

echoes

FROM LOURDES

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FR. GEORGE SZAL, S.M.

THE DIRECTOR'S LETTER

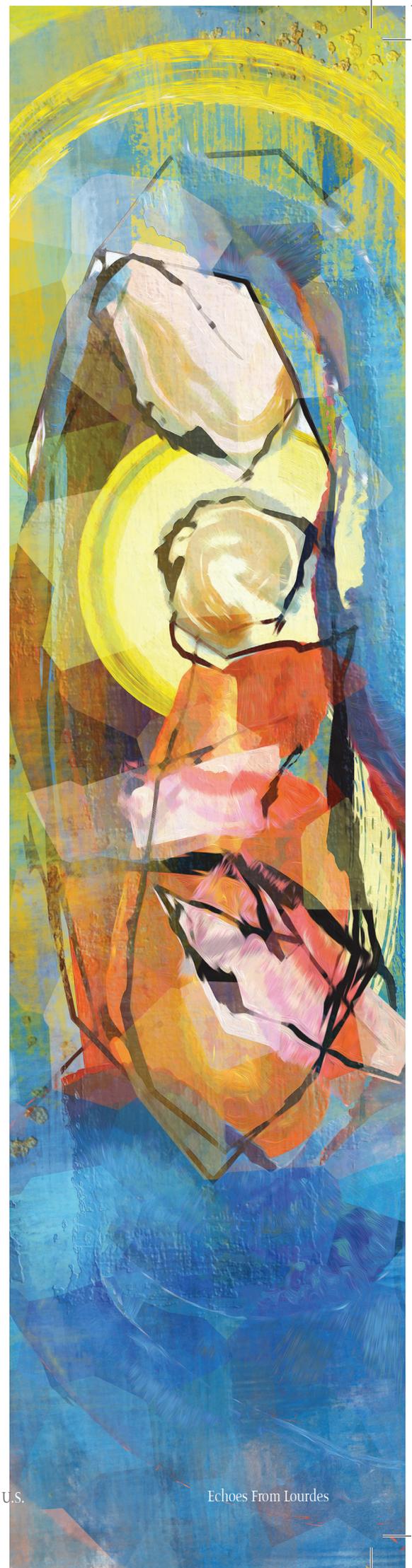
Mary's Pilgrimage and Ours

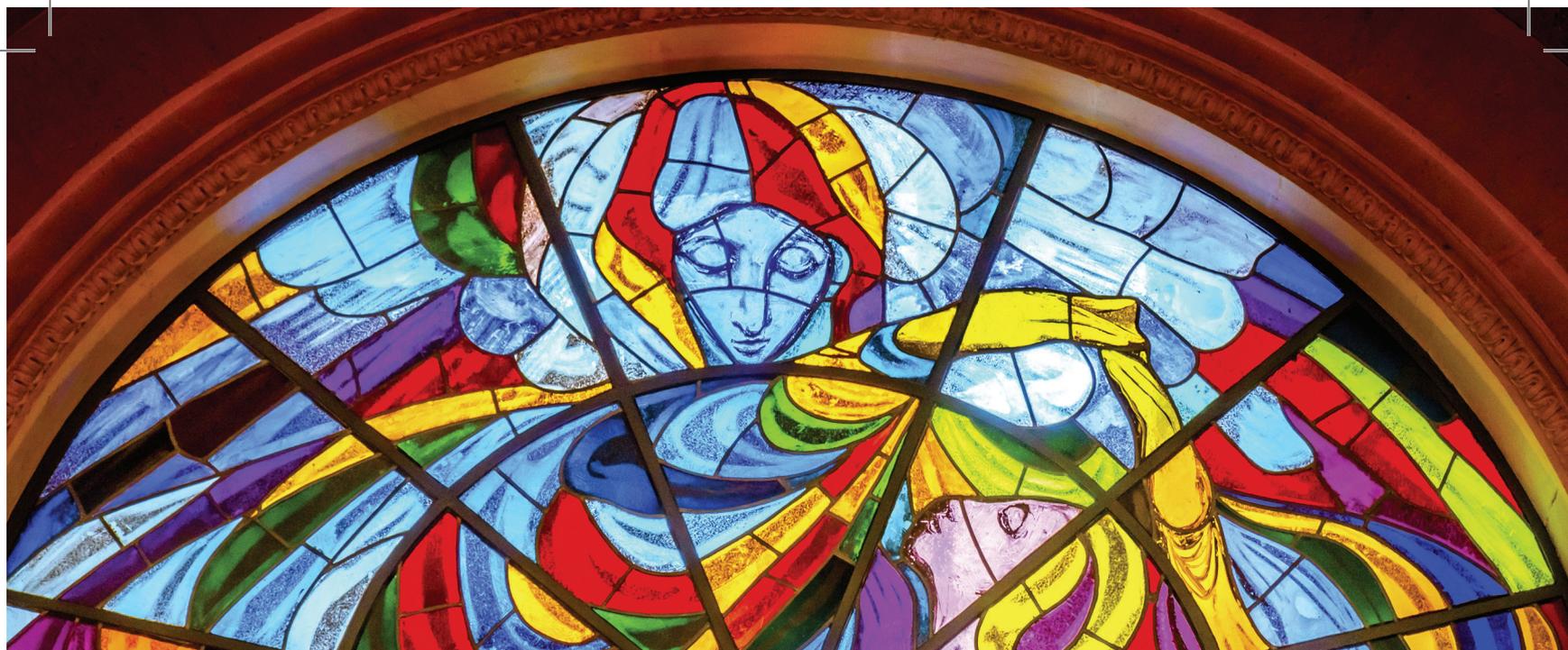
Every once in a while something “comes home” to me that changes my whole understanding of the Bible and of our Catholic Faith. For instance, when I was in the seminary and studied the Old Testament, the term “covenant” was defined as the legal contract that bound God and Israel. I was taught that covenant meant that God promised to be Israel’s protector and guide if Israel obeyed the Ten Commandments. Then about 20 years ago, I learned that covenant bond was something much more beautiful. In the language of the Bible “covenant” means a kinship relationship, like when a child is adopted into a family or when a man and a woman make a covenant bond “and the two become one flesh”. Now, when I hear the Gospel of the Wedding Feast at Cana, it’s not just about Jesus going to a wedding reception 2,000 years ago. Instead I hear God saying, “I love you, I want to become one flesh with you. I pledge Myself to you for rich or for poor, in sickness and in health even to My death on the Cross? Will you accept My proposal?” When I understood that I realized that be-

