The Encyclical on faith Lumen Fidei

Pope Francis at the World Youth Day in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

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Editorial

To be missionaries of the good news

Two great events took place in the Church in July: the release of the encyclical *Lumen Fidei* on faith — the first encyclical written by two popes — and the gathering of the youth of the world in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, for the World Youth Day. This event also marked the first journey of Pope Francis outside Italy since the beginning of his pontificate.

In the new encyclical on faith (see page 4), Pope Francis explains that faith is more necessary than ever for today’s world, for it helps us understand the plan of God for His creation and mankind: that we are all God’s children, and therefore brothers in Jesus Christ, that God is Love and that we must love one another, treat others like brothers and not like enemies, and respect the rules of charity, truth and justice in our relations with others and in life in society.

In his speeches to the youth in Brazil (see page 16), Pope Francis emphasized the same theme, and in a very direct way in his speech to the young people of Argentina on July 25: “I think our world civilization has gone beyond its limits, it has gone beyond its limits because it has made money into such a god” and he pointed out that in the Beatitudes (Blessed are the peacemakers, those who thirst for justice, etc.) and the Gospel according to St. Matthew, Chapter 25, on Judgment Day: (“I was hungry, and you did not feed me...”), there is all we need as plan of action.

The Holy Father also insisted on the need go out and meet people, to leave our comfort zone, not to remain observers in front of today’s changes and injustices, but to get involved. Young people have a great thirst for justice; that is why we invite them to read and study the writings of Louis Even and others on economic democracy (see page 11), and even to become its missionaries, to bring this good news of liberation everywhere. This is what every reader of MICHAEL should do.

Alain Pilote, Editor

*The statue of Christ the Redeemer with his open arms on top of Mount Corcovado in Rio de Janeiro*
The encyclical Lumen Fidei on faith

Written by two Popes, Francis and Benedict XVI

“Faith is born of an encounter with the living God who calls us and reveals his love”

On July 5, 2013, the Vatican released the first encyclical of Pope Francis, “Lumen Fidei” (The Light of Faith), dated June 29, Solemnity of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul. What is unique about this encyclical is that it is the first one written by two Popes: for, according to the words of Pope Francis, “written with four hands”: the two hands of Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI, and the two hands of reigning Pope Francis. Providentially, the two Popes appeared together on the same day in the Vatican Gardens for the unveiling of a statue dedicated to St. Michael the Archangel. (See page 31.) One can also add that July 5, 2013, will be remembered as the “day of the four Popes,” since, on this same day, it was announced that two previous Popes, Blessed John XXIII and Blessed John Paul II, will be declared saints during the same ceremony.

There are three theological virtues: Faith, Hope and Charity. Benedict XVI had already written an encyclical on charity in 2005 (Deus Caritas Est, God is love), and on hope in 2007 (Spe Salvi, Saved by Hope). He had announced in 2012 that he was working on an encyclical on faith to be published in the summer of 2013, during the Year of Faith. When he renounced the papacy in February, 2013, this encyclical was almost finished.

Benedict XVI then left the text to his successor, Pope Francis who, according to his own words, made only a few additions. Speaking to members of the General Secretariat of the Synod of Bishops on June 13, Pope Francis said: “An encyclical on faith should come out shortly... Pope Benedict, who delivered it to me, started it; it is a strong document... I have received this great work that he has done, and I have brought it forward.” By making this text of his predecessor his own, Pope Francis has allowed us to enjoy this final text of Benedict XVI, which completes the trilogy on the theological virtues, and which would never have been published if Pope Francis had not accepted to take it as his own.

Pope Francis made sure to mention the exceptional collaboration of Benedict XVI in this new encyclical and in Paragraph 7 of Lumen Fidei one can read:

“The considerations on faith — in continuity with all that the Church’s magisterium has pronounced on this theological virtue — are meant to supplement what Benedict XVI had written in his encyclical letters on charity and hope. He himself had almost completed a first draft of an encyclical on faith. For this I am deeply grateful to him, and as his brother in Christ I have taken up his fine work and added a few contributions of my own. The Successor of Peter, yesterday today and tomorrow, is always called to strengthen his brothers and sisters in the priceless treasure of that faith which God has given as a light for humanity’s path.”

With most of the text of the encyclical having been written by Benedict XVI and Pope Francis having made these thoughts of Benedict XVI his own and having signed the document, it is therefore right to say that the encyclical was written by four hands. As reported by Vatican journalist John Travis in his blog, Pope Francis recently said the following in a phone conversation with his old friend, Argentine journalist Jorge Milia:

“Today I was with Pope Benedict, and we talked a lot. It’s a pleasure for me to exchange ideas with him... You can’t imagine the humility and wisdom of this man,” said Pope Francis.

On the day the new encyclical letter was released, its two “co-authors”, Pope Francis and Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI appeared together in the Vatican Gardens for the unveiling of a statue dedicated to St. Michael the Archangel. (See page 31.)

“Well, then keep him close to you,” Milia replied.

“I wouldn’t even consider giving up the counsel of a person like this, it would be foolish on my part!”, said Pope Francis.

Let us thank God for this fruitful relationship between the Pope Emeritus and the reigning Pope, and let us ask God to protect them and keep them with us for many years to come!

During a press conference to introduce the new encyclical, Cardinal Marc Ouelet, Prefect of the Congregation for Bishops, stated:

“A pillar was lacking in Benedict XVI’s trilogy on the theological virtues. Providence willed that this missing pillar should be both a gift from the Pope Emeritus to his successor and a symbol of unity. For in taking up and completing the work begun by his predecessor, Pope Francis bears witness with him to the unity of the faith.”

The following large excerpts are taken from this first encyclical of Pope Francis and deserve to be meditated upon in this Year of Faith.

1. The light of Faith (Lumen Fidei): this is how the Church’s tradition speaks of the great gift brought by Jesus. In John’s Gospel, Christ says of himself: “I have come as light into the world, that whoever believes in me may not remain in darkness” (Jn 12:46).

2. A light to be rediscovered

2. Yet in speaking of the light of faith, we can almost hear the objections of many of our contemporaries. In modernity, that light might have been considered sufficient for societies of old, but was felt to be of no use for new times, for a humanity come of age, proud of its rationality and anxious to explore the future in novel ways...

3. Slowly but surely, however, it would become evident that the light of autonomous reason is not enough to illumine the future; ultimately the future remains shadowy and fraught with fear of the unknown. As a result, humanity renounced the search for a great light, Truth itself, in order to be content with smaller lights which illumine the fleeting moment yet prove incapable of showing the way. Yet in the absence of light everything becomes confused; it is impossible to tell good from evil, or the road to our destination from...
This picture was taken on October 10, 2009 at the Parish of the Assumption of Our Lady in Cordova, Spain, at the baptism of Valentino Mora, son of Erica, a nun of 21. The photographer, Maria Silvana Salles, works with a traditional camera and had to send the film to be developed to a shop in Cordova. When she received the photos, she noticed with surprise that the water poured from the head of Valentino was a perfect rosary.

The fullness of Christian faith

15. Christian faith is centred on Christ; it is the confession that Jesus is Lord and that God has raised him from the dead (cf. Rom 10:9). All the threads of the Old Testament converge on Christ; he becomes the definitive “Vbi” skin of the promises, the ultimate basis of our “Amen” to God (cf. 2 Cor 1:20). The history of Jesus is the complete manifestation of God’s reliability. If Israel continued to recall God’s great acts of love, which formed the core of its confession of faith and broadened its gaze in faith, the life of Jesus now appears as the locus of God’s definitive intervention, the supreme manifestation of his love for us...

