



# The Marian Observer

Praise be Jesus Christ

Now and Forever

December 2020

## A Different Christmas

Every year after exhaustion sets in, we say we're going to cut back, simplify and have a Christmas that focuses on the real reason for the season—Jesus. But every year, ads beckon, the children plead and it seems easier to just indulge our wants and whims. Overspending, overeating, materialism, and the sheer busyness rob us of our peace and joy, and rob Jesus of **His rightful role as the center of our celebration.**



For most people, Christmas has become quite a spectacle and an ugly and expensive one at that. How is it that most people do not see the absolute nonsense of buying expensive useless gifts and giving them to people who really don't need them! How totally insane!

Whether one shops on-line or at the mall, God has specifically placed the homeless and hungry in our path as a subtle reminder that they are the ones that we should be bringing Christmas cheer to. But in the all the shopping frenzy, we don't see them, we don't hear them, and most people simply don't care.

So how about a different Christmas this year? How about truly living out the true spirit of Christmas and giving to those who are in most need? Everyone can make a charitable gift in someone's name, letting them know that you bought a blanket or pair of sneakers, a pair of slacks, toothbrush, underwear, or whatever...for a homeless person. Imagine how special that homeless person will feel, compared to giving a gift to someone who has all the "toys" that money can buy.

(Cont'd on page 2)

**The Blessed Virgin Mary to the world from Medjugorje, October 25, 2020:**

"Dear Children: At this time, I am calling you to return to God and to prayer. Invoke the help of all the saints, for them to be an example and a help to you. Satan is strong and is fighting to draw all the more hearts to himself. He wants war and hatred. That is why I am with you for this long, to lead you to the way of salvation, to Him who is the Way, the Truth and the Life. Little children, return to the love for God and He will be your strength and refuge. Thank you for having responded to my call."

(Cont'd from page 1

On a recent Christmas, I avoided the endless gift giving spectacle and instead, went to greet the homeless in Miami. While family and friends were concerned for my safety, nevertheless, I went with Christmas cards that had cash included and some prayer cards and rosaries. I found that the homeless were aware that it was Christmas, understood the meaning of Christmas, and were most grateful that someone came to greet them on Christmas Day.

Some were gracious and wanted to share with other homeless people, some wanted to pray and others wanted to talk. Some were veterans who had proudly served our nation, some had fallen on hard times, having lost all their life savings. Some were alcoholics and some were druggies. Never for a moment did I fear for my life. St. Teresa of Calcutta would see Jesus in the brokenness of our humanity. I still see the faces and still live the encounters to this day.

So how about you? What will you do different this Christmas? No one has to go to the streets of Chicago or Miami, as the homeless and hungry are all around us (in the streets of Detroit, Pontiac, and Flint). How about truly making a difference in the life of someone who feels rejected or forgotten by society? There are a number of charities that can do that on your behalf. Give where it is most needed. Guaranteed is that your Christmas will be more meaningful. Let's approach Christmas differently and be transformed in the process.

(From "Christian Action News, Christmas 2018)

### Ideas from the Editor:

\* To help the homeless, consider a donation to the Pope Francis Center located at 438 St. Antoine, Detroit MI 48226, which feeds the homeless in downtown Detroit. The center welcomes guests from 7 - 11 a.m. Monday-Saturday for two nutritious meals, access to hot showers and grooming services, laundry facilities, and housing assistance. Guests also receive free medical, dental, and legal support through rotating clinics. Bike repair and mail services are also provided. See <https://popefranciscenter.org>.

\* Every year, instead of exchanging Christmas gifts with the adults, our family buys baby items which are donated to an organization that helps women who are considering abortion. Contact Mother and Unborn Baby Care Center, 24500 Southfield Rd, Southfield, MI 48075, [www.maubc.org](http://www.maubc.org).



### Happiness

*I can assure myself a happier life by:*

- Training myself to think constructively; filling my mind with useful, uplifting, positive thoughts; keeping out all negative and discouraging thoughts.
- Giving generously of myself. Making my life an act of love.
- Allowing myself time for relaxation, exercise, and fun. "Stop and smell the roses."
- Accepting myself as I am. Seeing myself as a growing, becoming person – forgetting the mistakes of the past.
- Taking full responsibility for my life. It's easy to blame parents, the past, or the government. Full maturity means accepting responsibility for all my actions, including my emotional and behavioral responses.
- Stretching myself beyond my comfort zone. Do something I've never done before. Share an emotion I've never shared before. Take a risk.
- Seeking to grow as a person: reading something new, learning something new, talking to someone new.
- Living one day at a time; making the most of today; not worrying about the future.
- Having an absorbing hobby.
- Learning to communicate effectively. Friendship and intimacy are not possible without communication.
- Seeing only the good in myself, in others, and in the situations in which I find myself.
- Spending time each day in prayer and meditation.

