

## God gives grace at Medjugorje

To the editors:

In light of the article that the *Catholic Courier* printed by John Thavis (of Catholic News Service) on Jan. 10 regarding the official statement made in a special session on Medjugorje by the Yugoslav Bishops' Conference, my comments are meant to restore balance to the reporting of the ongoing phenomenon of Medjugorje.

This report quotes the Bishops as saying, simply and directly, that there is no proof that Marian apparitions have occurred at Medjugorje. The remainder of the text of this article is clearly a distortion of the above remark and takes on a more strongly negative slant than the actual text itself would seem to warrant.

The Bishop's actual statement, taken in the context which it was stated, is "a masterpiece of ecclesiastical diplomacy" — Father Rene Laurentin — avoiding both open approbation of the apparitions and condemnation or interdiction.

My husband and I recently traveled to Medjugorje, a wellspring of Grace. Despite all odds, thirty-six people responded to a loving Mothers' call with trust. Though war raged in the Gulf and the threat of terrorism enslaved America, thirty-six people trusted that God would not make a fool of His Mother. Graces abounded all through the week. A man, away from the Church for forty years, was awakened by the light of Faith. A young woman, lost and confused, received a direction, another experienced the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist, actually tasting flesh and blood. Miracles happened, both of an interior nature and exteriorly. On a windy Friday, in an upper hallway, this highly favored group of thirty-six, experienced an outpouring of the Holy Spirit much like the first Pentecost.

I cannot relay all of the testimonies of our Faith experiences in this limited space. I relayed what I could of our experiences to create a balance to the reader who may have been swayed by the wrong emphasis regarding the Report on the Bishop's Communique. Regarding the forgoing report, a Vatican doctrinal official said the statement sounded a clear note of caution to Catholics. I now caution Catholics to be careful not to trample underfoot the tremendous Graces from God coming through His Mother in Medjugorje. Medjugorje may be Heaven's last Altar Call upon the earth!

Lena Shipley  
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**HOLY THURSDAY** — The Last Supper by Gustav Dore, regarded as one of the great masterpieces of religious art, commemorates Holy Thursday and the institution of the Holy Eucharist.

## Writer fails to see essential issues

To the editors:

In reply to Michelle Cometa's letter of February 21 ("Father McBrien contributes intelligent abortion insights"): There is sacredness in all stages of life.

Some are always clamoring for the newest methods of birth control. Do they ever concentrate upon the reasons for remaining chaste before the sacrament of marriage?

Perhaps Fr. McBrien should push the Natural Family Planning Method; it's better than complaining of unwanted pregnancies. It would be one of those

positive avenues and foster self-determination.

You should be grateful the Church adheres to its teachings, instead of the accusation of intimidating and browbeating stated.

The grace and strength one receives from the Sacraments of Penance and Holy Eucharist are immeasurable. It reminds one of Christ's words, I will not let your burdens become unbearable for you.

Rena B. Camblin  
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## We must follow command to love

To the editors:

In my opinion the following touches on the foundation of our faith. Throughout the Scriptures, Jesus has commanded us to obey the command to love: Matthew 22:34-40; Luke 6:27-38; 1 Peter 3:8-9 and many others too numerous to print. His command is to love one another.

It is written that "love covers a multitude of sins" (1 Peter 4:8)

Paul speaks of the excellence of love — the way which surpasses all the others (1 Corinthians 13). Do everything with love (1 Corinthians 16:14). Love your neighbor (Galatians 5: 14-15, 22-26). If we love one

another God dwells in us (1 John 4:7-21) and on and on.

"I give you a new commandment — Love one another. Such as my love has been for you, so must your love be for each other. This is how all will know you, for my disciples: by your love for one another" (John 13:34-35).

Why can't we leave the condemnation and judging of others in the hands of Our Creator — where it belongs — while we obey the Master's words?

Gail Vrabel  
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## Salvation is not priority to people

To the editors:

Hardly anyone really wants to go to Heaven anymore. Most everyone either thinks he is a pretty good Joe and is going there anyway or he hasn't the time to be bothered with such thinking, being too occupied with more essentials such as planning his next vacation, improving his bowling skills or what have you. The Catholic Church, however, being divinely instituted, teaches that not everyone is going to Heaven and that our most important concern in this life is to prepare ourselves for Heaven. "With fear and trembling work out your salvation" warns St. Paul (Philippians 2:12).