ing Catholic was not just about obeying commandments, but about abandoning my life to the only One Who really loves me as I am. I began to understand that in the Eucharist we become one flesh with the Risen Jesus, as husband and wife become one flesh in holy matrimony.

Another insight came to me when I heard that after His baptism Jesus became an itinerant preacher and that He and His apostles often slept in caves and open fields except when they received hospitality from people like Lazarus, Martha and Mary. He wasn’t wandering aimlessly, but was announcing His Father’s love for us and was on pilgrimage, that is, walking towards the day of His espousal to us all – the day of His Crucifixion and death. On Good Friday to the Church, His Bride, Jesus says, “My people what more could I have done for you that I have not done? I am yours for better or worse, richer or poorer, even to torture and death on a cross.” I realized that real love is the desire to live for the good of the other, whoever that is, and that God loved us so much that He, like a good moth-

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Our Lady in stained glass at The Basilica of Our Lady of Rosary in Fatima, Portugal, where three shepherd children encountered the Blessed Virgin. The Basilica was built in 1953.

Mary's Pilgrimage and Ours

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er or father, accepted all kinds of suffering, insult and even death, so that we might have Eternal Life. Overwhelmed by that realization any commandments required of me were nothing, I wanted to give my whole self to Jesus as He did for me...does for you and me!

Finally, Mary's participation in Jesus' pilgrimage is pointed out in the Gospel of Luke and in the Acts of the Apostles which St. Luke also wrote. Mary is the only disciple of Jesus who is with Him from the moment of His conception (Lk 1:28), through his preaching journey (1:39-56; 8:19-21), His death on the Cross (Jn 19:25-27) and Resurrection and finally at the founding of the Church is the Upper Room praying with the apostles and waiting for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:14). Fr. Jean-Claude Colin, S.M., founder of the Society of Mary, heard her say, "I was the support of the Church at its beginning and will be its support until the end of time." Amazingly, I saw Mary's pilgrim-

age outlined in a dozen icons at the church of St. Catherine Laboure' in Madrid, Spain. On the wall surrounding the altar and worship space were huge icons of the most important scenes of the life of Jesus in the Gospels. What struck was that Mary was in most of them, especially in the beginning (the Annunciation) and ending with the Dormition of Mary (her "falling asleep" and Assumption"). "Wow!" I thought, "To be a Christian is to be on a pilgrimage with Mary and Jesus through this life and all the way to heaven! Everyone has to know this, and telling others is our purpose and mission in life."

