

# Reflections

International

Catholic Family Newsletter

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Volume 88

**Bringing Light Into a World of Darkness**

**After Suicide**

**Master, I Want to See**

**You are called to Holiness**

**Thought for the Day:** Prayers, like Padre Pio said, “Are never wasted.” He reminds us that it is never too late to pray, whether a person died recently or long ago: *“For the Lord, ...everything is an eternal present. Those prayers had already been taken into account, so that even now we can pray for the happy death of others we have known!”*

**Prayer for Today: A prayer by Mother Teresa:** *If you ever feel distressed during your day — call upon our Lady — just say this simple prayer: ‘Mary, Mother of Jesus, please be a mother to me now.’*

**Blessing to All:**

**By: Richard Pickard**

I recently read a book by Fr. Chris Alar, MIC and Bro. Jason Lewis, MIC, titled **After Suicide**. Fr. Alar lost his grandmother to suicide and carried a pain deep inside and wondered if she went to hell. Through his personal experience he found hope and answers by reading the Diary of St. Faustina, *Divine Mercy in My Soul*, and in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.

**The good news is that there is ample evidence to support Divine Mercy at work, and hope of salvation, for those who commit suicide.**

I recommend this book. It has been carefully researched and includes some

of the quotes from Jesus to St. Faustina and the teaching of the Church found in the Catechism of the Catholic Church.

There were three accounts mentioned by the authors, that I want to mention here, especially for all the readers of this Newsletter who have lost a loved one or a friend to suicide. **There is hope and your prayers, regardless of when the suicide occurred, can make a difference.**

The *first* is where they quote St. Faustina, who tells us that Jesus comes to the soul who seems past all hope, who seems to be beyond the reach of God's grace: **"God's mercy sometimes touches the sinner at the last moment in a wondrous and mysterious way. Outwardly, it seems as if everything were lost, but it is not so. The soul, illumined by a ray of God's powerful final grace, turns to God in the last moment with such a power of love that, in an instant, it receives from God forgiveness of sin and punishment, while outwardly it shows no sign either of repentance or of contrition, because souls [ at that state] no longer react to external things. Oh, how beyond comprehension is God's mercy! Although a person is at the point of death, the merciful God gives the soul that interior vivid moment, so that if the soul is willing, it has the possibility of returning to God. (Diary 1698)"**

The *second* reference in the book tells of Saint Faustina's recollection of a conversation of the merciful God with a despairing soul.

**"Jesus:** O soul steeped in darkness, do not despair. All is not yet lost. Come and confide in your God, who is love and mercy.

--But the soul, deaf even to this appeal, wraps itself in darkness.

Jesus calls out again [a second time]: My child, listen to the voice of your merciful Father.

--In the soul arises this reply: "For me there is no mercy," and it falls into greater darkness, a despair which is a foretaste of hell and makes it unable to draw near to God.

Jesus calls to the soul a third time, but the soul remains deaf and blind, hardened and despairing. Then the mercy of God begins to exert itself, and, without any co-operation from the soul, God grants it a final grace. If this too is spurned, God will leave the soul in this self-chosen disposition for

eternity. This grace emerges from the merciful Heart of Jesus and gives the soul a special light by means of which the soul begins to understand God's effort; but conversion depends on its own will. The soul knows that this, for her, is final grace and, should it show even a flicker of good will, the mercy of God will accomplish the rest.



***My omnipotent mercy is active here. Happy the soul that takes advantage of this grace (Diary 1486)***

The *third* reference relates to Fr. Alar when he was conducting a parish mission. "I had some doubts [about Divine Mercy for suicides]. I was tempted to think that such hope was too good to be true. But then, once again, God stepped in.

I was walking from the rectory to the church when something astounding happened. A young woman was getting out of her car, and our eyes made contact. I smiled, but I could see that she was thinking as she looked at me, as if she couldn't determine whether she knew me or not. Then she asked, 'Are you Fr. Joseph.'" I answered well sort of. That is an honorary title given to the director of the *Association of Marian Helpers*, and I currently serve in that role.

Then she asked, 'Are you the priest what made a CD and talked about his grandmother committing suicide?' Surprised she would bring that up after I had just decided not to tell my grandmother's story, I answered, Yes, I am.