17. Our culture has lost its sense of God’s tangible presence and activity in our world. We think that God is to be found in the beyond, on another level of reality, far removed from our everyday relationships. But if this were the case, if God could not act in the world, his love would not be truly powerful, truly real, and thus not even true, a love capable of delivering the bliss that it promises. It would make no difference at all whether we believed in him or not. Christians, on the contrary, profess their faith in God’s tangible and powerful love which really does act in history and determines its final destiny: a love that can be encountered, a love fully revealed in Christ’s passion, death and resurrection.

18. This fullness which Jesus brings to faith has another decisive aspect. In faith, Christ is not simply the one in whom we believe, the supreme manifestation of God’s love; he is also the one with whom we are united precisely in order to believe. Faith does not merely gaze at Jesus, but sees things as Jesus himself sees them, with his own eyes: it is a participation in his way of seeing. In many areas in our lives we trust others who know more than we do. We trust the architect who builds our home, the pharmacist who gives us medicine for healing, the lawyer who defends us in court. We also need someone trustworthy and knowledgeable where God is concerned. Jesus, the Son of God, is the one who makes God known to us (cf. Jn 1:18...).
Faith and truth

23. Unless you believe, you will not understand (cf. 7:9). The Greek version of the Hebrew Bible, the Septuagint translation produced in Alexandria, gives the above rendering of the words spoken by the prophet Isaiah to King Ahaz... Terrified by the might of his enemies, the king seeks the security that an alliance with the great Assyrian empire can offer. The prophet tells him instead to trust completely in the solid and steadfast rock which is the God of Israel... The firm foundation that Isaiah promises to the king is indeed grounded in an understanding of God’s activity in the world and the unique place he occupies in history by his covenant and his promises.

24. Read in this light, the prophetic text leads to one conclusion: we need knowledge, we need truth, because without these we cannot stand firm, we cannot move forward. Faith without truth does not have, it does not provide a sure footing. It remains a beautiful story, the projection of our deep yearning for happiness, something capable of satisfying us to the extent that we are prepared to deceive ourselves. Either that, or it is reduced to a lofty sentiment which brings consolation and cheer, yet remains preys to the vagaries of our spirit and the changing seasons, incapable of sustaining us through the dark hours. If faith were truth, King Ahaz would be right not to stake his life and the security of his kingdom on a feeling. But precisely because of its intrinsic link to truth, faith is instead able to see further into the distance and take into account the vagaries of human life and the history of his people. The prophet challenges the king, and us, to understand the Lord’s ways, see- ing in God’s faithfulness the wise plan which governs the ages.

The Church, mother of our faith

38. The transmission of the faith not only brings light to men and women; it travels through time, passing from one generation to another. Because faith is born of an encounter which takes place in history and lights up our journey through time, it must be passed on in every age. It is through an unbroken chain of witnesses that we come to see the face of Jesus. But how is this possible? How can we be certain, after all these centuries, that we have encountered the same Jesus? The answer is twofold. First, faith is born of an encounter which takes place in history and lights up our journey through time, passing from one generation to another.

Faith’s past, that act of Jesus’ love which brought new life to the world, comes down to us through the memory of others — witnesses — and is kept alive in that one remembering subject which is the Church. The Church is a Mother who teaches us to speak the language of faith...

The sacraments and the transmission of faith

40. For transmitting a purely doctrinal content, an idea might tend to consider truth as that of a spoken message. But what is communicated in the Church, what is handed down in her living Trad- ition, is the new light born of an encounter with the true God, a light which touches us at the core of our being and engages our minds, wills and emotions, opening us to relationships lived in communion. There is a common mode of expression for this light, it is a means capable of engaging the entire person, body and spirit, interior life and relationships with others. It is the sacraments, celebrated in the Church’s liturgy. The sacraments communicate an incarnate memory, linked to the times and places of our lives, linked to all our senses; in them the whole person is engaged, the whole body, the whole person as subject and part of a network of communal relationships...

Faith, prayer and the Decalogue

46. Two other elements are essential in the faithful transmission of the Church’s memory. First, the Lord’s Prayer; the “Our Father”... Here Christians learn to share in Christ’s own spiritual ex- perience and to see all things through his eyes. From his own eyes who is light from light, the only- begotten Son of the Father, we come to know God and can thus kindle in others the desire to draw near to him...

Similarly important is the link between faith and the Decalogue. One of the many passages we have said, takes the form of a journey, a path to be fol- lowed, which begins with an encounter with the living God. It is in the light of faith, of complete entrustment to the God who saves, that the Ten Commandments take on their deepest truth, as seen in the words which introduce them: “I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt” (Ex 20:2). The Deca- logue is not a set of negative commandments, but a journey, an encounter with the living God...

“Faith does not merely gaze at Jesus, but sees things as Jesus himself sees them, with his own eyes: it is a participation in his way of seeing.”

(Lumen Fidei, 18.)
Faith is no refuge for the fainthearted, but something which enhances our lives. It makes us aware of a magnificent calling, the vocation of love. It assures us that this love is trustworthy and worth bearing, for it is based on God’s faithfulness which is stronger than our every weakness.

A light for life in society

54. Absorbed and deepened in the family, faith becomes a light capable of revealing all our relationships in society. As an experience of the mercy of God, the Father, it sets us on the path of brotherhood. Modernity sought to build a universal brotherhood based on equality, yet we gradually came to realize that this brotherhood, lacking a reference to a common Father as its ultimate foundation, cannot endure. We need to return to the truth.

The history of faith has been from the beginning a history of brotherhood, albeit not without conflict. God calls Abraham to go forth from his land and promises to make of him a great nation, a great people on whom the divine blessing rests (cf. Gen 12:1-3). As salvation history progresses, it becomes evident that God wants to make everyone share as brothers and sisters in the one blessedness which attains its fullness in Jesus, so that all may be one. The boundless love of our Father also comes to us, in Jesus, through our brothers and sisters. Faith teaches us to see that every man and woman represents a blessing for me, that the light of God’s face shines on me through the faces of my brothers and sisters.

How many benefits has the gaze of Christian faith brought to the city of men for their common life? Thanks to faith we have come to understand the unique dignity of each person, something which was not clearly seen in antiquity...

At the heart of biblical faith is God’s love, his concrete concern for every man and his plan of salvation which embraces all of humanity and all creation, culminating in the incarnation, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Without insight into these realities, there is no criterion for what we call the intrinsic human life precious and unique. Man loses his place in the universe, he is cast adrift in nature, either renouncing his proper moral responsibility or else presuming to be a sort of absolute judge, endowed with an unlimited power to manipulate the world around him.

55. Faith, on the other hand, by revealing the love of God the Creator, enables us to respect nature all the more, and to do so, listened to by the hand of God and a dwelling place entrusted to our protection and care. Faith also helps us to devise models of development which are based not simply on utility and profit, but consider creation as a gift for which we are all indebted; it teaches us to create just forms of existence, in the realization that authority comes from God and is meant for the service of the common good...

Consolation and strength amid suffering

56. To speak of faith often involves speaking of painful testing... Christians know that suffering cannot be eliminated, yet it can have meaning and become an act of love and entrustment into the hands of God who does not abandon us; in this way it can serve as a moment of growth in faith and love. By contemplating Christ’s union with the Father during the height of his sufferings on the cross (cf. Mk 15:34), Christians learn to share in the same gaze of Jesus. Even death is illumined and can be experienced as the ultimate call to faith, the ultimate “Go forth from your land!” (Gen 12:1), the ultimate “Come!” spoken by the Father, to whom we abandon ourselves in the confidence that he does not abandon us; in this way it can serve as a sort of absolute judge, endowed with an unlimited power to manipulate the world around him.

