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# OUR LADY'S MONTHLY MESSENGER

THE MIR CENTER OF WESTERN COLORADO

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*Standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple there whom he loved he said to his mother, "Woman behold your son." (Jn 19: 25-26)*

## Our Lady of Medjugorje's Monthly Message of August 25th, 2023:

*Dear children! In this time of grace, I am calling you to prayer with the heart. May your hearts, little children, be raised in prayer towards Heaven, so that your heart may feel the God of love who heals you and loves you with immeasurable love. That is why I am with you, to lead you on the way of conversion of heart. Thank you for having responded to my call."*

On the 25th of each month, Our Lady gives a message through the visionary Marija Pavlovic-Lunetti for the villagers in the parish of Medjugorje and for all those who choose to follow her on the path to holiness.



Our Lady of Sorrows

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## Cenacolo Founder Mother Elvira dies at 86

by John Burger from *aleteia.org*

Mother Elvira Petrozzi, who founded the Cenacle Community in 1983 to minister to teen drug addicts, died on August 3 after a long illness. She was 86. "She reminded her Cenacolo family members that 'life does not die' and that we should not mourn, but rejoice when God calls us to eternity. Like the friends of St. Philip Neri who sang 'Paradiso' when he died, Mother Elvira's close community members sang the same way on her death because they believe she is now embraced by her Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and all the angels and saints in heaven."

Albino Argano, director of Comunità Cenacolo America and one of the men who established the first community in St. Augustine, Florida, said Friday that Mother Elvira always encouraged him and reminded him "that life is precious and that life needs to be lived fully, to never be afraid to do God's will, and to always trust in Him. Because of this I can say that in all these years I can see that our community has kept on going even through so many difficulties because good always prevails."

At the Vatican on July 16, Pope Francis spoke about Mother Elvira and her community. "I send my heartfelt greeting to the Cenacolo Community, which has been a place of hospitality and human promotion for 40 years," he said following his Angelus address. "I bless Mother Elvira, the Bishop of Saluzzo, and all the fraternity and friends. What you do is good, and it is good that you exist! Thank you!"

Born Rita Agnese Petrozzi in Sora, Italy, on January 21, 1937, Mother Elvira was the fourth of seven children. In the wake of the Second World War, the family experienced marginalization and poverty. Rita's father was often drunk and unemployed, and her mother, a nurse, had to work outside the home to support the family. Rita spent much of her time helping her to care for the other children. The experience of dealing with an alcoholic father gave Elvira insights that she could call upon later in life in helping drug addicts. The family was so poor that Rita could not afford a pair of shoes, and was often unable to go to church on Sundays. But one day, when she did go, at the age of 12, she stood before a Lourdes grotto and felt a special union with Mary. "Tell Jesus to call me!" she prayed to the Madonna.

And call He did. At the age of 19, although Elvira was dating and had visions of starting a large family, she felt a strong calling to dedicate her life to God and serve the poor. She left her boyfriend and informed her family of her decision to enter the convent. On March 8, 1956, she entered the Sisters of Charity of St. Joan Antida Thouret, taking the name Sister Elvira.

She spent the next 28 years with the community, working in a hospital kitchen located in Turin or teaching in a kindergarten in Saluzzo. A biography provided by the Cenacle Community described Sister Elvira as a joyful nun, but said that at a certain point, "a strong desire arose within her, like a fire, an inner drive increasingly compelling her to dedicate herself to the youth. During prayer before the Eucharist, she felt as if she heard their 'cries' of pain. "I saw them without a shepherd, without points of reference, at a loss, with so much wealth, money in their pockets, cars, culture, with abundant material possessions, and yet sad and dead in their hearts," the nun is quoted as saying.

After seven years of persistent requests, Sister Elvira was finally given permission from her superiors to embark on a new path. She obtained an abandoned, run-down villa from the town of Saluzzo, and on July 16, 1983, the feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Mother Elvira, as she came to be known, began her new endeavor. She decided to call the community after the name of the "Upper Room," the Cenacle, where Jesus had the Last Supper with his disciples. "Mother Elvira's emphasis was on the Eucharist and devotion to the Blessed Mother as a source of healing," Bishop Baker of Birmingham told the *National Catholic Register* in 2018.

