

# Lourdes Echoes

May-June 2017

Vol. 8 No. 4

A PUBLICATION OF THE LOURDES CENTER • THE MARIST FATHERS & BROTHERS

## OUR LADY AND THE AGNOSTIC

There are thousands of “inexplicable healings” reported every year at the Marian shrine in Lourdes, France, one of the most visited shrines in the world. However, only a minute number of these “healings” are deemed truly “miraculous” by the Church; the criteria for such a designation are extremely rigorous.

Many people reject the whole phenomenon, unaware of the rigor of the Church’s studies and uninformed about how the Church validates or rejects the thousands of “apparent miracles” presented for examination. For many people, the concept of “miracle” is just the talk of charlatans, lacking any scientific basis.

This attitude of certain “intellectuals” contrasts the respectful posture of certain prestigious professionals such as the French doctor Luc Montagnier, a recipient of the Nobel Prize in Medicine (2008), who, among his various achievements, is credited with having discovered HIV.

A former director of the Pasteur Institute, this eminent scientist offered his opinion on Lourdes miracles in a book, *Le Nobel et le Moine* (The Nobel [Laureate] and the Monk), in which he dialogues with the Cistercian Michel Niassaut. When the conversation turns to the inexplicable healings in Lourdes and Brother Michel asks the doctor his



Inside The Basilica of Our Lady of the Rosary within the Sanctuary of Our Lady of Lourdes, France.

opinion as a non-believer, Montagnier responds: “When a phenomenon is inexplicable, if it really exists, then there is no reason to deny it.”

If the phenomenon exists, what’s the point in denying it? It should be studied, not denied. Montaigner affirms that “in the miracles of Lourdes, there is something inexplicable,” and he rejects the position held by some scientists, who “commit the error of rejecting what they don’t

understand. I don’t like this attitude. I frequently quote the astrophysicist Carl Sagan: “The absence of evidence is not evidence of absence.”

Montagnier continues: “As far as the miracles of Lourdes that I’ve studied, I believe it really is something inexplicable.” “I don’t have an explanation for these miracles,” he adds, “and I recognize that there are healings that are not included within the current limits of science.”



**REV. ANDREW ALBERT, S.M.**

Dear Friends of the Lourdes Center, I hope you all had a great Easter! And now we can enjoy the beautiful days of spring.

Some thanks are in order. First, I want to thank all of our readers who pray for our ministry and who support our ministry with generous donations. We could not continue the ministry without your generous support.

Thanks also to many of you who send us new names, new readers. Word of mouth is the best advertising. So many Catholics, so many of your friends may have never heard of what happened in 1858 in a small town in France. The Blessed Mother appeared 18 times to St. Bernadette, a young illiterate French girl. Everyone needs to hear of this marvelous event. YOU CAN HELP. All you have to do is send us the names and addresses of people who might be interested. Thanks again to those readers who help us in this way.

My thanks to Fr. Lacasse who has written interesting and insightful articles in the Lourdes Echoes for many years. Father, who is now in a nursing home, feels he cannot do this any longer. I thank him and know you will keep him in your prayers.

And now for a special announce-

## THE DIRECTOR'S CORNER

ment. As of July 1st Fr. George Szal, s.m. will take over as the new director of the Lourdes Center and the new superior of our Marist Community. It has been a joy and privilege for me to have been director for the past six and a half years. In talks with the provincial (my boss) I explained that it is time for someone else to take charge.

Fr. Szal is a Marist priest and believes very much in the ministry, and was chaplain twice in recent years with the yearly pilgrimage to Lourdes.

Fr. George was born and raised in Detroit, Michigan, the second of six children. In his own words he says, "My parents were devout Catholics and sent me to Catholic Schools. Both of my parents were devoted to the Blessed Mother and I think it was from them and the Franciscan Sisters at Our Lady Queen of Heaven School in Detroit that I developed a love for and dependence upon the Blessed Virgin Mary in all of my necessities. In fact it was my mom who taught me the rosary before I was able to receive communion."