57. Nor does the light of faith make us forget the sufferings of this world. How many men and women of faith have found mediators of light in those who suffer? But it was with Saint Francis of Assisi and the leper, or with Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta and her poor. They understood the mystery at work in them. In drawing near to the suffering, they were certain that God’s eternal presence was a balm which at least contained its fullness in Jesus, so that all may be one. The boundless love of our Father also comes to us, in Jesus, through our brothers and sisters. Faith teaches us to see that every man and woman represents a blessing for me, that the light of God’s face shines on me through the faces of my brothers and sisters.

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Where does money come from? Money should be the symbol of realities (goods and services). Today, however, physical realities, and even human beings, are subjected to the diktats of money.

Pope Pius XII wrote: “Bank robbery Cypriot style”.

Here is another example where money rules instead of serving: in March, 2013, under the pressure of the IMF and the European Central Bank, and after several days of paralysis when the banks were closed and accounts frozen, the government of the island of Cyprus agreed to confiscate force individuals’ savings in Cyprus’ banks in order to get an emergency help of 10 million euros (13 million dollars). At first, all savers were to contribute, but in the end, only the depositors of 100,000 euros and plus contributed. The text of the cartoon is in Cypriot language, and could be translated as follow: “Bank robbery Cypriot style”.

The right of everyone to a share in the goods of the earth is a natural right, an individual right, not pertaining to any group membership. No order or legislation can legitimately suppress this individual right. As Pope Pius XII put it in the same address already mentioned above:

“Such an individual right cannot, by any means, be suppressed, even by the exercise of other unquestionable and recognized rights over material goods.”

Meaning that, even the property rights of those who may have ownership of the resources for production, cannot disregard the individual right of each person to their share of the goods of the earth.

A Social Credit system acknowledges private property, and even supports it, but also firmly upholds the social responsibility of this private property. Furthermore, the Social Credit mechanism of distribution (the dividend) would allow for the goods produced to reach those who need them, which would certainly not harm the producers, since their main concern is to sell their products.

We do not mention these reflections as proof that the Popes advocate Social Credit — this is not the responsibility of the Church — rather, we wish to demonstrate how wonderfully Social Credit would facilitate “the practical realization of that individual right”, as proclaimed by these authorities.

This individual right goes back to the very creation of man. Though civil authorities, dictators of the economy, close-minded sociologists blinded by man-made laws and regulations, have been able to forget, to push aside or to minimize it, this right has continued to be affirmed by the Masters in Moral Theology.

The various social security measures — late and flawed in their application — are an admission of this right of all to a share in the necessities of life. However, the fact that the redistribution of the claims on goods (money) must be continuously adjusted, taking from Peter to give to Paul, proves that this redistribution, as presently regulated, is defective. Instead of defective “correctives”, as well as many overlooked cases, would it not be infinitely better to establish a source of purchasing power that would operate automatically in guaranteeing rights from the start, the basic share to which everyone is entitled? This is something the present system, which binds income to employment, cannot do.

Ends and means

The social and economic sectors today suffer from a distorted concept, where the ends are taken for the means, and the means are taken for the ends.

As in the case, for example, of those who think that man was created to be employed in economic activities. The contrary is true, it is the economic activities that exist in order to serve man, not visa-versa. If the progress in the production of material goods makes it possible to satisfy man's needs with a minimal amount of human labour, so much the better! There are other activities for man that are far more superior than economic functions, and if people have more free time, more leisure time to devote to these other activities, we must bless God for having allowed this progress.

Similarly, man does not exist for production, but that production exists to serve man and to satisfy his basic needs. To persist in using to the full capacity every means of production when all human needs have been satisfied, is to provoke either the waste of resources through the production of goods that no one needs, or creating and stimulating new, artificial needs, causing materialism and turning men's hearts from their true end; eternity.

The policy of full-employment is another form of distortion between the ends and the means. The purpose of industry is not to supply jobs, but to supply goods. Human labour is only a part of the means of production, it is not an end. If production can be achieved with less human labour, and still continue to maintain the proper flow of goods, this is also a good thing. Man will then be free to devote his time to other activities of his own choosing.

When money becomes the end (or goal) of a business, it is obvious that this too is a distortion of the ends and the means. It is the greatest heresy of the present economic system. When investing capital, investors try to invest in what will bring in the highest financial return, and not necessarily in what will better satisfy the basic needs of man. If there is more money to be made in alcohol and poisons, investments will go to industries that produce alco-

ter respects the fundamental rights of each human being — For each human being does, in fact, have fundamental rights. We all agree, for example, that each newborn baby has the right to life. — Which group then, the advocates of the present system or the advocates of Social Credit, offers the best possibilities for each individual to exercise these fundamental rights? — Considering that the right to life implies an undeniable right to the necessities of life, which of these two groups offers to each individual the best chances of obtaining these necessities?

A few principles

In order to prevent any accusation that we may have made up our own partisan ideas when speaking of these principles, we will quote verbatim from a few authorities with whom no one can contest the soundness of their doctrine as regards the fundamental rights of every human being.

In the Constitution on the Church Gaudium et Spes (n. 69), the Fathers of the Second Vatican Council wrote:

“God intended the earth and all that it contains for the use of every human being and people. Thus, as all men follow justice and unite in charity, created goods should abound for them on a reasonable basis... The right to have a share of earthly goods sufficient for oneself and one's family belongs to every human being. Furthermore, the Social Credit mechanism of distribution (the dividend) would allow for the goods produced to reach those who need them, which would certainly not harm the producers, since their main concern is to sell their products.

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hol and poisons. The workers themselves also give in to this distortion: they will look to be employed wherever the pay is highest, even if what they are producing is useless or even harmful. Even when this means helping monopolies to grow, and expand their economic dictatorship.

To associate income solely with employment is to forget the true purpose for which income exists. Income supplies purchasing power which, in turn, is a means to allow production to achieve its end; the satisfaction of the needs of all human beings.

When it comes to international trade, how many so-called learned people confuse ends and means, while losing sight of the only logical purpose of exportation; to allow a greater variety of goods for the population of all the countries involved — importing and exporting nations. Those who claim that the economy of a nation is successful if that nation manages to export more goods than it imports, misunderstand and poisons. The workers themselves also give in to this distortion: they will look to be employed wherever the pay is highest, even if what they are producing is useless or even harmful. Even when this means helping monopolies to grow, and expand their economic dictatorship.

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Pope Francis at the World Youth Day in Rio de Janeiro

“Go and make disciples of all nations”

For his first official journey outside Italy, Pope Francis went to Brazil, July 22-28, 2013, for the 26th World Youth Day (WYD) in Rio de Janeiro. It was an immense success, with over 3 million people from 178 countries attending the closing Mass on Copacabana beach, Sunday, July 28. (Only the World Youth Day in Manila, Philippines, in 1995, saw a larger crowd: 4 million people.)

The theme of the WYD for this year was: “Go and make disciples of all nations” (cf. Matthew 28:19.) It was Benedict XVI who had chosen this theme, and he had also chosen the city of Rio to hold this WYD, but Divine Providence arranged that it was Francis, the first Pope from Latin America, who went. The same “wink” from Providence took place for the first apostolic journey of Benedict XVI: it was John Paul II who had announced (in Toronto, Canada, in 2002), that the next WYD would be held in Cologne Germany, and it was a German Pope, Benedict XVI, who attended it.