In our soft and sophisticated society it is most difficult to impress upon people that it is quite easy to go to Hell — dare I mention that word in polite society? — and extremely difficult to go Heaven. "The just man shall scarcely be saved" warns St. Peter (1 Peter 4:18). But Our Divine Lord instituted the Catholic Church — and no other church but the Catholic Church — as a means to destroy the "old man" and to reform the "new man" in His likeness. Thus by living the Catholic Faith and Morals and receiving in the life giving Sacraments and by following the examples of the saints, we truly prepare ourselves for the life of Heaven. Moreover, by living a truly Catholic life we even have a right to expect to go to Heaven, if we may be detained in Purgatory for a while.

Enter now the modern theologian. He says, or at least implies, that everybody is going to Heaven. But notice if you will that all his assertions rest solely on his authority. These megalomaniacs are at variance with the Catholic Church and she rightly labels such delusions as sins of presumption. If anyone says to me that they are going to Heaven, I will not follow them because it is very probable that they are headed in the opposite direction.

The answer to this important eschatological matter is best expressed by St. Augustine: "God who did not ask for your cooperation in creating you will not save you without your cooperation." And St. Augustine, being of course a Catholic, presupposed that this cooperation consisted solely in practicing the Catholic Faith, which he did of course so well.

Therefore, in conclusion, let us all begin to think in terms of reality and not pipe-dreams and strive wholeheartedly to live the Catholic Faith as the saints did, not compromising and diluting it but keeping it pure and whole. With God's Grace — Deo Gratia — it can be done. "With God all things are possible" says Our Blessed Lord (Matthew 19:26). And a favorite saying of St. Therese of the Child Jesus was "Therese alone can do nothing, but Therese with God can do everything." What better way to start than during this Lent. As Lent is to Easter Sunday, life is to Heavenly Glory. Let us begin.

Richard V. Hussar  
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## 'Negative' letters penned in response to columnist

To the editors:

Florence Osekoski's Opinion page letter in the *Catholic Courier* issue of Feb 7th ("Christians need to seek out Christ in all people") requires a rebuttal since I am one of those "same people (who) write in again and again almost like a campaign." I would mention, that as Catholics, we are obligated — I repeat, obligated — to respond to those situations, individuals, controversies, et al. that are contrary to the principles and tenets of the Roman Catholic Church, as promulgated by the Holy Father and the Magisterium. After all, it is Father McBrien who has the decided advantage of disseminating his anti-Vatican essays on a weekly basis. Should not those who disagree with him be afforded periodic opportunities to present their objections and viewpoints? Should the readers be fed a steady diet of one-sided opinions of dissent? Doesn't his column constitute a "campaign?"

Further, I believe it stretches the imagination not to consider the Revs. McBrien and Curran as "disloyal, irreverent and heretical."

Isn't it Father Curran who initiated the dissent movement back in 1967-68 when he institutionalized private judgment over the teaching authority of the church with his protest against *Humanae Vitae*? Didn't he open the floodgates for the vocal media-oriented theologians and liberal bishops who have since catalyzed the "tearing asunder" referred to? Isn't it Father Curran who has been denied by the Vatican from teaching Catholic Theology?

Isn't it Father McBrien who is one of the anti-Catholic media's favorite exponents of dissent? Place a microphone in the vicinity of Father McBrien and he spontaneously reacts with a diatribe against the Pope and the Magisterium.

Revs. Curran and McBrien's track records place them in one or more of the categories referred to.

... Dropping Father McBrien's syndicated column from the *Courier* would drastically reduce the number of negative letters. Positive letters, I fear, will still be at a minimum.

A.J. Annunziata  
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**EDITORS' NOTE:** We remind Mr. Annunziata that Fathers Paul J. Cuddy and Albert Shamon — both strong supporters of the Vatican — likewise maintain weekly columns. Their presence certainly puts the lie to any claim that the "diet" we feed readers is "one-sided opinions of dissent."

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