**TODAY, I TAKE THIS THOUGHT WITH ME – EVERY MORNING SAYS TO ME:  
"SOMETHING HAPPY IS ON THE WAY!"**

## *The Legend of the Christmas Tree*

**What Christmas would be complete without the glittering fir, filling the house with color and warmth? But where did the custom of the Christmas tree originate?**

The pine fir certainly wasn't present in Oriental Bethlehem when Jesus was born. Rather, palm trees grow in the East, and are often depicted around the Creche. *So why don't we decorate a palm tree, rather than a fir tree? Is the custom even Christmas, you might ask?*

Indeed, that Christmas tree standing in our living room has an ancient, wonderful history. Although the custom began as a pagan tradition, it was "baptized" and adopted by the wisdom of a great saint.

Saint Boniface was an Englishman who lived in the eighth century and who felt a calling to evangelize the German nation. One of the pagan German gods was a great oak tree called "Thunder Oak" in honor of the god Thor. Every winter, the locals offered a sacrifice to Thor, usually a child, under the mighty oak.

One year, fired by holy anger, Boniface decided to do away with the barbaric custom and bravely showed up with an ax just in time to prevent the killing. Before the astounded revelers, he proceeded to hack away at the massive trunk.

Legend has it that a miraculous gust of wind pushed down the tree at the first blows. Impressed that the "god" did not strike down the daring priest, the pagans accepted Christianity.

As the giant oak collapsed, standing there was a small fir tree that, somehow, escaped destruction. Pointing to it, the holy man said: *"This little tree, a young child of the forest, shall be your holy tree tonight. It is the wood of peace...It is the sign of an endless life, for its leaves are ever green. See how it points upward to heaven. Let this be called the tree of the Christmas child, gather about it, not in the wild wood, but in your own homes; there it will shelter no deeds of blood, but loving gifts and rites of kindness."*

Thus, using strength and tact, Saint Boniface did away with an idol.



As you gather around the Christmas Tree this year, share its holy origins with your children, so they may not only love its lights and colors, but also the rich Catholic heritage that is theirs.

(Crusade magazine, FFP, Nov/Dec 2018)

### A few Christmas ho-ho-hos

\* What is the best Christmas gift ever? A broken drum—you can't beat it!

\* The three stages of man: 1) Believe in Santa Claus; 2) Doesn't believe in Santa Claus; 3) IS Santa Claus.

\* Santa's elves are just a bunch of subordinate clauses!

\* I bought my son a refrigerator for Christmas; can't wait to see his face light up when he opens it.

\* When you stop believing in Santa is when you start getting clothes for Christmas.

\* Who is never hungry at Christmas? The turkey—he is always stuffed!

\* How do you know Santa is a man? Because no woman would wear the same attire every year.

\* What is the most popular Christmas carol in the desert? Oh, caaamel ye faithful!

## Living the Spirit of ADVENT

**Advent is the liturgical season that prepares us for the celebration of the Incarnation at Christmas and for Christ's Second Coming. The faithful are asked to prepare themselves worthily—to make their souls fitting abodes for the Redeemer coming into the world and to make themselves ready to His final coming as judge at the end of the world.**

**How, then, to live the Spirit of Advent so that Christmas is truly joyful and Christ-centered?**

### 1. Receive Jesus in the Sacraments

Advent is the time for attending Holy Mass more frequently. The penitential season of Advent is also an ideal time to pursue deeper conversion by receiving God's mercy in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Plan now to make a good confession during Advent.

Follow the Daily Mass Readings.

As we reflect on God's Word every day during Advent, he can prepare our hearts to receive the Savior at Christmas. We hear inspiring stories of Old Testament figures like Isaiah, Jeremiah, and David longing for the promised Messiah. The Gospel readings speak of the Second Coming of the Lord, John the Baptist's preaching on repentance, and the early events that led up to the birth of Jesus.

### 2. Light the Candles on your Advent Wreath

Celebrating with an Advent wreath is one of the most cherished customs of the season. Three of the candles are purple and one is rose. The symbolism of the wreath provides a wonderful opportunity for parents to teach their children about the meaning of the season. The purple candles signify the sorrows we feel for our sins, while the rose candle points to the joy of the imminent birth of Jesus. The light of the candles reminds us that Jesus is the Light of the World.