Here are large excerpts from the many speeches of Pope Francis at the WYD of Rio, which electrified not only the youth of the whole world:

Welcome ceremony, July 22

Young people are the window through which the future enters the world. They are the window, and so they present us with great challenges. Our generation will show that it can rise to the promise found in each young person when we know how to give them space. This means that we have to create the material and spiritual conditions for their full development; to give them a solid basis on which to build their lives; to guarantee their safety and their education to be everything they can be; to pass on to them lasting values that make life worth living; to give them a transcendent horizon for their thirst for authentic happiness and their creativity for the good; to give them the legacy of a world worthy of human life; and to awaken in them their greatest potential as builders of their own destiny, sharing responsibility for the future of everyone.

Mass in the Basilica of the Shrine of Our Lady of Aparecida, July 24

When the Church looks for Jesus, she always knocks at his Mother’s door and asks: “Show us Jesus”. It is from Mary that the Church learns true discipleship. That is why the Church always goes out on mission in the footsteps of Mary.

Today, looking forward to the World Youth Day which has brought me to Brazil, I too come to knock on the door of the house of Mary – who loved and raised Jesus – that she may help all of us; pastors and parents, of God’s people, shepherding in spirit, shepherding in conscience, shepherding in truth, to pass on to our young people the values that can help them build a nation and a world which are more just, united and fraternal.

Visit to the favela (slum) of Varginha, July 25

I would like to make an appeal to those in position of greater resources, to public authorities and to all people of good will who are working for social justice: never tire of working for a more just world, marked by greater solidarity! No one can remain insensitive to the inequalities that persist in the world! Everybody, according to his or her particular opportunities and responsibilities, should be able to make a personal contribution to putting an end to

The shrine of Our Lady of Aparecida

According to the official account of the Aparecida apparition, in October 1717, Dom Pedro de Almeida, Count of Assumau and Governor of the Province of São Paulo and Minas Gerais, was passing through the area of Guaratunguã, a small city in the Paraíba river valley, during a trip to Vila Rica, an important gold mining site.

As the people of Guaratunguã decided to hold a feast in his honour, three fishermen, Domingos Garcia, João Alves, and Filipe Pedroso went down to the Paraíba waters to fish. The fishermen prayed to Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception that God would grant a good catch. The fishermen, having a run of bad luck, cast their nets in the River Paraíba. João Alves cast his net and pulled it back to find a headless statue of the Virgin Mary. Upon his next cast, he found the head. The group cleaned the statue, wrapped it in cloth, and returned to their task to find their fortunes had changed and they were able to obtain all the fish they needed.

The fishermen named the statue Nossa Senhora da Aparecida Conceição (in English: Our Lady of the Appeared Conception). Neighbors began to venerate the statue, which came to be known as Our Lady of Aparecida, and a cult grew. The first chapel was built in 1746. The statue in clay is less than three feet tall. The number of worshippers increased dramatically and in 1834 work on a larger church was begun, and finished in 1888. On June 16, 1930, Our Lady of Aparecida was proclaimed the “Queen and Principal Patroness of Brazil” by Pope Pius XI.

The third Basilica of Our Lady of Aparecida was consecrated on July 4, 1980 by Pope John Paul II. It is the second largest Basilica in the world, second only to St. Peter’s in the Vatican City. It can accommodate 45,000 worshipers. In 2010, over 10 million people visited it, which makes it the second most visited shrine after Lourdes.

Three million people crowded Copacabana beach in Rio de Janeiro on July 28, 2013 as Pope Francis celebrated the final mass of his visit to Brazil.

It is John Paul II who was inspired to launch these days (now two weeks) dedicated to the young people, which allow them to see that they are not alone believing in Jesus, and that even if there might be just a few believers in their area, they are millions throughout the world.
in the cathedral of Rio, July 25

so many social injustices. The culture of selfishness and individualism that often prevails in our society is not, I repeat, not what builds up and leads to a more habitable world: rather, it is the culture of solidarity that does so; the culture of solidarity means seeing others not as rivals or statistics, but brothers and sisters. And we are all brothers and sisters!

Way of the Cross with young people, July 26
The first name given to Brazil was “The Land of the Holy Cross”. The Cross of Christ was planted five centuries ago not only on the shores of this country, but also in the history, the hearts and the lives of the people of Brazil and elsewhere. The suffering Christ is keenly felt here, as one of us who shares our journey even to the end. There is no cross, big or small, in our life, which the Lord does not share with us.

But the Cross of Christ invites us also to allow ourselves to be snatched by his love, teaching us always to look upon others with mercy and tenderness, especially those who suffer, who are in need of help, who need a word or a concrete action; the Cross invites us to step outside ourselves to meet the Lord and to extend a hand to them. How many times have we seen them in the Way of the Cross, how many times have they accompanied Jesus on the way to Calvary: Pilate, Simon of Cyrene, Mary, the women... Today I ask you: which of them do you want to be? Do you want to be like Pilate, who did not have the courage to go against the tide to save Jesus’ life, and instead washed his hands? Tell me: are you one of those who wash their hands, who feign ignorance and look the other way? Or are you like Simon of Cyrene, who helped Jesus to carry that heavy wood, or like Mary and the other women, who were not afraid to accompany Jesus all the way to the end, with love and tenderness? And you, who do you want to be? Like Pilate? Like Simon? Like Mary? Jesus is looking at you now and is asking you: do you want to help me carry the Cross? Brothers and sisters, with all the strength of your youth, how will you respond to him?

Meeting with young people of Argentina in the cathedral of Rio, July 25
Look, at this moment, I think our world civiliza-
tion has gone beyond its limits, it has gone beyond its limits because it has made money into such a god that we are now faced with a philosophy and a practice which exclude the two ends of life... the elderly and the young...

Faith in Jesus Christ is not a joke, it is something very serious. It is a scandal that God came to be one of us. It is a scandal that he died on a cross. It is a scandal: the scandal of the Cross. The Cross continues to provoke scandal. But it is the one sure path, the path of the Cross, the path of Jesus, the path of the Incarnation of Jesus. Please do not water down your faith in Jesus Christ. We dilute fruit drinks – orange, apple, or banana juice, but please do not drink a diluted form of faith. Faith is whole and entire, not something that you water down...

The Beatitudes: What must we do, Father? Look, read the Beatitudes: that will do you good. If you want to know what you actually have to do, read Matthew Chapter 5, which is the standard by which we will be judged. With these two things you have the action plan: the Beatitudes and Matthew 25. You do not need to read anything else. I ask you this with all my heart.

Meeting with Brazil’s leaders of society, July 27
The future also demands a humanistic vision of the economy and a politics capable of ensuring greater and more effective participation on the part of the people, eliminating forms of elitism and eradi-
cating poverty. No one should be denied what is necessary and everyone should be guaranteed dign-
ity, fraternity and solidarity: this is the road that is proposed. In the days of the prophet Amos, God’s frequent warning was already being heard: “They sell the righteous for silver and the needy for a pair of sandals – they… trample down the head of the poor into the dust of the earth and push the afflicted out of the way” (Am 2:6-7). The outcry, the call for justice, continues to be heard even today.

Prayer vigil with the young people, July 27
Your young hearts want to build a better world. I have been closely following the news reports of the many young people who throughout the world have taken to the streets in order to express their desire for a more just and fraternal society. Young people in the streets. It is the young who want to be the protagonists of change. Please, don’t leave it to others to be the protagonists of change. You are the ones who hold the future! You ... Through you the future is fulfilled in the world. I ask you also to be the protagonists of this transformation. Continue to overcome apathy, offering a Christian response to the social and political anxieties, which are arising in various parts of the world. I ask you to be builders of the world, to work for a better world. Dear young people, please, don’t be observers of life, but get involved. Jesus did not remain an observer, but he immersed him-
self. Don’t be observers, but im-
merse yourself in the reality of life, as Jesus did.