She asked, 'Do you have a moment? I really need to speak with you.'

I agreed and she began to tell me an amazing story. She said, 'Father, like you, I lost someone close to me who took their own life. It was my uncle four years ago, and like you, I was struggling greatly because I didn't pray for him at all, before he died. I figured it was too late to do anything about it when later I realized my grave lack of charity.'

But then, I heard your talk about praying for the dead that commit suicide. I prayed many Divine Mercy Chaplets [for my uncle], hoping it would help. A few months ago, I went to a priest for Confession. He is known to be a mystic and perhaps can even read souls. Well, anyway I finished the confession and I was getting ready to leave, he said to me 'By the way your Chaplets worked.'

'Excuse me? I replied. He said, 'Didn't you have an uncle who took his own life four years go?' I never mentioned that to the priest. He answered, 'Well, he is now in Heaven.' Trying to hold back my shock, I questioned him, Father, how do you know? He replied, "I just saw it."

I was completely blown away by her story. I'd had determined not to tell my story about my grandmother again, and praying the Divine Mercy for her, unless God showed me a sign that it was true. *Well, here was the astonishingly clear confirmation. God is good! God is merciful!"*

If you have a suicide in your family or a friend, please say the Divine Mercy Chaplet for **them today**. God is above time and always in the present. Your prayers for the soul thought lost can be heard by God and used for grace to enlighten the soul and to trust in His Divine Mercy.

St. Faustina's book is called *Divine Mercy in My Soul*. If you have never heard of Divine Mercy or have not read her Diary, I recommend **you buy the Diary**. It is filled with hope and shows the great love Jesus has for us sinners. eBay has previously read copies in good condition for about \$5.00.



**Act now. Divine Mercy is REAL.**

# Master, I want to see

From Marian Helpers Magazine

By: Marian Friedrichs



See could see lilacs. It was May and they were in full bloom. She had seen the couch first, because it was beside the couch that she had knelt to say her prayer.

Now, Leslie Beck glazed in astonishment through the picture window in her family's living room. There was her front lawn. There were the lilac bushes. They looked the same when she had last seen them, before ***she had lost her sight, two years earlier when she was 8 years old.***

In 1964, a tainted batch of MMR vaccines (measles, mumps, and rubella), caused a variety of health problems in many children. Leslie contracted encephalitis, which affected the lining of her brain and the retinas of her eyes. ***She was hospitalized for a year.*** Leslie remembers having her hands tied to keep her from clawing at her eyes. "The pain was so terrible," she says.

Doctors told Leslie's parents that there was no hope of her regaining her sight. They recommended putting her in a special facility for blind children. Lesli's parents did not take this suggestion, and so, unable to go back to her former school, Leslie was allowed to, as she says, "run wild on the farm." Until the day she knelt beside that couch to pray.

Leslie's family was not religious. Her father was a non-practicing Catholic, her mother an atheist. Still, Leslie says, she always "had a strong faith in Jesus" and believed He was present in her life.



On this spring day, Leslie approached her mother and asked if Jesus might restore her sight if she asked Him. Her mother quipped laughingly, "*Well, you can try.*"

Leslie decided she would, indeed, try. She walked into the living room felt for the couch and knelt

beside it. **"If it's Your will, Jesus," she prayed, "would you restore my sight?"**

A moment later, she says, **"It was like I was in a dark room and someone turned the light on."**

Her sight was restored. Her prayer was answered that instant!

Her parents were overjoyed.

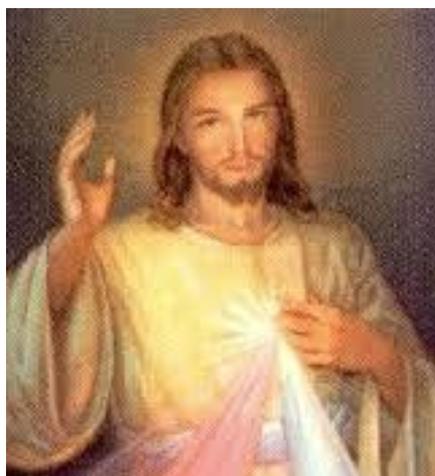


The visit to the doctor's office was remarkable. The doctor examined her eyes and found the same atrophy of the optic nerves, the same scarring on the retinas that had caused her blindness. And yet it was undeniable that Leslie—suddenly and inexplicably—could see.