Mary, Fr. Colin said, wants to be active in the mission of the Church through us. Good Mother that she is, Mary cares for the weakest, the poorest, and the most abandoned of her children, like those who come on pilgrimage to Lourdes. This is especially true in our times when the human race is so wounded and ill. Mary

wants us to know God's love as she does and bring many of our brothers and sisters with us on our pilgrimage to heaven. I think that this is why Mary asked the Church, through St. Bernadette, to bring the sick and the suffering to Lourdes – not so much for the healing of bodies (which occurs often enough), but for the healing of souls sick with loneliness, sin and fear. Lourdes is one of those places where God through us wants to show His tremendous love for us and His desire to espouse Himself to us, when we will be "as beautiful as a bride adorned for her husband...Where God will always be with them, and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, and neither shall there be mourning, nor crying nor pain anymore, for the old order has passed away." (Rev. 21:2-4).

Peace and blessings!

Fr. George

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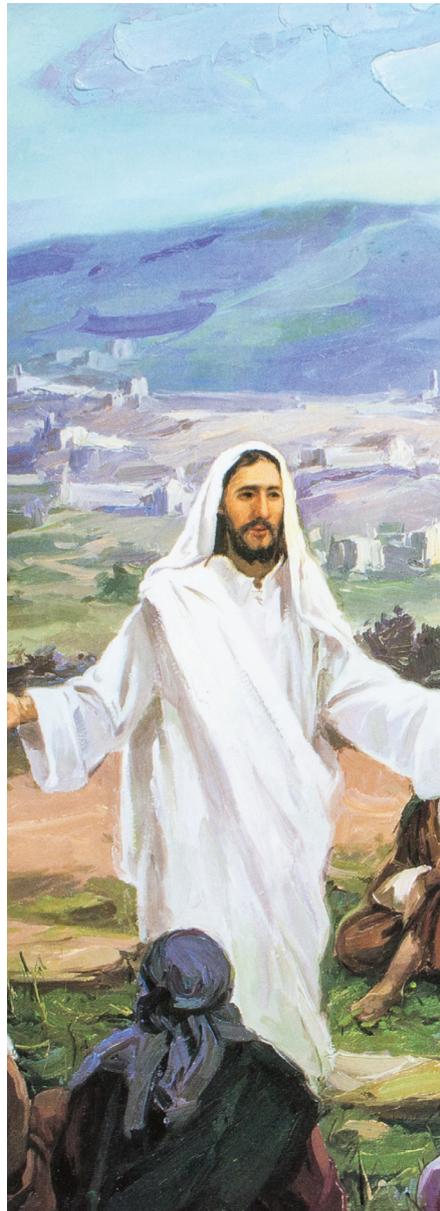
There are friends and there are *friends*

BY FR. FRANCIS A. GRISPINO, S.M.

Fair-weather friends are easy to spot. They just love you when you give them reasons to be around. They delight in you when you have disposable funds to treat them to lunch or a movie or both. Little practice is needed to note true from false friends. A teen complained that when he owned his first automobile he was surprised to see so many friends. They just materialized. But when his prize possession was laid up in the repair shop these same friends dematerialized. They were nowhere to be found.

Home Town – Friends?

Mark relates an interesting event in his gospel. Jesus makes a visit to his hometown of Nazareth. He is well known by the folks. After all, he lived there up to adulthood so they knew Mary his mother, his relatives and kin, and how he labored among them as a carpenter. “And they took offense at him.” Jesus said to them, “a prophet is not without honor except in his native place, among his own kin, and



in his own house.” So, he was not able to perform any mighty deeds there apart from curing a few sick people by laying his hands on them. “He was amazed

at their lack of faith.” Mark 6, 3-6

Unacceptance at a cost

It is obvious that Jesus was willing to do for the home towners what he was performing elsewhere. But he was prevented from showering blessings on the people of Nazareth. What stood in his way was their lack of faith. This was a cause for “amazement.” Needless to say, Jesus was disappointed. His reaction was a complaint. Where there was warmth and receptivity expected, there was coolness and rejection.

A Study in Contrast

The home towners of Nazareth had, as yet, no idea that Jesus was their Messiah and Savior who was to die a horrendous death on the cross to demonstrate his love for them. If Jesus was amazed at them – who lacked such knowledge – how much more Jesus must be “amazed” with us who possess such knowledge of his love. After all, we are living post Good Friday and Easter Sunday and

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Readers Write

Dear Father,

My mother recently returned home after two weeks in the hospital followed by six weeks of rehabilitation at a skilled nursing facility. During that time I called upon Our Lady of Lourdes and washed my mother with water from Lourdes. The dear Blessed Mother blessed us abundantly, and now my mother is doing beautifully. She walks, is eating well, and we are celebrating each day.