Closing Mass of the World Youth Day, July 28
“Go and make disciples of all nations”. With these words, Jesus is speaking to each one of us, saying: “It was wonderful to take part in World Youth Day, to live the faith together with young people from the four corners of the earth, but now you must go, now you must pass on this experience to others.” Jesus is calling you to be a disciple with a mission! Today, in the light of the word of God that we have heard, what is the Lord saying to us? What is the Lord saying to us? Three simple ideas: Go, do not be afraid, and serve.... Careful, though! Jesus did not say: “go, if you would like to, if you have the time”, but he said: “Go and make disciples of all nations.” Sharing the ex-
perience of faith, bearing witness to the faith, pro-
claiming the Gospel: this is a command that the Lord entrusts to the whole Church, and that includes you; but it is a command that is born not from a desire for domination, from the desire for power, but from the force of love, from the fact that Jesus first came into our midst and did not give us just a part of himself, but he gave us the whole of himself, he gave his life in order to save us and to show us the love and mercy of God. Jesus does not treat us as slaves, but as people who are free, as friends, as brothers and sisters, no limits: he sends us to everyone. The Gospel is for everyone, not just for some. It is not only for those who seem closer to us, more receptive, more welcoming. It is for everyone. Do not be afraid to go and to bring Christ into every area of life, to the fringes of society, even to those who seem farthest away, most indifferent. The Lord seeks all, he wants everyone to feel the warmth of his mercy and his love.
A child’s innocence is a “straight shot” to Heaven

“The Nature of the World and the Church
passes through the family.” – Pope John Paul II

by April Helenek

I sat in the church pew listening for something to inspire me regarding my vocation as a homeschooling mother and my article being due. I opened my Bible to the day old Hosea passage that had gone undetected. Misdiagnosed as the flu, she was lancing on death’s door. (See story in MICHAEL March/April 2013, p. 28-30.) My husband, Jae, who had not been raised in the faith, was now on his knees, and during one of the darker moments of this very frightening ordeal he had a conversation with God, desperate to save our child. Jae made a true heart felt “pact” with God, “bargaining” with Him that if He allowed Piper to live, then he would offer his own life in return. When Piper later walked out of that hospital, literally leaving the doctors scratching

The Helenek family

ing in Croatia, June 5, 2011 stated, “Parents commit
courses to yourself to teach your children to pray, and
and become like children, you will not enter the kingdom of

The disciples came to Jesus and said, “Who

“Put out into deep water and lower your

the Church.” (Luke 5:4-6.)

give homeschooling a try for a year, and if we found that

in which to live unity, communion

36

children, you will not enter the kingdom of

The Helenek family

come to know something about God that I didn’t know, at least not not yet anyway…

A few years prior, our oldest daughter Piper had been hospitalized because of her age old throwing up problem that had gone undetected. Misdiagnosed as the flu, she was lancing on death’s door. (See story in MICHAEL March/April 2013, p. 28-30.) My husband, Jae, who had not been raised in the faith, was now on his knees, and during one of the darker moments of this very frightening ordeal he had a conversation with God, desperate to save our child. Jae made a true heart felt “pact” with God, “bargaining” with Him that if He allowed Piper to live, then he would offer his own life in return. When Piper later walked out of that hospital, literally leaving the doctors scratching

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put it up on the Church, and in the Church of the home.”

As busy families we may wonder how we could real

...ultimately, as homeschoolers we have the freedom to

to help others in need even if just through “hospitality”.

As a parent swimming against this tidal wave of re

It’s hard to see the fruits before the

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As busy families we may wonder how we could real
keep your children’s innocence for as long as possible, and making plenty of room for all the positive information that you have prioritized for them. You could never fail at your task as a homeschooling parent!

Our Catholic Catechism states in this way The Primordial Parental Responsibility, (2221-2222) The primordial responsibility of children is to love their parents and to educate them in their faith and moral formation. Therefore, the parents’ right and duty to educate children is primordial and inalienable. Parents must see their children as children of God and educate them in God’s law. 2223. Parents have the first responsibility for the education of their children. They bear witness to this responsibility by creating a home where tenderness, forgiveness, respect, fidelity, and disinterested service are the rule. The home is well suited for education in the virtues. This requires an aptitude for self-denial, sound judgment, and self-mastery—the preconditions of all true freedom. Parents should teach their children to subordinate the “material and instinctual dimensions to interior and spiritual ones.”

Parents have a grave responsibility to teach their children about the divinity of the human person, and to make them aware that we are all children of God. In the Catechism of the Catholic Church, parents are called upon to “be the first educators of their children. When the time comes to jump in with both feet you may see how incredibly blessed your family will be from it.”

by Fr. Bevil Bramwell, OMI

As our moral environment becomes more challenging, Catholics shouldn’t be caught flat-footed. John Paul II said that in Christianitity: “Our spirit is set in one direction, the only direction for our intellect, will and heart is towards Christ our Redeemer, towards Christ, the Redeemer of man. We wish to look towards him—because there is salvation in no one else but him, the Son of God—through the Holy Spirit, Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life”

To develop Christ as the focus of mind and heart in the face of so many contrary ideas we need various tools, both to keep our focus on Christ and to stifle our resolve as a broad church of that focus. Praying the Rosary frequently does both.

As you know, in the Rosary we ponder the different events in Jesus’ life from the Joyful Mysteries to the Glorious Mysteries. But why focus on Christ? John Paul II says that “through all levels of self-awareness, and through all the fields of activity in which the Church expresses, finds and confirms herself, we must constantly aim at him ‘who is the head’, ‘through whom are all things and through whom we exist’, who is both ‘the way, and the truth’ and ‘the resurrection and the life’ whom we see, the ‘Father’ and who had to go away from us that is, by his death on the Cross and then by his Ascension into heaven—in order that the Counselor whom we should consult and who keeps coming to us as the Spirit of truth.”

This is how we become beacons of clarity in a world living in a moral fog. Really the main prayers are the Hail Mary and the Our Father. The Hail Mary captures the words of her cousin Elizabeth when she met the pregnant Mary. In this prayer, we ask Mary to intercede for us. We do this because Jesus explains: “The Blessed Virgin Mary continues to ‘go before’ the People of God. Her exceptional pilgrimage of faith represents a constant point of reference for the Church, and for individuals, for the multitudes, for peoples and nations and, in a sense, for all humanity. It is indeed difficult to encompass and measure its range.”

She accompanies her son and helps us to do the same.

Mary can help us to truly appreciate what the mysteries of Jesus’ life mean. His is the perfect human life and so it becomes the foundation of our perfection as human beings. The Second Vatican Council explained that “men are called to this union with Christ, who is the light of the world, from whom we go forth, through whom we live, and toward whom our whole life straights.” (Lumen Gentium 3.)

In fact in the same document, we read: “Christ, Jesus, since the very beginning of the creation of the world, to the present and to the end of time, is the head of the Church, the Mystical Body. He, the head of the Church, is present throughout the whole Church and she proceeds and moves through the laity, vivifies them in this Spirit and increasingly urges them on to every good and perfect work.” (Lumen Gentium 3.)

The Rosary is a work of grace. We read in Christ unfolds day by day. In some form or other, we live through all of the mysteries of his life. However we constantly need to be reminded that Christ is more real than the attractions and distractions around us. If we visit a pagan or Christian shrine, Christ is with us, the Christ of the Rosary and not the Christ concocted by some modern politician or theologian.