As Mother Elvira and her collaborators began to fix up the abandoned villa in Saluzzo, young men addicted to drugs began seeking refuge there. Elvira tried to learn from them what they needed in order to change their lives. For one thing, she could see that they were hungry for God. She also felt they needed a life structured around work, prayer, and fraternal living.



"I told them: Here, no one pays for you," she recalled. "You must regain your life through sweat, discovering that within you lies the strength and dignity for a new life." New houses opened, including, in the summer of 1986, in Medjugorje, the site in Bosnia and Herzegovina of alleged apparitions of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The presence of many international pilgrims there led to the Cenacle Community becoming known worldwide.

In 1993, a house for young women was opened. The community soon opened up to abandoned and marginalized children and adolescents, and in January 1996, Mother Elvira sent the first group of missionary men and women to Brazil.

In time, "Cenacolo families" were formed – men and women who felt the call to consecrate themselves in the Community. Altogether, there are 72 houses in 20 countries of the world, including four in the US. Houses also exist in Austria, Croatia, France, England, Ireland, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Spain, Argentina, Costa Rica, Brazil, Mexico, Peru, Paraguay, Liberia, and the Philippines.

"The members of the Community pursue their own personal sanctification by living a strongly Eucharistic and Marian spirituality, in total abandonment to Divine Providence," according to the Dicastery for Laity, Family and Life. "They are committed to the free acceptance of and service towards those who, especially because of drugs and other addictions, live a situation of existential loss." Mother Elvira often commented, "We are the first witnesses of God's miracle that was never thought of or planned at a table. It surpasses us and surprises us for which we are partakers by grace." Throughout her long illness, she often urged her community not to be sad when the day of her passing came. "When they say: 'Elvira is dead!' you must sing, dance, celebrate, because I am alive! Woe to you if you say: 'Poor her, No, not at all 'poor her'! I will go on calmly and sing, I'm already singing! Something magnificent will open wide before me because life doesn't die!"

## From the Diary of Sister Emmanuel

www.childrenofmedjugorje.com

On July 25th, 2023, the visionary Marija received the following monthly message from Our Lady:

***“Dear children! In this time of grace, in which the Most High sends me to you to love you and guide you on the way of conversion, offer your prayers and sacrifices for all those who are far away and have not come to know God’s love. You, little children, be witnesses of love and peace for all peaceless hearts. Thank you for having responded to my call.”***

### ***A priest who had hit rock bottom***

One evening on Križevac... After the Balkan war, my Mexican friends came to Medjugorje with a group of 45 pilgrims, including 15 priests. One of the priests having had to cancel his trip, was replaced by another pilgrim. But I will let Emilio, the leader of the group, tell the story of what he considers to be one of the most incredible events in his life:

“From the beginning of the trip, our group was embarrassed to see this newcomer drinking a lot of alcohol and even harassing women. He was aggressive and disrespectful. And yet he was a priest, replacing the priest who had cancelled his trip! You couldn’t tell from what he was wearing that he was a priest.

“Once we arrived in Rome, our first stop, he disappeared for 4 days, and no one knew where he was. He only showed up for the departure to Split, loudly expressing his anger at having to go to this small hamlet of Medjugorje. His attitude was becoming more and more unbearable, his arrogance was detestable.

“On the first day of the pilgrimage, our group went to see the visionary, Vicka, who gave pilgrims the main messages of the Blessed Mother as well as her personal experience. My wife and another friend were near this priest, in order to be the last ones to come under the hands of Vicka who prayed for the pilgrims. The priest began to utter sounds like animal cries, and began to vomit. As for Vicka, she kept calm and continued to pray in peace, trusting that Mary would take care of this strange pilgrim.

“At the end, Vicka raised her hand towards him while praying silently for him, when suddenly he uttered a horrible cry and fled. Vicka continued to pray for the members of our group. She laid hands on us in silence.