Fr. George was ordained in 1975. His first assignment was as chaplain at Massachusetts General Hospital, Boston, one of the largest and most prestigious hospitals in the state.



**REV. GEORGE SZAL, S.M.**

Hence, his apostolate to the sick was his first.

He also served in a number of Marist parishes, and was a chaplain at four prisons. He was pastor at Immaculate Conception Parish in Revere, MA, and since 1989 has been involved in the NEO-Catechumenal Way.

As he says, "I am extremely happy to be called at this point in my life to serve as the Director of the Lourdes Center."

I personally am very happy that our provincial Fr. Paul Frechette has appointed Fr. George Szal as the new director.

As for me, I will stay here at the center and continue to support this wonderful ministry that was entrusted to us by Cardinal Cushing over sixty years ago.

Have a wonderful Easter season and God bless you all.

*Fr. Albert*

# Reflections of a Marist Priest

By Rev. Roland Lacasse, s.m.



REV. ROLAND LACASSE, S.M.

On February 6th, I celebrated my anniversary as a Marist priest. As I look back over the past 57 years, I ask myself, “Would I do it over again, knowing what I know now?” And the answer I would give is “Yes,” not because it has been easy (it hasn’t) but because it has been a rewarding and satisfying life.

Some people would say, “How could it be rewarding and satisfying if you were not free to marry and have a family of your own, if you were not free to do what you wanted to do or go where you wanted to go, and if you were not free to make your way in the world and make a name for yourself?” And the answer to that is that there are many kinds of rewards and satisfactions in life, and you cannot experience them all. The Bible says “All fulfillment has its limits.”

So we have to be able to do two things: (1) Make a choice(s) and (2) Live by the choices we have made.

Someone once told me, “We live with our choices,” and I have to agree. At least if we are reasonable and mature people, people who are not afraid to reach out to God and ask for the graces we need to get through each new day. To be a “Marist” is to look at life in a certain way and to be willing to work at becoming more and more like Mary in her attitude, values, and disposition. Those who think that this is easy do not understand what is involved. Did you ever try to change your husband or

wife? Did you ever try to change something you did not like about yourself?

It’s only by the grace of God that anyone can change for the better. Oh, you can change for the worse by yourself, and many do! But to change for the better, you need God’s help, God’s grace. In addition to prayer and a personal relationship with God, some of the things that have helped me to weather “the storms of life” in the past 57 years are as follows:

**A sense of humor.** This is really an expression of humility, especially when the joke is on you. My mother was right when she said to me one day, “If you’re not worth a laugh, you’re not worth much.” My mother was the President of her Third Order of Mary group at one time, and she realized the importance of not taking oneself too seriously. We should take our work seriously, but we should not take ourselves too seriously. A real Marist will never consider himself or herself more important than others.

**Never over-react.** This is easier said than done, but we have to work at it. Many of us have to learn to control our emotions. It’s not easy. When I was stationed in Boston in the late 1970s, I remember being cut off by a taxi, and I wanted to ram him! Recently I was driving on Routh 495 and a big truck cut me off when I was in the passing lane, and I threw up my hands in disgust. The fact that there is

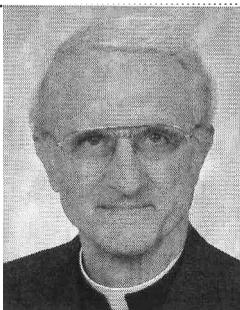
so much “road rage” nowadays is proof that many have never learned not to over-react. Parents frequently fail to teach their children the importance of self-discipline. They want to give their children everything they never had, but in doing so they fail to give them things they did have, like discipline!

**Reach out to others.** Not just your relatives and friends, and not just those who you are attracted to. Our attitude should be one of openness to others. Someone once said, “When a person is all wrapped up in himself/herself, the package is small.” We can either live for ourselves, or we can live for others. But there is no doubt what a real Marist’s orientation in life should be. Mary at Cana could have said to herself, “It’s none of my business if they ran out of wine. It’s their problem.” Instead, she “owned” the problem and said to the stewards, “Do whatever my Son tells you.” Mary had spoken to Jesus already, realizing that she had to reach out to others, if she was to be the person God wanted her to be.