Open a window every day on your Advent Calendar.

Children particularly delight in keeping an Advent calendar to count the days until December 25. Christian Advent calendars typically depict a religious Christmas scene and a passage from Sacred Scripture.

### 3. Make a Jesse Tree

The Advent custom of making a Jesse Tree involves tracing the family of Jesus. The Jesse Tree received its name because the prophet Isaiah tells us about the promised Messiah, who would be a "shoot" from the "stump" of Jesse. Jesse was the father of King David and Jesus is called the "Son of David" in the New Testament. The idea is to make ornaments that symbolize the ancestors of Jesus and events and prophecies that tell the story of God through the Old Testament. The ornaments are made to hang on the Tree which could be made of many things—actual tree limb, artificial tree, or one could be drawn on paper. There are Catholic websites where you can find lists of ornaments and Scripture passages.



### 4. Put Straw in the Manger

Have family members place a piece of straw in the manger every time they perform a good deed or work of mercy.

### Notice !!!

In thanksgiving for all the help and support we have received in the past, the Marian Peace Center has arranged for a Mass to be said for all our past volunteers and benefactors.

In case you would like to join us:

Saturday, January 2, 2021

5 p. m. Mass

St. Gerald Church

21300 Farmington Rd

Farmington 48336

Questions: 586-268-3731



*You are invited to attend...*

# A BABY SHOWER FOR THE BLESSED MOTHER

During this Advent Season as we prepare our hearts

for the coming of our Savior,

the Holy Infants Prayer Group invites you

to attend a Baby Shower; a “spiritual” Baby Shower

for our Blessed Mother.

From now until December 25<sup>th</sup>,

our hope is to make as many spiritual offerings as possible

so that the Blessed Mother and St. Joseph

will have our many “spiritual” Gifts

to place at Baby Jesus’ crib on Christmas morn.

You can “attend” this Baby Shower

by simply making spiritual offerings

(Holy Communions, Rosaries, Chaplets, sacrifices,

acts of kindness, etc.) any spiritual gifts that you wish,

offering them for the intentions

in the Heart of Baby Jesus (or of His Mommy or Daddy).

Let us wrap our gifts with love and thanksgiving

to our Eternal Father for the Gift of His Son.

***Please tell your family and friends. Everyone is invited!***

***No need to R.S.V.P. by writing down your name  
or what gift you will bring. Heaven will know!***

***All who “attend” Blessed Mother’s Baby Shower  
will be remembered at a special Holy Mass  
offered during the Christmas Season.***

Suggestion:

Make a baby shower favor as a reminder of your participation.  
Tie it with a white ribbon in loving memory of Aborted Babies  
who will never have a Baby Shower, a Birthday, or a Christmas.  
Then you can hang your favor on your Christmas tree.

*Questions: Please call 248-653-9636*

## *The CHRISTMAS spiders*

In a quiet cottage in the woods lived a widow and her eight children. The widow worked hard to keep her children warm and well-fed, but money was not plentiful. Christmas was coming, but instead of feeling joyful as the holiday approached, she felt only sad. She did not have enough money to buy gifts to open on Christmas morning. "I cannot afford new toys or books," she thought, walking home through the woods one night. "What will I give my children?"

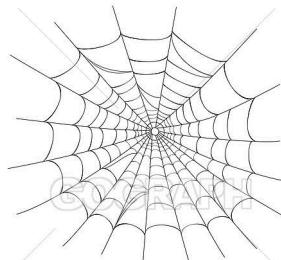
On Christmas Eve while the family ate their simple Christmas dinner, the widow tried to conceal her worries. After tucking her excited children into bed, she pulled her chair close to the fire and tried to erase the visions of their disappointed faces from her mind. After all, what fun is Christmas morning without gifts to open?

"Perhaps a Christmas tree would make my children happy," the widow sighed. She put on her coat and walked through the woods in search of the right tree. She chose a small but beautiful evergreen and brought it to the cottage.

For hours, the widow carefully decorated the fragrant tree branches with colorful fruits, bits of ribbon, and Christmas cookies. Then she blew out her candle and went to bed, hoping the tree would make her children's empty Christmas a little bit brighter.

While the tired widow slept, tiny spiders crept from the cracks and corners of the cottage. They had watched her hard at work, decorating the tree for her children. Onto the branches they jumped, spinning delicate strands of silky web which gracefully covered the small tree from trunk to top. It was a beautiful sight.

When the family awoke on Christmas morning, they could not believe their eyes. The webs of silk had been turned into pure silver, covering the tree with dazzling brightness!



