spur of the moment."

Michelle said that they went to a prayer meeting in Colorado Springs a couple days later (November 12th), and Theresa Lopez described how Mary had appeared. "She was dressed all in pink with a gold tie around her waist. And she wore a gold crown with hundreds of sparkling points and stood on a pedestal of light." Michelle said, "My eyes filled with tears because that's exactly what Jimmy said."

Later that week, a friend asked if I had heard what was going on at the Mother Cabrini Shrine. She went on to tell me about a couple from India who had seen Our Lady. So, I called them. They were reluctant to be interviewed, but when I assured them of their anonymity, Lyza said, "If this helps people come to God, I am pleased to talk."

Although they belonged to the Orthodox church, they go to the shrine two to four times a year to pray. Unaware of the apparition, their 12-year-old daughter had insisted they go there on November 10th, and while the parents were praying the rosary with a group in the basement of the main building, their daughter climbed the hill to the statue. Lyza, the mother, tells the story, "It was almost 2 o'clock. We got

there before ten, and Aimee, my daughter, came and told me, 'Mom I saw her. You want to see her?' I told her yes. She held my hand and took us where you get the holy water."

"Aimee showed me Mary above a bush. I did not know it was a bush then, and Aimee said, 'There she is.' I saw immediately, you could very well see it was Mary standing there. I felt fear, and walked very quickly toward the steps. I saw her like a statue from a distance. I said, 'Oh my God! Oh, my Lord!' and started crying. Two ladies came. One held my hand and prayed a Hail Mary. Another touched my shoulder while she prayed."

"Then Mary disappeared. Maybe a minute later, a bright light came, like seeing a movie, and I started seeing faces in the circle. You could see the faces very clearly. I did not know them, but I knew they were saints. They had human shapes but looked divine to me, like icons. Then Jesus appeared right there, as the shepherd. He was a whole figure with the staff in his hand, very bright, like a stained-glass window. Then Mary came, then Jesus. Jesus was plainly visible. Mary was like a shadow. You could not see her features. There were some people looking and seeing, others were not seeing. Unless you see with your very eyes, it is difficult to believe."

On November 24th, Dick from Lakewood called to tell me about another experience. That morning, he and his friend Mary had again gone to the Mother Cabrini Shrine to pray. Partway up the hill, he heard a voice tell him to turn around. When he did, he saw two suns in the sky. The inner voice told Dick that one was her Son, and the second brightness represented Her (the Blessed Mother).

Dick described the second sun as oblong, with blue, pink, green, red, and gold colors to the side. Her light kept moving toward the main sun until they joined together. It lasted about a half hour. Dick's companion said she saw a silhouette of the Blessed Mother in the second, oval sun. And the light from the oval sun shone onto Jesus' statue on the hilltop. Then Dick told her he heard the inner voice say, "I have to leave now," and the second sun faded.

It was bitter cold all the way up the hill, but when they reached the place of Theresa Lopez' purported apparition, it was suddenly warm. A 60-ish couple from Thornton had been near them on the steps when she and Dick saw the two suns. Rose Marie, the wife, described seeing the two suns. But her husband could not see it and had to look away because of the sun's brightness. Intrigued, I checked the phone book for the couple's name, called, and introduced myself. Rose Marie was reluctant to have her

name used, as she, "Didn't want nobody to come and ask me different things. I 'don't feel special." But she went on to say, "We were saying our rosary; I think we had finished the stations. And of a sudden I just felt really warm in the back. I turned and I saw the sun. It was very, very bright, and I poked my husband and told him to look. It was blue and kind of yellowish. Around the outside of the sun, it was like yellowish, gold. It was moving and going around, like when you see it spin."

She was describing "the miracle of the sun", witnessed by countless pilgrims to Medjugorje, Yugoslavia. She continued, "Then is when I saw that double sun. My husband had to turn away because it got very bright for him. It was double, it was like two suns which I had never seen before. It was beautiful and I just kept watching it."

"Others were just going up the hill talking and laughing and didn't see it. It sure did give me a good feeling. I had seen something like that in Medjugorje, but it was different. I felt bad that my husband could not see it. Then the whole thing went into the clouds. I wish other people could get that feeling I had. I felt it was something Our Lord was trying to say to everybody."

## **THE HISTORY OF THERESA LOPEZ' PURPORTED APPARITIONS**

When I interviewed Jeff and Theresa Lopez in November 1991, Jeff described them as having been a pretty typical, goal-oriented American couple, both managing Wendy's restaurants. Although Theresa grew up Catholic, even being baptized and receiving her First Communion in St. Peter's Basilica in Vatican City, she rebelled against attending parochial school in the eighth grade. "I was tired of being locked away and wanted to go out into the world." High school in Oklahoma City was traumatic, the first year of desegregation, when two teens were stabbed and one shot in the school halls. Failed marriages (neither within the Church) for both led to divorces, annulments, difficult lives as single parents, and their eventual courtship and marriage (which, if these apparitions prove to be true, should be encouraging to divorced Catholics).

Jeff was the "religious one." But then Theresa's supernatural religious experiences began at 2:00 AM, April 3, 1990, when she had awakened in the middle of the night and gone to the kitchen for something to Drink. A voice told her, "Read the Word."

She thought the kids were pulling a prank, but she found them asleep in Bed. Again, the voice said, "Read the word." So, she dug the Bible out from under a messy pile of newspapers, tapes, and magazines, opened it to Ephesians 1:15-19, and read:

*"Wherefore I on my part, hearing of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and of your love for all the saints, do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers, that the God of Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may grant you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in deep knowledge of him: the eyes of your mind being enlightened, so that you may know what is the hope of his calling, what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what the exceeding greatness of his power towards us who believe."*

When Jeff awoke at dawn, Theresa was still reading and rereading those verses. Reluctantly, she related her experience, and in amazement, he ran for his wallet and produced a tattered bank deposit slip from October 5, 1981 (which he showed me). On it he had written the same verse during a low point in his life 10 years earlier! Theresa continued hearing what she called "the voice" (referred to as "inner locutions") anytime of the day or night. She thought, "Just go with the flow." But she did not tell anyone, as she did not want people to think she was a lunatic.

Theresa underwent a difficult pregnancy that hospitalized her six times. Then, in February 1991, their infant daughter died of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome. Shortly after, Theresa was diagnosed with ovarian cancer. Then uterine cancer. Despite several operations, the cancer had spread to her colon and kidney. Then it stopped spreading.

After reading and hearing about the Blessed Mother's appearances at Medjugorje, Yugoslavia, Theresa felt called there and went in March 1991. When visionary Vicka Dragicevic, the oldest of the visionaries, was praying over Theresa, Vicka opened her eyes, looked to Cross Mountain in the distance, and excitedly turned Theresa around, saying, "Gospa, Gospa!," the Croation word for Our Lady. Theresa saw a silhouette image of Mary near the huge stone cross.

Her tour group leader arranged a meeting with Father Slavko Barbaric, the Medjugorje visionaries' spiritual advisor. There she heard "the voice," and he heard it, too. He asked her to return, and the next day. While praying with 15 monks and priests, Theresa asked if it would be alright if she sat instead of kneeling, as her knees were bruised from kneeling during prayer on Apparition Hill.

"Suddenly," Theresa said, "I was picked up and thrown to my knees as if God was saying, 'When you are praying to me, you will kneel!'" Then they all experienced the "coming of the lights" and everyone heard a locution. A priest tapped her chest and told her she was hearing the voice of the Blessed Mother. This was important to her,

as it confirmed that she wasn't just hearing things.

After returning home from Medjugorje in March 1991, Theresa saw vague images of the Virgin Mary at Grand Lake and outside her home. Then, during a prayer service at St. Thomas More Church and at a prayer group in St. James Church, the visions of Jesus' mother became clear. During the latter vision, several people witnessed a bright light shining on Theresa's face. And Rachel, a friend, adamantly swears that Theresa stopped breathing.

Theresa received two or three messages that said, "Bring my children to the spring." The only spring she could think of was the miraculous spring at the Mother Cabrini Shrine. A message on October 1, 1991, instructed Theresa to, "Come with my children on our anniversary to the place of your family's first miracle together."

Theresa thought Mary meant April 3, 1990, the anniversary of her first locution. But it turned out she meant October 13, Theresa's and Jeff's wedding anniversary. (This is also the anniversary of the 1917 miracle of the sun at Fatima, Portugal, where 70,000 people saw the sun gyrate in the sky.) The Mother Cabrini Shrine was the first place where she and Jeff had shared the modern version of the miracle of the sun.

Word spread through Denver's prayer groups, and on October 13, 1991 hundreds joined in rosaries, litanies, Mass, and a procession up to the statue of Jesus' Sacred Heart. There, Theresa had an inner locution, which said, "My child, I am very happy to see so many children gathered. I give a special blessing to each one present. This blessing is given to be passed to another. I offer the sick and suffering up to my Son. I desire you to all gather on the second Sabbath (Sunday) of the month."

Theresa was instructed by Our Lady to form a prayer group that meets on the Saturday preceding the second Sabbath of each month. During the first such meeting on November 9th, 8-10 people in the crowd saw the Blessed Mother's image on the tabernacle with two doves on each side. (I have pictures of this, and one image could be seen as Jesus the shepherd. But it DEFINITELY is a human shape.) Others saw a bright light shine from the tabernacle, which turned into a pink mist.

That night, Theresa, her family, and a few others went to pray in the chapel at the base of the Mother Cabrini Shrine. When they emerged from the candlelit chapel, her friend Veronica saw a thick, pink mist enveloping Jesus' statue on the hilltop. She turned to ask Theresa if she saw it, too, but Lopez was already flying up the steps, her son, Matthew, racing along behind her.

Veronica thought, "How can a human being move that fast? I didn't even hear their footsteps. I could understand a professional runner in sweats and running shoes, but Theresa had boots with heels and a bulky coat. She flew up the steps, and Matthew, her 15-year-old son, was almost keeping up with her. I remembered how the villagers at Medjugorje said the visionaries 'flew' up Apparition Hill to meet Our Lady."

Veronica and the others stumbled after them, but their progress was slow because of the darkness. Halfway up, Veronica's nine-year-old asthmatic daughter, Michelle, was wheezing and cold. It broke her heart, but Veronica turned to take her back down. Then suddenly, Michelle changed her mind.

When Theresa had reached the top, Our Lady was there waiting, and Matthew saw her too. Then Veronica and the others caught up, and Theresa read them the message she had received from Our Lady. Veronica sensed a spiritual presence, went to where Mary had appeared to Theresa (Theresa had not told her where she had appeared), and Veronica saw in the dark fog a bright oval shape of light with a black silhouette of the Blessed Mother. Theresa said, "Yes, that's our mother."

Michelle cried out, "Where, where?" Theresa shined a penlight toward the image. Michelle saw the Blessed Mother. Then Mary disappeared. On the way down the hill, Matthew could not stop crying and Veronica was beside herself. No one could talk. Neither Theresa nor Veronica slept that night.

The next morning, November 10th, was foggy, dismal, and damp. And when Mary appeared to Theresa, there was a striking difference in her greeting. Mary had always addressed Theresa as, "My child" or "My dear child." On this occasion, Mary began her message with, "Dear children." Unlike previous messages, which largely dealt with Theresa's personal growth, this communication was meant for many. And it marked their first actual conversation.

After Mary's message, Theresa said, "Mother, I love you." And the Blessed Mother came forward and kissed Theresa on the forehead. When Theresa told this to the crowd at the shrine, she broke down in tears. She later said the kiss felt like a butterfly gently fluttering its wings against her.

Theresa described an apparition for me. "Lights precede her appearances. They bring her. You can pick out every single ray of light in the egg shape that reveals her. She comes all in pink, with a gold tie around her waist and a gold rosary folded on her hands. A gold crown is on the back of her head with hundreds of sparkling points. She

stands on a sparkling pedestal of light. There are no words to describe the beauty of that face. Angelic. Soft and pink with pale, thin lips. Eyes so deep blue, that when you gaze into them, you can see your soul. They draw you in. When she leaves, the lights come and envelop her, consuming her in light, and they take her away."

After the Denver Post story, things got a little crazy for the Lopez family. Channel 9 was trying to reach her for an interview. Channel 4 was parked outside their home; and despite an unlisted number, the phone was ringing off the hook.

Jeff and Theresa emphasize again and again that they are normal people, that they are nothing special. Jeff had never prayed a rosary in his life until after their baby died, and Theresa had considered the rosary something you pray at funerals. Theresa's spiritual director has told them that God takes people with the most problems and makes them into an example. "What would be the point if God took a holy and wonderful person, and made them more holy and wonderful?" He said.

Theresa says, "People want me to pray over them, over their rosaries. I am no different from anyone else, and have no desire to be different. If He (God) desires to use me, then that's what I want to do." Yet, people want to touch Theresa, touch her hair, touch their rosaries to hers. Sometimes it is difficult for her to pray in a church, because of the stares and whispers. A channel 9 announcer laughed when telling of Theresa's story as a lead into the news. A middle of the night KOA radio talk show mocked her. Because frauds and "religious freaks" abound, it is easy to laugh at Theresa's expense. After all, how can we tell the truly supernatural from a fake?

Lending credibility to Theresa's story is a testimony by Josyp Terelya, a former middleweight boxing champ of the Ukraine who spent over 19 years in Soviet prisons for his Catholic faith. Finally released in 1987, through the efforts of the Pope, Ronald Reagan, Amnesty International, and other dignitaries, and organizations, he is in huge demand worldwide as a speaker.

After visiting the Mother Cabrini Shrine in October, Terelya told a crowd of 7,000 in Chicago that, "I saw the miracle of the sun and the sun spinning. I started to pray. My whole body, my whole body trembled with such a joy I cannot explain it to you. I knelt down, and as I knelt, I heard a voice say, 'Josyp, within a year's time, here in this place, very many miracles will take place. It will be a very great pilgrimage center just like Fatima and Medjugorje.'"

How does this fit in with previous apparitions, especially those still occurring in war-torn Yugoslavia? Calling herself the "Holy Mother of Virtues," Mary calls Theresa "her little star in the West."

At Medjugorje, Our Lady said that before God chastises the world, God will erect a permanent sign there as a final call for conversions to Him. Theresa says that while Medjugorje is the centerpiece, the Mother Cabrini Shrine is one of many "satellites" where God will also erect miraculous signs, so that people all around the world will know at the same time.

The Church typically withholds evaluation on apparitions until the death of the individual(s) involved. While there is no official policy, the church is prudent and takes its time researching the fruits of the purported appearances, such as miraculous healings, etc. The Archdiocese of Denver now investigates the alleged apparitions and, as of March 6, 1992 (as we prepare for printing), Theresa and Jeff Lopez are still under a vow of silence.

The information contained in this booklet was initially published and/or distributed before the investigation began on December 12, 1991 ("coincidentally" the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe). The commission has given permission for Theresa's messages and lessons to be written or distributed outside the Archdiocese of Denver. I live in Castle Rock in the Colorado Springs Diocese.

It seems fitting to close with what Pope Urban VIII said about apparitions, "... It is better to believe than not to believe, for if you believe and it is proven true, you will be happy that you believed because our Mother asked it. If you believe, and it should be proven false, you will still receive all blessings as if it has been true, because you believed it to be true."

[Your author now concludes this chapter with the following commentary]

We have just read that Theresa Lopez began reporting mystical experiences in her home where she lived with her husband and their children. It all began on April 3, 1990 when she heard a voice telling her to "*read the Word.*" She read that Biblical verse. What did this augur for her future? Had God chosen her as a prophet?

Let me now tell the reader that I have never met Theresa Lopez. I have, however, seen her on video tapes giving gripping testimony at some Marian conferences. I recommend the videotape of her testimony at the San Francisco Marian Conference on

June 27, 1993 organized by the (seemingly now defunct) San Rafael Ministries.

In the next chapter we will write about how the Archbishop of Denver appointed a commission to investigate the alleged apparitions, and how he came to conclude that they “*were devoid of supernatural origin.*” I conjecture that he looked at Theresa’s life and concluded she was an unlikely soul for Mary to choose as her messenger. She and Jeff managed a Wendy’s restaurant. They had a daughter who died of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome. Many people have asked me about Theresa Lopez because I have been the president of QAMA since 1997. But I have always told them that I have never met her, and she doesn’t know me. I have, however, interviewed dozens of people that knew her very well; and that is why the reader may trust me to write comprehensively and truthfully about her.

I saw enough in that 1993 testimony in San Francisco to know in my heart that she was speaking the truth about Mary’s messages to her as Our Holy Mother of Virtues. Keep in mind, we do have guardian angels helping us, especially when we pray to them. We also have the Holy Spirit living within us when we keep our souls in a state of grace. When I first watched that testimony of hers in 1993 in San Francisco, I knew with absolute certainty that Mary chose her as her mouthpiece or messenger, just like the Virgin Mary chose the three little children in Fatima, Portugal a century ago.

The reader might know of Ted and Maureen Flynn of Herndon, Virginia who have frequently spoken at Marian conferences, and who have written many books about Marian apparitions. Maureen edits the quarterly magazine “*Signs and Wonders for Our Times,*” that chronicles current and past prophecies from heaven given to earthly messengers by Mary, Jesus, God the Father, and other saints. Those prophecies number in the hundreds, but the average Catholic knows only about the most famous ones, like Lourdes and Fatima.

Ted Flynn wrote the bestselling book “*The Thunder of Justice*” in 1997. He has also written other eschatological books. He came to our *Russia* conference in 1995. I met him there. His testimony about Marian apparitions and prophecies provided one great impetus for my conversion that day. He advised me to quit the practice of law and start traveling to Russia as a missionary. He and I became fast friends. I would often stop in Virginia on my way back from Ukraine or Russia to visit him and his wife at their home. They often asked me questions about Theresa Lopez and the messages of Our Holy Mother of Virtues.

On one such visit to their house in about 1998 or 1999 I brought with me the videotape of Theresa Lopez's testimony at the San Francisco Marian conference in June of 1993. We loaded it into their VHS player in their living room and sat back to watch. Ted's jaw dropped to the floor. His eyes opened widely, and so did Maureen's. They had their eyes glued to the TV screen. I could tell that the power of Theresa's message thrilled both Ted and Maureen. I am certain they had no doubt about the authenticity of Theresa's witness. [As a favor to Ted, I agreed not to tell my readers that he endorses the apparitions of Our Holy Mother of Virtues.]

I had believed in her authenticity since my attending the first Russia Conference. Those prophecies had stuck in my heart and had fueled my desire to run headlong towards Russia as an ambassador of Mary's Immaculate Heart so frequently. Her words of encouragement had thrilled the hearts of the pilgrims. The prodigies they witnessed inspired them to send their riveting testimonies through the mail to Fr. Michael Walsh. They knew the Archbishop had appointed a commission to investigate. They knew that they had received special heavenly graces from Our Lady at Mother Cabrini Shrine. They believed her account of the apparitions and the messages, because they had received spiritual and physical healings. Joy and peace filled their hearts. They witnessed the fruits of the presence of the Holy Spirit. Still, the Archbishop of Denver was not convinced.

*“My son, there is nothing in your heart that escapes me. I know your pain. I know your suffering. Do not be afraid, for I will open every door for you as you travel to Russia. Sooner is not always better than later if you travel with resentment and confusion in your heart. Know that every journey you take is an act of love and of faith. I accept all you do for me as a sacrifice. Be at peace, knowing that your accomplishments in prayer and in sacrifice have won the favor of God, and that in the days ahead you shall want for nothing. I love you my son, and I am with you in every step you take. Peace and joy to you as you once again go forth in joy to my beloved people of Russia.”* [January 26, 1999]



With Bishop Jacek Pyl in Obukhiv, Ukraine



Greeting Kiev's Archbishop Vitaliy Krivitsky and Sr. Luda at the Chancery

## Chapter 6 The Commission Investigates the Apparitions

On December 9, 1991, the Archbishop of Denver, J. Francis Stafford, appointed a commission to investigate this local phenomenon of Mary's reported visits to his archdiocese. I believe a team of religious and laymen from the chancery offices comprised the commission. I do not know their identities, except that Monsignor Raymond Jones sat on the commission. I have not read their report. I think they made it confidential and privileged information. I do not know whom they interviewed, nor do I know what protocols they employed.

Keep in mind that the local newspapers covered this story like bears in a pot of honey. I remember reading some of the newsprint. The tone was usually one of incredulity and sometimes of ridicule. They printed personal information about Theresa Lopez that put her in a bad light. I thought that the reporters and their editors showed not much love for the Catholic Church. Quite understandably, the Archbishop did not want his Church subjected to ridicule.