“On the last day, it was very cold and snowing a lot. Then only four of us insisted on climbing Mount Križevac. We were enthusiastic, even though we were not wearing warm clothes or proper shoes.



Sister Emmanuel

“As we were walking alongside the church in the direction of the mountain, we didn’t see anyone outside because of the icy wind. However, we heard a voice shouting out to us in the distance. It was that priest! He asked us where we were going, and expressed his wish to go with us. We accepted, though reluctantly. He took a bag with him, that contained what was needed to celebrate Mass. “The climb was very difficult, given the icy wind and snow. We were frozen in our ordinary street clothes! Once we got

to the top, we sat in circles to attend Mass. Then, little by little, we started feeling as if we were enveloped in a very gentle and warm atmosphere that protected us from the wind, cold and snow. Our clothes dried quickly. A mysterious light illuminated us, while the day had already dimmed very quickly and Mass began.

“At the moment of the offertory, the priest kept silent for a few minutes, knelt down, and turned his face to heaven. Then, in an extremely loud voice, he asked our Heavenly Father to forgive him for every one of his sins. He spoke all his sins aloud, while weeping and begging God for mercy. We were completely dumbfounded! But we felt compelled to do as he did, and in turn, we each confessed our sins out loud.



“We then had the most beautiful experience of our lives. At the end, we were filled with the joy of the Holy Spirit, we couldn’t stop singing. We went back down the mountain without any fear despite the dark night. A light illuminated each of our steps. We got to the pension at midnight. Then the priest told us how he had gradually lapsed. He was disappointed by a series of difficult obstacles in his pastoral ministry, and had become deeply discouraged. That was when he sank into alcoholism and some other deadly traps.

“Eight months later, he shared with us his great joy at having been able to restore his parish upon his return from this pilgrimage, and how, with God’s grace, he had adopted Our Lady’s spiritual riches in his pastoral ministry: the Rosary, the Eucharist, Adoration and the main messages of Medjugorje... In short, this beautiful resurrection spread like wildfire!”

As for us, what can we learn from all this? There is a missing piece in this story, which will remain the secret of the King. What happened in the heart of this priest between the prayer with Vicka and the moment when he wanted to climb the mountain with us, in this icy cold weather? Prayer... That is where the real miracle is! The fervent prayer of an entire group as well as Vicka’s obtained a pathway to peace for this lost heart. Fervent prayer is what obtained this wonderful outpouring of the Holy Spirit on Mount Križevac! God alone knows the many fruits that have flowed down from there to the whole Church and to the world!

## Fr. Mark Beard's Prophetic Last Homily Before His Tragic Death

thescottsmithblog.com

*Fr. Mark Beard's conversion and vocation were discovered in Medjugorje. He died at age 59 in a car accident in early August. Here is a portion of his final homily. Find the homily on YouTube*

You can't keep walking, straddling the fence. That is the gospel. Not once, not twice but three times, He says the Kingdom of Heaven is this. My brothers and sisters in Christ, He's trying to tell you you can't take it with you. You can't bury it. You're either in or you are not. You can't play both sides against the middle.

He gives you an example and remember you're Jewish, so you and I now know that when they use parables there's always a twist in the parable. Something that doesn't, just doesn't make sense. I mean let's be honest. You're walking down a road, you look into a field, and there's a treasure. You're walking down the road, nobody's seen it, but you, and there's a treasure. You're so excited. You go bury it. Sell everything you have and buy the field. The fact that there's a treasure in the field, but you just didn't take it and run with it. You buried it and sold everything. Yeah, Brothers in Christ, it doesn't work. It's just not logical. It's not reasonable. But that's what he's saying. You can't bury this treasure and you can't take it with you.

He says, well, I'll give you another example. He said it's like you find this beautiful pearl. It is so beautiful that you go and sell your house, your car, your camp, your boats, your guns, and you go buy The Pearl. Then you realize, you can't eat with the pearl, you can't hunt with a pearl, you can't fish with the pearl. You can't buy anything. You can't be clothed with it. You can't put a roof over your head. He says you can't take it with you, my brothers and sisters in Christ, he's trying to tell people.