**Hang in there.** My mother used to say, “Ca va se passer.” One of my favorite poems is entitled “Don’t quit.” Another one goes like this... “It is easy enough to be pleasant when life goes along like a song, but the one who’s worthwhile is the one who can smile,

*Continued on page 5*

## Grace Comes Tailor-Made



*“My grace is sufficient for you”*

2 Corinthians 12,9.

God’s grace is ever available. His mercy knows no bounds. It often happens that the ones who visit the sick to offer consolation leave the bedside finding themselves the ones consoled. I have heard this from others and I, myself, have experienced it.

### Former Drug Addict

This story took place at a college campus. I noticed this particular student coming down to the parking lot in his wheelchair. He pushed a button and the rear door of his van opened up and out popped a platform that lazily lowered and stopped at ground level. Once on the platform he was lifted up into the van. From there he managed to get into the driver’s seat. Thanks to technology he drove off, all the controls at his fingertips.

### His Story

He was hooked on drugs. Living in a moody and hellish state, he was miserable. One day, under the influence, he smashed his car into a tree. Paralyzed from the waist down, he is lucky to be alive. Are you sorry for him? Don’t be! He’s not. He explains that since the accident he has been off drugs. He sees in this

tragedy the hand of God. He no longer lives in a foggy, messed up life. He is graduating soon and the prospects for a job as a counselor look promising. Then came the words spoken in all honesty, “If what happened to me was what I needed to straighten out my life, I welcome it.”

### What it Means to Survive

What I find striking in this tragic account is that he did not return to a life before addiction, but got his life back and then some – despite his paralysis. He was exhilarated and full of optimism. He has prevailed or, as we would say today, he is a survivor. Those who survive, who prevail, have wounds to show as a result of their misfortune, but a better human being all the same.

### Grace Abounds

Have you ever seen a man in a wheelchair or a blind person using a cane as a path finder and say to yourself, “I could never live that way!” You say that because you are not in that person’s shoes and are unable to assess the truth of the matter until you actually find yourself in that predicament. Once you are experi-

encing what you imaginatively abhorred may well be a game changer. Human nature is very resilient, and grace builds on nature. Misfortunes and adversity invite corresponding grace. With adversity comes the grace to cope. No adversity, no grace. Not only does grace abound, it’s much like the glove that fits the size of the hand.

### A Story with a Moral

A man is walking to work one morning. He notices, once again, that his right shoulder is bothering him. It’s the cross he is carrying. Now he is wise enough to know that we all have crosses to bear in life. But he now feels that his cross is a bit much. Looking up, he notices a sign: St. Joseph’s Workshop. Odd, he never noticed it before. He enters and sees racks and racks of crosses of all sizes. He makes a beeline for the children’s section. He becomes embarrassed that he a grown man looking at crosses made for the little folks. Sheepishly, he makes his way to the adult section. He spies one that strikes his fancy. He shoulders it and prances before the mirror. It

*Continued on page 5*

# Fr. Lacasse

*Continued from page 3*

when everything goes dead wrong.” Remember the song, “I Never Promised You A Rose Garden!”

### **Bloom where you are planted.**

So, life has handed you lemons instead of peaches and cream, make lemonade! The lament of the married man is “Would someone please tell me how I picked a lemon in the “garden of love” when I thought only peaches grow?”

Some people say you are “gifted”

from birth or not, and that whatever qualities you possess are qualities you inherited from your parents. This is a huge over-simplification. The parable of the talents reminds us that whatever talents we possess have to be worked at and developed. People have said to me, “You must have had wonderful parents,” and I say to myself, “I did, but the grace of God took up where they left off, and I had to co-operate with that grace. And so do you! ■

# Fr. Grispino

*Continued from page 4*

looks good, but too light to bear. He tries another, but too heavy. The trying on for the right size and weight goes on for a while until he spots a cross by itself in the corner against the wall. It’s a perfect fit! He now leaves giving St. Joseph a wave and

a cheerful, “Thank you!”

