

echoes

FROM LOURDES

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THE DIRECTOR'S LETTER

FR. GEORGE SZAL, S.M.

St. Bernadette: Holy Fool

Since the dawn of the scientific age people have been tempted to abandon their faith, thinking that an explanation of the origin of the universe, its workings and purpose could be understood through exploration and study alone. These days, as one discovery after another only uncovers more mysteries and wonders, scientists are a little more humble. Some have even come to the conclusion that there must be a supreme intelligence behind the beauty and complexity of creation. In the time of St. Bernadette Soubirous (1844-1897), however, there was still a lot of scientific skepticism that attacked the idea of a Creator.

This train of thought reached its zenith in Emile Zola (1840-1902), a world renowned French essayist and novelist. He believed that science had cleared up, or would soon clear up, all the questions of the universe and was, of course, a bitter enemy of the Catholic Church. He considered the shrine of Lourdes to be the epitome of the stupidity of the Catholic faith and St. Bernadette to be nothing more than an ignorant, delusional peasant. He went so far as to say, "I only want to see a cut finger dipped in water

and come out healed."

In August of 1892, Zola got his chance. He went down to Lourdes as a sort of investigative reporter and witnessed two scientifically unexplainable miracles. Thousands of invalids were going down to Lourdes even in those days, even though only a tiny fraction of them could expect a physical cure. Zola accompanied a certain 18-year-old woman named Marie Lemarchand. She suffered from no less than three diseases that were incurable in those days: an advanced stage of lupus, pulmonary tuberculosis, and ulcers on her leg as large as a human hand. Zola described her face as "a frightful mass of matter and oozing blood." However, when she came out of the bath she was completely healed of all three diseases, a fact immediately confirmed by the doctors in the hospital at Lourdes. Nevertheless, Zola went away unconvinced. Confronted by the fact of Marie's miraculously complete and total healing Zola said, "I don't want to look at her... To me she is still ugly." After witnessing a second miraculous healing of a woman in the last stages of tuberculosis, he remarked, "Were I to see all the sick at Lourdes cured,

I would not believe in a miracle!"

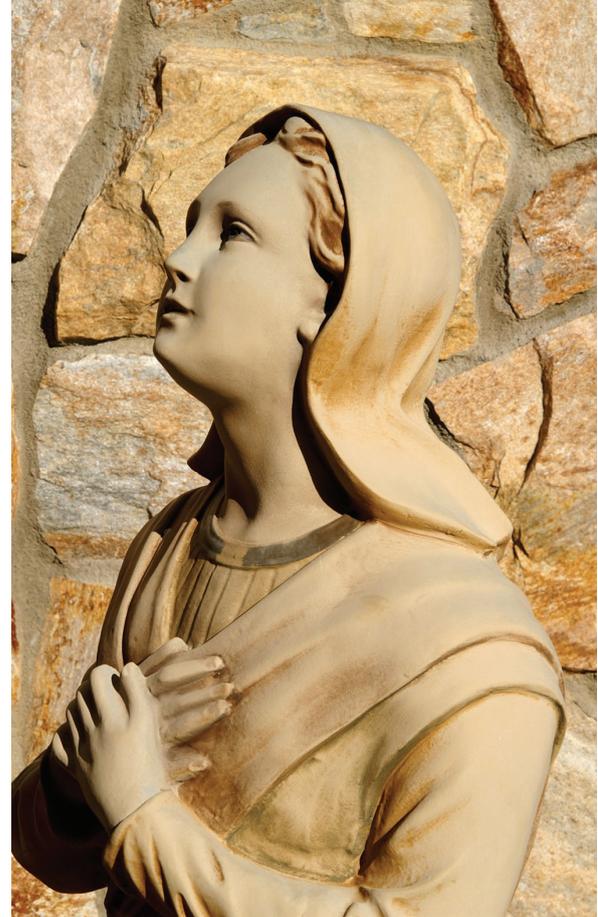
Franz Werfel, a Jewish author and playwright who was hidden at Lourdes from the Nazis during World War II, and who in gratitude wrote "The Song of Bernadette" once said, "For those who believe, no explanation is necessary; for those who will not believe, no explanation is possible." Emile Zola was a socialist as well as famous author. He was not an evil man. He truly wanted to make the world a better place for everyone; he fought long and hard for justice for the Jews in France and suffered exile for his trouble. Like all of us, his problem was one of pride. He thought that he could create the perfect world on earth by the

Continued on next page

THE COVER

The Basilica of Our Lady of the Rosary, designed by architect Leopold Hardy, completed in 1899, consecrated in 1901, featuring a capacity of 1500 worshippers.