It's like you're going net fishing on the Sea of Galilee. Now, why is this important to you? Because that's the only way you can fish on the Sea of Galilee today. You can only net fish, and as a result of it, when you throw the net out, you're going to get good and bad. I'm telling you this now so that you make sure that you are all in, because if not, I'm going to send my angels and they will separate you. This is why this is important. Because our best players in Scripture are those who are able to delineate whether they're all in or all out. You can't ride the fence.

You know, you can't straddle the fence. So now here you and I sit 2000 years later. Well, let's see Brothers in Christ, how good are you at straddling the fence? Or are you all in? When somebody says "are you Christian?" Will you stand up and say, well, "absolutely, I'm Catholic." Well, tell me, as a Catholic, are there exceptions to abortion? Like rape and incest? Absolutely not. There are no exceptions. If there had been He would have told me there were. You don't think they had rape and incest in the time of Christ? You don't think they had that going on? My brother in Christ, they were burning children in the pit they called Gehenna while Christ walked the Earth. You can't have it both ways, my brothers and sisters in Christ. When it comes to abortion, it's intrinsically evil in and of itself, and the fact of the matter is when people tell you, as Catholics, that, "I'm sorry Father, I'm just not a one-issue person" Well, that's a fine how-do-you-do.

So what you're telling me is, well father, he's got a good diplomatic policy. He's got a good economic policy. You don't have a policy! Your policy is to kill children. So you think the good

Lord's going to bless your supply and demand? You believe that your economic policy is going to work after you kill His children? So when the good Lord asks you, where are my children? Your answer is going to be, well you know, I got to tell you, the president had a good economic policy. He's a pretty good diplomat, for who I have no idea, but he's a good diplomat.

My brothers and sisters in Christ, that's the point. All things come through Christ. You can't pick and choose. You're either in the Church or you are not. How many times do I hear people make the argument, well father you know we're just not ready to have children. My brothers and sisters in Christ, please go back and read Scripture. You are not your not your own. You have been purchased with a great price, says Saint Paul to the Romans. When you start using the pill or some type of contraception, you are putting something between you and your spouse. I told you to go forth into multiply. My brothers and sisters in Christ, He is the God of economics. If he wants you to be able to support you and your children then he will. For you and I to step in His shoes and tell him that this is how it will be -- you're telling Him, it's more important how we do it, than how You do it.

You can get upset. You can get mad. You can kick your dog. I'm telling you right now. That's the teachings of the Church. You got to decide whether you're in or whether you're out. You can't walk the fence, my brothers and sisters in Christ. This is getting old, this is why our country is starting to fracture. Remember that it does not matter to me what Francis says or does not say. What matters to me is where you land. All I care about is your soul. Stop worrying about what Francis says or doesn't say. Stop worrying about what Joe says or doesn't say. The only thing that matters is your soul. Do you not understand that there are no exceptions?

When you're in front of Him, there's no arbitration there's no mediation. Man, at your judgment you come in on this day and you go home on this day. So please for the love of God remember this: the nanosecond you and I die, the nanosecond before people walk away from your bed before they leave to get in their cars you have already been judged and you're either in heaven, hell, or purgatory that's it, it's done and there's nothing else to do and it's for all eternity. I'm trying to tell you can't pick and choose. Either He's The Great I Am or He's not. You can't have it both ways. You can't say, man I believe in the Church but I have exceptions to these rules.