Before the door closes behind him he hears the words of St. Joseph, “The cross you are leaving with is the same one you came in with.” Thanks to the grace bestowed by the Heavenly Father we can say: Grace comes Tailor-Made. ■

# Purgatorials for the Deceased

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone # \_\_\_\_\_

Requested by: \_\_\_\_\_

*Suggested offering: \$10.00 (perpetual)*

## Our Lady's Purgatorial Society

Each year your enrolled deceased and loved ones are remembered during the 365 daily Masses celebrated by the Marist Fathers. An attractive certificate framed in a blue folder with a colorful picture of Our Lady is sent to the donor or recipient.

## Gift Center

The following gift items are available for order from the Marist Lourdes Center in Boston.

### *Order from The Lourdes Center*

Our Lady of Lourdes Medal in Grotto.....\$5.00

Brown Scapular.....\$2.00

Green Scapular.....\$2.00

St. Bernadette pins.....\$3.50

Our Lady of Lourdes pins.....\$3.50

Booklet: "Lourdes and Our Lady"  
by Fr. John Lynch, S.M.....\$4.00



Lourdes Center Chapel, Boston

Please send your order with payment to: Lourdes Bureau Gift Center,  
P.O. Box 15575, 698 Beacon Street, Boston, MA 02215-2594.



**Our email address is:**  
[ourlady@lourdescenter.org](mailto:ourlady@lourdescenter.org)  
[lourdescenter@yahoo.com](mailto:lourdescenter@yahoo.com)

**Our website is:**  
[www.lourdescenter.org](http://www.lourdescenter.org)

# Our Deceased

*We have been notified that the following friends of the Lourdes Center have passed away. Please join us in remembering them in your prayers.*

FLORA DEORA, IL  
 FRANCES EILEEN VEZINA, MI  
 FELIX ARAMBULA, TX  
 MIKE RICHARD, TX  
 EDWARD PASZKIEWICZ, IL  
 CUSHMAN K. PINAO, HI  
 CORBETT DUHON, SR., LA  
 MARY A. FLYNN, PA  
 FRED BROADHACKER, MO  
 HELEN BROWER, MI  
 CLARA HILL, MI  
 ESTHER WACKER, MO  
 SUZETTE CANONIZADO, OR  
 ELEANOR DIVENTURA, PA  
 STEPHANIE DAYTON, PA  
 DORIS BURNS, MS  
 JOSEPH SMITH, MD  
 LILLIAM CANTON, CA  
 LORETA S. FERBES FELIX, GA  
 ALICE TOBENS, TN  
 BEVERLY SINCLAIR, MT  
 DOROTHY DE NOVA, NY  
 KATHLEEN CORSON, WY  
 HOWARD WARREN KRAUSS, VA  
 PAT KNOP, MI  
 RITA SACK, PA  
 ROBERT L. SPANG, NJ  
 RUTH GULLAGE, MA  
 JOHN M. KENNEY, MA  
 AGNES PRINCIPE, PA  
 BERNICE LESNIAK, IL  
 SR. GRACIS SCHMITT, IA  
 CHERYL SVGITA, HI  
 ANN G. ALBRECHT, MA  
 MAURO BACOLO, NJ  
 EUGENE SCHOENBAUER, MN  
 EDITH FERRETTI, PA  
 ARLINE RHEAUME, MA  
 MARGARET H LUCAS, CT  
 GREGORY M. TAKACS, CA  
 JOE & GLADYS OPPOLD, IA  
 SR. RITA ST. ONGE, CT  
 LUCILLE NEWTON, WI  
 KAREN RODRIGUES, RI  
 NICHOLAS & MARY DOFFING, KS  
 MARGARET WYDERKA, WI