Remember that all of this preceded my own conversion almost four years later. The commission then completed its investigation more than two years after having begun their work. They then submitted their report to the Archbishop. Two weeks later the Archbishop released the following letter to his flock:

### **DECLARATION CONCERNING ALLEGED APPARITIONS OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY AT MOTHER CABRINI SHRINE AND OTHER PLACES IN THE ARCHDIOCESE OF DENVER**

*On December 9, 1991, I appointed a commission to investigate alleged apparitions of the Blessed Virgin Mary at Mother Cabrini Shrine and other places within the Archdiocese of Denver to Theresa Antonia Lopez. On February 22, 1994, the commission completed its investigation and presented its findings to me.*

*As Archbishop of Denver, I have concluded that the alleged apparitions of the Blessed Virgin Mary to Theresa Antonia Lopez are devoid of any supernatural origin.*

*Because of my concern for the spiritual welfare of the people of God, I direct the faithful to refrain from participating in or promoting para-liturgical services related to the alleged apparitions.*

*Furthermore, anyone encouraging devotion to those alleged apparitions in any way is acting contrary to my wishes as Archbishop of Denver. It remains my constant hope*

*that all the faithful will promote devotion to our Blessed Lady in the many forms which have been approved by the Catholic Church.*

*J. Francis Stafford, Archbishop of Denver, March 9, 1994*

The letter struck like a bombshell! Those with a strong devotion to Mary as Our Holy Mother of Virtues were stunned. They already knew in their hearts of the authenticity of the apparitions and the messages. They had savored the graces, the healings, and the peace. They also took very seriously the obedience one owes to one's bishop. What should one do?

What happened? Devotions to Our Holy Mother of Virtues in the Denver Archdiocese quickly tapered off. Devotion did not disappear, but it lessened considerably. Local Catholics wanted to be loyal and obedient to their bishop, but they did so with very heavy hearts. Did obedience demand they cease their devotions? I will answer in the negative, because the bishop and his commission found nothing contrary to faith or morals in the messages from Mary. We will revisit this conundrum towards the end of this book in Chapter 18.

Many wondered why the local Archbishop did not believe in the authenticity of the visits of the Virgin Mary to his archdiocese in the face of so many spiritual fruits. Most surmised that Theresa Lopez's private life was too disordered. She had had a previous marriage that failed. Therefore, by human logic, why would God or Mary choose such an imperfect vessel to convey her holy messages and requests? I heard someone criticize Theresa Lopez for buying a fancy new red Ford Probe sports coupe. Perhaps that person thought, "would Jacinta or Lucia have done that?"

The Archbishop's letter perplexed the parishioners at St. Thomas More Church. They wanted to continue their work evangelizing Russia. They knew that the mission was a fruit of the apparitions. Was the mission therefore tainted? They concluded that the mission could stand on its own, remaining free from criticism, if only the members of the QAMA group refrained from publicly declaring that they went to Russia because Our Holy Mother of Virtues had asked them to. The QAMA board of directors took precautions to distance themselves from Our Holy Mother of Virtues. All did, except the President Rachel Bresnahan and me.

The Archbishop's letter also perplexed the devotional prayer groups who met and prayed the Chaplet of Virtues. They decided to contact the Archdiocesan offices at the chancery and ask for a clarification of what the bishop meant. One prominent such

prayer group had the name *Apostles for the Triumph*. Within the week, their spokeswoman, Carolyn Cartwright, had spoken with Father Raymond Jones, head of the commission, and had received from him some answers to her questions.

First, Father Raymond Jones told her that the commission found nothing in the writings of Theresa Lopez that were contrary to the teaching of the church. He stated that the writings were not condemned. “*Absolutely not*” was his response to the question. He stated that the writings were to be considered merely the writings of Theresa, and not messages from Our Blessed Mother. He, moreover, stated that the faithful could use Theresa’s book for private meditations, and that would not be contrary to the Archbishop’s directives. Finally, he said that the “*public is always encouraged to go to Cabrini Shrine to pray, as it is a nationally approved Catholic shrine,*” but that people should not go there merely because it was the place of alleged Marian apparitions.

Since Archbishop Stafford’s published declaration of March 9, 1994, the Denver Chancery has issued no further statements concerning the apparitions of *Our Holy Mother of Virtues*. Archbishop Charles Chaput, who succeeded Archbishop Stafford, never made any statements about the apparitions. He knew of the work of the Queen of the Apostles Mission Association. He knew that QAMA was a fruit of the alleged apparitions. He knew me personally very well, and more than once encouraged me to proceed with the mission. In one letter from him he wrote: “*Matt, keep up the good work you are doing for the church in Russia. Archbishop Charles Chaput.*”

Thus, the parishioners at St. Thomas More saw that they were given a sort of a tight rope to walk. The commission found no heresy in the apparitions. Private devotion was permitted. Para-liturgical services were out. The archbishop did not believe in the apparitions, but the faithful could believe and maintain their devotions if they did not cross a vaguely defined boundary line.

Private devotion did continue with the *Apostles for the Triumph* prayer group that numbered many dozens of parishioners. They met in private homes near the church for their weekly prayer gatherings. The QAMA Russia mission did thrive, but not under the umbrella of Our Holy Mother of Virtues. Most of the seven board members were very wary of causing any scandal by giving credence to the alleged apparitions of Our Holy Mother of Virtues. They felt that the QAMA mission was a most fruitful and important effort. They thrilled with the exciting possibility of helping the church in Russia, from faraway Colorado. Already they had enjoyed some successes in evangelizing atheistic Russia. They had another promising enterprise close at hand.

They wanted to organize a Second International Congress to address the spiritual and financial needs of the Catholic Church in the Former Soviet Union.

*“My sweet children: In this hour I come again to be with you in prayer. God hears the cries of his suffering children. He hears your cries. Your hearts are full of anguish over many things. Think of the anguish that my beloved children of Russia have suffered. Remember them in your prayers as they are truly in need. Honor the souls who endured the carnage of the centuries past for the sake of me and my son Jesus.*

*“I your Holy Mother of Virtues have come to set aright the hearts of man that they may draw close to my Virtuous Heart and remedy this world of anguish and pain, hatred and contempt. You my children because of your prayers have won great graces for me that I may dispense in abundance to the world. You have become a wellspring of hope for so many in Russia. Do not be afraid to go forth and proclaim that Christ our God is living among us. He truly has risen and comes to draw your hearts to God.*

*“May the Almighty Everlasting Lord remain in your hearts that nothing may cause you anguish or fear. I love you my children and I call you to remain prayerful and in the service of my Virtuous Heart to the people of Russia and the World.” [1998]*



QAMA helped purchase and install the first pipe organ in St. Mary Cathedral, Berdyansk, Ukraine.

## Chapter 7 The First “Russia” Conference

Father Michael Walsh, and the QAMA board of directors, began making plans in 1994 to host *The First International Conference to Assist the Catholic Church in the Former Soviet Union* at a Colorado venue. [Hereinafter I abbreviate it as the *Russia* conference] They wanted to host it at St. Thomas More Church in Englewood. They planned to invite many priests and bishops from Russia and former Soviet republics to come to the U.S. and make a plea for assistance to the American people. Fr. Walsh and the QAMA board believed they acted in accordance with the requests of Our Holy Mother of Virtues who had asked them to “*Run to my children in the East who long to hear your hearts. Russia is the ransom for the peace that the world yearns for.*” We have already printed many messages from The Virgin Mary pertaining to Russia in Chapter 3 of this book.

Archbishop Stafford would not give his consent for them to hold the conference in his archdiocese. It seemed to him that QAMA was tainted fruit; and he would have none of it. Therefore, Father Walsh and the QAMA board looked for a suitable venue in the adjacent diocese to the south, Colorado Springs. They found a most willing pastor to co-host the conference at his church. They found Father Paul Wicker, the pastor of Holy Apostles Catholic Church in Colorado Springs. They planned the conference for the first week in June 1995.

Father Paul Wicker and his parishioners had also heard the call of Mary to help her children in the East. They had also begun some projects along these lines. They had established their own Apostolate, like QAMA. They called it Colorado Outreach to Northern Ukraine (CONU). Father Paul has flown there as an emissary of Mary many times since the mid-1990s. He also thrills to hear the hearts of Mary’s children in the East. He delightedly hosted the conference at his parish. He became for us the best of friends in this endeavor.

QAMA and Fr. Paul Wicker sent out invitations to bishops and priests in Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan and elsewhere. About three dozen bishops, priests, sisters, and laymen accepted and agreed to fly to Colorado that first week of June 1995. Archbishop Tadeusz Kondrusiewicz came from Moscow. Cardinal Kazimierz Swiatek came from Belarus. Bishop Joseph Werth came from Novosibirsk and Bishop Jan Pavel Lenga came from Kazakhstan. A representative from the National Conference of Catholic Bishops came to the conference-- Monsignor George Saraukas. They also brought in some lay speakers. *Aid to the Church in Need* sent their national director. Ted Flynn came to speak of Marian apparitions. They had

enough speakers to keep the podium occupied for 3 days of talks and discussions. QAMA handled most of the logistics and paid for the air travel tickets and the hotels, when necessary, for the visiting guest speakers.

At the conference, the priests frequently celebrated the Holy Mass. Everyone said many Rosaries too. Some musicians from Magadan, Russia, Stalin's slave labor gulag headquarters in Siberia, came to rend the hearts of the Americans attending the conference with their plaintive and haunting Slavic songs of love and sorrow. But when Ted Flynn told us about the Virgin Mary's recent visits to our planet, his words thrilled my heart. The clouds of sorrows surrounding my heart began to disperse. That day my life would change forever.

Several hundred people came to the conference. I knew none of them. My first impression that this would be a special event for me came when I walked into Holy Apostles Catholic Church. The huge modern parish complex serves thousands of families in the city. Walking into the narthex I passed several Catholic priests and bishops working in Russia, who stood there greeting the visitors. Shame filled my heart as I saw them standing there in their regal holiness of priestly splendor wearing long black tailored cassocks. They stood there in holy dignity with a serious aspect. I reflected upon my own miserable existence. I lived for the transient delights of the sins of the flesh. They lived for God and the salvation of souls. My guardian angel then rebuked me sharply for my sinful ways.

Ted Flynn's talk about Mary's apparitions had so moved me that I immediately sought him out following his presentation. My guardian angel led me to him. I was thrilled by the reports that the mother of God was visiting us in our times. He invited me to join him for lunch during an interlude at the conference. Geraldine Kerrigan dined with us. She ran the Abba House in Pueblo, a retreat center, that frequently received Ukrainian mystic Joseph Terelya and his spiritual advisor Bishop Roman Danylak.

Ted, of course, already knew of the Blessed Virgin's apparitions to the imprisoned Catholic convict, Joseph Terelya. Terelya, when serving time in Communist jails in the U.S.S.R., received visits from the Blessed Virgin Mary. He listened to her words and received Her miraculous help for his brave defense of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church in his native country. She had helped preserve his life from freezing in the middle of winter. His jailers tried to execute him in a small locked unheated shed. In the morning they opened it, and found him alive, warm, and smelling of roses.

After lunch, Ted took me aside and asked me about my life and my purpose at the

conference. I told him I was a lawyer without purpose in life, a fallen away Catholic. I told him I was there to investigate the *Aid-to-the-Church-in-Need* group, and to maybe give them money from our family foundation. I told him my mother had sent me there. He saw that the reports of Marian apparitions in our times had filled me with awe, as I then finally believed in their authenticity. He could see that I had developed a keen interest with the possibility of helping the Church in Russia that had suffered so much under Communism. He made a proposal that thrilled my heart. I should put my energies and my family's money to the best of causes, helping Mary's priests where they then needed it most, in Russia!

At first, Ted proposed that I move to Virginia to be near him and his wife and their Marian apostolates. I would benefit from his direction and counsel. We would work together to try to expand the work of QAMA to many more parishes. We would use the Werner family monies to fund this project. I immediately agreed. In the next months, I began to wind down my affairs in Denver to make the move to Virginia. I planned the move for the autumn of 1995. I rented out my home in Denver and rented an apartment in Arlington, Virginia. The day before picking up my U-Haul truck, Ted called me and told me that the Holy Spirit had inspired him to tell me to stay in Denver and to start working with QAMA instead of moving to the East Coast. This took the winds out of my sails. I was already relishing my return to the D.C. area where I had lived during college and law school. Nevertheless, I changed my plans and stayed in Denver to stay close to the place of Mary's local apparitions that had given spawn to the QAMA project.

I approached Father Walsh and the QAMA board and asked them if I might join them in their efforts. I attended a special meeting to discuss with them my offer. Fr. Walsh asked me why I wanted to join them and help them. I answered: "*because I want to go to heaven.*" This response satisfied him completely. They quickly put me to work helping them with their publicity and fundraising.

At the same time, I had also rejoined my old law firm. They welcomed me back most gladly because they remembered my honest productivity. But my enthusiasm for the law soon waned. I wanted to be at St. Thomas More Parish where the QAMA mission had stolen my heart. I wound down my law practice with *Wachsmann & Associates* in early 1996 and began giving more and more of my time to QAMA. I went to their offices every day after joining them for the morning 9:00 a.m. Holy Mass and the Rosary. What remained for me was to make my first voyage to the land of sorrows, Russia. Ted had said to me; "*Matt, you must go to Russia as soon as possible, otherwise you won't understand this mission.*"

*“My son, I your Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, am here with you in this hour. You my son have been so obedient to my mother; and have sacrificed so much that I am taking this time now to tell you that everything you have heard in messages from my servant, Sylvia, is true. It is only now in this quiet time in this deafening silence that you feel in your heart that I may truly enter in. My mother has paved the way for me to begin conversing with you as well, and for a short time I will continue to instruct you through my servant Sylvia that you may know the secrets behind all that I intend for your soul.*

*“First, begin to know that I am with you in all things and that my mother and I have you at our sides. You are so close to us and so special to us. As we watch your progress, we see our heavenly design unfold in your heart. There are so many things that I want to teach you, and so many things that my mother wants to say to you. In these days while you await further conversations with my mother, I ask you to meditate upon the seven sorrows of my mother. Especially as you go now once again to my beloved people of Russia. In my mother’s sorrowful heart lies the true suffering of my Passion as she suffered denial, abandonment, ridicule, scorn, hatred and even threats upon her life.*

*“You, my son, shall go forth with a heavy heart, but not from any effects of sin, but from an experience of the sorrowful heart of my mother. As you see now, that she is very silent with you. Know that it is not from her lack of desire to converse with you, but it is from her strongest emotion of pain that she is too wounded to speak. My mother’s heart has been scorned for so long. The abuses she suffers even now are beyond comprehension. Yet, as you see, she continues to bear witness to God and all that has been required of her. In order for you to hear my mother’s voice, you must first understand her sorrowful heart. Remember the days when Herod sent his murderers into the streets to kill the firstborn son. Remember her exile into Egypt as she escaped their sword. Now, as you go forth to the land of exile, remember that like my mother of sorrows, my children of Russia are worn and discouraged, despairing and depressed.*

*“You, my son, have a message of great hope and joy. But for now, my mother and I are allowing you to undergo the understanding of her sorrows, that you may know no mortal has ever suffered as long and as heartfelt as my mother. Do not be afraid, my son, for I am truly with you, and all things revealed, and unseen will lead you to the heart of God. I know that you are suffering, but trust that it is not a suffering brought about by your sin. Rather a true spirit sent for the understanding of the agony my mother endured most of her mortal days.*

*“You my son have been chosen not only to rely on others, but that others may rely on you. As the son of our Holy Mother of Sorrows, I bring you her wounded heart that, through the offering of your life, she may be revealed to the world in a profound and meaningful way, that many shall come to understand her virtue and the true sacrifice of love that she gave when she chose to be my mother. And that this sacrifice continues today, as she brings my children to me.*

*“Trust me, my son, for I am the Way, the Truth and the Life. And no one shall come to know the truth of my mother’s heart, but through the gift of the Spirit and through an understanding of her sorrows. I love you my son, and I thank you for giving so generously to the heart of my mother. And you are forever written in my heart as her true and faithful, loving and virtuous everlasting humble servant. Go in the peace of God to prepare for your journey to a land of exile. My beloved children of Russia await the good news of salvation, and who understand more fully than you know the sorrowful suffering heart of my beloved and blessed mother.” [April 8, 1997]*



Sister Cristiana and the nuns who run the House of Mercy, Ivano-Frankivsk, Ukraine

## Chapter 8 A short autobiography of A. Matt Werner



First, I had to go to confession. At the conference, Ted Flynn said that the Virgin Mary told the Fatima children that most souls go to hell because of the sins of the flesh. My soul shuddered upon hearing those words. Hell would be my destination if I did not change. I had been living a most sinful life. I had broken the 6<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> commandments regularly. I should now give the reader a brief autobiography of my life up until my going to the “*Russia*” conference in June of 1995.

I will try to race through my life story because I do not want the reader to get bogged down with a tedious story of my life before my conversion. This book will serve as an historic account of the apparitions of Our Holy Mother of Virtues, and the fruits of those apparitions, but not so much about the sinful life of its author.

I was born the second of nine children in Sheboygan, Wisconsin, into a very normal Catholic family of German, Irish, French, Dutch, and Jewish blood. I lost my faith at about twelve or thirteen years of age, when as a precocious student I read what the evolutionists wrote. After reading a book by Roy Chapman Andrews about paleontological digs, I began reading other books defending the Darwinian thesis. I fell for the hoax of Evolutionism. Then materialism and determinism sucked me in. In my intellectual pride, I convinced myself that we were all composed of just atomic particles, subject only to the laws of physics. For me religion then became just a manmade crutch of histories, traditions, and rituals, to help make life more bearable, when in fact life was meaningless, and therefore, hopeless.

I went into a deep depression that my parents did not notice, busy as they were raising so many other children. I masked it by deceiving them, worried that they would recoil with anger at my rejecting everything they had taught me. I had even just become an Eagle Scout. But it meant naught to me. One night I went down from my bedroom to join the family for dinner. I arrived last. As I approached the dining room from the landing at the bottom of the stairway, I beheld them as one who was looking from afar through the lens of a telescope. To me, they seemed as if they were at least one hundred meters in the distance.

Soon thereafter, I found solace and camaraderie with my peers, excelling especially in

sports where I performed very well as an athlete, especially football. I emerged from depression in high school where my football prowess earned me many praises and many friends. I was the only sophomore brought up to the varsity squad. The coaches gave me a starting job as the middle linebacker, despite my modest stature. My senior classmates choose me as their valedictorian. Then I found a new meaningful pursuit, girls.

I went to Georgetown in 1973 and received a degree in Bachelor of Science of Foreign Service in 1978. In the meantime, my morals went south. Like so many others at Georgetown, I took to a life of campus parties. This meant girls and drugs. I took to chasing women. It became for me a serious pursuit. I continued in this vein while in law school at Catholic University, where I never once attended Mass at their magnificent basilica while I was a law student.

One year out of law school I joined the United States Air Force and accepted a commission as a judge advocate, a military lawyer. While serving in England at Royal Air Force Base Upper Heyford in Oxfordshire, where we flew F-111 intermediate nuclear bombers targeted at Russia and Ukraine, I married a girl whom I met in law school. She then served as an Army judge advocate in Germany. I moved to a German- based assignment soon thereafter. At Ramstein Air Base I tried courts martial with Captain Lindsey Graham. But outside the courtroom my wandering eye and my failure to make a commitment doomed our marriage. Many years later the Church granted an annulment because I did not intend to marry Dianna. Nevertheless, regrets haunted me for many years to come.

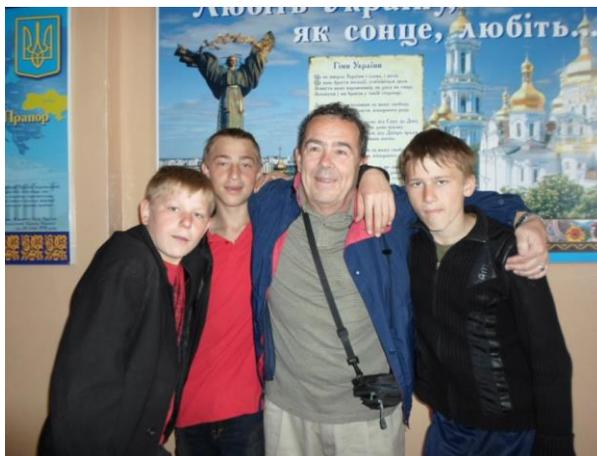
I fell into even deeper sin when I separated from the Air Force in 1987 and moved to Colorado in 1989 where I practiced civilian law for some years until the end of 1992. I fell in with a bad crowd and began using drugs. While practicing law very competently during the day, I often filled my evenings with vice. I frequented the local bars where I could find women with loose morals. They became my accomplices in vice.

I came to the point of a nervous breakdown. I went to a doctor telling him I had a soft and painful area of my scalp. He diagnosed a nervous depression disorder. I decided to leave Colorado and try to make a break with my disordered existence. Nevertheless, I was still without grace and without the sacraments; and without them you cannot chart your ship for calmer waters and better weather.