I thank the dear Blessed Mother with all my heart for being so near to us, and I thank you and the Lourdes Center for bringing Lourdes here in the United States! Please accept the enclosed contribution with my deepest thanks to Our Lady of Lourdes and for the mission of the Lourdes Center.

PC

Dear Father,

When I had a physical and x-rays before my knee replacement surgery, they found a mass on my lung. When I went to the doctor, he checked the PET scan and told me to come back in four months after another CT scan. I promised I would send a check for \$25.00 and also drink Lourdes water. The second CT scan showed that it is better and I don't have to go back for 6 months. Praise and thank God and Jesus.

BL

Dear Fr. George,

I cannot believe the article I just read in *Echoes From Lourdes* that says we suffer for one reason: "to exercise our free will." From all of my teaching in Catholicism Jesus showed loving behavior only. Robots? - Why would it not be great and Christ-like to always have loving behaviour? The divine programmer to me would be God and Jesus was sent to us to remember his love and expectations. Maybe pain and illness is for us to remember how lucky we are and there are always people worse than you are. Also, it reminds us to pray to help us cope with our hurt. We also pray for the less fortunate and ask to help them....There can be so many reasons. We will never know. Maybe if we are in pain or have sadness when things get better we can rejoice and try to help someone else that is having problems, remembering how difficult it was for us...I also think it is humanly impossible to say in terrible times, "I'll just accept this, it's my free will or choice." I do not think anyone can answer the question, "If God loves us so much why does he allow suffering?" I believe we must try to cope and remember that God loves us, and maybe in time when we go about our daily lives we forget him. So maybe it is His way of waking us up, and when we suffer and ask for his help - not just for ourselves, but also for others. AT

[AT - I think you have some good answers here. However, as one priest dying with cancer said, "When I get to heaven and see God face to face I will have such joy that I will forget all of the things I wanted to ask God." Ed.]

Dear Father,

Enclosed is a donation for five bottles of Lourdes water, including postage. Thank you for all who help send the Lourdes water to us! Every day we thank God for this priceless gift! May Our Lady of Lourdes ask her Son Jesus to bless us all with graces and healings. God bless everyone, always!

RB

(Cardinal Cushing, who gave the mission of the Lourdes Center to the Marist Fathers and Brother of Boston, wanted those who could not make a pilgrimage to Lourdes, where the water is free, to be able to experience the graces that come from using it. Charging only for bringing the water from Lourdes, France, packaging and mailing it to you, and supported only by the Grace of God, the prayers of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the generous donations of our readers, we have been able to accomplish this ministry in precariousness for 68 years.

We thank God and our supporters for the privilege of this mission and experiencing its graces. Ed)

Friends

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even now fall short of the trust and faith that he seeks in his followers!

The Complaint Continues

Jesus registered a complaint in the apparitions granted to St. Faustina that gave rise to the chaplet of Divine Mercy. He complains that his Christian followers and believers are lacking in faith and trust! This happens especially when they find themselves in difficult straights. Notice how the chaplet of Divine Mercy not only centers on the sorrowful mysteries and how the word “Mercy” is repeated in each

invocation but ends with: O Jesus from whose side gushed forth blood and water a font of mercy for us, I trust in you! (3X) The mercy of Jesus is of little personal benefit if not accepted in faith and trust.

A Lesson from Job

In the biblical story of Job, we read how he fell victim to catastrophes unimaginable. Yet his faith stood steadfast. So much so that he spoke these memorable words: “We accept good things from God; and should we not accept evil?” Job 2, 10

If your first reaction was like mine you just said, “No!” But what

Job is saying is very profound. In fact, there is a special name for it: Holy Indifference. God was no fair-weather friend for Job. Nor for us. God’s love remains constant for us both in good times and in bad. Trust in God trumps whatever experiences may befall us. God holds our best interests in his merciful heart.

Whatever the circumstances in life the needle on our spiritual compass points always in one direction: God is love. You and I are embraced in that love. Job never knew the brand of suffering and death God’s only begotten son would experience for us and for our salvation. We do. Unlike Job, we can draw from that love demonstrated and accessible to us from the cross, the tree of life.

Order your Lourdes Water

Lourdes Water is an expression of faith ... my trust in God's Mercy.

Offering to cover shipping and handling \$ _____ N.B.
 A donation of \$3.00 per bottle is suggested to cover our expenses. We the offering 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 water from the Shrine at Lourdes

Name _____
 Address _____
 City _____
 State _____ Zip _____
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Requested by: _____

Does this person receive this newsletter? Yes No
 If not, should we send Echoes from Lourdes to them?
 Yes No

Please allow 3-6 weeks for delivery

A Gift from You...