ESTHER BALTIERRA, TX  
 CLARA GAYLIN LARSON, SD  
 HELEN E. MOLIHAN, MA  
 CECILIA GROLEAU, WI  
 BEATRICE A. PICHE, MI  
 RITA WILLIAMS, NC  
 SR. RENE FISCHER, D.C., IN  
 MARY M. SCHAFFER, OH  
 HELEN NEWBERG, MN  
 GEORGE KRISKO, OH  
 LINDA AREENEAX, LA  
 PENNY D. STIMLEY, IN  
 LOVELY MOSES, HI  
 ALICE D. DAVID, LA  
 CONCHA SANCHEZ, TX  
 MARIA HEREDIA, MA  
 RAYMOND HUBER, IL  
 FRED BROADHACKER, MO  
 MARGARET THORNTON, WI  
 MARY SEVEC, AZ  
 DOROTHY MEIER, MN  
 DOLORES C. HENLEY, LA  
 AQUILINO BRAVO, CA  
 DANIEL J. DALY, MA  
 WILLIE B. THAIS, NM  
 FRANK PURZYCKI, NY  
 FRANK FERGUSON, MA  
 WILLIAM D. MATTIO, MA  
 JAMES WENDLAND, MD

BILL J. GUNTER, KS  
 SALLY DERINS, FL  
 JOSE DA SILVA, MA  
 KATHY CAMILLERI, MI  
 SR. M. ROSALINE KAROLAK, PA  
 MARGARET FABICH, PA  
 MARGARET DOCKENDORF, MN  
 ELAINE MAGNASCO, GA  
 MARY CARNEY, CO  
 GERALDINE YANNELL, HI  
 MARGARET CATALANO, NY  
 MARY R. LEARIE, PA  
 KATHY MUNCH, LA  
 CATHERINE CONNELLY, MA  
 MAINE KAPULE, WA  
 JESSIE HART, NY  
 MARILYN ADAMITIS, WI  
 MARTIN SOMMERS, NY  
 JOSEPH & ROSEMARIE REARDON, WI  
 MILDRED JEN LIPAROTO, GA  
 PATRICIA MEROLO, FL  
 REV. JOSEPH WISEMAN, NY  
 MARIE GEORGE, AK  
 ELLA TULIK, AK  
 FRANCES VEZINA, AZ  
 PAUL & RENA RICHARD, LA  
 JULIA & JAMES DOODY, MA



Do you know someone who would like to receive Echoes from Lourdes? Give them a **FREE SUBSCRIPTION!**

*Send their names and addresses. Use a separate sheet if necessary.*

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E-mail the information to: [ourlady@lourdescenter.org](mailto:ourlady@lourdescenter.org)  
 MAIL it to:  
 Lourdes Center  
 P.O. Box 15575  
 698 Beacon Street, Boston, MA 02215-2594

## Readers Write

**M.R.** I am a faithful user of Lourdes Water and went to Lourdes, France back in August 1980. I have gone through cancer surgery and lost both breasts and an ovary in 1982. Other major surgeries include thyroid removal, cataracts, brain tumor removal, and kidney tumor removal. I owe my health and life to the Holy Family, especially the Blessed Mother, for being with me through all my earthly experiences. I will be 76 this coming September, and just can't say enough to people how our Blessed Mother does intercede for us and does take care of us. But, you must give her and the Holy Family "thanks" daily. I use this Lourdes Water always, pass it on to

others who are ill, and pray for them. Being single and never married, the Blessed Mother has taken good care of me and I owe her a lot. Passing on the word of "Lourdes" is a must. I do this by giving bottles of water to those in need. I just want you to know how blessed I've been. **VA**