I moved back to Wisconsin in the winter of 1993, the place of my birth. There my

forbears had made their names serving the public in the offices of state and local government. There I thought I would make my name. My sins, however, held me back from any successful endeavors. When we live in the state of habitual mortal sin, the Holy Spirit flees from us. When we live in a habitual state of mortal sin, we live without sanctifying grace, without wisdom, without knowledge, and without understanding. We have no clarity of mind, and the devil easily deceives us. Totally befuddled, I moved back to Colorado in the winter of 1995. With a most sorrowful heart I rejoined my old law firm. Some months later, I attended the aforementioned “Russia” conference.

*“My son, I send you into the world with a heart of peace and joy. Though the storms of evil whirl around you, the truth of my love for all men reigns in your heart through the united spirit we share. Take joy with you as your currency, and peace with you as an offering; and as I have sent you to serve, now I send you to be an ambassador of my heart. You have at your disposal all the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and they will sustain you and be your very livelihood. Oh! that you could see the wonders of God that my heart has prepared for you. Dear son, please do not worry, for I am with you. I am your Mother, the most Blessed Virgin Mary, and I have your every intention deep in my heart. Ask of me what you will, and I will take it to the Father for consideration. I am your Queen. I am your Mother, and I desire for you every hope and dream you ever had. I desire to restore you to the truths of your youth and to the innocence of all you were taught by your loving parents and Faith-filled family. Take joy in knowing I am always with you! Pray, my son, for the time of great grace and mercy are upon you! And pray through the Heart of the Holy Lord Jesus Christ that all that is sacred will be restored in you!” [September 18, 1996]*



With 8<sup>th</sup> grade boys in school corridor between classes.



Our Holy Mother of Virtues painted by Joan Cameron Mitchell

## Chapter 9 Mary Sends Me to Serve her Russian Children

After Mary opened my eyes, my mind, and my heart at the conference, I ran immediately to confession. Using a naval analogy, you do not turn around an aircraft carrier of mortal sins back into the safe harbor of virtue in a short moment. I labored at that task. I had to steer clear of the drugs I had often taken with my many girlfriends. I fell frequently, but less and less often. I grew sensitive to the voice of my conscience. I received my daily spiritual food when I prayed Mary's Rosary and her Chaplet of Virtues. At first, I did not feel worthy to receive the Holy Eucharist, but as I began to purify myself of my evil desires and deeds, I went more often to Holy Mass.

Mary had begun to give me special messages through the visionary Sylvia Groeger, who had become my special companion. Through Sylvia, Mary spoke some words for my heart that Sylvia wrote down on paper as we knelt in prayer before Mary's statue in St. Thomas More Church. We gathered there daily at Mary's request. Often, we met at Holy Ghost Church for midday Mass. After Mass, we would pray the Rosary. Through Sylvia, the Virgin Mary spoke to me words of encouragement, and words requesting my prayers and my sanctity. She asked me to go to Russia as an ambassador of her Immaculate Heart, and she asked me to be a guardian of her apparitions.

When Sylvia received these messages, I could see and perceive her going into a spiritual trance. For some minutes she would listen to the Virgin Mary, eyes closed, body still. Then she would take up a pen and a piece of paper and write for some minutes. My Guardian angel informed me that I beheld a genuine mystery.

I have now three binders of spiritual messages from the Virgin Mary. In them she spoke many words addressed to my heart. She gave me words of consolation, requests, encouragement, and special spiritual direction. I confess I have sometimes been too lax in following her requests. Every time I open those binders, I realize that I must knuckle under and strive anew to take up the tools she gave me. She gave me the tools of prayer, penance, the sacraments, and a desire to please her by striving towards holiness and a life of virtue.

Next, I needed to go to Russia as Mary's ambassador. I prepared for that task by praying the Chaplet of Virtues. The day before my flight, I drove to Cabrini Shrine to ask for the strength to persevere. In mid- March 1996 I flew to Russia through Seattle and Anchorage, Alaska. On the last two segments of the trip, we flew aboard an old Tupolev 154 jetliner transporting only Russians, I think. Most everyone smoked

cigarettes. We laid over in Alaska for several hours. I had brought with me an old baby incubator donated by St. Joseph's hospital in Denver. I carried with me \$10,000 in cash. I was going to visit the lone Catholic priest serving in Magadan--- Stalin's Gulag headquarters for slave labor in the 1930s, 40s and 50s. Mary grants us enough graces to accomplish what we must. I flew from Denver to Seattle, to Anchorage and then on to Russia. It took two days to get there.

Father Michael Shields picked me up at the airport. We drove to town on a serpentine frozen dirt road, to his Nativity of Our Lord Parish. I would be his guest in Magadan for one week. Magadan charmed my soul that week. I loved the Russians immediately. Their hearts of simplicity and humility served as balm for my soul. The seaport Magadan had about 50,000 souls living on the frozen tundra on a rocky plateau above a natural harbor in the Sea of Okhotsk at the sixtieth parallel. Six to ten feet of snow lay on the ground in most places. You could not hurry anywhere. Vehicular traffic crawled slowly on the icy streets. It never got dark. At night, the sky shown a lovely royal blue upon the city through the night—as if Mary watched over her beloved children of Russia.

We had Holy Mass each day with a couple of dozen pious parishioners. We visited the prayerful women of Madonna House. We went to the local hospital and delivered the baby warmer I had brought with me. The doctors warmed my heart with their effusive gratitude. Then we went to visit the local Orthodox priest, Fr. Rostoslav. Fr. Michael and he had become good friends. We gave him \$3,000 in a plain envelope. Fr. Michael, upon our departure from that meeting, told me that he would like to have seen the face of Fr. Rostoslav when he finally opened that envelope.

We visited the museum of the Kolyma, that region where Stalin sent political and religious prisoners to work the gold mines in this region of northeastern Siberia. I learned that many millions went to their graves while working in the mining camps that fan out from Magadan for more than two hundred miles in all directions but south. They died of starvation and the cold. Stalin wanted the gold to bolster the Soviet economy in the face of the disastrous five-year economic plans that did not work as expected. From crossing the continent on the Trans- Siberian railroad to the port city of Vladivostok, the prisoners finally arrived in Magadan in the holds of freighters that had sailed north another fourteen-hundred miles after having departed Vladivostok. Almost no one would return home. Russia already understood the sorrowful heart of Mary.

My unforgettable trip to Magadan was the first of what have now been 37 mission

trips to Russia and Ukraine. I had done as Ted Flynn had suggested. I had made my first trip to Russia. I met the people, and I loved their hearts. I eagerly awaited my next visit to that enchanted land. Many mission trips to Russia and Ukraine would follow. I will tell of these mission trips in greater detail in a later chapter.

But this is only a short conjunctive chapter. I should now tell the reader about how Mary's apparitions transformed the Parish of St. Thomas More. Yes, the Archbishop did not believe in the authenticity of the apparitions. At the same time, he did not condemn the phenomenon. He found nothing contrary to faith or morals in the "writings" of Theresa Lopez. He did not prohibit private readings and meditations. It seems to me that he felt himself in a difficult position. He must have seen the good fruits. What did he read in the report of his commission? We don't know how Archbishop Stafford drew his conclusions. We only know what he wrote. After his short one-page statement of March 1994, he wrote nothing else for the flock in his diocese regarding the authenticity of the visits of Our Holy Mother of Virtues.

As he allowed for private devotions and prayer groups, the devotions to Our Holy Mother of Virtues continued in the Denver region. The reader should know that the devotees to Our Holy Mother of Virtues went to great steps so as not to give scandal. In their hearts, they knew that the Blessed Mother had truly visited them. Nevertheless, they walked on tiptoes and held their private prayer sessions at their own homes. Many hearts were downcast because of the bishop's pronouncements, but the fervor engendered by Mary's messages, and the fervor ignited by the fruits of the apparitions would not subside. The phenomena of Mary's apparitions transformed the parish. It became the most visited Marian apparition site in North America for many years.

*"Tell my son that I am with him and that I will protect him in his needs. Tell him that I will accept this trip to Magadan as a sacrifice for the evil he has done in his life and that this trip demonstrates to me his willingness to repent. I am alone as he is alone. In so far as it was my solitary duty to bear Christ into the world, so too it is his solitary duty to go forth and bear Christ to the people of this desolate land. I am your Mother."* [March 23, 1996]

## Chapter 10 Saint Thomas More Parish Transformed

[I wrote this chapter in 2013. To serve the purpose of this book I need not update this report. I do not know if the following text still accurately describes the sacramental and spiritual life of that parish. We have attended the traditional Latin Mass now at FSSP and SSPX parishes for many years.]

Just the other day over coffee in the Padre Restaurant at St. Thomas More Catholic Church, where twenty years have passed since the sensation of Mary's apparitions and visits, Joe McAleer remarked how the parish went through a beautiful transformation in the months and years following Mary's visits under the title of *Our Holy Mother of Virtues*. From a normal parish, St. Thomas More Church changed into almost a diocese unto itself with not just dozens of ministries but ministries more than anyone could number. They had a proliferation of prayer groups, missions, educational projects, conferences, devotions, and daily Mass attendance. Everyone ran around like busy beavers. Fr. Walsh established Perpetual Eucharistic adoration. The Archbishop of Paris, Cardinal Jean-Marie Lustiger, came to St. Thomas More Church to dedicate the new adoration chapel in 1993, when he came to World Youth Day.

It would be difficult to name a prominent American Catholic in the clergy or in academia who did not visit St. Thomas More Parish in those years of Mary's visits, and in the years immediately following. St. Thomas More Parish began hosting many seminars, conferences and missions beginning in those years. We hosted Scott Hahn, Curtis Martin, Fr. John Corapi, and many hosts and guests you have seen on EWTN. Fr. Michael Scanlon of Steubenville visited us. Visionaries from Medjugorje came to give talks. We hosted a second Russia conference in 1997 wherein we brought a full slate of Marian priests and Mariologists, including: Fr. Rene Laurentin, Fr. Michael O'Carroll (spiritual director to Vasula Ryden), Fr. Edward O'Connor, Archimandrite Stephen Barham, Bishop Roman Danylak and many priests and bishops from Ukraine and Russia. The parish hosted the visitors to World Youth Day in 1993. Fr. Walsh then became good friends with the Rector of the Sanctuary and Shrine of Lourdes, France, Fr. Patrick Jacquin. Fr. Walsh hosted Fr. Jacquin along with scores of pilgrims from France. [Incidentally, Fr. Walsh was to open a Lourdes Marian Center in 2003 to distribute water from Lourdes. The Lourdes Marian Center would serve as a devotional Apostolate at his next parish, St. Vincent de Paul Church, in Denver, after his departure from St. Thomas More Church.]

St. Thomas More Church has now hosted the FOCUS conference twice. They host seminars on stewardship. The Church has dozens of catechism programs. I taught

catechism there for thirteen years. They have the largest Knights of Columbus Council in the state of Colorado. The Legion of Mary numbers just one of the dozens of prayer groups. The church was an anthill of activity seven days a week, and usually all day long. They have the largest elementary Catholic school in the diocese. The monthly parish magazine *More Informed* numbers usually about 28 pages. It helps educate parishioners on how they might plug into the parish practically and spiritually.

Annually the parish has two ministry fairs. Maybe 30 or 35 spiritual ministries show up for the first one, and probably double that number take booths and tables at the second ministry fair. Queen of the Apostles Mission is of course one of the oldest ministries, because we formed immediately after Mary's visits to the parish. Her visits began almost thirty years ago, and I dare say that many of the currently active parishioners have never heard of Our Holy Mother of Virtues. But Joe McAleer reminds me that this outburst of parish activity began only in the wake of Mary's visits to the parish in the early 1990s. These many fruits of her visits often prompted Father Walsh to turn to me and ask me; "*Well Matt, what do you make of all of this?*"

This flurry of parish activism began with Mary's visits to the parish. Today the Newcomer's introduction brochure at St. Thomas More Church has 36-pages setting forth the parish vision and listing its numerous ministries. The organizational chart has 22 boxes. The Communications department has 5 branches. Stewardship has 7 committees. The Faith and Academic Formation Commission has 13 sections. They have 5 sacramental preparation committees. The booklet lists 12 lay movements. The Parish Life Commission has 9 branches. The Liturgy Commission lists 13 endeavors. Prayer groups number 15. Family Life Commission supervises 18 ongoing projects. The Social Concerns Commission supervises 8 separate ministries.

The attached parish K-8 elementary school has more than 700 students. Its commissions and ministries read like those of the parish. The parish has 100 full-time employees and 135 part-time employees, including those of the school, as I write this. The parish business manager Dick Rapp gave me these figures when I interviewed him in April of 2012. This Octave of Easter 2012, EWTN came to St. Thomas More to film one of their upcoming special programs. From the foregoing description of the parish, I want the reader to understand that St. Thomas More parish received special graces from Mary's visits. The parishioners had responded obediently to her imprecations to pray her **Chaplet of Virtues**, and to make their consecration to Her Immaculate Heart.

*“My son, concern yourself not over the date and time you should go here or there. Rather concentrate on the spirit with which you go forth. You shall travel extensively; and you shall see the handiwork of God. You shall meet His multifaceted people who love and adore Him in hundreds of different ways. Some you will love and some you will not. Remember my son, God loves all his children the same, even those who know Him and choose to deny Him.*

*“I have called you forth from the world to be a witness to the truth of my apparitions here, and to be an ambassador and advocate of my Immaculate and Holy Virtuous Heart. You know my heart well my son, as I know yours. I know how you suffer; and I know and understand why you suffer. There are so many injustices in the world. God, in His Great Mercy though, has deigned to come to you and your friends to reveal to the world that I am your Holy Mother of Virtues. This is a historic event that few are chosen to witness, yet it shall become renowned, and my Holy Virtuous Heart shall be revered by all.*

*“I invite you to put aside all of your desires and turn your heart to my needs. You have put off travel to attend to me and to witness here. You have given your all to me. You are my beloved son. For, whenever you sacrifice your heart for the sake of me, God is glorified in the hearts of man; and this is the witness I desire. Each sacrifice you make for me brings you closer to the one thing you desire most-to be loved and honored by God. This my son is true paradise. This, my son, comes by walking along the path to holiness. You my son have chosen the greatest path, that of complete and utter deprivation. You have denied everything for me.*

*“The solitude and deprivation you experience are unfamiliar and at times seem never-ending. I tell you my son that even now you do not see how truly close to heaven you are. God’s perfect love for you is within your reach. Do not be afraid to embrace His love for you and to claim your blissful inheritance, which is the heritage of my Holy Virtuous Heart. I desire, my son, that you consecrate yourself to my Virtuous Heart, and in so doing you shall come to feel the peace that you are so lacking. Join me today on this path and your joy will become complete. I love you my son and I am truly always with you. [December 19, 1998]*



In Novograd-Volinsky Roman Catholic Monastery with Father Gennady Belinsky singing our hearts out after a long day on the mission road.



In the House of Mercy with Mother of the Tears, Sr. Zavanitsya, and orphans.

## Chapter 11 The Chaplet of Virtues

Mary certainly wants us to venerate her as Our Lady of the Rosary, **as in Fatima**, but she also wants us to venerate her as Our Holy Mother of Virtues, **as in Denver**, beseeching her help for us to live virtuous lives. She wants us to consecrate ourselves to Her Immaculate heart as she has been requesting for some centuries now. She does not want us to pursue extraordinary worldly lives chasing fame, fortune, and pleasure. She just wants us to pursue lives of virtue, and to model our conduct after hers, as when she led an ordinary and humble existence, unknown to the world. Only God and St. Joseph recognized the extraordinary Prodigy inhabiting the poor little house in Nazareth.

She will help us if we turn to her in prayer and devotion, and if we will turn to her Son humbly, begging His forgiveness, and receiving the Sacraments of His church. She will especially help us if we recite her Chaplet of Virtues. She began requesting we pray her Chaplet during those apparitions at St. Thomas More Church and at Mother Cabrini shrine.

The Chaplet of Virtues is a ten-twelve-minute prayer prayed with the aid of a small circle of beads, about half the size of a Rosary. The petitioner asks God and Mary to help him/her advance in the virtues of Faith, Hope, Charity, Humility, Patience, Perseverance and Obedience. The petitioner leads off with the **Apostles Creed** followed by a short **Consecration prayer to Mary**. The **Angelus** follows.

Then you make petition to the Blessed Virgin to acquire seven specific virtues. After mentioning each of the seven virtues of Faith, Hope, Charity, Humility, Patience, Perseverance and Obedience you pray:

*“Come Holy Spirit enlighten my heart to see the things which are of God. Come Holy Spirit into my mind, that I may know the things that are of God. Come Holy Spirit into my soul, that I belong only to God. Sanctify all that I think, say and do, that all will be for the glory of God, Amen.”*

Following this Holy Spirit prayer, the petitioner prays an Our Father, a Hail Mary and a Glory Be. Having prayed for these seven virtues the petitioner finishes the chaplet by praying: *“Spirit of Christ stir me; Spirit of Christ move me; Spirit of Christ fill me; Spirit of Christ seal me. Consecrate in me Your heart and will O Heavenly Father. Create in me a fountain of virtues. Seal my soul as Your own, that Your reflection in me may be a light for all to see. Amen.”*

*“Oh Maria, transform my heart unto thine. Place around it a wreath of purity adorned in Virtue. Take my heart dear mother, consecrated as your own. Present it to God Father, as an offering from me to you. Help me O Maria in each day to make your heart more known. Amen.”*

All the pilgrims learned it and prayed it. They did not abandon the Rosary. Rather, they added the Chaplet of Virtues to their other prayers. The Holy Mother of Virtues Prayer Group that continued to meet for many years at St. Thomas More Church would typically begin their prayers with the Chaplet of Virtues, follow it with the Chaplet of Divine Mercy, and conclude with the Rosary. This prayer group now meets on the second Sunday of every month in our home in Castle Rock at 2 p.m. We receive about sixteen or twenty souls each month. After praying we enjoy a potluck dinner and thereafter converse on matters spiritual and mystical.

[Note that the Marian Alcove to the right of the altar in the church, with multi-colored stained glass, predominantly blue, and with an image of the spinning sun of Fatima, and Mary in the center, found a new home at the back of the church, and now faces east, high on the wall above the main entry doors, since the remodeling and renovation of St. Thomas More Church in 2008-2009.]

*“My brother, Joy fills my heart today as you plan to journey to the heart of Russia. In our Mother’s plans, many shall come to know and understand her virtuous heart through you. The language of virtue has become all but non-existent in this world. Kind words and generosity are foreign to most. As you are on your way, remember the mercy of God that in your greeting and in your departing, your words of encouragement and joy renew and refresh your brothers and sisters.*

*“It is difficult to learn the language of virtue. All are accustomed to the language of vice and sin. It is truly more important for you to study virtue and to transmit it than to study a set of words called Russian. Be at peace, my brother, because the language of obedience and hope, faith and perseverance, patience and humility translate universally to all.*

*“Your prayers to Our Holy Mother of Virtues afford her great wealth. Remain her servant in prayer and she will send you the assistance you need to accomplish all she requires of you. All heaven and earth rejoice at your humble servitude, and we unite in prayer for your protection and safe journey. Your Brother in Christ Jesus and defender of Our Holy Mother’s Virtuous Heart.” [Saint Jerome: August 8, 1998]*



While on mission, we often stayed in L'viv at St. Onufrio Monastery in support of the Priests of St. Basil the Great, and their seminary in nearby Briukhovichi, Ukraine



With pastor Fr. Ivan, Maria, Sylvia, a parishioner, and Matt in L'viv.

## Chapter 12 In the End My Immaculate Heart Will Triumph!

Mary gave more than just the *Chaplet of Virtues* to the parishioners at St. Thomas More Church, and to the pilgrims who went there to make their consecration to Her Heart. She also told us how to make our consecration to her Immaculate Heart. In an 84-page book or manual that she dictated to Theresa Lopez over the course of just three days, from October 10<sup>th</sup> through October 12<sup>th</sup> of 1993, she explained the importance of consecrating our hearts to hers. Through the pages of that manual, she leads the reader on a 33-day spiritual retreat wherein they prepare to consecrate themselves to Mary. *In the End My Immaculate Heart Will Triumph* is a 33-day schedule of imprecations, guidance, directions, meditations, and prayers by which the Faithful might prepare their minds, hearts, and souls to make a formal and solemn consecration of their hearts to Mary's heart.

The consecration manual saw its first printing in November 1993. Queenship Publishing Company has since reprinted it some twenty times. It is their bestseller. Millions of copies circulate in many English and Spanish speaking countries throughout the world. It is now also available in Russian. Its subtitle is: *Consecration Preparation for the Triumphant Victory of the Immaculate Heart of Mary*. I think many readers of this book of mine already have it. They have prepared themselves for making a consecration more than only once.