During the night, Santa Claus had come with gifts for the children and saw the tree covered with spiderwebs. He smiled as he saw how happy the spiders were, but knew how heartbroken the widow would be if she saw her tree covered with spiderwebs. So he turned the silky webs into pure, shining silver.

The next morning, as the widow watched her children sing and dance around the beautiful shining tree, she knew it would be a wonderful Christmas after all!

**From that day forward, people have hung strands of shiny silver tinsel on their Christmas trees in honor of the poor widow and her tiny Christmas spiders. -- (By Stephanie Herbek)**

### Great Spiritual Reading

#### **"BENEDICT OF BAVARIA"**

As a man born, bred, and who spent much of his life in Bavaria, it is natural that Joseph Ratzinger would be influenced by its culture, values, and traditions. But what does this mean for the papacy, the Catholic Church, and the world? Author **Brennan Pursell**, a professional historian who is fluent in German and spent many months in Bavaria over the years, believes that understanding Pope Benedict's Bavarian heritage is the key to understanding his character.

Even though this book was written when Joseph Ratzinger was Pope, it is still relevant to this day. The book is enlightening and very readable. I personally enjoyed getting to know Pope Benedict XVI more through his fascinating descriptions of his love for his homeland and the Catholic Church. — Editor

*Hardcover, 243 pages. Sells for \$24.95, Our price: \$5, plus shipping and packaging.  
Please call Eleanor, 586-268-3731. One book left.*

## A Birthday Gift for Jesus

By Kathy Sabol

On this Your birthday, Jesus,  
What can I give to You?  
What gift is truly worthy?  
What kind will really do?  
You see, You've given me so much  
And blessed me through the years,  
That finding something special  
Cannot help but cause me fear.  
For how can I express my love  
With things that are on earth?

There's nothing that seems good enough  
To celebrate Your birth.  
If I could own each sunrise,  
I would give YOU one each day.  
But, sadly, I can't do this.  
They're not mine to give away.  
I'd also give the moon and stars  
That every nighttime shine,  
But once again, I can't,  
Because I know that these aren't mine.

I'd offer You each flower  
That will bloom throughout the spring  
But I can't have them all  
Therefore, this gift I cannot bring.  
I'd give you every mountain  
Or the oceans, vast and deep  
There's so much I would offer, Lord,  
Yes, nothing I would keep.

Dear Jesus, please forgive me  
For I cannot seem to find  
The proper gift to give You  
One that's really truly mine.  
I've searched the whole world over  
Yet there's nothing I can see  
And everything I think of  
Is what You have given me.

I just want to give You something  
That was not sent from above.  
Oh, dear Jesus! Yes, I know now!  
**I will give You all my love.**  
(From "Heart, Soul, and Inspiration, by Kathy Sabol, 2007)  
REPRINTED WITH PERMISSION.

## Medjugorje News



The *Church of the Holy Sepulchre* in Jerusalem is where the Feast of the **Exaltation of the Cross** was first established in 350 AD. Constantine, whose mother, St. Helena, had discovered the true relics of the Cross, established the feast. He was the first Christian Emperor after the Roman collapse. Each year, since the beginning, the relics of the True Cross are taken out for veneration on September 14th—the Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross. A reading is read on this feast that quotes John 12:32. "*Once I am lifted up from earth, I will draw all men to myself.*"

*The "lifting" up of the Cross means  
The "exalting" of the Cross  
The "rising" of the Cross*

In the early 1990's, a visiting priest to Medjugorje who had lived for many years in Jerusalem and helped to care for the sacred sites surrounding the death and resurrection of Jesus, spoke from the pulpit of St. James Church. He said...

*...In the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, on the Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross, Holy Mass would be celebrated at 7:00 A.M. There would be a few Arab women, seven or eight Franciscans, a couple of young altar boys present for the Mass. They would bring out the relic of the true Cross, and, by 8:00 A.M., everything would be put away. In Rome, it is the same. But here in Medjugorje, on the Feast of the Triumph of the Cross, just recently, 100,000 people climbed Cross Mountain and celebrated Holy Mass. It took hours and hours of a steady stream of people up and down the mountain.*

*I thought, "Dear Jesus, this is the only place in the world where this feast is celebrated!" I've been in Jerusalem; it's celebrated liturgically, but not with thousands of people fulfilling Jesus' words: "I will draw all men to myself."*

*They were like an "ant stream" from everywhere, from five continents of the world, going up that mountain.*