**M.M.** – I want to share with you the very special blessing I have received from Our Lady. Several weeks ago I had an appointment with the vascular surgeon to check on my aortic aneurysm. Every six months I have an ultrasound to be sure it doesn't change or get worse. I waited in her office after the ultrasound and after she checked it she came into the room with a big smile and said, "You don't have to come to see me anymore – it's gone." She gave me a big hug and repeated, "You don't have to come and see me anymore unless

your legs get more painful – but the aortic aneurysm is gone." – another big smile and another hug – end of visit. I was so amazed and so very thankful. I thank God! The next morning as I was washing and showering I realized it was through the intercession of Our Lady. I use your Lourdes water faithfully every morning – on my head, chest, abdomen – the "hurting" parts. I also put it on my husband's back as I put on the daily "grease" for his serious skin cancer and ask Our Lady of Lourdes to pray for us. Thank you, Our Lady of Lourdes! And thanks to all of you who make this precious gift available to all of us! I forgot to mention that my husband's serious problems have been in what they are calling "remission" as they stay the same and do not get worse as they were expected to. He is 81 years old and I am 79. God bless you all! **WA**

## Affiliations

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yearly and at our  
weekly Perpetual Novena**

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Offering: 1 year \$2.00,  
3 years \$5.00 Lifetime \$10.00

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City \_\_\_\_\_

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## Lourdes Water ...

**...is an expression  
of my faith...  
my trust in God's  
mercy.**

Offering to cover shipping &  
handling \$ \_\_\_\_\_

N.B. A donation of \$3.00 per  
bottle is suggested to cover  
our expenses. When the offer-  
ing permits, we use Priority  
Mail. We will accept orders of  
1-3-5-6-and 10 bottles. For  
multiples thereof and for  
unusual numbers requested,  
we reserve the right to send  
what is both just and feasible.

**Please send \_\_\_\_\_ bottles of the  
water from the Shrine at Lourdes**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

(Please Print Clearly)

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

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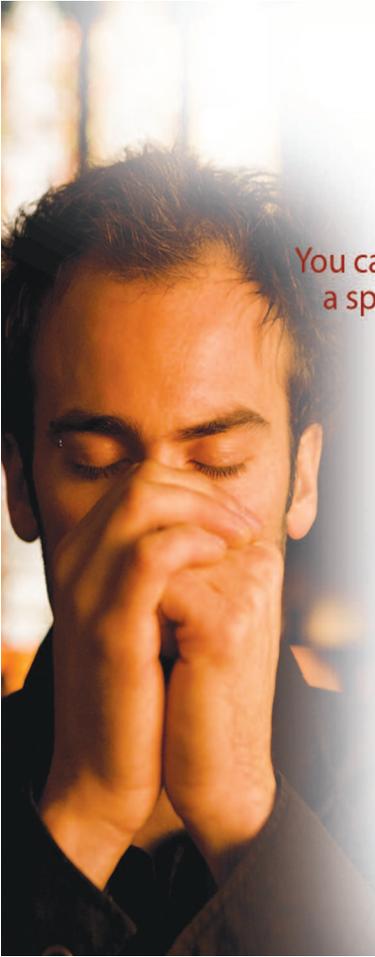
Does this person receive Lourdes Echoes?

Yes  No

If not, should we send Lourdes Echoes to them?

Yes  No

PLEASE ALLOW 3-6 WEEKS FOR DELIVERY



On Friday, May 12 & Friday, May 28  
and Friday, June 9 & Friday, June 23,  
The Marist Fathers & Brothers of the Lourdes Center  
will be praying for you.

You can count on it, on the second and the fourth Friday of every month, we hold  
a special prayer day when we say special prayers and offer Mass at our chapel  
for our extended Lourdes family ... including you.

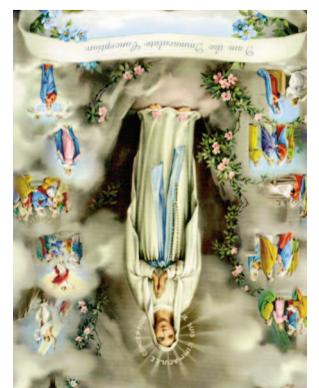
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Asst. Director: Rev. Roland Lacasse, S.M.  
Printed with Ecclesiastical Approval

Lourdes.  
Published bi-monthly to promote devotion  
of Our Lady and interest in her shrine at

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