The manual is a beautiful poem of love, dictated by a most concerned mother who sees the snares of Satan entrapping so many of her children. The little book contains profound spiritual lessons, some of which I remember reading in Thomas a Kempis' classic *The Imitation of Christ* (written in 1441 A.D.). Mary stresses the particular importance of growing in the virtues of humility and purity. She describes for the reader the spiritual battle in which we find ourselves at this point in history. She stresses the importance of the sacraments, especially of going to confession and receiving the Eucharist. She strongly encourages Eucharistic adoration and reciting the prayers of her Rosary.

After 33 days of preparing for the consecration, you consecrate your heart to Mary on the next day while saying the consecration prayer that you have already read in Chapter 3 of this book. We will print for the reader just one of Mary's messages from the consecration manual to give a sample of Our Blessed Mother's inspiring words. On day three of the consecration preparation, we hear these words from our Queen:

*“My angel, I ask you to renew your consecration to me in a most special way. On the day of the Annunciation, I ask that all my children be joined to me on this day. Come together and be consecrated to my Immaculate Heart. You do not perceive how much grace is held for you there. I long to carry you all in my maternal arms and to present you to God Father in heaven. I present you to my Jesus---your truth, your life, and the way of eternal life in heaven.*

*I come to the world in such fullness because of the deceptions and evil it is influenced by. I desire to lead you to the fullness of the Gospel message. So, it is by this means you shall pattern your lives; and will gain the crown of heaven. I warn you, dear angel, the world shall succumb to dark times of great tribulations. I plead to you all to become intertwined with my Immaculate Heart, so I may protect and guide you through such bleakness. I assure you, you do not know how difficult it is for you, dear children, to escape the snares of evil that Satan prepares for you. His seductions have become so alluring and subtle that only through the joining of our hearts, shall you be saved from them.*

*It shall become clearer in each day that the flock who are consecrated to my heart and carried by my arms in these final times, shall be those who are faithful to the Gospel message, the Vicar of Christ, adore my Son’s presence in the Eucharist; these shall be enclosed in the folds of my mantle by the Consecration to My Immaculate Heart.*

*It is in this way I desire to lead you to glorification of the Most Holy Trinity. You shall find passage through the door of my heart, and by this means shall you spread the light of divine splendor. When this light you shall contain is spread throughout the earth and my part to usher in this light is fulfilled, my Jesus shall claim the Reign of His Sacred Heart and restore His kingdom.*

*Through your smallest effort shall you spill forth this glory, and so it remains within your hands, the Triumph and proclamation of our two hearts among mankind.”*  
[ 10-17-1992]

Many readers will already know that the most famous book promoting consecration to Mary’s heart is *True Devotion to Mary*, written by St. Louis-Marie Grignon de Montfort (d. 1716) more than 300 years ago. One of de Montfort’s books also presents a 33-day schedule of prayers and meditations preceding the act of consecration. I read his book many years ago and found it very inspiring. Perhaps our modern age has forgotten Saint Louis Marie de Montfort. Do you suppose that Heaven sent Our Blessed Mother to earth once again to stress the importance of our consecration, the

same that the forgotten de Montfort had advocated? It is a beautiful poem of love and a spiritual treasure. Most of our many hundreds of friends and supporters at St. Thomas More Church and elsewhere have profited from reading the spiritual treasures in the booklet.

While writing this book I rediscovered the depths of its mysteries and secrets. I now consecrate my heart to Mary anew as I finish writing the final chapters of this book. I had forgotten its charm. Perhaps more accurately, I have matured a bit since I last read it. I now discover spiritual gems that I did not notice the first several times I turned its pages. Your soul perceives Mary's maternal love and concern while reading her gentle words and meditating on her many spiritual lessons. By reading the manual you certainly get to know our virginal Mother better than you had before.

I could write about the booklet for many pages. It has inexhaustible treasures. But I not only want to expound upon the wisdom of Marian consecration. I also want to continue to give you the chronicle of Our Holy Mother of Virtues visits. I also want to tell you more about the fruits of those visits, especially when we went at her bidding to Her children in the East "*who long to hear our hearts.*"

I want to connect many themes, many people, and many events into a vivid picture so that the reader might understand and grasp what a great gift we received when the Virgin Mary visited Colorado as *Our Holy Mother of Virtues*. I hope the reader might understand the importance of heeding her call and making a consecration unto her heart, thereby participating in her foretold triumph. So many souls risk eternal damnation because of their attachment to sin. She wants us to help her fight this mystical battle against the evil culture of our times, especially the evil of impurity.

As a prelude to the next chapter, I will tell you that many times in the booklet Mary refers to herself as the "Co-Redemptrix" of humanity. She does so **eight** times. Paragraph 4 of the consecration prayer reads:

*"Queen of Apostles and Co-Redemptrix, guide us in the midst of darkness in this time, where the rays of your dawn come to give light to our horizon. With the refuge of your Immaculate Heart as our beacon, lead us in to the field of this battle, send us forth with your sword of truth and the armor of virtue, to be the example of the infinite mercy and love of God Father."*

In the booklet, Mary also refers to herself as our Advocate and our Mediatrix of all heaven's graces. Many Catholics anticipate a final Marian Dogma wherein the pope

will proclaim her as our Co- Redemptrix, Mediatrix and Advocate. Dr. Mark Miravalle, S.T.D., wrote a book defending the thesis supporting such a dogma and published it in 1993. *Mary-Coredemptrix Mediatrix Advocate* is the seminal theological treatise on this topic. It received an *Imprimatur* from Most Reverend Gilbert Sheldon, the Bishop of Steubenville. Luigi Cardinal Ciappi, O.P., Papal theologian emeritus for Pope Pius XII, and the next four popes, wrote the forward to the book. He wholeheartedly endorsed Dr. Miravalle's theological study and expressed his hope that the pontiff would declare it to be dogma, that Mary is Co-Redemptrix, Mediatrix and Advocate. He wrote in part: "*The doctrine of St. Albert the Great and of St. Thomas Aquinas about the maternal participation of the Virgin Mother in the Redemption as Co-Redemptrix, Mediatrix, and Advocate had a great influence in the Church.*"

*"I share the hope of Dr. Mark Miravalle: With the profound contribution of our present Holy Father, Pope John Paul II, to the understanding of the mediating mystery of Mary with Christ and the Church...there is only one final action that remains in bringing the Marian roles of Co-Redemptrix, Mediatrix and Advocate...into the fullest acknowledgement and ecclesial life of the People of God; that our Holy Father, in his office as Vicar of Christ on earth and guided by the Spirit of Truth, define and proclaim the Marian roles of Co- Redemptrix, Mediatrix of all graces, and Advocate for the People of God as Christian dogma revealed by God, in rightful veneration of the Mother of Jesus, and for the good of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church of Christ."*

While some in the church pray for this new Marian dogma, many also oppose it. Some theologians seem ready to draw daggers and spill blood over this question. Because *Our Holy Mother of Virtues* spoke so frequently about her role as Co-Redemptrix of humanity, she drew the attention of one devoutly Marian Bishop from Eastern Europe. Bishop Paolo Maria Hnilica, from Slovakia, who favored the pronouncement of a dogma declaring Mary Co-Redemptrix, hastened to Colorado to meet Theresa Lopez and to learn more about the apparitions and messages of Our Holy Mother of Virtues.

*"My sweet angels, Joy fills my heart as once again you come in obedience to my request that you pray for the children of Russia. Never before have my beloved children of Russia been in so much need. All things for them seem hopeless, yet your simple prayers to me, however few they are, yield for me a bountiful harvest.*

*Think for a moment on the number of seconds in your life. In an instant you can have thoughtless worries and concerns, not giving homage to the Father, but breeding*

*unholy thoughts. Now, in this hour you come to make amends for your carelessness. Bring me the grace I need to help my hopeless children of Russia. These prayers assist my weary children to resist evil temptations and lifts their hearts to thoughts of God. You my children should never forget the importance of your prayer and your contribution to the construction of God's kingdom in the hearts of your brothers and sisters in Russia.” [Our Holy Mother of Virtues, August 27, 1998]*



QAMA funded dozens of new churches in Ukraine and Russia.

## Chapter 13 Family of Mary Co-Redemptrix

Now we will tell the reader about the connection between Our Holy Mother of Virtues and the new religious order of **Family of Mary Co- Redemptrix** (since renamed just **Family of Mary**). Bishop Paul Maria Hnilica, ordained a bishop in Slovakia during Soviet times, founded this new order in 1968 when it had the name *Pro Deo et Fratribus*. The order has a keen awareness of our Blessed Mother as Co-Redemptrix of humanity. The order also serves the lands so badly ravaged by militant atheistic Communism. I have met their priests and sisters in the Ukraine and Russia. The order has as its spiritual underpinnings the messages of the Virgin Mary to a visionary from the Netherlands, Ida Peerdeman of Amsterdam. The Blessed Virgin appeared to her from 1945 until 1959. In 1951 Mary told Ida that she wished to be venerated as *Our Lady of All Nations*.

Mary gave Ida Peerdeman a special prayer for the faithful. It reads thus:

*“Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the Father, send now your Spirit over the earth. Let the Holy Spirit live in the hearts of all nations, that they may be preserved from degeneration, disaster, and war. May Our Lady of All Nations, who once was Mary, be our Advocate. Amen.”*

The Virgin Mary also told Ida that a future pope would proclaim a new and final Marian dogma. He would proclaim her as **Co-Redemptrix, Mediatrix and Advocate**.

Bishop Hnilica and his priests breathed the spirituality of **Our Lady of All Nations** in their souls. (Bishop Hnilica died some years ago.) When Hnilica heard that Mary was appearing in Denver and calling herself the **Co-Redemptrix**, as she called herself in Amsterdam, he jumped aboard an airplane and rushed off to Denver to investigate these reports of Mary’s apparitions. He met Theresa Lopez and quickly concluded she truthfully transmitted the words from Our Blessed Mother. He became thereafter her protector, and took her back to Civitella, Italy around 1994, after Theresa had begun suffering acute public persecution for the testimony she gave here locally in Denver, and at various Marian conferences across the country.

The reader should bear in mind that this expected new Marian dogma has many detractors and naysayers within the Church. I am not one of them. Bishop Hnilica also has some detractors. I am not one of them either. If you research him, you will find monographs wherein the authors deny that he received valid consecration as an

underground bishop in Soviet times, and they attempt to throw his pastoral endeavors into a bad light. I have never met him, and I have no firsthand knowledge about him. But Mary Smolczyk told me he was the holiest priest she has ever met. I have met some of his subordinates. I met Fr. Dominic Maria and Fr. Paul Sigl, the notable superiors of the order in the late 1990s. I met them at St. Thomas More Church. I hold them in high regard, especially because of their piety and their humility.

Not only did Bishop Hnilica find Theresa Lopez and her reports of Mary's apparitions inspirational, valid, and uplifting. So too did the parishioners of St. Thomas More Church draw inspiration from Bishop Hnilica and his new religious order. It was a good marriage. They both found validation in the spirituality of their brethren across the seas. They shared a common mature Marian spirituality. The work had just begun.

The Family of Mary Co-Redemptrix then formed priests in Italy, where they lived in community in Civitella. They also formed religious sisters. Four men from St. Thomas More church went into formation for the priesthood in Italy and became priests of the order of Family of Mary Co-Redemptrix. Others from St. Thomas More Church became brothers and religious sisters of the order. They went to serve the Catholic Church as missionaries in formerly Soviet lands. The pastor and parishioners at St. Thomas More Church took satisfaction, knowing that their parish had responded so generously to Mary's call to evangelize formerly Communistic countries.

In my own travels throughout Russia and the Ukraine, I have met the priests and the sisters of the congregation in Kiev, in Moscow and in Kazan. I know they vigorously evangelize the souls of Kazakhstan and other formerly Soviet lands. They also have houses in Slovakia and Austria. All of them whom I have met display humility, piety, and fervent Marian devotion. I fondly remember praying Rosaries with one of their humble devout priests, Fr. Ulrich Maria Schamberger, during one of my visits to Kazan, Russia. He came into my hotel room where we knelt on the floor and prayed the Rosary together. Their sisters have recorded the most beautiful Marian hymns on cassettes and CDs that the human ear has ever heard.

I have heard that Fr. Paul Maria Hnilica, S.J., titular Bishop of Rusado (Slovakia), served as a favorite Mariologist for Pope John Paul II. Slovakia and Poland share a border. I have heard that after the pope received a bullet in his chest, and while recuperating, he called Bishop Hnilica to discuss the messages of Fatima. After Mary's apparitions at Cabrini Shrine, Bishop Hnilica flew here to discuss with Fr. Michael Walsh the apparitions and messages of Our *Holy Mother of Virtues*. He came in 1993. Denver hosted World Youth Day that summer. In 1993 the Queen of the

Apostles Mission Association had begun to bring practical and spiritual relief to the lands ravaged by the Communist persecutions of the Church. Bishop Hnilica had found American friends who willingly harnessed their hearts and souls to the same plow that he and his priests and sisters were already pulling in the East.

In the years from 1995 until 2000 St. Thomas More Church received visits from the priests of Family of Mary Co-Redemptrix, who came to give us parish missions. I met the priests personally, and attended their three-day missions in the church, usually from Monday through Wednesday. The parishioners found the pious priests' words spiritually uplifting, all under the protection of the pure and Immaculate Virgin. Those missions brought an unforgettable peace to the souls of the parishioners. And finally, QAMA began sending financial support for the missionary priests of their order who served in formerly Soviet lands.

Fr. Michael Walsh's brother Larry, also a Roman Catholic priest educated in Denver, took retirement in Ireland. He had for many years supported and protected the Family of Mary Co-Redemptrix. He went to God the first week of March 2012. In the last two years of his life the sisters of *Family of Mary Co-Redemptrix* cared for him in his cottage in County Waterford, Ireland. After his death, our beloved Fr. Michael lived alone in that cottage. Fr. Michael Walsh died in 2013.

In recent years, the members of the order have changed their name to simply "**Family of Mary**." I do not know why they have dropped the modifier "*Co-Redemptrix*." But I do not need to know. I already know enough about the hatred of certain men for our Pure Virginal Mother in heaven, and of her perquisites, her privileges, and her power.

I think our Lord needed his mother's cooperation to help him consume his sacrifice on the cross. I think He wants us to know he needed her to suffer as the Co-Redemptrix of sinful humanity, imploring his mercy for sinners. He wants us to honor her as such. Without her suffering at his side, he would not have been able to die alone, so terrible were the excruciating sufferings of his passion, so terrible the abandonment by men.

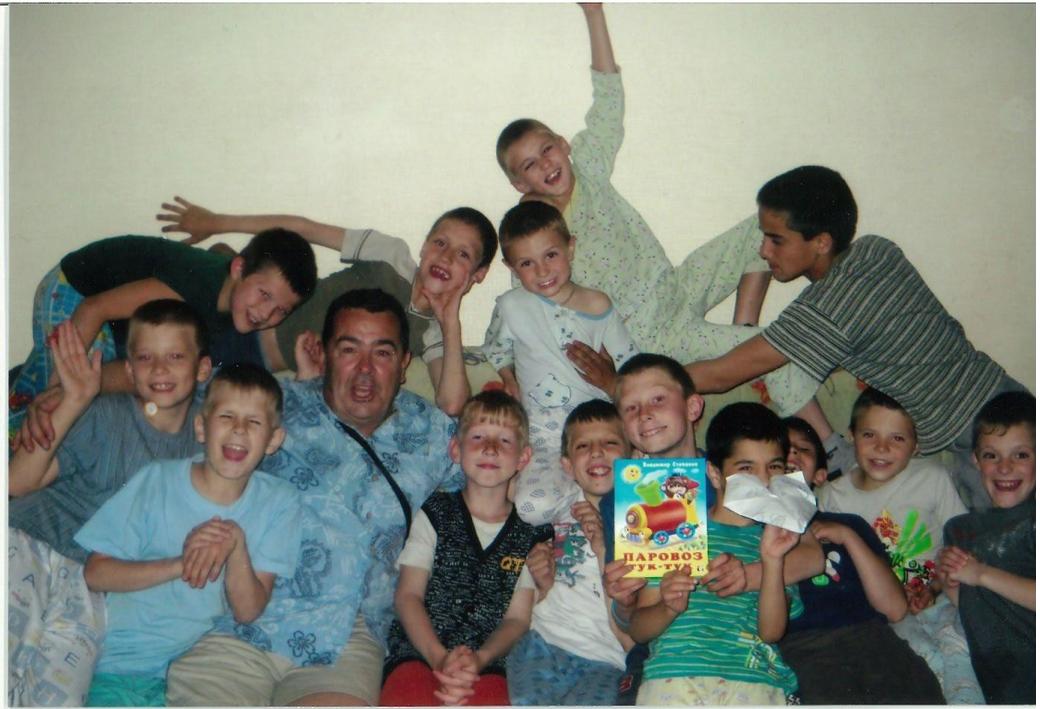
Our Lord Jesus did not redeem us alone. He needed his mother's help. This is a mystery beyond our understanding. Such a great mystery that God would willingly undergo such a humiliating and dreadful passion. But I think he needed her encouragement, her prayers, and her sufferings. I have read that God Father granted the desire of her heart to suffer with him all his pains, but in a mystical way, unseen by the world. I think not even God could have consumed that chalice alone, without the help of his mother. Mystery?

*“My son, now that we have come this far together, know that Jesus Christ is truly calling you closer to the Father. Each day your heart grows more compassionate and merciful. You have at your disposal all the gifts of the Holy Spirit. As in an instant you clearly saw the holiness of my beloved priests of Russia, in an instant you shall see the holiness of all people. You may not always have the resources you need to assist everyone. However, you can always offer a word of hope and encouragement to the downtrodden.*

*“True brotherhood in Christ comes not only in the joyous occasions, but in the sorrowful ones as well. As I journeyed to visit my cousin, Elizabeth, I went as a weary soul, alone and afraid. I had nothing to offer except my simple service and cheerful company. What joy we found in the exchange of the Holy Spirit as Christ leapt in my womb.*

*“Look for Christ in the weariest soul. Bring your hope and love. Remember the generosity of God as He has allowed me the grace to visit the alcove. God, in his generosity, sees fit for you to bring His Spirit to my beloved people of Russia. Everyone you meet along the way is worthy of God’s love and peace, even if at the time you do not feel that a person is open to you, remember that they are downtrodden and confused, alone and afraid, unaware, and disinterested. “Great things are happening in the hearts of man as they witness your true devotion to me and your willingness to serve. Be at peace knowing you are truly walking in God’s Divine Will for you. Stay on guard from things that distract you from your mission. Pray constantly for continued grace to remain hopeful. I love you my son and send you a spirit of hope that shall unfold in the hearts of all you meet. [August 27, 1998]*



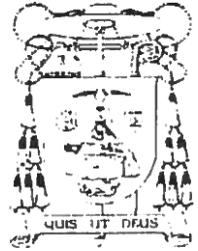


In dormitory corridor just before evening prayers at Shkola Internat Trypillja



## Chapter 14 Letter from Bishop Hnilica / Titular Bishop of Rusado

Mons. PAOLO MARIA HNILICA S.J.  
Vescovo Titolare Rusado  
VIA MONTE SANTO 14 00195 ROMA - ITALIA  
TEL .31 49 67 38 53 38 - FAX 325 1549



Rome, 1 December 1992

Dear brothers and sisters in Denver,

With joy I answer your request to write some reflections on the important message, the greatest and profoundest message the Holy Virgin Mary has addressed to humanity and the whole Church.

You who are connected together from many parts of the United states to celebrate the marvels which the Lord has done in his humble handmaid, you are chosen to become the apostles of her Immaculate Heart for the whole of America. You are called to become collaborators for her triumph which she has promised for Russia and the entire world!

In fact, the message of Fatima in 1917 has been particularly directed towards Russia. The Virgin appearing to the three shepherds entrusted her maternal concerns for the destiny of the entire world bound to the destiny of Russia. In this year nobody could imagine the universal significance of these words.

It is always like that. When heaven speaks, the only attitude man should have is the one of humble listening. But we, also the people of the Church, are only so little capable of listening humbly. For this the Virgin chooses mainly children, be it in Lourdes or in Fatima as it is in other places which have become the goal of international pilgrimages. The "simple hearts" of which the Gospel speaks.

The extraordinary events of the last years in the oriental part of Europe was pointed out by the Virgin of Fatima who have confronted more than ever the accuracy of this prophecy: after having predicted that great errors which have been spread from this nation, our Lady announced the catastrophic consequences over the whole world.

The given solution, the only moment to resolve the most terrible problem in the whole

world, was this simple. Simple like the hearts of these children who have put it immediately into practice: the consecration to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, together with prayer and sacrifices, confession, and communion (the practice of the first Saturdays of five consecutive months).