What the world has always needed is a revolution of the heart, that is, humble trust in the love and wisdom of God and not merely on our poor power and intelligence.



St. Bernadette: Holy Fool

Continued from previous page

power of his own ideas and by force, without the help of God. But as St. Paul wrote, “Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?” (I Cor. 1:20b)

What the world has always needed is a revolution of the heart, that is, humble trust in the love and wisdom of God and not merely on our poor power and intelligence. It is estimated that since 1860 over 200 million people have come to Lourdes. Only a handful have received physical healings, but untold millions have had their belief in a living, loving God strengthened – all because 160 years ago a humble little peasant girl, like the Virgin Mary, said “No” to herself and “Yes!” to God.

Finally, as the famous French philosopher and revolutionary Voltaire is reputed to have said, “You can bring down all of the unjust structures of society, but unless you change the hearts of those who inhabit them, they will simply create the same un-

just structures – and worse – all over again.” He was, in a way, echoing Psalm 127: “Unless the Lord builds the house, in vain do the builders toil; unless the Lord watches over the city, in vain do the watchmen keep vigil.” This need for humble reliance on God was proven in the disastrous and atheistic governments of Hitler’s Nazis, and the communist regimes of Russia, China, North Korea, and Cambodia. Millions were murdered in the name of scientific materialism and in the effort of men to create heaven on earth. Perhaps that’s why the Immaculate Conception told Bernadette that what God wanted as a cure for our pride is “Penance, penance, penance.”

Through the prophet Jeremiah God said, “I know the plans I have in mind for you; they are plans for peace, not disaster, to give you a future filled with hope”(Jer. 29:11). This world, in fact, is not our home. We are headed towards the New Jerusalem – no more tears, separation or death. While on earth and by the

grace of God, we try to do the good that we can to alleviate the sufferings of our brothers and sisters. However, while physical healings and works of justice are important and wonderful, what we need more than anything is the moral miracle, that is, healing for hearts wounded by pride, greed, anger, jealousy, etc. Healed of these we can begin to live the life of heaven while still on earth in our weak and sinful bodies. For these wounds there is no pill, only the therapy of life in the Church, the sacraments, prayer, fasting, alms and the Rosary.

Peace,

Fr. George

P.S. We are in need of making some major repairs to the elevator that goes up to our offices on the fourth floor of the Lourdes Center. We would appreciate any help that our readers could provide. Thanks and God bless you!

An Invitation

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

Take a sheet of paper and draw a line down the middle. On the left column write, The Bad; on the right column write, The Good. The division references the good and bad things that happened in your life. The object is to note if your good column outweighs your bad. Remember to start off your Good Column with: my birth, my life, my faith, my family, my friends, etc. On the left column write out your bad happenings. Reflect on both as you read the following.

The Human Predicament

“Life is difficult.” With these three words M. Scott Peck opened the first paragraph of his book, “The Road Less Travelled.” It soon became a best seller in its day. It was a time in our culture when many people were under the illusion that life was meant to be “a walk in the park.” The author’s contention went something like this: Life is not problem free, so buckle up and get ready for a rough ride. Today’s culture has not drifted too far from that stance.

The Working of God’s Grace

What made the book a sensation was that it not only told the hard facts of life but the author, M. Scott Peck, was a psychiatrist who was not fearful to speak of God and the working of God’s grace in the world. He relates instances of how grace, God’s free, unearned help, sustained individuals under trying circumstances even if they were unaware of divine assistance.

Facing Life with Trust

A Christian who is an ardent believer becomes aware of grace at work in his life and is alert and eager to reach out for those graces that Our Lord and Savior makes so available for each and every one of us. In this way, we will find ourselves willing and able to cope when the toughest of times roll in to envelope us.

An Attitude of Gratitude

What if you were to go through life noticing the good that happens to you and responding with gratitude to God. This can be habit forming. Before long your outlook on life will be through the lens of gratitude for countless blessings, big and small, that come your way.