What I got to get you to understand is you can't just keep walking down the middle of the road. How can you and I proclaim to be Catholic and remember that Catholic means according to the whole that if we gather in one place we listen to the readings we sing the Psalms and different from the Jews we break bread instead of sacrifice a lamb, that's the definition of Catholic and it became so popular it became Universal. You and I have got to stop apologizing for being Catholic. You need to learn your faith. My job is to pitch it. Whether you want to catch it or not it's on you. My job is to make sure you know the whole truth and nothing but the truth so help me God. At the end of the day you have got to get off that fence you have got to plant your flag. I'll leave you with the words of Johnny Cash, a great theologian in his own right; he said if there was a fence between Heaven and Hell it would be owned by the Devil himself



## Fr. Mark went to Medjugorje as an Angry Skeptic

from medjugorjemiracles.com

King David went to the hills of Judah and said, "How is it that the Ark of the Covenant came to me?" And he danced for joy. One thousand years later, Mary came to the hills of Judah, where her cousin Elizabeth exclaimed, "How is that the Mother of Our Lord has come to me?" And John the Baptist leapt for joy in Elizabeth's womb. That's the Mary I now know—the archetype of our Church, the holy tabernacle that carried God Himself into the world.

But just a few years ago, I did not know Mary. So when I heard that she was appearing in Medjugorje, I didn't want to believe it. God had sent prophets, disciples, and His only Son! So why would He be sending His mother? At that time, my father saw me going down a path he feared I would not recover from. I was young, in my 30s, bullet-proof, and liked money, power, and "dating"—the unholy Trinity. I did avoid drugs or alcohol, but that's because I was too busy chasing women.

My father, a powerhouse of a man, designed water plants for cities and started several companies. He was chairman of the board, and I worked under him in the family business for twenty years, earning a sizable income, flying around the world, and coming home to a nice house, a maid, and a rag-top jeep. One day, my father said to me, "It seems that Mary's appearing in Medjugorje. Go check it out."

"What!?" I thought. We have litigation to deal with, jobs we're trying to get started overseas, and you're telling me to travel halfway around the world to check out some visionaries? Yeah, that's what I'm gonna do. My father has lost it," I thought. "How am I going to hide this from the shareholders, the board of directors—from my mother?"

Then I talked to my buddy John about what my dad was asking, and he said, "You should get the book, *Queen of the Cosmos*." I read the whole thing while standing up in a bookstore. I couldn't put it down. I thought, "I've got to research who these visionaries are. THE Blessed Mother? I mean really. She's talking to people on Earth? Come on, now. The whole thing struck me really hard. "Ain't no way it's happenin'. Ain't no way."

Yet something Jakov said in that book—about how Mary told him gently that she wasn't happy with the way he was acting at school—nagged at me. "She's watching?" I wondered. "She knows? If she's aware and she knows what we're doing, that means HE must know too. Then I'm accountable for my actions and I might not settle up with Him too well at the end of time!"

I thought Ben Franklin was right: God helps those who help themselves. I did my job. I figured people could worship trees and still do their job, and if they did their job right, then whatever religion they had was good enough, and all that was expected. I was an obligatory Catholic. I'd show up for Mass, and if the priest didn't bore me, I'd stay. I figured I hadn't killed anybody, so I was a good enough person. I confessed my sins directly to God, a forgiving God. No need for the Sacrament of Reconciliation. And I didn't believe in the Real Presence.

So, I needed to go across the world to put this animal to bed. I needed to debunk the hubbub. Travel and money were no

problem, since I'd been flying around the world for a long time due to business, so I quickly boarded a plane for Medjugorje. I ran into nothing but problems. It started when I got lost. I was supposed to meet up with my pilgrimage group in Paris, but they had already left. Don't ask me how I ended up in Germany, but when I was there in the airport, I decided to go home. As soon as I stood up to leave, I saw a group of women wearing Mary pins. I knew that face on the pin. It was the face used to portray Mary of Medjugorje, like I'd seen in the *Queen of the Cosmos* book.

I was not in a good mood on this trip and was "making friends" wherever I went. I figured I made a LOT of money, so I was IMPORTANT, so I deserved to have a BIG chip on my shoulder. The people in this group finally realized I was safe to talk to, and one woman in the group said, "You don't really believe what's going on in Medjugorje, do you?" "No, I don't." "Lucifer picks one to make sure there are trials and tribulations." "Ma'am, I'm the pick of the litter."