Then we also pray the Our Father. We should always pray the Our Father at the beginning of any prayer. This is how a life in Christ unfolds day by day. In some form or other, we live through all of the mysteries of his life. However we constantly need to be reminded that Christ is more real than the attractions and distractions around us. If we visit a pagan or Christian shrine, Christ is with us, the Christ of the Rosary and not the Christ concocted by some modern politician or theologian.

The Rosary is a survival manual. It is true that homeschooling is not for everyone; some of us have some really great options to keep our children in a healthy Catholic environment in great educational standards. But if you are feeling that home-schooling may be the only option for your family, or if you feel called to homeschool your children, there are a few things that I would recommend that you do first: Prayer, prudence and patience It is true that homeschooling is not for everyone; some of us have some really great options to keep our children in a healthy Catholic environment in great educational standards. But if you are feeling that home-schooling may be the only option for your family, or if you feel called to homeschool your children, there are a few things that I would recommend that you do first:

1. Pray with fervency! Receive the sacraments often; you will need the graces for the tidal wave of concerns and questions that will come your way. Discuss your goals and their priorities and explain to your spouse what you can receive the support you will need, even if he may not yet have fully educated himself about homeschooling.

2. Read! There are some really great books, especially Catholic ones on the subject of homeschooling. Reading even just a few pages will put your heart at ease and will help you to see if this venture is for you and your family. It is never too early to begin reading great books on this subject but I do have a few suggestions and I have also included a wonderful parenting book:

- Parenting With Grace by Gregory K. Popcak and Lisa Popcak (highly recommend)
- Catholic Homeschool Treasury: Nurturing Children’s Love for Learning by Rachel Macion and Mau- reen Wittmann
- Catholic Education: Homeward Bound – Useful Guide to Catholic Home Schooling by Kimberly Hahn and Mary Hasson
- Catholic Home Schooling by Mary Kay Clark

3. Speak prudently to others and be realistic with yourself. Get excited, be motivated and put all you’ve learned into action! But... allow open to how it is that God wants for you and for your family. There is a reason why He has called you to homeschool, be it for one child, or for all your children, for one year, for many years, just remember that it is your vocation. You will need self-discipline, self-motivation and, let’s face it, a lot of hard work, but once you open your heart to the idea of homeschooling, it is then that you will begin to see how incredibly blessed your family will be from it.

4. Have Patience with yourself, your spouse and your children. When the time comes to jump in with both feet it may seem as though you may not be cut out for the job. You are, I promise! God gave these children to you and he will give you the graces too. I have my own “three months you’re ready for a break (Christmas).”

- By three o’clock you’re ready for the day to be done and have some tea.
- By three weeks you finally feel like you’ve got the hang of things.
- In another three months you need a break (Christmas).
- In another three months you’re ready to be better (Lent).
- In another three months you’re ready for a change of pace (summer).

- By the third year you really feel like you know what you are doing and so do your kids.
- And best of all, when all else fails:
- You have the Holy Trinity to call upon for help.

Above all though, trust in Our Lord and in His ability to provide for ALL your needs, whether physical, mental or spiritual. He is there for you. He is there for you and when you think of the Our Father He is the Our Father. He considered Him as the Father that is, by his death on the Cross and then by his Ascension into heaven—in order that the Counselor whom we should consult and who keeps coming to us as the Spirit of truth.”

This is how we become beacons of clarity in a world living in a moral fog. Really the main prayers are the Hail Mary and the Our Father. The Hail Mary captures the words of her cousin Elizabeth when she met the pregnant Mary. In this prayer, we ask Mary to intercede for us. We do this because Jesus explains: “The Blessed Virgin Mary continues to ‘go before’ the People of God.” Her exceptional pilgrimage of faith represents a constant point of reference for the Church, and for individuals, for the multitudes, for peoples and nations and, in a sense, for all humanity. It is indeed difficult to encompass and measure its range.”

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Eucharistic miracle in Buenos Aires in 1996

The inquiry was commissioned by Cardinal Bergoglio, now Pope Francis

by Fr. Mieczyslaw Piotrowski, SChr

The weakening of faith in the real presence of the Risen Christ in the Eucharist is one of the most significant aspects of the current spiritual crisis. Jesus wants to strengthen our faith in His Eucharistic presence. That is why from time to time in the history of the Catholic Church He grants signs — eucharistic miracles that clearly underscore the fact that He, the Risen Lord Himself in the mystery of His Divinity and glorified humanity, is truly present in the Eucharist. The most recent Eucharistic miracle recognized by the Church authorities occurred in 1996 in the capital of Argentina — Buenos Aires.

A consecrated Host becomes flesh and blood

At seven o’clock in the evening on August 18, 1996, Fr. Alejandro Pezet was saying Holy Mass at a Catholic church in the commercial center of Buenos Aires. As he was finishing distributing Holy Communion, a woman came up to tell him that she had found a discarded host on a candleholder at the back of the church. On going to the spot indicated, Fr. Alejandro saw the defiled Host. Since he was unable to consume it, he placed it in a container of water and put it away in the tabernacle of the chapel of the Blessed Sacrament.

On Monday, August 26, upon opening the tabernacle, he saw to his amazement that the Host had turned into a bloody substance. He informed Cardinal Jorge Bergoglio, who gave instructions that the Host be professionally photographed. The photos were taken on September 6. They clearly showed that the Host, which had become a fragment of bloodied flesh, had grown significantly in size. For several years the Host remained in the tabernacle, the whole affair being kept a strict secret. Since the Host differed from normal decay, Cardinal Bergoglio decided to have it scientifically analyzed.

On October 5, 1999, in the presence of the Cardinal’s representatives, Dr. Castanon took sample of the bloody fragment and sent it to New York for analysis. Since he did not wish to prejudice the study, he purposely did not inform the team of scientists of its origin. One of these scientists was Dr. Frederic Zugiba, the well-known cardiologist and forensic pathologist. He determined that the analyzed substance was real flesh and blood containing human DNA. Dr. Zugiba testified that, “the analyzed material is a fragment of the heart muscle found in the wall of the left ventricle close to the valves. This muscle is responsible for the contraction of the heart. It should be borne in mind that the left cardiac ventricle pumps blood to all parts of the body. The heart muscle is an inflammatory condition and contains a large number of white blood cells. This indicates that the heart was alive at the time the sample was taken. It is my contention that the heart was alive, since white blood cells die outside a living organism. They require a living organism to sustain them. Thus, their presence indicates that the heart was alive when the sample was taken. What is more, these white blood cells had penetrated the tissue, which further indicates that the heart had been under severe stress, as if the owner had been beaten severely about the chest.”

Two Australians, journalist Mike Willessee and lawyer Ron Tesoriero, witnessed these tests. Knowing where the sample had come from, they were dumbfounded. Dr. Zugiba’s testimony. Mike Willessee asked the scientist how long the white blood cells would have remained alive if they had come from a piece of human tissue, which had been kept in water. They would have ceased to exist in a matter of minutes, Dr. Zugiba replied. The journalist then told the doctor that the source of the sample had first been kept in ordinary water for a month and then for another three years in a container of distilled water; only then had the sample been taken for analysis.

Dr. Zugiba’s was at a loss to account for this fact. There was no way of explaining it scientifically, he stated. Only then did Mike Willessee inform Dr. Zugiba that the analyzed sample came from a consecrated Host (white, unleavened bread) that had mysteriously turned into bloody human flesh. Amazed by this information, Dr. Zugiba replied, “How and why a consecrated Host would change its character and become living human flesh and blood will remain an inexplicable mystery to science — a mystery totally beyond its competence.”