Give someone you care about a FREE SUBSCRIPTION to Echoes from Lourdes!

Name _____
 Address _____
 City _____
 State _____ Zip _____

Name _____
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USE SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY
E-mail to: ourlady@lourdescenter.org
Postal mail to:
 LOURDES CENTER
 P.O. Box 15575
 698 Beacon Street
 Boston, MA 02215-2594

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.

RUTH BROWN, MA
 MARJORIE CUTTER, MA
 DOROTHY CZAMECKI, MI
 GEORGE HAJOVSKY, TX
 JEAN CAMMEROTA, PA
 JAMES WENDLAND, MD
 DAVID FINE, CO
 THERESA PRATHER, MO
 TERESA NGUYEN THANH CHU, MO
 EVELYN D. GEIGER, CA
 SR. MARY MARTIN, NY
 VELMA B. GASPARD, LA
 SR. ALICE MARIE QUINN, CA
 ALICE PROVOST, MA
 ALERTA STOVALL, MO
 JOHN O'BRIEN, IL
 JAMES J. KEATING, NY
 COLE THURMAN, IL
 ESTHER BALTIERA

HELEN, FLAHERTY, IL
 GLORIA NOWLEN, FL
 BRO. WALLY KENDRICKS, MO
 DOROTHY A. LOWELL, KS
 JOAN M. O'SULLIVAN, MA
 LORETTA FASSANO, NY
 ELSIE HIGGINS, WI
 MRS. MAHALEY BUTLER, DC
 ANTHONY CLADIS, MO
 SOPHIE GORNIAKOWSKI, NY
 CECILE GAGNE, NY
 RUTH WONG, HI
 WANDA R. SALVAGNI, NY
 PIERRE AND RACHEL PELLETIER, MA
 JOHN J. TYRRELL, NY
 IRENE GONZALES FIMBRES, AZ
 REGINA L. DUNCH, FL
 DOLORES E. SCHUSTER, NM
 DOREEN MCGREW, IL
 CLARE MURPHY
 ANTHONY J. O'GEEN, NY
 MARY C. BRODERICK, OH
 ANITA JACQUES, MA
 SYLVIA SETLIK, IL
 FRANCIS HERBST, NY
 CASTORA V. SORIANO, HI

GEORGE SCHRADER, WA
 MARY V. HOMUNG, NJ
 MARY M. CHEEMUK, AK
 JOHN RUSSELL, MA
 JOHN MCCARTY, TX
 SR. MARY MARGARET, OH
 MARY F. WAITZMAN, OH
 ANN ALBOSTA, MI
 WILLIAM LYDON, MA
 CHRISTINE SKRZYPEK, IL
 TOM BRADWELL, PA
 VICTOR LARA, TX
 GEORGE GUNTER, MO
 ELLEN GUNTER, MO

Our Gift Center



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

- 2018 WALL CALENDAR\$5.00
Limited Supply!
- OUR LADY OF LOURDES MEDAL.....\$5.00
IN GROTTTO
- 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".....\$4.00
BY FR. JOHN LYNCH, S.M.

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

Purgatorials for the Deceased

Name of Deceased _____

Please send Purgatorial to:

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.

Please mail responses to: Marist Fathers, 698 Beacon St.
 P.O. Box 15575, Boston, MA 02215-0010

Affiliations

*Remembrance in 50 Masses Yearly
 and at our Weekly Perpetual Novena*

Requested by: _____

Phone Number: _____

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

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

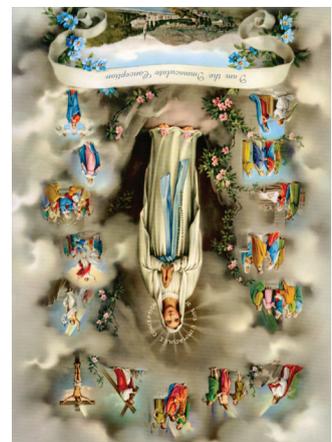
State _____ Zip _____

**On Friday, July 13 and Friday, July 27
and Friday, August 10 and Friday, August 24,
The Marist Fathers and 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.*

Please send us your intentions: _____

Please direct your intentions, and any offering you'd like to send, to: Marist Fathers,
698 Beacon Street, P.O. Box 15575, Boston, MA 02215-0010



Lourdes Echoes

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to Our Lady and interest in her shrine at
Lourdes.

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