When I finally arrived in Medjugorje—at midnight, after untold delays, problems, and missed connections—all I had was the name of a person in the town. I didn't know anyone, didn't know the language, couldn't sleep, didn't have my luggage since it had been lost along the way, and I was there to meet six people who thought they were seeing the Blessed Virgin Mary. I probably could have lit up the entire town with my anxiety.

I sat down with my new "faux" pilgrimage group at the pension where they were staying and started to eat some soup. I wanted to be left alone. Then someone said to me, "You need to sleep down the street." "No, I don't," I said. "Yes, you do, really." "No, YOU really." She took me in her car, stopped it several yards from my destination, and pointed to a house.

"Good," I said, "Just drive your car right to that home." "No," she said, "there are too many potholes." So I got out of the car, and she took off. It was now 2 a.m. I started to laugh. "CNN would not believe this," I thought. "Cajun Man from South Louisiana Ends Up Across the World Searching for Visionaries."

I walked up to the door of this unknown house and knocked on the door. A woman opened it, and I heard the most magical words: "You must be Mark Beard. Where have you been?" "Ma'am, we don't have the time."

The next person I met was the visionary Vicka. As I stood in the crowd of onlookers watching Vicka give her talk to pilgrims, a woman next to me said, "You don't believe, do you? You're like Thomas." "Ma'am, I make Thomas look like the rock."

I had to admit, though, that Vicka glowed. That woman was radiant. She described heaven, purgatory, and hell. I wanted to get the skinny on why she was doing what she was doing. Where was the book deal—the movie—the money? This must be a seven-digit deal, not a three- or four-digit one.

After Vicka's talk, she said she would pray with everyone two by two. "Great . . . like Noah's ark," I thought. I wanted to catch her at her game. I figured she'd cut her losses by not praying over everyone because there wouldn't be anything in it for

(Angry skeptic continued on page 7)

(Sister Emmanuel continued from page 3)

### **Mother Elvira, founder of Cenacolo has died**

A fiery soul has returned to the Father! Who doesn't know Sister Elvira (or Mother Elvira) and her magnificent work through the community of Cenacolo? I met her in 1990, before the Balkan war, when the few young people she had gathered were still living in tents, without any proper facilities. She struck me with her pragmatism and her unique way of expressing her love for these troubled young people. She had both the authority and the maternal tact to prove to them that they were going to make it. Nothing would stop her! She saved countless young people from drugs, alcohol and so many other disastrous paths through prayer, hard work, a fraternal lifestyle and the proximity of good priests who loved and understood them. Suffering from Alzheimer's disease, she passed away peacefully on August 3rd, surrounded by her community, in Saluzzo, Italy, at the age of 86.

The visionary Vicka, with whom she had collaborated extensively, was able to attend Mother Elvira's funeral despite her own fragile health. Vicka was the "godmother" to these young people. Before she got married, she could be found cooking in front of their stoves as well as helping with the housework. Too many young people are in trouble! Today, let us ask the Lord to send new Sister Elviras everywhere, because the need for this gift is constantly increasing. From the beginning of the apparitions, Our Lady told us and repeated through Vicka: **"Dear children, pray for young people because they are in a very difficult situation all over the world."**

### **What is my great joy in Medjugorje?**

It is to meet people from all walks of life who, against all odds, remain faithful to the Gospel and to the words of Our Lady, often at the cost of great persecution. In the simplicity of their hearts, these people live out their Christian faith without compromising with the false values of the world. You can recognize them a mile away, because they radiate a great inner peace. I believe that they form that "remnant" mentioned several times in the Book of Revelation and of which the mystic Marthe Robin also spoke. They are those "little burning hubs of



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fervor in a harsh and Godless world and a "humanity that has chosen death", according to a recent message. These people are already described by several saints, including the great Marian prophet Saint Louis de Montfort, (1673-1716), the ones he called the apostles of the end times. In a word, "they will be true disciples of Jesus Christ, walking in the footsteps of his poverty, humility, contempt for the world, and charity, teaching the narrow way of God in pure truth, according to the Holy Gospel. These people need to be encouraged! And so I wish to quote this beautiful message given by Mary on February 2nd, 2017, through the visionary Mirjana:

***"Dear children, you who are striving to offer every day of your life to my Son, you who are trying to live with Him, you who are praying and sacrificing - you are hope in this peaceless world. You are rays of the light of my Son, a living gospel, and you are my beloved apostles of love. My Son is with you. He is with those who think of Him - those who pray. But in the same way, He is patiently waiting for those who do not know Him. Therefore, you, apostles of my love, pray with the heart and with your works show the love of my Son. This is the only hope for you, and this is also the only way to Eternal Life. I, as a mother, I am here with you. Your prayers directed to me are the most beautiful roses of love for me. I cannot but be where I sense the scent of roses. There is hope. Thank you."***

## **Girl Healed of Blindness at WYD**

*from catholicnewsagency.com*

The father of Jimena, the 16-year-old Spanish World Youth Day pilgrim who reported she recovered her sight during a Mass in Fátima, provided details of what he described as a "gift from the Virgin Mary for WYD." On Saturday, Aug. 5, in Fátima, Portugal, Jimena said she was cured of a serious eye problem — which the doctors had called incurable — after completing a novena to Our Lady of the Snows and receiving holy Communion at Mass. Her father said he was always "holding on to the conviction that she was going to be cured," described what Jimena's first call home was like after it had happened. "We practically didn't speak, she was crying; she just told us, 'I see, I see, I see.' Then the priest called us who had celebrated the Mass to give us a few more details. It's an incredible joy," he said.

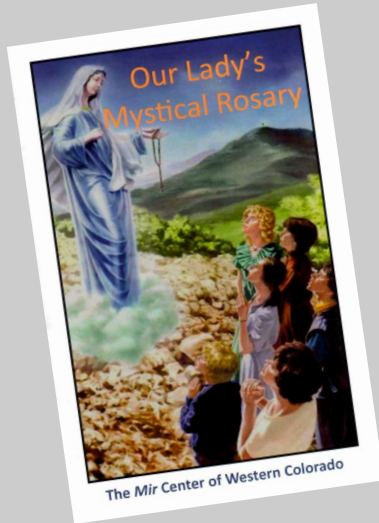
"Jimena went to confession before going to Mass. She was very excited, she felt something special. She then went to receive Communion," he said. "Afterward she was afraid to open her eyes because she thought, 'If I don't get cured, it's because I don't have faith.' And she opened them up and began to see everything. Then she started crying and realized that her friends were two and a half years older than when she saw them last."

"We went through a small *Way of the Cross* from doctors who were recommended to us. No one understood what was happening to her. Prior to WYD, during a walk along the beach, father and daughter decided to completely abandon themselves to the Virgin. After that, they both decided to "get in gear and get the whole world praying. My daughter believed that we had to pray and make a novena to Our Lady of the Snows," Jimena's father said. Thousands of people participated in the novena. "Just the girls who went with her to WYD numbered almost 400. All prayed, and now for them it was the miracle of WYD."

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(Angry skeptic continued from page 5)

her; after praying over a few people, she would have put on enough of a show. To test this, I got out of line and went to the very back. I started timing her as she prayed over each person—one minute, ten seconds; one minute, ten seconds, each time. She took a full hour to do this, and prayed for every single person who was waiting. When it was my turn, I looked at my watch the whole time—one minute, ten seconds. The woman who'd talked to me earlier asked, "Do you believe now?" "The jury is still out." "You need to meet Ivanka," she said.

I left and scoured the town, talking to whomever would listen—cab drivers, restaurant owners, pilgrims—trying to punch holes in the charade, but I couldn't get the goods from anyone about what was "really" going on. By the time I met Ivanka, I had a plan. I'd memorized an interview of her in *Queen of the Cosmos*, in which she told the story of Mary appearing and showing her her deceased mother, whom she was able to embrace. At one point in Ivanka's talk, she asked if there were any questions. I decided to make a statement instead of ask a question: "I'm so sorry to hear about your mom passing away. I can't even imagine what that must be like." At this point everyone around me started backing away from me, probably thinking, "This man is going to die from insolence, and we don't want to die with him."