The central part of that message was the request to the Church to consecrate Russia on the part of the Pope united with all bishops.

Communism has started to vacillate and finally to break down after the Holy Father, John Paul II - the shepherd coming from the East, marked with the blood of the attempted assassination (May 13, 1981—the anniversary of Fatima) - consecrated the world and Russia solemnly to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. It was the 24th and 25th of March in 1984, when finally, the Holy Father responded completely to the supplication of the Virgin, which was repeated many times to the only seer of Fatima still alive, Sr. Lucia. \*

I, by the grace of God, was exactly this day in the Kremlin in Moscow and from there I was united with the Pope to consecrate Russia to Mary. In these moments of grace, after waiting for decades, I could finally be there, united to Peter to seal with him Russia to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. In spite of such miraculous signs of God's omnipotent mercy, today, after knowing and reflecting on this message for many years, the deep and indissoluble connection between Fatima and Russia is not yet known. Because of that one does not ask neither: (sic) why Russia? nor which part has this nation in the plan of God's mercy?

Another fundamental point of the message of Fatima is the promise of the "Triumph of the Immaculate Heart of Mary." It remains often an abstract idea, devotional and not a plan of life, an ideal for which to spend all energies possible.

The Christians being from the Church in the East, maybe more than anybody else, have penetrated the importance of these words of the Virgin of Fatima, because those words have given comfort and hope during the terrible persecution of communism. The importance of the message of Fatima has, first of all, a deep concern for all those innocents who suffered from the most terrible doctrine existing: the militant atheism, the red dragon of Russia who has vomited on the entire world.

The Church in Russia is the biggest martyr church of all times. [Author's note: I think he meant to write Soviet Union] Through the suffering they gained the greatest graces for the whole of Christianity, for the whole world. Our task is to turn our hearts to

these brothers and sisters from the East, to draw from their graces which dwell through their martyrdom, to look at them as examples of true co- redeemers. How much blood was shed in 70 years of violent communistic persecution which has torn apart entire villages and reduced to concentration camps, actually "whole nations"!

In some villages in Russia persecuted witnesses who survived, speak of an immense shedding of blood. In the whole Bible we can see that without preceding suffering there is no triumph of God. It is against the plan of God to have resurrection without the crucifixion. The light of the resurrection in Christ crucified, will radiate in the next future, especially on the earth most martyred, most tormented by the demon with the terrible doctrine of militant atheism: Russia, or better, all the countries where the "Red" poison of Satan wanted to cancel every drop of blood shed by the redeemer.

The reconciliation which will be between Catholics and Orthodox is the exclusive fruit of the suffering of the many millions of Christians of this part of the world, united with Christ's suffering. And also the fruits of uncountable prayers and sacrifices, also of the many Christians of the west. Only the blood of Christ can bring reconciliation.

This makes us suffer and embrace together the cross of redemption which will make us one in Him! We are brothers and sisters and the cross lived together unites, only the cross and the Virgin under the cross, the Co-Redemptrix. The prophecy of Fatima tells about this triumph of the Immaculate Heart of Mary linked to the conversion of Russia.

But also here we have to interpret well: also we Occidentals have to convert. Actually, we need more to convert, as we have moved away so far from the cross of Christ. We are so full of ourselves that we do not even feel anymore the desire of redemption. The crisis in the Church here in the Occident is a crisis of loss of conscience for the sacrifice of Christ united with the suffering of His mother Co- Redemptrix.

When Our Lady in Fatima has spoken of the conversion of Russia, I believe she has referred most of all to the persecutors, to the atheists, who poisoned and destructed Christianity in the conscience of the Russian people and in every other person with atheistic doctrine. Like Saul, they must become Paul. The enemies of yesterday will be the fervent Christians of tomorrow.

The triumph of the Immaculate Heart of Mary has its deepest meaning in this: full reconciliation and union of the two sister churches not in virtue of diplomacy but in virtue of Christ's blood, mediated by Mary Immaculate. The martyrdom of millions of

Christians of those two sister churches served to sow the soil making it fruitful for Her triumph, assisted by the intercessory prayers of millions of Her Catholic children throughout the whole world. Such reconciliation and reunion amongst Catholics and Orthodox will bestow many blessings upon the earth.

This injury bleeding since 900 years, could finally be healed with a new infusion of the grace of redemption makes it possible by the co-redemption of millions of Christians united with the Co-Redemptrix, Mary most holy, under the guidance of one shepherd, the Peter of all times, now being John Paul II, the shepherd who came from the Orient! With this the prophetic prayer of Jesus to the Father: *"That the world believes that you have sent Me."*

This regained unity will be the excellent sign which will convince the entire world that God has sent Jesus, His son as redeemer of the world. I am convinced that this is the time where all this is going to be realized. Only if this union between the two sister churches will be done, one will be able to speak of the triumph of the Mother in common.

The messages of the apparitions like in Medjugorje in ex-Yugoslavia, in Kibeho in Africa, or in Akita in Japan and other places in the world lead to the same point: only the Lord is King of history and today as never before we need this extraordinary infusion of His mercy to regain the light of the world amongst us. It is this which the Divine Providence in many parts, and for diverse extraordinary ways, wanted to communicate to us. It is this which has taken the name of the "new Pentecost," or "extraordinary intervention of God," or as said in Fatima, "the Triumph of the Immaculate Heart of Mary!"

The private revelations - those which have proved with many fruits of conversion the goodness and authenticity of their origin. Surely, they do not have the same value as the Public revelation. But without doubt, they are gifts of the Father and they guide us to a more profound knowledge and rediscovery of the infinite treasure of Christ's revelation.

How much did the prophecy of Fatima guide the entire Church and humanity to the understanding of God's plan for our century! The message of Fatima, because it originated from the Father, has shown the universal significance even though it has been entrusted to three simple shepherds. I believed that the breakdown of communism was due to the consecration to the Immaculate Heart because Our Lady has revealed in Fatima to the three simple shepherds confirming the authenticity

through the conversions and the miracles which followed this message. The triumph of the Immaculate Heart of Mary signifies the triumph of God's mercy.

In this our century we see that the prophecy of Fatima and the revelations of Jesus of Mercy to Faustina Kowalska, where this extraordinary era of God's mercy is announced, is clearly connected.

These graces necessary to realize the promised Triumph of the Immaculate Heart of Mary originate like every grace from the infinite treasure of Christ's redemption fulfilled 2000 years ago. In this sense one can speak of a new infusion of the Holy Spirit who is not bound to our limited rational horizons to give abundantly his gifts. These gifts flow through the mystical body of Christ which is the Church for all mankind. And exactly in the Church most persecuted, the one in the East where the terrain has been penetrated with the blood of millions of co- redeemers who caused the dwelling of uncountable fruits of grace and conversions: "*Lux ex oriente!*" (the light comes from the east.)

There, in this part of the world, Russia, where Satan wants to raise his most powerful times, God will raise the throne of His mercy. This is the "revenge on malice and all its followers." As St. Paul says: "Where sin increased, grace increased all the more." (Rom. 5:20)

As St. Maximilian Kolbe also has predicted: "There will be a time, and it is not far away, where the statue of the Immaculate Mary will surpass the tower of the Kremlin!" If Russia will not be conquered by Christ, the sects, who are growing so fast there, will invade the whole of Russia. The desire of our hearts for conversion and renewal guarantees that we are not deluded, that the confidence we have in the triumph of the Immaculate Heart of Mary for Russia and the whole World is not a dream but a profound hope and an unremovable confidence for the coming of her triumph.

Your presence in Denver can be, in prayer and in the consecration to Mary, a worthy preparation for the coming of the Holy Father next year. Pray in these days intensely for him so that the triumph of the Immaculate Heart of Mary will come under his pontificate. America has a big role in this, do never forget this!

Yours in Christ, *Paolo Maria Hnilica, SJ*

Paolo Maria HNILICA, SJ Titular bishop of Rusado

P.S.: For information or for sending help for the Triumph of Our Lady contact QAMA (Formerly Catholic Evangelization Mission for Russia) founded to support Catholic evangelization for Russia: Post Office Box 1676 Castle Rock CO 80104.

\*I believe Bishop Hnilica is mistaken when he writes that the “Holy Father responded completely to the supplication of the Virgin” in consecrating Russia to her Immaculate Heart. *Our Lady of the Rosary* at Fatima asked the Holy Father to consecrate Russia to her Immaculate Heart **in union with all the bishops of the world**. I do not know anyone who believes all the bishops of the world joined with the Holy Father in such an act. I have heard the report that Sister Lucia said that the Virgin Mary accepted Pope John Paul II’s consecration. But we have persuasive evidence that the real Sister Lucia died in the late 1950s and that the *Sister Lucia* quoted by Bishop Hnilica is none other than an impostor of the Lucia of Fatima.

*“My son, on every side of you evil has been tormenting you. Know that these are the days of great perdition, but that even greater is my mercy. I know you see the magnitude of man’s sins. Take all I have given you into your heart and know that I have designed a plan that all may come to know me and be brought to the glory of God. It is for you, my son, to carry out a great mission of love and joy, for in your mercy towards your fellow man, I will be merciful to you. But even more than that, an exchange of great love has come into the world through your loving heart.*

*“Be at peace, my son, knowing that I am well pleased with your efforts and your daily sacrifice of love to my beloved children of Russia. Today I seal your heart with an indelible mark of holiness that no man can corrupt nor destroy. You my son have truly become my brother. The days are at hand when you my son shall see the glories of God’s divine plan unfold in your life. Be at peace knowing that I am well pleased with you.”* [From Our Lord: May 15, 1997]



Sylvia with Orphans in Shkola Internat Orphanage, Trypillja Ukraine



Orphan Vera Kimak prays with us at bedtime.

## Chapter 15 Our Holy Mother of Virtues Prayer Group

The visits of Our Holy Mother of Virtues spawned many prayer groups. I have already mentioned the “Apostles for the Triumph.” Lee Murphy informed me in June 2012 that they still meet monthly. Some readers will recognize the names of some of their members: Garafalo, White, DePuydt, Lyons, Ciaccino, Murphy, Hansen, Mamber, Bimm, and Cartwright. Some of their members have by now moved away or entered into eternity, but they remain united in spirit and in purpose. Lee Murphy told me: *“You don’t have to believe in the truth of the apparitions, but if you do, and they bring you closer to Our Blessed Mother, then this is good fruit. So many people were brought closer to Our Lord and his mother.”*

Now let me tell you about another prayer group that formed about three years after Archbishop Stafford issued his edict. This prayer group met in St. Thomas More Church weekday evenings at 5:30 p.m. from July 1997 until May 2008 when the pastor Fr. Andrew Kemberling closed the church for a lengthy renovation project.

Fr. Michael Walsh had instituted a weekly Thursday night Holy Hour at 7:00 p.m. in 1993 for the conversion of Russia, consistent with Mary’s messages at Fatima in 1917, and in compliance with the requests of Our Holy Mother of Virtues. Every week for many years many dozens of parishioners would gather in the church on Thursday at 7:00 p.m. for Eucharistic adoration, the Holy Rosary, and then the Divine Praises and Benediction. During this hour, the priests would hear confessions. I began attending this Holy Hour in January of 1996.

I had met Sylvia Groeger the previous year, and we had become prayer partners, meeting most frequently for the mid-day Holy Mass and Rosary at Holy Ghost Church in downtown Denver near the offices of the publishing company, R.R. Donnelly, where Sylvia worked in a clerical capacity. I had met Sylvia the previous year, and I had learned from her that she had been one of the three women privileged to see Our Holy Mother of Virtues in the early nineteen-nineties, and to hear her voice. Sylvia and Theresa Lopez knew each other well, and often prayed together. They prayed together at St. Thomas More Church, and at Cabrini Shrine. Sometimes Veronica Garcia prayed with them.

At the height of the excitement that followed upon the Virgin Mary’s visits to Colorado, Sylvia often prayed at Theresa’s side, but stayed in the shadows. She sought no publicity or fame. She did help Theresa formulate a prayer for the Chaplet of Virtues when Theresa did not know a formal consecration prayer to the Virgin Mary.

For the most part, Sylvia chose to remain hidden. Then during the period of the archbishop's investigation, certain officious parishioners at St. Thomas More Church told Sylvia to stay away from the parish. It was as if to say: "*We have our authentic visionary here, and we don't want you to muck it up.*"

Sylvia was mortified. She obeyed. Then I asked her to join me at the church for those Thursday evening holy hours. She very reluctantly agreed. She feared that the parishioners might drive her away. They did not. We attended this holy hour for some years. We made some dear friendships with other devout parishioners whom we met there every week. Then in the springtime of 1997, Our Holy Mother of Virtues appeared to Sylvia and told her that she wished for the pastor to celebrate Mass each weekday evening at 5:30 p.m. as it was the hour of the last supper. She told Sylvia that "*I do not come for my benefit or for yours, but for the world.*"

Sylvia was afraid she would meet with resistance if she told Fr. Walsh about this. So, without immediately telling Fr. Walsh of this request from Mary, she decided to partially comply with Mary's request by resolving to go to the church and pray every day at the 5:30 hour for prayer to *Our Holy Mother of Virtues*. This was the beginning of a prayer group that then met regularly for about ten years. On July 7, 1997 Sylvia went to the church to say some prayers. Inside up at the alcove Sylvia saw Our Blessed Mother. Encircling her, she saw the twelve apostles with tongues of fire over their heads. Sylvia saw them surrounded by the heavenly court of angels, who spilled into the nearby sanctuary.

I was present that day. I didn't see anything out of the ordinary, but whenever Sylvia would have mystical visions or inner locutions, I could tell that something special was going on. How? I perceived it with my mind and my soul. I could see how Sylvia was mystically transported to a different place. She always kept her eyes closed when having apparitions or receiving verbal locutions. Perhaps my guardian angels so informed me. But I had no doubts at all in the matter. I could sense supernatural workings in my midst.

Every day we would pray for one hour. We would begin with the Chaplet of Virtues and pray for all of Mary's intentions in that hour. We would follow with the Chaplet of Divine Mercy and pray for an end to abortion, suicide, abuse, obsessions, and addictions. We would conclude with the Rosary and pray for the conversion of Russia.

After several months of praying this schedule of prayers, Sylvia told Fr. Walsh of Mary's special request for a daily 5:30 p.m. Mass. Fr. Walsh said he would consider it

prayerfully. He approved of our daily prayer group in his church. He knew we were some of his most dedicated volunteer workers of his beloved *Queen of the Apostles Mission Association*. Nevertheless, he never agreed to the daily 5:30 evening Mass. It did not matter to us. We prayed in obedience to Mary's request. She granted us many graces.

We met many new lifelong friends over the years. These new friends, like Julio & Jeannie Arteaga, came from Carterville, Missouri, to spend summers every year with Jeannie's sister Theresa. For several years they prayed every day with us from early July until late August when they would return to Missouri. They gave us great encouragement to persevere with our devotions.

We witnessed many spiritual healings during these years of evening prayers. Our prayer group never amounted to more than about two dozen participants. Usually only 5 or 6 would show up. Sometimes only the two of us prayed the holy hour. It was, nevertheless, a blessed spiritual exercise that yielded many fruits, most of them spiritual. Our Holy Mother of Virtues would often appear to Sylvia and give her a message for the prayer group, or for a particular individual present that evening.

Most often, Mary would tell Sylvia how many women had chosen not to have an abortion that day because of our prayers. Or Mary would tell us how many souls got released from purgatory that day because of our prayers. Sometimes Sylvia would see the church pews filled up with souls from purgatory awaiting our prayers. When they got released from purgatory, she would sometimes see a new crowd of souls from purgatory take their places in the church and sit in the pews awaiting the prayers we would say the following day.

Sylvia now has a book of many messages for devotees of *Our Holy Mother of Virtues*, and for anyone else who wants to read them. You can find this book for free on our website [QAMA.org]. Father Walsh had read this book. Fr. Walsh also sent a copy of it to Archbishop Charles Chaput. It is not a secret book. Rather, Sylvia keeps these mystical revelations private. It usually takes some prodding to get her to share her experiences with those who did not belong to our prayer circle. Suffice it to say that Sylvia's book contains messages she received as early as 1991 and as late as 2004. For the most part Sylvia received the messages from Our Blessed Mother from 1997 through the year 2000 during or after the 5:30 p.m. prayer hour at St. Thomas More Church. Occasionally Our Lord Jesus would give her a message, and sometimes various saints in heaven also gave messages.

Fr. Michael Walsh's successor as pastor at St. Thomas More Church decided to mostly demolish and rebuild the spacious modern church. Nevertheless, he still rebuilt it according to the same circular modern floor plan. During construction they celebrated all Holy Masses in the school gymnasium for a period of two years. Beginning in May of 2008, we had to say our daily prayers to Our Holy Mother of Virtues elsewhere. Fr. Andrew Kemberling, the pastor at St. Thomas More Church beginning in 2001, relocated the beautiful stained-glass windows of Mary's alcove. That's where our *Holy Mother of Virtues* made her appearances beginning in 1991. He those put windows above a high wall at the back of the church above the entrance doors. It seemed to us an awkward placement for these iconic windows. Finally, the new pastor did not continue the weekly Thursday holy hour for the conversion of Russia.

When the church reopened, it had been closed for two years, and Mary's alcove had gotten relocated to a place you could not easily approach. The place did not seem the same. And so, our prayer group began reciting its beads elsewhere. Since Sylvia and I got married in 2010 and since moving to Castle Rock in 2012, we have hosted a monthly Holy Mother of Virtues prayer group in our spacious home in Plum Creek. We usually receive about 18 guests. At our 2019 QAMA Christmas Party we had 58 visitors. The Virgin Mary has gained many new prayerful children in Castle Rock.

*“My son, today I place my mother's heart in your hands. As you come to pray, she is very much comforted and consoled. Remember my son, how I spoke of her sorrowful heart? Each time you come to pray, her heart is lifted and consoled. Your responsibilities*



*are great. Know that I, your brother **Jesus**, stand beside you in all that you do, and that your decisions are made in the grace of the Holy Spirit. And with confidence, I stand before you to announce that Your Holy Mother of Virtues desires to speak to you. All things are under the authority of God Our Heavenly Father, and as your brothers and sisters in Russia waited for the veil of sorrows to lift from their land under the enslavement of Communism, you must wait for the veil of sorrows to lift from your heart as our Mother draws nearer and nearer to you. You, my son, shall soon understand my mother's voice.” [May 28, 1997]*

## Chapter 16 QAMA Operations & Mission Trips

We have already told the reader in Chapter 2 about the formation of the Catholic Evangelization Mission for the Conversion of Russia (CEM/COR) and how Fr. Walsh and the parishioners renamed it QAMA in 1994. In that chapter I set forth how the parishioners set out to aid the Catholic Church in Russia in both a practical sense and in a spiritual one. QAMA focused upon the performance of corporal works of mercy for our brothers and sisters in Russia and formerly Communistic Countries.

Practical aid certainly took the form of fundraising and grantmaking.

It also took the form of shipping humanitarian supplies and religious goods. When I joined QAMA in late 1995 I decided to help in any way I could. I had much enthusiasm; and I had lots of energy and ideas. I knew that I could help with publicity. I soon began to write and produce their quarterly newsletter, *The Breaking Dawn*. Since 1996 we have printed and mailed well over one hundred issues (We have printed it bimonthly for many years now). Most of those issues gave reports of the activities of recent mission trips. We told our supporters which priests and sisters needed their help for building and repairing certain churches and monasteries, or for other reasons. Our newsletters contained many large colorful construction photos, or photos of smiling orphans.

We got off the ground in September 1996 when my brother Patrick, Nick Kripakov, and I climbed aboard an Illiyushin-62 Ukrainian Airliner flying from Chicago to Kiev. We had a simple plan. Just show up. We stayed seventeen days in Kiev, living in a one-bedroom apartment, sleeping on the couches and the floor. Retired Soviet puppeteer Ludmilla Logiko and her husband Vadim Terentiev served as our hosts. They showed us their city and its churches and museums. We had brought \$18,000 in cash from the Werner Foundation. This we passed out to the bishops, priests, and sisters we met. We knocked on doors at many churches and monasteries. We received many warm welcomes from the priests, bishops, and sisters we met. When we pulled out a couple of thousand dollars from our coat pockets, they reciprocated by pulling a bottle of cognac from the cabinet.

On that very first trip to Kiev, we met Bishop Stanislaus Szyrokoradiuk, Fr. Wieslaw Stepien, Fr. Oleksandr Gurskyi, Fr. Jacek Pyl, Fr. Igor Onashekevitch, and Sister Marjana Yakimets at the convent of nuns of the *Sister Servants*. Our hosts took us to the Orthodox Pecherska Lavra Monastery where we attended Divine Liturgy and heard the deepest resonant bass voices shaking the walls of the Refectory Church. On that very first trip Luda drove us to the Trypillja orphanage on one of her missions of

mercy. Our planned itinerary would also take us through Belarus before our return to the U.S. But we couldn't tear ourselves away from that magnificent city where the Russian peoples got baptized in 988 A.D. We returned to the U.S. seventeen days later with a couple hundred photographs and many stories to share with the 2,000 souls on our newsletter mailing list.