Years later, and all grown up, Leslie visited many different churches. In her 20's, she was introduced to the Rosary and "prayed it on and off" for years. "I really fell in love with Mama Mary," she says.

But before Leslie finally made her way home to the Catholic church, she had to pass through another terrible time of darkness. *Her young son committed suicide.* Yet even amidst profound grief, Leslie "felt such a comfort and closeness to the Lord." Responding to God's invitation to draw still closer to Him, Leslie started praying the rosary and reading the Bible more regularly.

One day she realized, "I want to be Catholic. I think that's my home." She entered the Rite of Christian Initiation program and was baptized at the age of 50.



Very soon after she became Catholic, Leslie bought a copy of *Divine Mercy in My Soul*. Her heart responded immediately to the Divine Mercy message, and the Chaplet became part of her daily prayers. Today, Leslie is not sure how many times she has read the Bible, and she is currently reading St. Faustina's *Diary* for the third time, "I'm trying to understand my faith." she says.

Then, Leslie heard of Fr. Alar's book called *After Suicide*. She bought the book and read it. The book offered her consolation and hope, not only

for her son's soul, but for that of her grandfather as well, who took his own life when Leslie's mother was a teenager. Jesus' message of trust in God's mercy encourages Leslie to be "confident they are both in Heaven."

When the blind beggar, Bartimaeus, became aware that Jesus was passing by, he called out, "Jesus, son of David, take pity on me!" The crowds tried to hush him but he repeated his plea until Jesus sent for him and asked what he wanted. To the blind man's simple request "Master, I want to see"-Jesus gave an equally simple reply: "Go in peace; your faith has saved you" (Mk 10:47,51-52) Despite the doctors' grim report and her parents' lack of faith, Leslie turned to Jesus with trust and her eyes were opened. After decades of searching and the anguish of a mother's loss, she now has peace in her soul. Jesus is always there to hear our prayers." Knock and it will open-Seek and you will find." (Matt 7:8)

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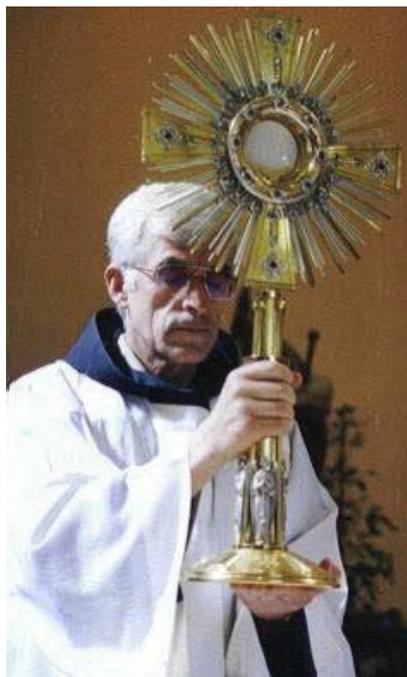


**Unborn Babies are People. Just ask Jesus.**

## You are called to Holiness

By Fr. Slavko Barbaric, Medjugorje

Although the talk is from 1997, it is just as applicable today.



Father Slavko Barbaric was born on March 11, 1946 and ordained a Franciscan priest on December 19, 1971. He earned a doctorate degree in religious pedagogy and the title of psychotherapist 5 years later. Pedagogy is the discipline of study related to the field of education and teaching methods with God at its center.

Fr. Slavko served Medjugorje pilgrims tirelessly from 1983 until his death on Nov 24, 2000. He spoke 6 languages, led Adoration during the evening program in the church during the week, gave talks to pilgrims, led the Stations of the Cross every Friday while climbing Cross mountain, started an orphanage called "Mother's village", and so much more. He was an amazing priest and was the "face" of

Medjugorje for so many who visited there.

### The Family is Called to Holiness and Consecration

All those who are immersed in the death of Jesus Christ in baptism have died to sin and are called to holiness. In the Creed, we confess to the "One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church", which is called to be holy and stainless. What pertains to the entire Church, a fortiori, pertains to all its members and families and a family is often referred to as a 'small church.'