You will discover that your life is a song of thanksgiving to God and that you abide in thanksgiving.

Possible Consequences

The happy fallout from this frame of mind is that when a difficult experience crosses your path, even something as tragic as the loss of a friend in death, your sense of gratitude will lessen the pain. Those negative feelings will be absorbed and the loss will be seen with a heart long accustomed to thanking God in all things. Moreover, a strong faith engendered over the years along with the habit of gratitude will necessarily include the blossoming of a friendship with the Lord.

A Trusting Friend

Being convinced that God desires only your good, you will be willing to see beyond your suffering and, yes, even your imminent death as all part of the grand design that leads to the ultimate promised happiness. To go through life giving thanks to God is a good way to prepare to meet God at the end of our days.

Continued on page 6

Readers Write

Dear Father,

On February 13, 1987, while at work for AT&T Network systems, a clamp holding a 1,100 pound unit sheared pinning me to the floor from my shoulders to my feet. At the hospital the doctors found that my right knee cap had been driven to about an inch from my ankle and that the tibial plateau and all of the cartilage and ligaments in that leg had been destroyed. They thought I would probably need to have my leg amputated and that prayer in this case was useless. After several surgeries, all of the surgeons involved and all of those whom I asked for a second opinion stated that I would never walk without a leg brace, crutches and that I would most likely need a wheelchair for long distances. After eight years of physical therapy and several trips to Lourdes I have progressed far beyond what my surgeons ever expected. I am walking without a leg brace or wheelchair, and use a cane only on stairs and uneven surfaces. Finally, on a visit to the chief surgeon in my case he asked me for some Lourdes water because not only myself, but one of his other patients had also gone to Lourdes and had surpassed all medical expectations! NB

[NB has been working in the Lourdes Center since the time after his accident, with time off for surgeries, rehabilitation and pilgrimages].

Dear Father,

I have Sarcoidosis, a disease caused by inflammation. It affects my lungs, manifesting itself in chest pain, severe at times. With the help of an anti-inflammation diet, and most of all Lourdes water applied to my chest, I am greatly relieved! Our Lady of Lourdes is a wonderful Mother, caring for her children in a caring, marvelous and curing ways! I just wanted to share this with you as there are days when I am practically free of any discomfort...a true miracle! I feel so much better! CB

Dear Fr. George,

My husband Harold was diagnosed about a year ago with cancer. He had a good-sized tumor on his rectum. It meant an operation and a colostomy bag. He went for treatments and used Lourdes water faithfully. Eventually he went for his CAT scan and scope. Both showed that the tumor was gone – no sign of it. He goes in four months for another CAT scan and scope. The doctors are going to watch it. Thanks be to God and Our Lady of Lourdes. He still uses the water faithfully. JT



Fr. John Beckley in procession at Lourdes

Marist priest, Fr. John Beckley, guides Lourdes pilgrimage

One-hundred and thirty-two Americans made a spiritual pilgrimage to the Shrine of Our Lady of Lourdes in France between July 2 to 11, 2018. Among the priestly guides were Fr. John Beckley, S.M. who was joined by three Dominican priests.

The Shrine was built to commemorate the place where Saint Bernadette Soubirous (1844-1879) received 18 apparitions from the Blessed Virgin Mary in 1858 and has been the place where there have been many miraculous healings.

Fr. John was particularly impressed by the thousands of people of all ages who made

Continued on next page

Fr. Grispino

Continued from page 4

Conclusion

As the following shows the “invitation” as described above is scripture based:

“...let the word of Christ dwell in you richly...with gratitude in your heart...whatever you do in word or in deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God through him” (Colossians 4, 16-17).

Fr. Beckley at Lourdes

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their way to Lourdes every day to bring their burdens in prayer.