Then I started to reiterate what I'd read in the book, but changing slightly a couple facts here and there, and adding a few nuances, trying to catch her in a lie—because if I caught her in a lie, then I would prove that the whole thing was a sham. Coming to a close, I ended my speech with, "I just want to thank you for sharing that with us."

Ivanka responded, which took several minutes, and then the translator began to speak in English. Ivanka had corrected every misstatement, every false innuendo, every supposition I had made—and she did so like a mother to a child. "Oh my God," I thought. "That woman is telling the truth."

I went to a pay phone and called my father. "Chief," I said to him, they're telling the truth. They're living it. The whole town is living it. If they were lying, they'd be giving up their children's inheritance, their children's future, because if they were making this all up and someone found out, the whole town would consider them anathema, and they'd be left all alone. The risk is too great. There's no money. No book deals. They've got nothing. Only God. I went to Confession for the first time in years. And toward the end of the trip, I found myself sharing my heart with another pilgrim, an honest, kind, prayerful man, a former Protestant pastor, who had sacrificed a lot to become a Catholic. He said to me spontaneously, "There's something I need to tell you." "If it makes you happy." "Are you sure you're not supposed to be a priest?" Obviously, the story didn't end there...

Aren't the messages of Our Lady too good to keep to yourself? Isn't there a friend or relative that you'd like to add to our mailing list? There is no charge for "Our Lady's Monthly Messenger", but donations are accepted. Please Note: if you add more than 2 names, please consider a donation of 20 dollars per name per year. Make checks payable to: *The Mir Center*. And please, no overseas orders... Thanks and God Bless!

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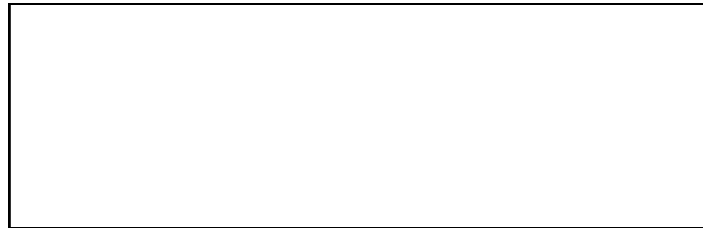
The Mir Center of Western Colorado  
2574 Young Court  
Grand Junction, CO 81505

# September

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5 Medjugorje prayer group 7:00pm St Francis	6	7	8 <b>Birthday of the Blessed Virgin Mary</b>	9
10	11	12 Medjugorje prayer group 7:00pm St Francis	13	14 <b>Triumph of the Cross</b>	15 <b>Our Lady of Sorrows</b>	16
17	18	19 Medjugorje prayer group 7:00pm St Francis	20	21	22	23
24	25	26 Medjugorje prayer group 7:00pm St Francis	27	28	29	30

## Upcoming events:

- + **Birthday of the Blessed Virgin Mary, September 8th**
- + **The Exaltation of the Cross, September 14th**
- + **Our Lady of Sorrows, September 15th**



Our Lady's Five-Point Program  
 \*Conversion  
 \*Prayer  
 \*Fasting  
 \*Peace  
 \*Reconciliation

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MISSION STATEMENT

Our primary goal, our main focus, is to bring Jesus Christ to the world and to bring the world to Jesus Christ. To accomplish this task, the MIR Center of Western Colorado was established to provide accurate information about the messages and events originating from Marian apparitions occurring in Medjugorje and elsewhere. We are committed to living and sharing the messages of Medjugorje and helping others to live the messages as well. By living the messages of Medjugorje, which are in essence the message of the Gospel, we hope to spread peace into our families, into our communities, and into our world. As a nonprofit organization, we intend to use any and all funds raised or donations received to aid in spreading the messages of Our Lady to all who will listen. With regard to the apparitions occurring in the world today we humbly submit to the final authority of the Catholic Church.