For five years we rented apartments when we flew to the Ukraine, though in the winter of 1998 I slept in the St. Oleksandr Cathedral Church bell tower in an unheated room. From 1997 until 2000 I flew from Kiev to Russia and back every year at about the midpoint of my two-three month mission trip. Sometimes I would fly to Moscow, other times to St. Petersburg. Three or four times I visited Kazan and the Catholic parishes in the villages on the Volga River. In the city of Lenin's birthplace, Ulianovsk, we had Mass in the living room of a small home. About 15 souls attended. Once I took an overnight train from Moscow to Kazan. One year, Bishop Klemens Pickel flew me from Kazan to Moscow. On one trip I got to sleep in the apartment of Archbishop Tadeusz Kondrusiewicz. On one trip I visited the Catholic Seminary in Russia. The rector mistook me for a priest. He said: "*You have the heart of a priest.*" We got as far east as Ufa, near the Ural Mountains. The warmest hearts we found in Buguruslan.

Beginning with the year 2001, I confined my mission travels to just the Ukraine. It certainly helped our budget, and the Ukraine presented us with countless opportunities to evangelize. Over the years I would visit 23 out of the 25 regions [Oblasts] in the country. Only Donetsk and Luhansk did I not see. From 2001 until 2005 we kept house at the Social Center on the left bank of Kiev. Pope John Paul II had given that three-bedroom ground floor apartment to the Kiev-Zhytomyr Diocese when he visited Ukraine in the year 2000. The Social Center had a walk-in medical clinic, a soup kitchen, and a kindergarten. They distributed used clothing. The Social Center served as our operations center. We became fast friends of the staff. Several times we took some orphans there for a holiday meal.

During the years stretching from 1997 until about 2015 we spent more nights sleeping at the Trypillja orphanage than anywhere else. I first fell in love with the orphans when I made a day trip to Trypillja in September of 1996. I wept that day. I could hardly wait to get back there. So, in the spring of 1997 I stayed at the orphanage for three or four nights. In the autumn of 1997, I spent two weeks with the orphans. In the spring on 1998 I spent one hundred days with the orphans! Through the years we have known more than one Thousand of them by name. Every trip there I discovered another two dozen new faces. I worked hard to memorize every name. Failure to

remember their name gives proof to the child that you do not love him or her. I recall memorizing the names of all 150 orphans back in the late 1990s.

At the orphanage they put me to work teaching English to the children. In the school corridors the children pull us in all directions, insisting we visit their next class. We have taken the children on so many excursions. Sometimes to the Russian Orthodox Pecherska Lavra Monastery. Sometimes to museums in Kiev. Sometimes to the Water Park on the island in the River Dnieper. Sometimes to the Coca-Cola Factory in Brovary. Sometimes to the Vidubitsky Monastery and the Botanical Gardens in Kiev. Sometimes just down to walk along the river, but not without buying them snacks at the magazine at the bottom of the hill. The magazine got converted from an old railroad car into a dry goods store.

Every year we took at least one excursion to the 11<sup>th</sup> century Russian Orthodox Monastery Built upon the high steep bluffs of Kiev above the Dnieper river. St. Anthony founded the Pecherka Lavra Monastery. For the first several centuries the monks lived a labyrinth of caves winding many hundreds of meters beneath the ground. We would depart the orphanage with a busload of children, all most excited to explore those caves by candlelight. We would also visit the many ornate churches and chapels enclosed within the walls of the monastery. Inside those churches I would lead the children in prayer, praying the Our Father and the Hail Mary in Russian or Ukrainian. The old Babushka's serving as guides and guards would smile with approval when they saw how much the children loved and obeyed me. Before returning to the orphanage, we always stop at a local McDonald's restaurant where they would dig delightedly into their Happy Meals. For many of the children it would be their first visit ever to that iconic restaurant—and thus a very big deal!

Let me tell you how deeply we have loved our orphans, and how we never forget them. Two or three years ago the assistant director Raisa Mikolaevna had called me into her office to show me a photograph. She handed me a small picture showing eighteen children standing shoulder to shoulder in a long line-up. The picture showed the graduating class from 2003, fourteen years past. Raisa pointed to one tall skinny boy. She asked me: "*Who is that?*" She told me that none of the up-bringers in the orphanage could make out his features well enough to identify him. I studied the photograph and tried to remember all the members of that class. Hours passed. Then it came to me. I called Raisa on my phone and I told her: "*It's Mikola Dzhemolukén*" It was he! I had last seen him as I departed the Skadovsk Sanatorium on the Black Sea in June of 2003. Mikola had tracked me down as I prepared to catch a train back to Kiev. He implored me, with his big brown sad eyes, asking if I would give him a little

spending money. I gave him a ten spot.

After saying our evening prayers with the orphans, we would tuck them into their beds on the second and third floors of the dormitory. But after a week at the orphanage, I would return to Kiev to recharge my batteries at the Social Center for three or four days. Then I would take the metropolitan subway into the center of the city and hang out at the Caritas Offices where I would meet the visiting priests. And more often than not, the priests would insist upon my visiting their parishes. So off I would go for three or four days to Zvenigorodka, Uman, Talne, Malin, Berdyansk, Cherkassy, Chernigov or Novograd-Volinsky, for example.

Upon landing at Borispyl Airport in 2005 or 2006, Fr. Stanislaw Mouravsky collected me to take me to the Social Center. On the drive into town, Fr. Stanislaw suggested that I go with him back to the seminary in Vorzel, rather than going to the Social Center. I took his suggestion. Then for the next five years I lived in a house with him at the Holy Heart of Jesus High Priest Seminary. Father lived alone in the house except for when visiting priests came for conferences and feast days. The second floor of the newly built red brick house had six bedrooms, enough to accommodate a dozen priests. Sometimes I helped teach English at the seminary.

Sitting in a quiet forest, one relaxed very well in Vorzel after a tough week at the orphanage. When sleeping in Vorzel, I would take frequent day trips to the nearby Bucha middle school/orphanage. We went there the first time to check up on some of our beloved Trypillja orphans who had matriculated there following graduation from the ninth form.

The Bucha school has about 500 pupils. Half live at home with their parents; the other children have broken homes, so they live in the dormitory. They invited me to attend their English lessons. They structured the Bucha curriculum to specialize in teaching the English language. They had about six or more English teachers. The children always fought over whose class I would teach. They all wanted me to visit their classes. At the end of the school day, I would depart Bucha and take the electrified train (electriczka) two stops down the track back to the Vorzel Seminary.

One year we unpacked our bags in the rectory in the village of Malin. Fr. Igor Olhovski welcomed us as his guests. When Archbishop Petro Malchuk arrived in Kiev, he selected Fr. Igor as his chauffeur and aide, removing him from Malin. Father Igor moved to a second-story apartment near the Cathedral in Kiev. We moved into his spare bedroom for a year.

In about 2014, we found that sleeping in the orphanage had grown uncomfortable for our bones. Since then, we have stayed at the Oblate of Mary Immaculate Church and Monastery in the city of Obuchiv. They built the complex to serve as a novitiate, but the vocations never came. Now five priests live, work, and pray there. They host many retreats. They gave me and Sylvia a suite of rooms on the ground floor, four steps down from the street. There we have morning Mass at 7:30 a.m. in a private chapel on the third floor. Or we can go to evening Mass. It takes only twenty minutes to drive from Obuchiv to the village of Trypillja. So, while we don't sleep at the orphanage anymore, we can still spend whole days with the children, and then return to nearby Obuchiv.

Every year in the middle of our mission, we have always crossed the country by rail or by airplane to visit our Ukrainian Greek Catholic priests and sisters. They follow the Byzantine tradition and pray the Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom or St. Basil the Great. We have stayed in the Basilian Monastery of St. Onofrio in L'viv at least twenty times. There we pray with the twenty-four priests and monks, and join them in their refectory for meals. From St. Onofrio Monastery we have made many trips to parishes in the nearby villages.

For instance, we have stayed in Lutsk at the monastery that QAMA benefactors have generously supported since the year 2000. That year I travelled through the villages with Bishop Irynej Bilyk in his passenger van. Some days he would pray Divine Liturgy in two separate villages. He had just been consecrated the ordinary bishop of Chortkiv, and he needed to visit all the villages in his eparchy. We met Fr. Dmytro Hrigorik at one stop. He then served as the pastor in Lutsk. After that meeting the Bishop Bilyk turned to me and said, *"You must help Fr. Hrigorik. He is a very poor priest."*

For many years we would stay in the Ulashkivtsi Monastery as Bishop Bilyk's guests. Then every day we would go out to visit another village, pray Divine Liturgy, and then enjoy an excellent dinner prepared by the grateful parishioners. Traveling down bumpy roads in the Bishop's van, we would all pray the Rosary. One year we stopped at the Shrine of Our Lady of Zarvanitsya and visited Bishop Semeniuk. Several times we visited the Monastery in Hoshiv where the Virgin Mary had appeared centuries ago. We visited the Hotyn Citadel where the Virgin had appeared and had promised her protection from the invading Turks.

When St. Onufrio had no room at the inn some years ago, we instead stayed at the Briukhovichi Basilian Monastery thirty minutes from town and nestled in a tranquil

verdant forest. Most years we would also visit the city of Ivano-Frankivsk (formerly Stanislav). They also have a large Ukrainian Catholic monastery that our donors have supported.

In 1998 we met three Byzantine Servidora Sisters from Argentina. They call themselves *The Sisters of the Lord and the Virgin of Matara*, an order founded in Argentina by Fr. Carlos Miguel Buela in 1984. Mother Maria de las Lagrimas, Sr. Maria Mother of God and Sr. Maria Cristiana had come to the Ukraine to open a Novitiate. We met them in their small apartment in the city of L'viv and listened to them tell us of their plan to open a novitiate. Their young order had already sent out missionary sisters and priests to all the five continents. They have spread to 88 dioceses in 36 countries. We had already met their priests in Kazan, Russia earlier that year. QAMA had helped Fr. Juan Carlos Sack build a chapel in one of the city's cemeteries for the sum of \$10,000. I had visited Kazan the previous year and had met the pastor there, Father Diogenes Urquiza, and the Mother Superior of the order, Sr. Maria Anima Christe who was visiting from Rome.

The three Argentine sisters showed us the new house they hoped to buy. I told my late mother about it. She agreed to help. The house would cost \$38,000. My mother wrote out a check for that amount. That nearly finished four-story red brick edifice became their Novitiate. We visit them there nearly every year at Easter time. I think we have visited it not less than twenty-eight times. We watched the number of novices increase every year. They typically have about sixteen young girls in formation.

About one hundred novices have taken their vows after formation in that monastery. Some of them serve in Italy, some in Russia, others in Ukraine. When we join them, we sing glorious Marian hymns for hours. We cherish their friendship. They have five houses in the Halych (Galicia) region. They have a contemplative house in Burshtin, where six sisters live a cloistered life of prayer. They have the House of Mercy where they care for abandoned children and young mothers with newborn babies. They now seek funds to complete a Catholic middle school in Ivano- Frankivsk. Sr. Maria Cristiana works to attain this goal.

Several years we spent two weeks at the seaside accompanying our orphans to the Skadovsk Sanatorium on the Black Sea. We visited the Catholic parish in Berdyansk on the Sea of Azov six or eight times. We visited the Carmelite Monastery in Kharkiv while also visiting the parish of Father Gennady Belinsky in 2006. One year we attended a bishop's conference in Kamyanets-Podilsky. That same weekend they consecrated the new cathedral in that fortress town built to repel the Ottoman Turks.



Mother Hoshivska with four new Servidoras



These novices have just taken their first vows!

I first walked on Ukrainian soil in June of 1996. I had joined a group of American pilgrims who had flown to attend the 350<sup>th</sup> reunion of Uzhgorod, in Transcarpathia (beyond the Carpathian Mountains) Ukraine. Some old atlases will show the area as Ruthenia. Many thousands gathered in that provincial capital to celebrate the return of a confederation of Orthodox bishops and priests to the Roman Catholic Church. Their agreement with Rome allowed them to retain their traditions and their liturgy—the Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom and St. Basil the Great. Following the union, they became Byzantine Catholics, or Ukrainian Greek Catholics, or Uniates, a pejorative term employed by angry Russian Orthodox who regard their former brothers as traitors.

About twenty parishioners of St. Thomas More Church had flown to Budapest, Hungary. Another fifty pilgrims from New Jersey had joined us at JFK airport and accompanied us to Hungary. On our plane we had Father Ed Carter, founder of Shepherds of Christ. From Budapest we hopped on a bus, drove through Slovakia, and entered the Ukraine at a heavily guarded border crossing. We stayed at *Hotel Zakarpatya*. The solemn reunion Mass they prayed in the courtyard of a ruined medieval castle. At the reunion we made many new friends, including Bishop Ivan Semedi, Fr. Oleksandr Legeza, and Father Stepan Cych.

These priests would receive the first international bank wires that QAMA would send. In the first three years of overseas mission work, I would often accompany these priests to their village churches. QAMA helped Fr. Cych build a new masonry church in Meydika's vineyard. It cost \$20,000. In Vinogradov we helped him refurbish his parish church. We helped Fr. Legeza repair a church in Kontcovo, about twenty kilometers from Uzhgorod. We rebuilt their bell tower. The villagers had buried the bell in a field to save it from pillage during the war years.

We had many tales to share with our friends and benefactors after returning to Colorado from overseas. I took many photos. We always published a newsletter shortly after our return. I would return to the states in May or June. And then I would be off again to the Ukraine in September or October. This went on for a dozen years. Father Walsh hated to see me depart so often for the Ukraine. He really missed my company, and he wondered if it was necessary for me to go so often. But I could not wait to get back to my Russian orphans in Trypillja. Russian? Yes, they spoke Russian. The mandate of teaching classes in the Ukrainian language would not come until years later, during the presidency of Viktor Yushchenko (2005-2010).

I hated to break the news to Father Walsh that I was planning an imminent departure.

For several years I would spend four or five months in the Ukraine. Three months in the springtime, two in the autumn. Why couldn't he understand that I needed to get back to the land of romance and sorrow? When he had resigned himself to my leaving again, he would often ask me: "Well Matt, what do you hope to accomplish on this next little junket of yours?"

*"My brother, I lived in austerity. The wilderness was my home. So many people knew not the glorious life of love of God. The Holy Spirit brought me to great heights and transformed my soul. You, my brother, have been chosen to walk in the light of God. Be at peace as you go forth to the land of desolation and deprivation, the motherland of Russia. Know that I am close at hand and that I have accumulated the assistance of many of my cohorts to intercede for you on your behalf before God for your safety and success. Step forth on this journey knowing that all in heaven are watching with joy and gratitude as you carry on the great mission of spreading the Gospel through your generosity and prayer. I am glad to know you my brother and I will continue to pray with you as you walk along the path to salvation. All glory and honor and praise be to Jesus Christ our solemn and Holy Brother. [Saint Jerome: March 31, 1998]*



Orphan Tanya Savchuk gave me this card almost 20 years ago.  
She has written Jesus and Maria.

## Chapter 17 Consecration Image

On February 16, 1993 in Rome, Italy Theresa Lopez heard Our Holy Mother of Virtues speak the following words: *“I ask from you now an important favor. Grant to me, at the moment of this global consecration, an image of myself for a heavenly specific mission. I desire to give to the world an inspiration from the love of my Immaculate Heart. The gift I desire to grant is one of profound conversion, of confidence, of evangelization and unity of heart, mind, and soul. I wish to bestow the depth and breadth of my grace upon this image, that forevermore shall it contain this gift.”*

*“Those souls who shall come to venerate this image shall receive the boundless graces of my Immaculate Heart. May they come with a pure heart and be given deep conversion and the fire of evangelization. Before this image may my armies be sent forth.”*

Theresa replied: *“Mother, I shall promise to bring you this image to receive your grace.”*

OHMV: *“Thank you, my dear. Tell all those who shall come before my Immaculate Heart on this day of consecration, I shall forever remain and dwell within their souls, for I shall always remain where I am loved so much, just as I remain here.”*

Thereafter Theresa made it known that the Blessed Mother desired an image of herself for a heavenly specific mission. I know two artists who thereafter composed oil paintings of Our Holy Mother of Virtues. They selected a pink color palette so their paintings might show our Blessed Mother as she appeared to those favored pilgrims who had seen her at Mother Cabrini Shrine or at St. Thomas More Church. Joan Cameron Mitchell of Colorado Springs painted an image of Our Holy Mother of Virtues that Gary Kuntz selected to print on the cover of *Messages for the Harvest*. On the other hand, Stano Dusik, of Slovakia, painted an image of Our Holy Mother of Virtues dated November 11, 1992, that Queenship Publishing printed on the cover of the consecration preparation booklet: *In the End My Immaculate Heart Will Triumph*.

In the Foreword to this book the reader has already learned that Queenship Publishing Co. has sold more of this book than any other. Back in 1998 they had already sold more than one half of a million copies of the *Consecration Preparation for the Triumphant Victory of the Immaculate Heart of Mary*.

Our Holy Mother of Virtues chose Stano Dusik's painting to serve as the Consecration Image. They set this image on a tripod in the sanctuary of St. Thomas More Church on March 25, 1993. Busloads of pilgrims travelled to that parish that day to make their consecrations to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. *"My angel, to this image I bestow the gift of my infinite love and grace. It shall last an eternity and give the marvels of heaven. To those who come in faith before it, I shall grant all for the asking in accordance with God Father's will and for the good of my Triumph."*

Our Lady appeared in the church that day over this Consecration Image of her. At the end of the apparition Theresa Lopez saw our Lady disappear into the center of the portrait. She instilled into the image her endless graces of conversion, evangelization, and the conviction to remain faithful to Her Triumph. A scanned copy of this Consecration Image accompanies the text of this chapter of the book.

*"My son: In my words are truth and everlasting knowledge and understanding. All things of beauty and love issue forth from my Sacred Heart. You, my son, have become a living sign that I am alive in your heart and have a stronghold in the hearts of my children.*

*"Do you understand that I Jesus your Brother have been always behind you walking no less than a step away? In the times you were alone I was preparing you for this great mission, that of reseeding the faith in the hearts of my beloved children of Russia. This path has been chosen for you from all eternity and it is your path to holiness. "Each step you take brings me joy. I am thrilled to see your courage and your stalwart efforts to please my heart. Your generosity is endearing and restores my delight in my creating you, even as you had lost all hope that you would ever revive my affection for you. You are now blinded to the things of this world and have fixed your gaze on my heart and I love you.*

*"I have brought you forth to this land that you may experience the wilderness. For in the quiet of your soul, in the stillness of your heart I will embrace you and it is in this solitude that I will speak. Do not be afraid to remain alone with me and to spend your time in quiet contemplation for I long to be close to your heart that I may reveal to you the depths of my mercy and love for you. "You are my sweet and obedient child whom I take great delight in. I, your brother Jesus, bring to you this day full brotherhood and kinship in my Kingdom, and together we shall conquer even the most hardened of hearts. Alleluia, for it is well for you on this our day of united service under the protection and intercession of Our Holy and Immaculate Heart of Mary, Queen of Virtues, Queen of All. [February 15, 1999]*



With Fr. Alexander Goursky, (center) who often visited us in America



Fr. Yaroslav Chudnij, in L'viv Ukraine



Consecration Image

## Chapter 18 Unconditional Obedience?

In Chapter Six I wrote about the conundrum facing the pilgrims who had become devoted to Our Holy Mother of Virtues. The Virgin Mary's visits to Mother Cabrini Shrine and to St. Thomas More Church had served to increase their Faith and their piety. But the Archbishop Stafford, whom God tasked with guarding his sheep, told the faithful of his diocese to refrain from devotion to Our Holy Mother of Virtues.

An obvious question arises: Why would the Archbishop try to shut down the show, this great Marian devotion in his diocese, that had born such good fruit? Since the archbishop found nothing contrary to faith or morals in the messages given to Theresa Lopez, did he even have the authority to order those devotions to cease? I had always thought that the pilgrims could freely ignore the Archbishop's will, because he would otherwise deprive them of a great spring of Grace that benefited their souls. All Catholics living in the Denver area in those years frequently heard the repeated cry—Obey! Obey! Obey! Let me give an analogy. We have a doctor telling his patients to refrain from taking the medicine that cures their ills.

Thankfully, I had moved out of the Denver Archdiocese in June of 1997. I knew I owed no obedience to a bishop from a different diocese. Nevertheless, the majority of the QAMA officers lived in the Denver Archdiocese, and so did many of our friends and supporters. Some QAMA board members urged us to obey the Archbishop. We had a little family quarrel in 1997.