Fr. Pezet with Cardinal Bergoglio

Only faith in the extraordinary action of a God provides the reasonable answer — faith in a God, who wants to make us aware that He is truly present in the mystery of the Eucharist.

The Eucharistic miracle in Buenos Aires is an extraordinary sign attested to by science. Through it Jesus desires to arouse in us a lively faith in His real presence in the Eucharist, He reminds us that His presence is real, and not symbolic. Only with the eyes of faith do we see Him under appearance of the consecrated bread and wine. We do not see Him with our bodily eyes, since He is present in His glorified humanity. In the Eucharist Jesus sees and loves us and desires to save us.

In collaboration with Ron Tesoriero, Mike Willessee, one of Australia’s best-known journalists (he converted to Catholicism after working on the documents of another Eucharistic miracle) wrote a book entitled Reason to Believe. In it they present documented facts of Eucharistic miracles and other signs calling people to faith in Christ who abides and teaches in the Catholic Church. They have also made a documentary film on the Eucharist — based largely on the scientific discoveries associated with the miraculous Host in Buenos Aires. Their aim was to give a clear presentation of the Catholic Church’s teaching on the subject of the Eucharist.

They screened the film in numerous Australian cities. The showing at Adelaide drew a crowd of two thousand viewers. During the commentary and questions period that followed a visibly moved man stood up announcing that he was blind. Having learned that this was an exceptional film, he had very much wanted to see it. Just before the screening, he prayed fervently to Jesus for the grace to see the film. At once his sight was restored to him, but only for the thirty-minute duration of the film. Upon its conclusion, he again lost the ability to see. He confirmed this by describing in minute detail certain scenes of the film. It was an incredible event that moved those present to the core of their being.

Through such wondrous signs God calls souls to conversion. If Jesus causes the Host to become visible flesh, it is to make us aware that He is the contraction of a human heart — a heart that suffers like that of someone who has been beaten severely about the chest, if He does such things, it is in order to arouse and quicken our faith in His real presence in the Eucharist. He thus enables us to see that Holy Mass is a re-presentation (i.e., a making present) of the entire drama of our salvation: Christ’s passion, death, and resurrection. Jesus says to his disciples, “Unless you see signs and wonders, you will not believe” (Jn 4: 48). There is no need to actively seek out wondrous signs. But if Jesus chooses to give them to us, then it behoves us to accept them with meekness and seek to understand what He desires to tell us by them. Thanks to these signs, many people have discovered faith in God — the One God in the Holy Trinity, who reveals His Son to us: Jesus Christ, who abides in the sacraments and teaches us through Holy Scripture and the Magisterium of the Catholic Church.

A mystery that surpasses our understanding

The Eucharist — the actual presence of the risen person of Jesus under the appearances of bread and wine — is one of the most important and most difficult truths revealed to us by Christ. Eucharistic miracles are merely visible confirmations of what He tells us about Himself; namely, that He really does give us His glorified body and blood as spiritual food and drink.

The Eucharist is Christ’s supreme gift and miracle, for in it He gives us Himself and engages us in His work of salvation. He enables us to participate in His victory over death, sin, and Satan, to share in the divine nature, and partake of the life of the Holy Trinity. In the Eucharist we receive “the medicine of immortality, the antidote to death” (Encyclical de Eucharistia, 18). For this reason, Mother Church holds that every deliberate and freely willed absence from Holy Mass on Sunday is an irretrievable spiritual loss, a sign of loss of faith, and hence a serious sin. Let us also remember that if “a Christian’s conscience is burdened by serious sin, then the path of penance through the sacrament of Reconciliation becomes an indispensable means of participation in the Eucharistic Sacrifice” (Ecclesia de Eucharistia, 37).

Fr. M. Piotrowski SChr

www.foamagazine.org
**Never Say Never, A Padre Pio Miracle**

**by Susan Brinkmann**

Paul Walsh was 17 years old when the car he was driving on an icy December night in 1983 hit a tree on Chester Pike in suburban Philadelphia. One doctor described his head injuries as the equivalent of dropping an egg on a cement sidewalk. Not only was his skull shattered, every bone in his face was broken and there was a tear in Paul’s brain. "It was hard to even recognize Paul. His face was permanently and irreversibly brain damaged," said the mother of ten from Ridley Park, Betty Walsh, as she stood in front of her son’s room, very clear-eyed. Then he fell back into the coma again but I just knew something had happened." Betty knew it couldn't have been Charley because he was living in Boston. She folded up a picture of Padre Pio, hiding the name, and showed it to Paul. "That's who Uncle Charley?" he said. "Isn't that Uncle Charley?"

Weeks later, Paul Walsh walked out of Crozier Chester Medical Center, completely healed.

If there was any doubt in their minds that Padre Pio interceded in Paul's healing, those doubts were put to rest a year after the accident when the family received an unexpected phone call from Bill Rose, who lived on the property where Paul hit the tree. Rose claimed he heard the crash the night of the accident and ran outside to find Paul laying on the ground with his face in a gutter. He knew the person was dying and while someone called for an ambulance, he held Paul's head up out of the gutter and prayed for his soul.

"Within three to five minutes of your son's accident, I told Betty, "I dedicated him to Padre Pio."

To this day, Paul admits he still wonders "why me?" But that doesn't stop him from telling his story whenever he can. "I'm not doing this for myself," Paul said. "I want to give other people hope."

This story written by best-selling author Susan Brinkmann was one of the collection of survivor stories in Amazing Grace for Survivors www.michaeljournal.org

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**Saint Padre Pio of Pietrelcina (May 25, 1887 – September 23, 1968) was a Capuchin Catholic priest from Italy who became famous for bearing the stigmata. He was born Francesco Forgione, and given the name Pius (Italian: Pio) when he joined the Capuchins. On June 16, 2002, he was canonized by Pope John Paul II.**

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**Toronto bi-monthly meetings**

October 13, December 8, 2013
Lithuanian Hall, 1573 Bloor St. W., Floor 3
(One block west of Dundas Subway Station)
Rosary at 2:00 p.m. — Meeting at 2:30 p.m.
For information call: (416) 452-6639

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**Rougemont monthly meetings**

Sept. 29, Oct. 27, Nov. 24, 2013
House of the Immaculate, 1101 Principale St.
10:00 a.m.: opening; 5:00 p.m.: Holy Mass

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**My past, O Lord, to your mercy; my present, to your love; my future, to your providence!**

**Saint Padre Pio**
Fr. Michel-Marie Zanotti-Sorkine, a cassock in deep Marseille

The life, works, and miracles of a priest in a city of France, who has made the faith blossom again where it had withered.

by Sandro Magister

The title of this article is the same one that the Italian newspaper Avvenire gave to a feature report on Marseille by its correspondent Marina Corradi. The feature was published in the issue of August/September 2012. It was the first in a series that presented highlights of an entire life are rehashed, the spiritual fathers of Michel-Marie tell him to ripens, the faith is imparted to. The desire, at the age of eight, to convert the Marxists: ‘One has to become their friend,’ he would reply.

The affable priest of Canabière is a rigorous priest. He is pastor at Saint-Vincent-de-Paul. In this way on the streets I take advantage of every opportunity to make friends. Father, someone always asks me, where is the post office? Come on, I’ll go back those who are far away.

The affable priest of Canabière is a rigorous priest. He is pastor at Saint-Vincent-de-Paul. In this way on the streets I take advantage of every opportunity to make friends. Father, someone always asks me, where is the post office? Come on, I’ll go back those who are far away.