Holiness is a call to a concrete life in love with God and our brethren. In itself it means first and foremost, the healing of our relationship with God and with others and a growth in love, faith and hope.

It is Mary's desire that a family be the birthplace of holiness. The example of the holiness of the parents and the elderly will, in itself, be a school of holiness to the young. Our Blessed Mother said, "**I beseech you, by your own testimony help those who do not know how to live in holiness...but especially your own family**"(July 25, 1986).

Love and forgiveness, goodness and generosity, gentleness and resoluteness, the love of truth and moderation are an expression of and a school of love in the family. So that the family may reach holiness in accordance to the measure of Jesus and Mary, which is the measure of the Gospel, Mary calls us to individually, as a family and as a parish, consecrate ourselves to Her beloved Son, Jesus and to Her Immaculate heart, "...**so that all belongs to God through my hands**" (October 25, 1988).

The Latin expression for consecrate is 'con- sacrare', which directs us to the real meaning of the call to consecration. To consecrate means, to decide to take Mary and Jesus as the example, to be with them, to keep company with them, and to become like them in accordance with the logic of a national saying: "**Tell me who you associate with, and I'll tell you who you are..**". Whoever keeps company with Mary and Jesus in daily prayer, especially in the prayer of the Rosary, is in the best School of Holiness and will understand how he can live in joy and sorrow and the final glory in heaven.

Through consecration, a person consciously walks the way with Mary and Jesus and in this way overcomes that terrible loneliness which comes about through sin. He thus creates a new community of love and life and knows that he will conquer both sin and death.

### **The Destructive Plans of Satan**

The Family must consecrate itself and in holiness defend itself against Satan and his destructive words. He sows the most dangerous seed of evil for the family - hatred and division. This is a cancerous wound, which kills the fundamental essence of human togetherness. On October 25, 1988, Our Lady says, "Satan is strong and, therefore, you little children by constant prayer, press tightly to my motherly heart". Mary is the woman in the Sacred Scripture who, with Her Child, conquers Satan (Gen 3:15 and Revelations12:1-6).



Bishop Milingo, a renowned exorcist, said in a conversation that Mary was the first exorcist. With Her Son, She will conquer Satan. Her Son is not only Jesus, but also every one of us, and Her family is not only the family

from Nazareth, but every family. Close to Her Motherly Heart, the individual and the family are protected from the works of destruction.

In the message of January 25, 1994, once again She reveals Satan's works and intentions. **"In this time Satan wants to create disorder in your hearts and in your families. Little children, do not give in. You must not permit that he leads you and your life."** It is his wish, to exempt us from the power of God's love and to govern with us, with our families, with our feelings and our decisions. There where he takes charge, only ruins remain. Mary, once again, shows Herself as the one who protects us with Her love and Her intercession before God. In so far as individuals and families do not accept Her help and protection, the door is opened to Satan, who tempts so that in the smallest things, faith, hope and love are lost

### **Peace in the Family**

Everything Mary said about families, all the advice She has given, all the motherly warnings, all invitations to abandonment to God and decisions for holiness, the invitations to love and forgiveness, lead to that main goal in accordance to which She has chosen Her name when She said: **"I am the Queen of Peace."**

Peace is the deepest yearning of every human heart. In whatever man does, be it good or bad, in some way, he seeks peace. When he kills another or takes his own life, he is seeking the way to peace just as he is when he gives his life for others. Peace is a Biblical value, which is realized only when the fullness of all good takes place: spiritual, psychological and physical. In the end, peace is possible only where life is accepted, loved, respected and protected. That is why, once again, the family is either a place of peace, and thus, life or a place of destruction, and thus, of death. In the heart of Mary, - as the Queen of Peace and the new Eve, as the mother of all the living, - peace in the family is cherished.

For this reason, one of the main intentions of the prayer in the family is peace, which is especially threatened at this time. In addition to calling us to pray for peace, She invites us to fast. What will happen to the family and in the world depends in particular on prayer and fasting (Her message of July 25, 1991). At the time of the message of July 25, 1991, the storm of war had already flared up in Croatia. It is God who gives peace and defends from unrest and evil (Her message of December 25, 1992).