We had begun planning our 22<sup>nd</sup> Russia Conference for early October of that year. A local visionary named Gina Hrpcha told some of us that heaven would like us to begin the conference on October 8<sup>th</sup>. I had already witnessed Gina suffer the mystical death and resurrection of Our Lord at one of the monthly prayer group meetings at the Hrpcha home. Gina would not lie or deceive. I thought we should begin the conference on that date. But most of the other officers strenuously objected to complying with the request Gina had relayed to us. Instead, they insisted we should begin the conference the subsequent day. They had such fear, that if we relied upon the words of a visionary, then we would show our disobedience to the Archbishop—even though the Archbishop had not warned his flock about Gina Hrpcha.

Tensions arose in the QAMA mission office at St. Thomas More Church. Then one day in May or June, while we continued conference preparations, six of the eight board members suddenly announced their collective resignation from the board of directors. That left just me and the QAMA President Rachel Bresnahan remaining. We

picked up the pieces, gave thanks to God, and recruited five new board members. At the same time, Rachel told me that I should next serve as the president. I protested my unworthiness, but to no avail. Rachel persuaded me that I had the makings of a good leader, so I accepted.

In recent years I have read a small library of books on the crisis of Modernism in the Catholic Church. One such book has the title: *Is Tradition Excommunicated?* (Angelus Press 1993) That book contains the essays of six or seven priests and doctors. Thomas Ausseneg, in his chapter titled *The Case of the Imaginary Schism*, writes:

*“We know that obedience is not an end in itself. Absolute obedience is not a Christian virtue, it is slavery. There is an order of virtues. Obedience is a moral virtue, and above the moral virtues there are the cardinal virtues, including justice. Above these there are the theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity. It is wrong to obey a command contrary to justice and damaging to the faith for the sake of the lesser virtue of obedience. Some people act as if the three theological virtues were obedience, obedience, and obedience. They forget that the violation of the Roman Mass is itself a profound act of disobedience. No one has the right to disobey the solemn legislation of St. Pius V. The only way to get around Quo Primum [1570] is by deception, and that is how the hierarchy imposed the Novus Ordo.”*

Touche’ Thomas Ausseneg! Had clearer thinking prevailed at the time of the investigation into the apparitions of Theresa Lopez, I think the Archbishop would not have ordered his flock to refrain from *participating in paraliturgical services related to the alleged apparitions*. Had clearer thinking prevailed, then the pilgrims would have frankly told the Archbishop that he had been wrong in declaring that the apparitions were *devoid of supernatural origin*. With their five senses and their God-given intelligence, and with their guardian angels at their sides, they knew with certainty that they had come face to face with sublime supernatural mysteries. Those mysteries emanated from the center of the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

I think those pilgrims could have told him in good conscience that he had reached an erroneous conclusion. He was not competent to tell them that the apparitions lacked supernatural origin. He could only give his opinion. On the other hand, the pilgrims had competence to tell the archbishop they had witnessed supernatural mysteries. They might have told him that they did not want to sin against the Holy Spirit, who had sent His spouse to save their souls. Instead, the heresy of *Modernism* had confused the thinking of modern man, and he could no longer understand that it is wrong to obey a command contrary to justice and damaging to the faith for the sake of the lesser

virtue of obedience.

*“My son, I your Holy Mother of Virtues, request that in this time of your service to me you will pray one Chaplet of Virtues a day if nothing else. I would mean a great deal to me as this is the foremost prayer in the Heart of God at this time. You, my son, please me greatly when you say this prayer. Concentrate on the virtue of perseverance in the Book of Job and Jonah. Remember the days of my waiting to find Jesus in the temple—to find Him risen from the dead!*

*In these days of your journey, you shall follow in the shadows of darkness and suffering only to rise to the hope and promise of the Resurrection of Christ in your Heart. He is alive and as he lives so shall we all be revived and restored to our original union with God in Holy Paradise as it has been ordained by God through the life, death, and resurrection of His Son Jesus the Christ.*

*“Let no one cause you dismay nor cause you to lose heart that your desire to serve me through spending time with the children is of no consequence. On the contrary, this is precisely where Christ reveals himself, in the lowliest of all these the forgotten children. I do not ask you to look at the service of others or to focus on their path but reflect and focus only on this road you trod. Concentrate on Calvary and its solitary direction—to the cross—for from the cross comes salvation and the glory of our God in the Resurrection of His Son.*

*“Renew your consecration to me and my Immaculate Heart and I will guide you and protect you from all harm in heart mind and body. I love you my son! I am truly your Holy Mother of Virtues.”* [February 15, 1999]





Papal Nuncio visited Vorzel Seminary for ordination. QAMA helped build seminary.



With Mother Maria and the Sister Servants of the Lord and Virgin of Matara

## Chapter 19 QAMA Relocates Its Offices

Fr. Michael Walsh gave the QAMA mission group [pronounced quama] offices in the basement of the church, underneath the *Padre Restaurant*. We occupied two adjoining rooms sharing an inner door-way passage. They measured about 20 feet by 12 feet and 16 feet by 10 feet. Stuffed into the rooms you would have seen several desks, many tables, and many tall file cabinets. We had bookshelves holding a large assortment of Marian literature. We had boxes of VHS tapes, some showing Theresa Lopez addressing conferences or mission talks. The walls had holy images and icons adorning them from ceiling to floor. In my office I had taped to the four walls large maps of Asia and Russia. Onto those maps I had pasted many photographs of Catholic missions in Eastern Europe and in Russia.

We used the rooms for our occasional board meetings. We assembled and mailed our quarterly newsletters while seated at those tables. Mary Smolczyk did our books while seated at a computer in my office. When she and her husband Bernie moved to the mountains, Jane Brennan took her place. Jane would bring her three little girls with her when she came on Wednesdays: Alexa the eldest, and the identical twins Carly and Daria. When Jane's schedule got too tight to continue to work in our offices, Joanne Horne took her place.

Most of the QAMA directors and volunteers attended morning Mass in the church upstairs at 9:00 a.m. Most of us prayed the Rosary after Mass. Thereafter eight or ten souls would take the stairs to the basement and enter our offices. They would discuss QAMA projects. They would discuss Marian apparitions and prophecies. They would work on upcoming conferences and fundraisers. Father Walsh would visit his beloved QAMA offices every day. Often in the late morning hours some of us would go up to the church to kneel at the alcove where Mary appeared, and we would pray a Rosary. In the afternoon hours I often worked alone, but sometimes Rachel Bresnahan would work with me, when her husband Dick, a retired Army Major General, would allow her. That brings us to a funny story. Rachel spent more time at church than her husband would have liked. Rachel had a difficult time tearing herself away from the QAMA offices where mystical fruits fed her soul. She also spent a lot of time in adoration. One day in 1998 her husband Dick asked her if she was having an affair. She looked him straight in the eye and told him she was having an affair. After his face had blanched, she told him she was having an affair with Jesus. She likes telling that story.

We received drop-in visitors constantly and at all hours. Out-of-state pilgrims would arrive with many questions about the apparitions. One late afternoon Paul and Barbara

G. surprised us with a visit. They had found us either saying some prayers or engaged in earnest discourse. Impressed by our operation, they wrote us a big donation check.

We mailed our newsletters to the addresses given by the thousands of pilgrims who had gone to Mother Cabrini Shrine or to St. Thomas More Church to consecrate their hearts to the Blessed Mother. In the 1990s we sent our newsletter to more than 2,000 souls. We found a Catholic printer Steve G. who donated his time and product. I remember paying him not much.

Fr. Walsh received a new assignment in 2000 AD. The Archbishop Charles Chaput sent him to St. Vincent de Paul parish on University Boulevard in the Bonnie Brae district of Denver. Shortly thereafter our new pastor at St. Thomas More Church told us that he would like us to vacate our offices because he had another purpose for them. In 2002 we relocated our offices to Fr. Walsh's basement at St. Vincent de Paul Church. Fr. Walsh took great delight having his beloved QAMA mission back under his guiding eye.

In the move to our new offices, we lost most of our volunteers. We also lost three quarters of our space. We had to jettison hundreds of pounds of files. The office measured about 8 X 12 feet, with no windows and no ventilation. It had served as a storage room prior to our arrival. Again, we worked in the catacombs. After several years there, Fr. Walsh let us have a portable air conditioner from his upstairs office. One bonus, I got a free meal anytime I wanted one.

At Saint Vincent de Paul Church, Father Walsh opened a Lourdes Marian Center in the vacant bungalow adjacent to the Church. Fr. Walsh had met the Rector of the Shrine of Lourdes, Fr. Patrick Jacquin, back in 1993, when Fr. Jacquin had led a group of French pilgrims to Colorado to attend World Youth Day. Fr. Jacquin had suggested to Father Walsh that he open a Lourdes Center in Colorado to distribute Lourdes Water that would arrive following a Trans-Atlantic voyage aboard a freighter in large blue plastic barrels.

It did not become opportune for Fr. Walsh to undertake such a project until he became pastor at St. Vincent de Paul Church. I gladly served on his Lourdes Marian Center Board of Directors, and helped him get the project rolling. During our five years as a tenant in his church, I would spend much more time at the Lourdes Marian Center than I would in my hot little basement closet. The Lourdes Marian Center became quite an attraction, with countless streams of visitors arriving to get Lourdes water after leaving their donation. We spent much time on our knees praying to the Virgin

Mary for physical healings and spiritual favors.

Father Walsh retired in 2005 when he passed his 76<sup>th</sup> birthday. He remained in the Denver area to work in his healing ministry. The new pastor at St. Vincent de Paul Church asked us to find a new location for the QAMA offices. So, in 2007 we relocated our office to an even smaller room at St. Elizabeth of Hungary Catholic Church on the Auraria Campus on Speer Boulevard in Denver. Thankfully, we had a walk-in closet with built in bookshelves, so we just barely squeezed in our operation. For the first time we needed to pay rent at \$200 per month. It suited us well, especially insofar as the pastor Fr. Chrysostom Frank prayed the holy sacrifice of the Mass in accordance with the Russian Byzantine Liturgy.

Sylvia and I exchanged marital vows on November 13, 2010—the feast of St. Francis Cabrini! Hurrah! Then in 2012 we bought a spacious townhome in Castle Rock thirty miles south of downtown Denver. I decided to save time and money by moving the QAMA office to our garden level walkout. From my office I watch golfers pass down the fairway of the 17<sup>th</sup> hole of the Pete Dye designed Plum Creek professional golf course. I now also practice law from the same desk from where I write this book. I represent mostly U.S. military veterans whom I meet at the monthly walk-in legal clinics at Veterans Administration offices in Denver and Colorado Springs. When they visit our home, I tell them to petition the Virgin Mary for help.

*“Sorrow is a cross, but it is also a wing. Mourning divests to reclothe. Rise, you who are weeping! Open your eyes, get rid of nightmares, of darkness, of selfishness! Look, the world is the barren land where one weeps and dies. And the world shouts “help” through the mouths of orphans, of sick, lonely, doubtful people, through the mouths of those who are made prisoners of hatred by treason or cruelty. Go among those who are shouting. Forget yourself among those who are forgotten! Recover your health among those who are sick! Be hopeful among those who are despairing! The world is open to those willing to serve God in their neighbor and to gain heaven, to be united to God and to those whom we mourn. The gymnasium is here. The triumph there. Come. Imitate Ruth in all your sorrows. Say with her: “I will be with you until I die.” And even if those misfortunes, which consider themselves incurable, should reply to you: “Do not call me Naomi, call me Mara: for God has marred me bitterly,” you must persist. And I solemnly tell you that those misfortunes one day, because of your persisting, will exclaim: “Blessed be the Lord who redeemed me of my bitterness, desolation and solitude, by means of a creature who knew how to make his sorrow bear good fruit. May God bless him because he is my saviour.”*

**Our Lord Jesus Christ:** from *The Poem of the Man God* [Maria Valtorta, 1944]

## Chapter 20 Prayers from Heaven

### Prayer to our Virtuous Mother

Sweet Holy Mother, virtuous in all things, open my heart today to be dutiful to the sacred mysteries of the Trinity and to be obedient to the Sacred Word of God.

Bring me dear mother, to the feet of your son Jesus that I may follow him along the path to holiness. Keep me close to Christ walking with a steady pace that I may neither look to the world nor to vainglory lest I fall from the straight and beautiful path to salvation.

Be my protection as I am in darkness. Strengthen and solidify my resolve to do God's holy divine will. Put my heart at ease in the heart of Jesus, as I place my heart in yours.

Oh Mary, Queen of the Apostles and Holy Virtuous Heart, have Mercy on me and lead me to God through the great and wondrous virtues. Amen.

[Given to Sylvia Groeger on March 30, 1997]

### St. Michael the Archangel Prayer

Saint Michael the Archangel prepare my heart to speak to God as I come to be with Him today. Open my eyes and my heart to the Holy will of God that in all I do I will bring glory to Christ.

St. Michael the Archangel prepare my mind to think and act as Jesus, that all that I contemplate and do resembles Christ.

St. Michael the Archangel call upon the Holy Spirit to come into my soul that all that I do is sealed with the power and sanctity of God.

St. Michael the Archangel walk with me when I am alone; and carry me on your wings to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, where we may reside together with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, now and forever! Amen.

[1997]

## **Prayer to Our Holy Mother of Virtues**

Sweet Holy Mother of Virtues bless my heart in this moment that I may do the Divine will of God.

Sweet Holy Mother of Virtues guide my heart that I may choose holiness at all times.

Place before God my needs that He may consider my poor humble heart to receive His blessings.

Remain with me until I am on the path of holiness that leads to everlasting life!

Accept in gratitude my humble service to you, this sacrifice of prayer, and my promise to live the virtues in your holy name!

[Given by Our Holy Mother of Virtues to Sylvia Werner on December 31, 1999]

## **Prayer of Saint Jerome**

In my heart I come to know you God, yet I cannot understand you for my heart is weak and wounded.

In my eyes I come to see you God, but I am blinded by my own desires.

In my life I come to serve you God, but I cannot obtain joy, for my efforts are so small in comparison to my sins.

So, I come and beg of you Lord to heal my heart that I may see your loving kindness and come to serve your every need out of my yearning and desire to love you.

Have pity on me Lord and bring me to God through you Holy Virtuous Heart. Amen!

[Given by St. Jerome to Sylvia Werner, 1998]

## **Holy Spirit Prayer**

Shine on me Holy Spirit of Faith  
that I may trust God in all things.  
Shower me Holy Spirit of Hope  
that I may joyfully endure despair.  
Shield me Holy Spirit of Charity  
that I may always choose to love,  
in spite of adversity.  
Send me your Holy Spirit of  
Humility that I may always give  
glory to God. Soothe me Holy  
Spirit of Patience, that I may  
always render your peace.  
Strengthen me Holy Spirit of  
Perseverance that you will prevail  
in all that I do. Be steadfast in your  
mercy Lord that I may learn to be  
holy and obedient to you.



[1998]

## **Angels of Virtues Prayer**

Angels of Virtues which surround the Immaculate Heart of Mary surround my heart  
that I may always be protected from the evil temptations sent as Legions to torment  
me. When I am in hatred remind me to be humble. When I am in doubt flood my soul  
with Faith. Remind me that in every moment I have the opportunity to serve God by  
choosing to be virtuous. Let me not hear the voice of despair; but keep my soul  
steadfast and united with the voice of the Holy Spirit. Sweet Angels of Virtue fly to  
my aid that I may find shelter in your holy protective shadows. Amen!

[April 18, 1999]

## **Holy Blessed Rainbow of Love Prayer**

(Through Trinidad Garcia)

Holy God

Holy Jesus Christ

Holy Infant Jesus

Holy Youthful Jesus

Holy Spirit

Holy Immaculate Heart of Mary

Holy St. Joseph

Holy All Saints

Holy Archangels

(Michael, Gabriel, Raphael, Uriel, Selathiel, Gehudiel, Barachiel)

Holy Guardian Angels—Seraphim and Cherubim, Principalities, Dominions, Virtues, Powers and Thrones

I lift up every heartbeat, soul, mind and body

The living, the dying, the dead, souls in purgatory, heaven, and earth

To end the evil powers of hell, Satan, sin, and darkness!



We carry Mary's Immaculate Heart to Bucha Middle School Children.

## Chapter 21 Marybelle Werner and QAMA

As we approach the third anniversary of the death of my mother Mary Belle [Bersch] Werner, we reflect upon the many ways she succored and encouraged the work of the Queen of the Apostles Mission Association (QAMA). It all began in June 1995. My mother had learned of an upcoming conference about helping the Catholic Church in Russia. She had read an article in the *National Catholic Register* that QAMA was hosting a three-day conference at Holy Apostles Catholic Church in Colorado Springs. The late Father Michael Walsh had titled the conference: ***First International Conference to Assist the Catholic Church in the Former Soviet Union.***

QAMA had invited a dozen bishops and priests serving in Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, and the Ukraine. ***Aid-to-the-Church-in-Need*** had also sent a representative to the conference. My father had died only several years earlier, after having founded the Wisconsin based *Anthony M. & Mary Belle Werner Foundation*. My father intended the foundation to assist the Catholic Church's evangelization efforts. My mother had asked me to attend the conference as her envoy to interview the Germany based Church- in-Need delegation and learn how they might use Werner Foundation money.

I have already written in this newsletter how my driving to the conference at my mother's bidding led to my return to the Catholic Church and Her Sacraments. Ted Flynn spoke on Friday telling his listeners that one key Fatima Prophecy revealed that ***"most souls go to hell because of the sins of the flesh."*** I raced off to confession. Ted and I became close friends. He suggested that I join the QAMA Russia Mission group. My mother took great joy in my return to the Sacraments. She soon thereafter handed me the reigns of the quarter million-dollar Werner Foundation. I joined QAMA, serving first as its publicist and grant writer. I put the family foundation to the service of the Blessed Virgin Mary and her beloved children of Russia. Over the next two decades my generous mother gave more than another quarter of a million dollars to Catholic bishops, priests and sisters in the East who needed help rebuilding churches and monasteries.

My mother visited the Ukraine four times from 1998 through 2002, each time flying with Sylvia from Chicago. On their first visit they flew from Chicago to Prague and on to Kosice, Slovakia. They waited hours to cross the heavily guarded border before entering Uzhgorod. In the *Exaltation of the Holy Cross Cathedral* on Easter morning, my mother's soul first imbibed the sublime delights offered by the Byzantine Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom.

We planned every trip to coincide with Easter (Pascha) as celebrated according to the Julian Calendar. Every year we crossed the country by rail to celebrate Pascha with our beloved Servidoras in the Halych region in Ivano-Frankivsk. My mother loved visiting our Byzantine Sisters and singing their glorious Paschal hymns all afternoon in the Novitiate House we purchased for them—with a \$38,000 check written by mother in 1999. Sixteen Novices now live in the Novitiate House in formation preparing for their vows.

QAMA support for several churches and monasteries in Zakarpatya (beyond the Carpathian Mountains) led to my mother meeting Mother Marija of the Holy Spirit from Holy Annunciation Monastery in Sugarloaf, Pennsylvania. My mother met Mother Marija in an airport one year when Mother Marija was bringing to the U.S. a young girl from Zakarpatya, a postulant. She recognized Mother Marija from our photographs. They soon became fast friends. Thereafter, my mother would every few years drive to Pennsylvania to spend several days in retreat at that cloistered Byzantine Discalced Carmelite Monastery where Mother Marija and her fifteen sisters live a chaste life of prayer. They also work the monastery farm raising goats and geese, but primarily raising prized miniature horses to sell to eager buyers from around the world.

One-year, foul weather delayed Sylvia's flight from Denver to Chicago for one hour. In Chicago she had planned to board a plane with my mother, flying to Krakow, Poland. When Sylvia's plane finally reached Chicago, and while taxiing to the terminal, she espied the Polish LOT 747 depart from its gate. Her heart sank. However, when she deplaned and entered the terminal, she heard my mother's mellifluous voice-- "*Oh Sylvia.*" My mother had walked off the LOT flight moments before departure, telling the crew that she would not fly without her daughter. They told her---"*Lady; you are causing us a lot of trouble.*" (They had to reopen the plane's baggage hold.)

Sylvia and mom overnighed in Chicago. The next day the airlines put them on an Air France flight to Paris, flying first class! They landed at Charles de Gaulle Airport on Palm Sunday. Then they flew onwards to Poland. After two or three days in Poland they hired a taxi to drive them from Krakow to L'viv Ukraine. They embarked on an eight-ten hour odyssey, spending many hours at the border control where ten lanes of traffic inched forward at an agonizing pace, slowly squeezing down to just two lanes. After paying their driver \$80 USD upon reaching L'viv, the driver turned around immediately and headed back to Poland, telling Sylvia and my mother that he feared thieves would steal his car if he remained in the Ukraine overnight.