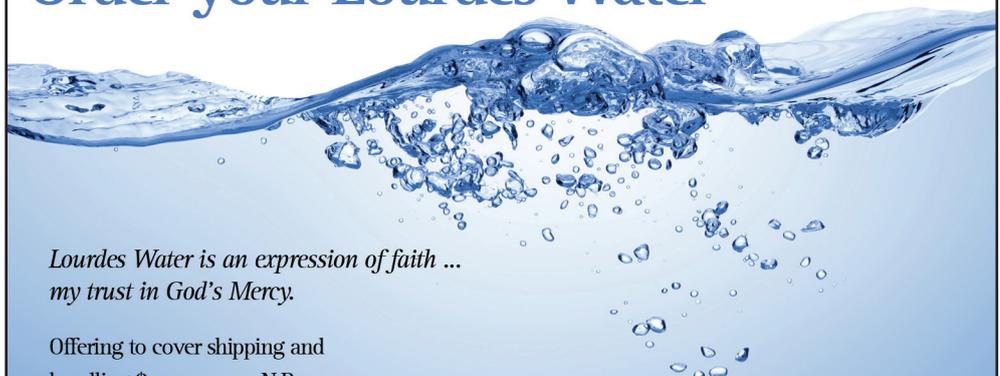
Fr. Beckley shared: “It was obvious that many who came had crushing illnesses and problems. It was a humbling experience. I was also impressed with the many volunteers, young and not so young, who come for a week or two every year to assist with the many disabled and bring them to Mass, the afternoon procession with the Blessed Sacrament and the evening rosary procession.

“Another thing that was hard to ignore was the literally hundreds of shops near the Shrine selling

small mementos for the pilgrims to bring home to family, friends and loved ones to remind them that someone remembered them and their Intentions in prayer at the Grotto of Lourdes.

“Although there have been some notable miraculous healings over the decades at Lourdes I do not know of any that occurred with our group of pilgrims. I do know that each one was blessed with renewed spiritual strength and grace to carry their burdens when they returned home and a deeper reverence and devotion when they returned to rejoin their parish community to participate in the celebration of Mass. The memories of this pilgrimage will be a source of enduring spiritual strength.”

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.
 When 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 _____
 Phone _____

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 _____
 Address _____
 City _____
 State _____ Zip _____

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.

WILLIAM P. MCMAHON, MA
 BETTY JO TABB, KY
 SR. ALICIA SNYDER, PA
 MARY R. THOMAS, MT
 DONALD A. KING, KY
 DONALD DUKART, TX
 EVELYN A. MCCAFFERTY, OH
 MARTHA NORDEN, CA
 THERESA IMUNDO, IL
 ANN BURNS, KY
 MARK WOOD, MA
 EDWARD GROMEK, PA
 RENEE GLASGOW CHESLA, OH
 PAULINE MUELLER, IA
 RICHARD KRUS, MO
 FLORA D. FENSO, MA
 PAT PASCIUCCO, NY

MARY BAZA BAUTISTA, GUAM
 WILLIAM L. DRENNEN, FL
 ALEX MAGNO
 PAULINE DUCOTE, TX
 HELEN BOLUBASZ, OH
 JANICE DOHERTY, CT
 LORETTA DUNN, MI
 LUIS RODRIGUEZ, CA
 FRANK AND LORRAINE HEJMEJ, MO
 CAROL AND EARL HANSON, WI
 MARY MORENI, AZ
 MILDRED DURBIN, PA
 ROBERT WALL, CA
 CLARICE KONIECZNY, TX

Our website is back

We apologize for any inconvenience some of you may have experienced in trying to contact us through our website <OurLady@LourdesCenter.org> which has been down for two months. It has been restored to service and may again be accessed. Thank you for your patience.

Fr. George

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

Our Gift Center



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

- 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

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 _____

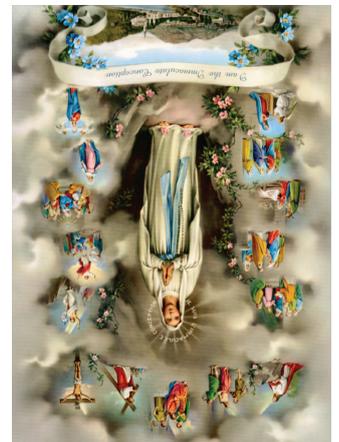
On Friday, September 14 and Friday, September 28,
and Friday, October 12 and Friday, October 26,
The Marist Fathers and Brothers of the Lourdes Center
will be praying for you.

*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

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Marist Fathers
Lourdes Bureau
P.O. Box 15575
698 Beacon Street
Boston, MA 02215-2594
www.lourdescenter.org
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