While God desires peace, because He is the fount of peace and through Mary invites us to fast and pray for peace, Satan wants war, lack of peace, the destruction of all that is good in the heart, in the families and in the whole world (Her message of March 25,1993). Only with prayer can unrest and hatred be overcome and peace reign (Her message of April 25,1993).



In the Christmas message of 1994, Mary is the Mother who rejoices with us and prays with us for peace, for peace in our hearts, in our families, in our desires and in the whole world. She invokes the blessing of peace from the King of Peace, who alone can give peace. That is why we must finally come to understand that peace is God's gift, which gives birth to love, as love does to peace (Her message of April 25,1996).

According to the visionaries, at the end of the apparition, Our Lady always says, **"Go in peace, my angels!"**

### **Visual Images About the Family**

Just like Her Son, Mary uses images mainly from nature, so that She may more easily express what it is that She desires.

In the pre-Christmas message of December 20, 1984, She invites every family to bring a flower to Church and to place it beside the manger of the crib as an expression of abandonment to Jesus. In the message of May 1, 1996, She expresses Her desire for every family to become a harmonious flower, which She wishes to give to Jesus, and for every individual to be a petal of this flower in the realization of God's plans. She gave this message

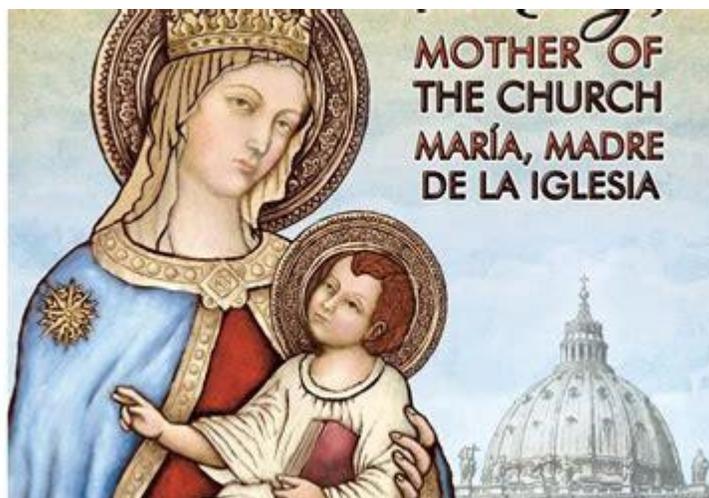
at the beginning of May, a month full of flowers and of enchanting beauty in nature. In this image, Mary expresses everything that She desires with our families and for family unity in general.

In April of 1993, She invites all of us to go into nature and to look at how nature is awakening so as to help us to open our hearts to God the Creator. Nature, which awakens from winter's sleep and awakens to a new life, is proof of the creative power of God and an inspiration to every heart and family, encouraging them to renewed hope and acceptance of life.

From the messages, it is clear to see where Mary is guiding the family and to what end She is educating it. Through Her protection and intercession, by the power of the spirit of God and the will of the Father, the family becomes a community of life, love and peace, a foretaste of heaven. It becomes the protection for the individual, and especially for children against a life without God.

Mary, the Mother of the family, and the Mother of the Church, cannot betray Her primary assignment, for by becoming the Mother of Jesus and the Mother of the Holy Family, She became the Mother of us all and the Mother of every family. Through Her intercession, God renews His 'small Church'.

Wholehearted cooperation with Her gives birth to the ardently desired peace. Let it be so.



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**Our mission statement is to motivate people to pray and to be Christian examples in their work, home and with others, for those needing the Light in a world of Darkness.**

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**Jesus and His Blessed Mother are watching over  
you.**

**Pray For The Salvation of Souls.**



**Pray the Rosary and the Chaplet of Divine Mercy**

**The Rosary is Biblical**

**Hail [Mary], full of grace, the Lord is with you!" (Luke 1:28)**

- **"Blessed are you among women and blessed is the fruit of your womb!" (Luke 1:42)**
- **Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. [A petition for intercessory prayer. Just like you ask others to pray for you. Why not ask Mary, the Mother of Jesus.]**