One year we arrived in L'viv at night and found no vacancy in the Hotel Dniester. Hillary Clinton's entourage had booked all the rooms. Two taxi drivers told us they would drive us to the outskirts of town to a hotel with vacancy. Mom rode in one car. Sylvia and I rode in the other. Racing down dark mysterious streets, often with no illumination, fear entered my mother's heart. Upon arrival at the next hotel, she told us she had feared they might kidnap her.

One year at the Hotel Zakarpatya in Uzhgorod the elevator stopped between two floors. The car contained mom, Sylvia, Fr. Alexander Legeza, and me. I saw great discomfort show on my mother's visage. It seemed like ages before they could rescue us. No one answered the alarm bell. But adventures like these armed my mother with so many humorous anecdotes to share with her friends upon her returning to Sheboygan, Wisconsin.

In 2008 Sylvia assembled a photo album with ten chapters, each beginning with my poetic reflections upon the QAMA mission in Russia and Ukraine. We presented my mother her copy of *Reflections Rus* as a Christmas gift. We also sent it out to one hundred of our best friends and supporters of this Marian mission to Her beloved Slavic children.

My mother just loved visiting our orphans in Trypillja. There she spent many sunny afternoons in the courtyard sitting on park benches giving the children caresses. So many children fell in love with our Mary Belle. They called her Maria-Bella. For many years, after she could no longer brave the rigors of travel, the orphans would often ask about her. They told us give her their kisses. My mom and the director Tamara became fast friends. Each greatly admired the other.

Each year we would cross the country by overnight train, sleeping in Pullman-like cars with four over-and-under bunk beds in the *coupe*' wagons. The officiants would bring us starched and ironed bed sheets. They also brought cups of hot tea. My mother relished the shot of cognac I would pour into her teacup to help her fall asleep. Crossing the country during *Paschal* Season, we frequently sang the glorious resurrection hymns with the other pilgrims who had made the journey across country to join relatives in celebrating Our Lord's trampling down death by His death.

My mother took great interest in the needs of the Catholic Church in the East. She gladly sat down with many bishops and priests who offered her hospitality and told her of their projects. One year we visited Bishop Sofron Mudryj, OSBM, the late Ordinary of Ivano-Frankivsk (formerly *Stanislav*). He served us tea and biscuits at the

dining room table of his residence. While listening to Bishop Mudrij, we all noticed an ant creeping across his white linen tablecloth. Without interrupting his speech, the bishop calmly picked up his miter and set it down over the ant. Mom loved retelling of that precious moment.

Sylvia and I had been making monthly visits to my mother during the last twelve months of her life. She lived much longer than the doctors thought she would. We spent one week every month in her condo. We said many Rosaries and sang many songs. At her bedtime, each night we would sing Ukrainian folk songs, and we would sing *Sub Tuum Praesidium* (Under Your Protection) in the Ukrainian tongue, as we had learned it from our *Servidoras*. Mom also loved Sylvia singing *Pie Jesu*.

A few months before my mother died, Mother Marija of the Holy Spirit called her on the phone. I had picked up the phone when it rang. The phone call came in January or February 2017. We were visiting in the living room when the call came. Mother Marija wanted to assure my mother of her prayers and the prayers of her Byzantine Discalced Carmelite sisters. Then Mother Marija, a contemporary of my mother, asked mom what she felt in her heart and soul with death approaching. They remained on the phone for a long time. Mother Marija would not call again, as my mother's death came shortly thereafter. She died on Palm Sunday 2017. Tridentine Rite Canonical Hermit Sebastian Glentz, attending my mother's funeral, told me "*Your mother had a good Lent.*"



On Good Friday, the faithful in Ukraine line up for hours to kiss the *Plaschanitsa* which represents the burial cloth of our Lord Jesus. Their veneration of the Passion of Our Lord moves our hearts deeply.



**QUEEN OF THE APOSTLES MISSION ASSOCIATION**



Mary Belle with Sylvia and Matt at Holy Hill in Wisconsin.



The *perfect* life of Christ was crowned with sorrows.

**Lent 2020 — Remembering Mother**

As we approach the third anniversary of the death of my mother Mary Belle [Bersch] Werner; we reflect upon the many ways she succeeded and encouraged the work of the Queen of the Apostles Mission Association (QAMA). It all began in June 1995. My mother had learned of an upcoming conference about helping the Catholic Church in Russia. She had read an article in the *National Catholic Register* that QAMA was hosting a three-day conference at Holy Apostles Catholic Church in Colorado Springs. The late Father Michael Walsh had titled the conference: First International Conference to Assist the Catholic Church in the Former Soviet Union.

QAMA had invited a dozen bishops and priests serving in Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan and the Ukraine. Aid-to-the-Church-in-Need had also sent a representative to the conference. My father had died only several years earlier, after having founded the Wisconsin based Anthony M. & Mary Belle Werner Foundation. My father intended the foundation to assist the Catholic Church's evangelization efforts. My mother had asked me to attend the conference as her envoy in order to interview the Germany based Church-in-Need delegation and learn how they might use Werner Foundation money.

I have already written in this newsletter how my driving to the conference at my mother's bidding led to my return to the Catholic Church and Her Sacraments. Ted Flynn spoke on Friday telling his listeners that one key Fatima Prophecy revealed that **"most souls go to hell because of the sins of the flesh."** I raced off to confession.

**Consecrated to the Immaculate Heart of Mary**  
 Supporting Roman and Byzantine Catholics in the former U.S.S.R. since 1994  
 Editor: A. Matt Werner P.O. BOX 1676 Castle Rock, CO 80104  
[www.QAMA.org](http://www.QAMA.org) [Facebook.com/QueenOfApostlesMission](https://www.facebook.com/QueenOfApostlesMission) 720.234.7223 [QAMA@aol.com](mailto:QAMA@aol.com)



Orphans Natasha, Allya, Oksana & Olga in Trypillja.



Olga and Snezhanna know we will return to them.



Teaching the faith and the virtues in the House of Mercy or Dom Miloserdia.

Ted and I became close friends. He suggested that I join the QAMA Russia Mission group. My mother took great joy in my return to the Sacraments. She soon thereafter handed me the reigns of the quarter million-dollar Werner Foundation. I joined QAMA, serving first as its publicist and grant writer. I put the family foundation to the service of the Blessed Virgin Mary and her beloved children of Russia. Over the next two decades my generous mother was to give more than another quarter of a million dollars to Catholic bishops, priests and sisters in the East who needed help rebuilding churches and monasteries.

My mother visited the Ukraine four times from 1998 through 2002, each time flying with Sylvia from Chicago. On their first visit they flew from Chicago to Prague and on to Kosice, Slovakia. They waited hours to cross the heavily guarded border before entering Uzhgorod. In the *Exaltation of the Holy Cross Cathedral* on Easter morning my mother's soul first imbibed the sublime delights offered by the Byzantine Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom.

We planned every trip to coincide with Easter (Pascha) as celebrated according to the Julian Calendar. Every year we crossed the country by rail to celebrate Pascha with our beloved Servidoras in the Halych region in Ivano-Frankivsk. My mother loved visiting our Byzantine Sisters and singing their glorious Paschal hymns all afternoon in the Novitiate House we purchased for them—with a \$38,000 check written by mother in 1999. Sixteen Novices now live in the Novitiate House in formation preparing for their vows.

QAMA support for several churches and monasteries in Zakarpatya (beyond the Carpathian Mountains), led to my mother meeting Mother Marija of the Holy Spirit from Holy Annunciation Monastery in Sugarloaf, Pennsylvania. My mother met Mother Marija in an airport one year when Mother Marija was bringing to the U.S. a young girl from Zakarpatya, a postulant. She recognized Mother Marija from our photographs. They soon became fast friends. Thereafter my mother would every few years drive to Pennsylvania to spend several days in retreat at that cloistered Byzantine Discalced Carmelite Monastery where Mother Marija and her fifteen sisters live a chaste life of prayer. They also work the monastery farm raising goats and geese, but primarily raising prized miniature horses to sell to eager buyers from around the world.

One-year, foul weather delayed Sylvia's flight from Denver to Chicago for one hour. In Chicago she had

planned to board a plane with my mother, flying to Krakow, Poland. When Sylvia's plane finally reached Chicago, and while taxiing to the terminal, she espied the Polish LOT 747 depart from its gate. Her heart sank. However, when she deplaned and entered the terminal, she heard my mother's mellifluous voice-- "*Oh Sylvia.*" My mother had walked off the LOT flight moments before departure telling the crew that she would not fly without her daughter. They told her---"*Lady; you are causing us a lot of trouble.*" (They had to reopen the plane's baggage hold.)

Sylvia and mom overnighted in Chicago. The next day the airlines put them on an Air France flight to Paris, flying first class! They landed at Charles de Gaul Airport on Palm Sunday. Then they flew onwards to Poland. After two or three days in Poland they hired a taxi to drive them from Krakow to L'viv Ukraine. They embarked on an eight to ten-hour odyssey, spending many hours at the border control where ten lanes of traffic inched forward at an agonizing pace, slowly squeezing down to just two lanes. After paying their driver \$80 USD upon reaching L'viv, the driver turned around immediately and headed back to Poland, telling Sylvia and my mother that he feared thieves would steal his car if he remained in the Ukraine overnight.

One year we arrived in L'viv at night and found no vacancy in the Hotel Dniester. Hillary Clinton's entourage had booked all the rooms. Two taxi drivers told us they would drive us to the outskirts of town to a hotel with vacancy. Mom rode in one car. Sylvia and I rode in the other. Racing down dark mysterious streets, often with no illumination, fear entered my mother's heart. Upon arrival at the next hotel she told us she had feared they might kidnap her.

One year at the Hotel Zakarpatya in Uzhgorod the elevator stopped between two floors. The car contained mom, Sylvia, Fr. Alexander Legeza and me. I saw great discomfort show on my mother's visage. It seemed like ages before they could rescue us. No one answered the alarm bell. But adventures like these armed my mother with so many humorous anecdotes to share with her friends upon her returning to Sheboygan, Wisconsin.

In 2008 Sylvia assembled a photo album with ten chapters, each beginning with my poetic reflections upon the QAMA mission in Russia and Ukraine. We presented my mother her copy of *Reflections Rus* as a Christmas gift. We also sent it out to one hundred of our best friends and supporters of this Marian mission to Her beloved Slavic children.



Mary Belle celebrates her 85th with 8 of her children.



Teaching the English lesson to the fifth grade.



After years of formation the Novices take their final vows. Mother Hoshivska, Sr. Jednosti, Sr. Cristiana and Sr. Maria of the Passion in Galicia or Halych.

Each year we would cross the country by overnight train, sleeping in *Pullman* like cars with four over-and-under bunk beds in the *coupe*' wagons. The officiants would bring us starched and ironed bed sheets. They also brought cups of hot tea. My mother relished the shot of cognac I would pour into her teacup to help her fall asleep. Crossing the country during Paschal Season, we frequently sang the glorious resurrection hymns with the other pilgrims who had made the journey across country to join relatives in celebrating Our Lord's trampling down death by His death.

My mother took great interest in the needs of the Catholic Church in the East. She gladly sat down with many bishops and priests who offered her hospitality and told her of their projects. One year we visited Bishop Sofron Mudrij, the late Ordinary of Ivano-Frankivsk (formerly *Stanislav*). He served us tea and biscuits at the dining room table of his residence. While listening to Bishop Mudrij we all noticed an ant creeping across his white linen tablecloth. Without interrupting his speech, the bishop calmly picked up his miter and set it down over the ant. My mother loved retelling of that precious moment.



Allison Forbes loved my mother very much.

Sylvia and I had been making monthly visits to my mother during the last twelve months of her life. She lived much longer than the doctors thought she would. We spent one week every month in her condo. We said many Rosaries and sang many songs. At her bedtime each night we would sing Ukrainian folk songs, and we would sing *Sub Tuum Praesidium* (Under Your Protection) in the Ukrainian tongue, as we had learned it from our Servidoras. Mom also loved Sylvia singing *Pie Jesu*.

A few months before my mother died, Mother Marija of the Holy Spirit called her on the phone. I had picked up the phone when it rang. The phone call came in January or February 2017. We were visiting in the living room when the call came. Mother Marija wanted to assure my mother of her prayers and the prayers of her Byzantine Discalced Carmelite sisters. Then Mother Marija, a contemporary of my mother, asked mom what she felt in her heart and soul with death approaching. They remained on the phone for a long time. Mother Marija would not call again, as my mother's death came shortly thereafter. She died on Palm Sunday 2017. Tridentine Rite Canonical Hermit Sebastian Glentz, attending my mother's funeral, told me "Your mother had a good Lent."



Mother Marija of the Holy Spirit with Novice from Ukraine in Sugarloaf PA

## Chapter 22 A Message to Thrill your Heart

February 27, 1993 Florence, Italy

*"My Angel, my Triumph is like the dawn that breaks the darkness of the night. It is the sun's rays as they come over the horizon. One by one, they dispel the darkness and bring daylight. My Triumph shall come, dear angel, in the same way. As each heart is opened by the consecration, the light sweeps away the dark. As each ray gives its brilliance to the horizon in the dawn, each heart possessed by me shall bring the magnificence of Son-shine upon the earth.*

*Now is the time of twilight upon the earth. The faint glow of my heart may be seen as if in the distance, but as more hearts are opened to receive me in every day, I assure you of the break of day. Very soon my heartlight may no longer be hidden by the ploys of evil. It shall rise in the East to give light to the West. As in the beginning of the dawn, my Triumph shall be seen as the morning light in the East. It shall rise in every moment as it crests over the darkened horizon. It shall find its greatest glory and brilliance in the center of the hearts of my children.*

*My Triumph shall then fill the heavens and shine across the earth and no man shall be able to doubt its victory and darkness shall not overpower it. My angel, I shall now wish to teach you of the Spirit Who brings life. All I have spoken to you are of the Spirit. In the covenant of the Spirit comes the essence of my Triumph, to bring to revelation the Sacred Heart of my Son. With this, then, shall the earth be covered in the Spirit of His mercy and final justice.*

*In the second Advent of the Paraclete comes the joining of my Triumph and His Reign of Mercy. This shall be the sign in the sky over the dragon of red where Satan holds his threshold in this time. I shall strike by the fury of God Almighty, with the Spirit of Truth as my sword, to crush the head of evil; and the sky shall be filled with his blood and shine red. In the settling of the ashes, new life shall be born, and the empowerment of the Holy Spirit shall sweep across the land with no restraint and cleanse all. It shall sweep to the darkness all that remains of evil.*

*When the day comes, the remnant flock will stop relying on human powers and give all trust in God only. The remnant shall return to the Almighty God. Even now, as you are as many as the sands of the sea, only a few true and undefiled of you shall return to be received by the mercy of God; for so many shall deny its true purity.*

*This destruction has been decreed which will make justice overflow; for throughout the world, the Lord shall now enforce the destruction now decreed in the mystery of the secrets. The light in the East will become a fire, and the center of its flame is my Jesus' Mercy. It shall come burning and devouring all hearts open to its purification.*

*He shall come to consume and possess. The ones standing the highest shall be cut down first and the proudest laid low, and no one of unjust nature shall survive the blows of the Mighty One.*

*I shall summon my champions to shake the heavens upon the earth. When the earth will reel on its foundation, I shall separate the strong of consecrated heart from those of weakness of the world. The earth is now defiled by man's submission to sin and evil, and this is why God's wrath shall consume its impurity and burn away such things. The earth shall reveal the blood shed upon it by the indignation of man's hate of one another. In the darkest night shall the soul long for God, and your spirit shall seek Him out; for when His judgment appears on the earth, the people of the world shall learn what saving justice is.*

*But I tell you, my children, God is waiting to be gracious to you. He desires to take pity on every soul. He remains a fair judge; and blessed are all who hope in Him. He shall bring His mercy to all who cry out for help. As soon as He shall hear you, He will answer. When the Lord has brought you just suffering and the tears of distress, He shall never hide from you as your teacher, and you shall receive His words*

*Until His Spirit of mercy to come is poured out from above and the deserts become orchards, the dryness becomes wet. The fires of purity shall reign, and the effect shall be uprightness and trueness. It (the Reign of the Sacred Heart of Jesus) brings quiet, peace, and security forever."*

Does this prophecy not remind us of the victory of the Woman over the serpent in Genesis 3:15? [Douay version]

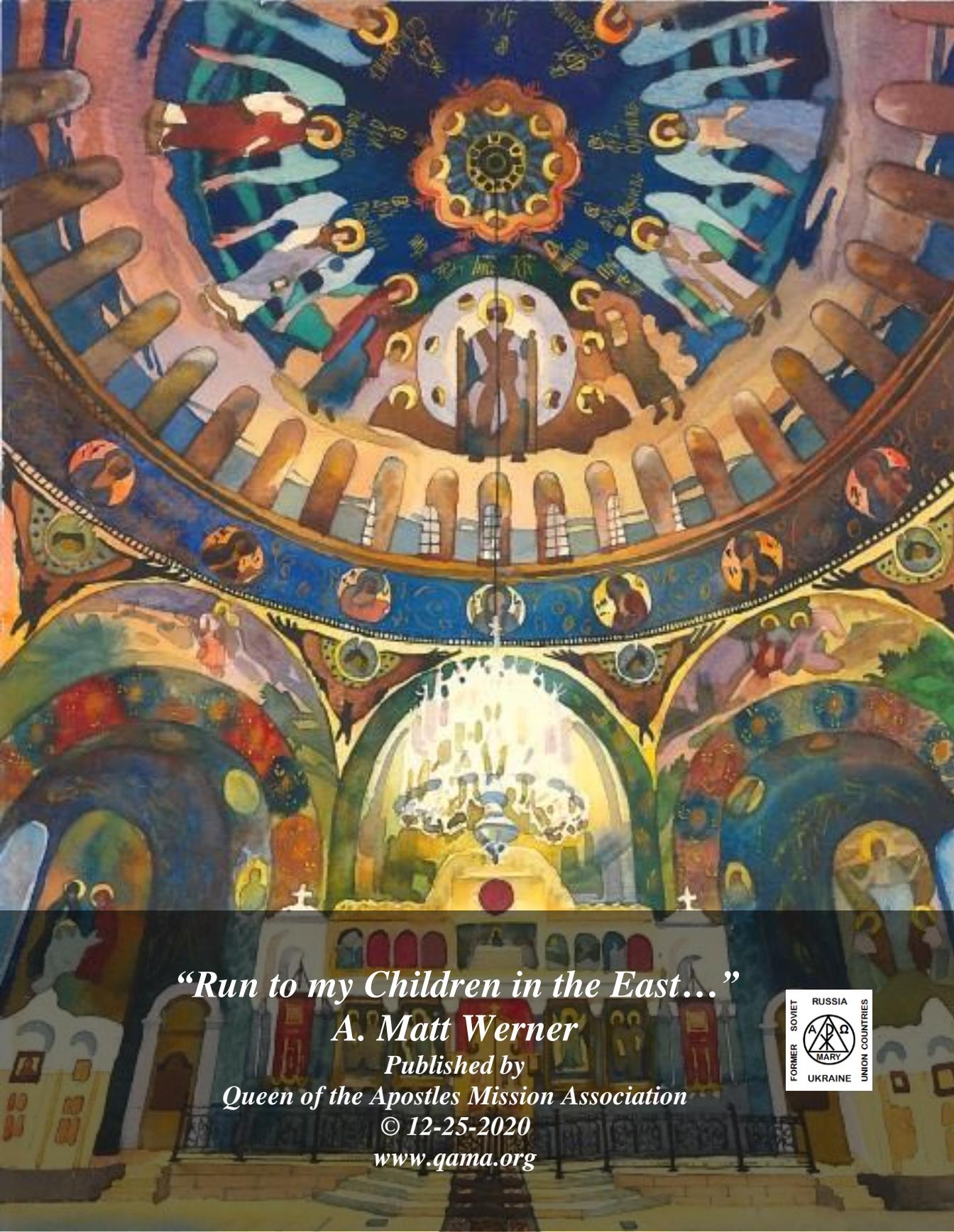
*"I will put enmities between you and the Woman, and thy seed and her seed: she shall crush thy head, and thou shalt lie in wait for her heel."*

Covid-19 kept us from running to the Virgin Mary's children in the East this year. Still, we entrust them to the protection of Her Immaculate Heart, knowing that *Russia is the ransom for the peace the world yearns for*. Will you help pay that ransom?



16<sup>th</sup> Century Byzantine Assumption Church in Krylos,  
Halych region [Galicia] Ukraine

The back cover shows a watercolor painting of the refectory church in the 11<sup>th</sup> Century Kiev Pecherska Lavra Russian Orthodox Monastery. Artist Maria Chekirda 2001.



*“Run to my Children in the East...”*

*A. Matt Werner*

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