*Cont'd on next page*

***Medjugorje— cont'd from previous page***

*They're doing what Jesus said. He's drawing them to Himself in a literal meaning of His words.*

*That doesn't happen in Rome; it doesn't happen in Jerusalem. This is the only place in the whole world where this Feast is being celebrated, where the Cross is being lifted up, raised up, exalted. Jesus is literally drawing people from five continents, to Himself, going up that hill, physically, geographically...*

*Hallelujah, Lord, I want to be in that number. That means you are safe. You're drawn away from the seducer. Satan doesn't "draw" men to himself, he seduces men in a sinful seduction. Adam and Eve were seduced. Jesus must remedy that. How? "If I be lifted up, I will draw all men to myself. I will smash his head." (Gen. 3:15)*

On September 12, 1985, Our Lady gave a message in Medjugorje:

***"Dear children, I want to tell you that the cross should be central these days. Pray especially before the Cross from which great graces are coming..."***

This was, of course, just days before the celebration of the Feast of the Triumph of the Cross, but, in the village of Medjugorje the Cross is always central because of its visible presence on top of a tall mountain that helps to form the valley in which Medjugorje is located. **The Cross has always been central in Our Lady's plans and messages over the years as well.**

([www.medjugorje.com](http://www.medjugorje.com) – July 13, 2013)

## **Subscribe TODAY to The Marian Observer**

If you have not already done so, please send your e-mail address to [MarianPeaceCenter@gmail.com](mailto:MarianPeaceCenter@gmail.com) and you will receive our on-line issue of the Marian Observer.

## **The Marian Observer**

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*Eleanor Burley, Editor  
586-268-3731*

Medjugorje Peace Center of Detroit

(a.k.a. Marian Peace Center)  
P. O. Box 721248  
Berkley, MI 48072  
586-219-7223  
Established: 1991

### Mission Statement:

*"The Marian Peace Center of Detroit is a non-profit organization that exists to spread the messages of the Blessed Virgin Mary as revealed in Medjugorje and other apparition sites.*

*We are dedicated to helping people live and spread peace by giving themselves to Jesus through Our Lady's call for prayer, fasting, conversion, penance, and faith."*

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## *The Marian Observer*

Medjugorje Peace Center of Detroit

(a.k.a Marian Peace Center)

P. O. Box 721248, Berkley, MI 48072-0248

Phone: 586-219-7223

Website: [www.MarianPeace.org](http://www.MarianPeace.org)

E-Mail: [MarianPeaceCenter@gmail.com](mailto:MarianPeaceCenter@gmail.com)

Facebook: Joseph Burley

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We respectfully recognize and accept that the final authority regarding apparitions and locutions rests with the Holy See in Rome, to whose judgment we humbly submit.

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**December 2020**

*Please continue to  
check our website and  
Facebook page for  
news about our Center.*

### R.I.P. Marge Wagner!

We are saddened to announce that one of our founding Board members, Marge Wagner, passed away unexpectedly on October 25.



Marge has been an integral part of our Center since the beginning. She secured speakers and many times hosted them in her home. Marge worked tirelessly to pass on information about Medjugorje and gave testimony at our Medjugorje Information Nights. Her other contributions were spearheading our youth events (specifically Youth 2000), proofreading the newsletter, and coordinating and emceeing our programs. She could even be found in the kitchen at programs, tirelessly assisting in serving refreshments.

Marge took a "family leave" about 8 years ago to care for her disabled husband, rejoining us this past year when Chuck passed away. We will miss her greatly and appreciate all her love and support these past 29 years.

### Fr. Aniello Salicone, SX, dies from Covid

One of our very favorite priests and speakers, Father Aniello Salicone, SX, passed away recently from the virus. We are saddened as Fr. Aniello was a very special priest who loved coming to Detroit to share his special gifts with us. Our history with him goes back to 2005 when we hosted him at St. Lucy and St. Stanislaus. Since then, he joined us for Days of Reflection, healing Masses, and retreats: September 2009 (St. Hubert, St. Anastasia, St. Stephen); June 2013 (St. Mark); September 2014 (St. Isidore); and October 2016 (St. Gerald). The last time we were blessed to see him was in May of 2019 for healing services at St. Gerald and St. Basil. Board members enjoyed Father's sense of humor and treating him to a meal after programs. Unable to stand during his last few visits, Father prayed the Mass sitting on a stool and joyfully blessed people while reminding them of his favorite prayer, "Thank you, Jesus, for loving me as your #1!" We will greatly miss his smiling face and humble presence. **May the Lord be merciful and grant him eternal life.**