During a fragal meal, the highlights of an entire life are rehealed. Two splendid parents; the mother, baptized but only formally, allows her son to go to church. The faith is imparted to him “by an elderly priest, a Salesian in a black cassock, a man of generous and boundless faith. The desire, at the age of eight, to be a priest. At thirteen he loses his mother: “The pain devastated me. And yet I never doubted God.” Adolescence, and that beautiful voice. The piano bars of Paris, which may seem little suited to discerning a religious vocation. And yet, while the decision slowly ripens, the spiritual fathers of Michel-Marie tell him to keep to the nightmares of Paris: because there as well a sign is needed. Finally the vocation pays off. In 1999, at the age of 40, his childhood wish comes true: a priest, and in one of his books – he has written many books, and still writes songs sometimes – he affirms the vocation to convert the Marxists: ‘One has to become their friend,’ he would reply.

Then, in church the Mass is stark and beautiful. The affable priest of Canabière is a rigorous priest. Why take so much care with the liturgy? “I want everything to be splendid around the Eucharist. I want that at the elevation, the people should understand that He is here, truly. It is not theater, it is not superfluous pomp: it is inhabiting the Mystery. The heart too needs to feel.”

He insists a great deal on the responsibility of the priest, and in one of his books – he has written many books, and still writes songs sometimes – he affirms that a priest who has an empty church must examine himself and say: “It is we who lack fire.” He explains: “The priest is ‘alter Christus,’ he is called to reflect Christ in himself. This does not mean asking perfection of ourselves; but being conscious of our sins, of our misery, in order to be able to understand and pardon anyone who comes to the confessional.”

Fr. Michel-Marie goes to the confessional every evening, with absolute punctuality, at five o’clock, without fail. (The people, he says, must know that the priest is there, in any case). Then he remains in the sacristy until eleven o’clock, for anyone who might want to go to him: “I want to give the sign of an unlimited availability.” Judging by the constant pilgrimage of the faithful, in the evening, one would say that it works. Like a deep demand that emerges from this city, apparently far removed. What do they want? “The first thing is to hear someone say: you are loved. The second: God has a plan for you. One must not make them feel judged, but welcomed. They must be made to understand that the only one who can change their lives is Christ. And Mary. There are two things that, in my view, permit a return to the faith: the Marian embrace, and impassioned apologetics, which touch the heart.”

Those who seek me out,” he continues, “are asking first of all for human assistance, and I try to give all the help possible. Not forgetting that the beggar needs to eat, but also has a soul. To the offended woman I say: send me your husband, I will talk to him. But then, how many come to say that they are sad, that their lives are no good... Then I ask them: how long has it been since you went to confession? Because I know that sin is a burden, and the sadness of sin is a torment. I am convinced that what makes...
The Vatican consecrated to St. Michael the Archangel by Pope Francis, in the presence of Benedict XVI

On July 5, 2013, a new 5-meter (16-foot) statue dedicated to St. Michael the Archangel was unveiled at the Vatican Gardens and blessed by Pope Francis. Notably present was Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI who, according to communique released by the Holy See, “was specially invited by Pope Francis.” For this occasion, Pope Francis also consecrated Vatican City State to St. Joseph and St. Michael.

“Benedict XVI was greeted with great affection by the assistants and staff of the Governator,” the communique stated. “The two pontiffs remained united throughout the ceremony and sat together in front of the monument.”

This statue was commissioned by the former president of the Governate of Vatican City State, Cardinal Giovanni Lajolo, to celebrate the Archangel Michael, defender of the Faith and protector of the Catholic Church. This bronze statue was created by Italian artist Giuseppe Lomuscio.

Around the globe that supports the statue, one can read in Latin: “That thou art Peter; and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” (Mt 16:18.) The hand bears the mark of the nail of the Crucifixion, and also has the ring of St. Peter, worn by the popes.

Pope Francis recited two prayers of consecration to both Saints (one can read the prayer of consecration to St. Michael on the next page) and he explained his gesture with the following address:

“We have gathered here in the Vatican Gardens to inaugurate a monument to Saint Michael the Archangel, patron of Vatican City State. It is an initiative planned some time ago, with the approval of Pope Benedict XVI, to whom always go our affection and gratitude and to whom we wish to express our great joy to have him present here in our midst today. My heartfelt thank you!”

“There are several artistic works in the Vatican Gardens; however, this one, which is added today, assumes a place of particular importance, be it for its location, be it for the meaning it expresses. In fact, it’s not only a celebratory work, but an invitation to reflection and prayer, which is well inserted in the Year of Faith. Michael – which means: ‘Who is like unto God?’ – is the champion of God’s pri-

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**“Break the cycle of poverty”**

His Eminence Oscar Andrés Cardinal Rodríguez Maradiaga, SDB, President of Caritas Internationalis, wrote in July 2013 in the 2012 annual report of this organization:

“This is a world where about 300 children die every hour from malnutrition and where nearly a billion people have no access to clean water. At the same time, there are over 1200 billionaires in the world, the highest number ever recorded.

“We are scandalised that millions of our brothers and sisters live in extreme poverty in a world of riches. But we are filled with hope because we are the first generation with the tools to change the system that keeps them poor... Providing aid is not enough. We must break the cycle of poverty.

“Our greatest challenge is not poverty or the economic crisis. It’s the growth of secularism in many parts of the world, especially in the richest. When people do not believe in God, individualism triumphs over community and we lose sight of our ethical principles.

Only through living the truth of the word of God can we overcome the spiritual poverty of our age and build a fraternal world in which we live united as brothers and sisters in peace.”
macy, of His transcendence and power. Michael fights to re-establish divine justice; he defends the People of God from its enemies and above all of the enemy par excellence, the devil. And Saint Michael triumphs because it is God who acts in him.

“This sculpture, then, reminds us that evil has been vanquished, the accuser is unmasked, his head is crushed, because salvation was accomplished once and for all in the Blood of Christ. Even if the devil always tries to scratch the Archangel’s face and man’s face, God is stronger; the victory is His and His salvation is offered to every man.

“We are not alone in life’s journey and trials; we are accompanied and sustained by the Angels of God who offer, so to speak, their wings to help us surmount so many dangers, to be able to fly high in regard to those realities that can weigh down our life or drag us down. On consecrating Vatican City State to Saint Michael the Archangel, we ask him to defend us from the Evil One and to cast him outside.

“Dear brothers and sisters, we consecrate Vatican City State also to Saint Joseph, the custodian of Jesus, the custodian of the Holy Family. May his presence make us stronger and more courageous in making space for God in our life to always overcome evil with good. We ask him to guard us, to take care of us, so that the life of grace will grow every day more in each of us.”

Pope Francis then recited the following prayer of consecration of Vatican City to St. Michael the Archangel:

O glorious Archangel St. Michael
You who announces to the world
the consoling news
of the victory of good over evil
open our lives to hope.

Watch over this City and the Apostolic See,
the heart and center of the Catholic Church,
so that it may live in fidelity to the Gospel
and the exercise of heroic charity.

The Lord of the universe made you powerful
against the forces of the enemy:
unmask the traps of the devil
and of the spirit of the world.

Make us victorious over the temptations
of power, wealth and sensuality.

Be our safeguard against all machinations
that threaten the serenity of the Church;
be the sentinel of our thoughts, who delivers
us from the assaults of a worldly mentality;
be our spiritual guide,
who supports us in the good fight of faith.

O glorious Archangel St. Michael,
who always contemplates the Holy Face of God,
keep us firm on the path to Eternity.
Amen.