



# THE RAY

*The newsletter of Our Lady of Grace Catholic Spirituality Center*

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Our Lady of Grace Catholic Spirituality Center  
2281 North Swan Boulevard  
Wauwatosa, WI 53226

(414) 302-0240  
www.ourladyofgracespiritualitycenter.org

## *From the desk of Mary...*



Warm Advent greetings from Our Lady of Grace Catholic Spirituality Center!

What an amazing year this has been. The Extraordinary Year of Mercy 2016 brought countless people from every continent back to the Church. At Our Lady of Grace, nearly everyone who visited noted how at one point or another they or a loved one had received a special grace from our merciful Lord over the past year. May we always be grateful to Pope Francis, who under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, gave so many people who felt the Church had left them, a warm welcome home through the Holy Doors of Mercy located in every diocese of the world.

And now we have yet another wonderful opportunity to pray for a deepening of the graces received in 2016 as the Church joyfully celebrates in 2017 the Centenary of the apparitions of Our Lady of the Rosary to three shepherd children in a field in Fatima, Portugal between May and October of 1917. The 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary year officially began a few weeks ago on October 13th and runs through October 13, 2017. Pope Francis plans to travel to Fatima to celebrate Mass at the site of the visions on May 13, 2017, the exact day of Our Lady's first visit 100 years ago.

We are devoting two issues of our newsletter to this inspiring story that is sure to touch your heart as you get to know the three little shepherds of Portugal who can show us a way to peace in our day by their own generous and powerful examples of prayer and sacrifice. We begin here by covering the visits of the Angel of Peace who preceded Our Lady's apparitions. We hope you enjoy the read.

As always, we thank you most sincerely for your prayers and donations to Our Lady of Grace Catholic Spirituality Center. We couldn't do this wonderful and important work without your help. We pray for your intentions daily and have a Mass offered for you quarterly. May God reward you in time and in eternity for your faithful and generous support of our sacred mission.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, from our hearts to yours, I wish you and those you love a very Merry Christmas and a Happy and Healthy New Year!



## Memorial

Our Lady of Grace Catholic Spirituality Center gratefully acknowledges the following gift:

- In loving memory of Clyde A. Bowers (anonymous)

## Serra Club of Milwaukee, Thank You!

Serra Clubs worldwide are known for their efforts to foster and support vocations to the priesthood and vowed religious life. In support of our work at Our Lady of Grace in providing spiritual direction and vocational discernment for young adults, we are delighted to report that the Serra Club of Milwaukee will be covering the rent for our office space over the next year. We remember all Serra Club members living and deceased in our grateful prayers.



Mrs. Carol Weiland holding a framed image of Our Blessed Lady of Victory during a presentation she gave to the Board of Directors at our Annual Meeting in September.

## Masses for Your Intentions in 2017

In gratitude for your support, Holy Mass will be offered in 2017 in the Jesuit Chapel at Saint Camillus (Wauwatosa) for all of our benefactors, directees and volunteers on the following Marian feasts:

- |                             |                                  |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Feb. 11 Our Lady of Lourdes | May 31 The Visitation of Mary    |
| Sept. 8 The Birth of Mary   | Dec. 8 The Immaculate Conception |

## The Power of a Name

The Blessed Mother has been loved and honored under many titles throughout history. Do you know how she identified herself during her apparitions at the following three (3) Church approved sites? (Answers below.)

1. **Tepeyac, Mexico (1531)** \_ o \_ h \_ r of the \_ r \_ e \_ o \_
2. **Lourdes, France (1858)** \_ m \_ a \_ \_ l \_ t \_ \_ o n \_ e \_ t \_ o \_
3. **Champion, Wisconsin (1859)** \_ e \_ n of \_ \_ \_ v \_ n

1. Mother of the True God; 2. Immaculate Conception; 3. Queen of Heaven

## The Angel of Peace

In 1916, a year prior to the Blessed Mother's first apparition in Fatima, Portugal, Lucia dos Santos (age 9) and her two younger cousins, Francisco (age 8) and Jacinta Marto (age 6) were visited three times by the Angel of Peace, as he identified himself during the first visit. In her memoirs written in obedience to the bishop many years later, Lucia, describes the angel as "a young man, about fourteen or fifteen years old, whiter than snow, transparent as crystal when the sun shines through it, and of great beauty."<sup>1</sup> He knelt down, bowed his head until his forehead touched the ground, and invited the children to pray the following prayer which he made them repeat three times. "My God, I believe, I adore, I hope and I love You! I ask pardon of You for those who do not believe, do not adore, do not hope and do not love You."<sup>2</sup> He exhorted them to pray thus, and they heeded, spending long stretches of time prostrate repeating that prayer sometimes to the point of exhaustion.

On another occasion, when they were playing on a summer day, he reappeared and exhorted them to pray very much, stating, "The most holy Hearts of Jesus and Mary have designs of mercy on you. Offer prayers and sacrifices constantly to the Most High."<sup>3</sup> Lucia asked, "How are we to make sacrifices?"<sup>4</sup> He responded, "Make of everything you can a sacrifice and offer it to God as an act of reparation for the sins by which He is offended, and in supplication for the conversion of sinners. You will thus draw down peace upon your country. I am its Angel Guardian, the Angel of Portugal. Above all, accept and bear with submission, the suffering which the Lord will send you."<sup>5</sup> Again, these lovely children heeded the Angel's words to a heroic degree.

As an example, in the intervening time between the Angel's last visit in 1916 and Our Lady's first Apparition on May 13, 1917, Lucia's family experienced much hardship including a serious decline in her mother's health and loss of property due to some unfortunate decisions made by her father. Lucia was suffering greatly, but so as to prevent her mother from noticing, she would withdraw to a solitary place. Recalling the Angel's words, "accept and bear with submission the suffering which the Lord will send you,"<sup>6</sup> she would there sob and offer her broken heart to God. Sometimes her younger cousins, Francisco and Jacinta, would find her and upon seeing her in such a state would themselves shed many tears. Lucia recalls that Jacinta "made our offering aloud. 'My God, it is as an act of reparation, and for the conversion of sinners, that we offer you all these sufferings and sacrifices.' The formula of the offering was not always exact, but the meaning was always the same."<sup>7</sup> Jacinta was barely seven years old at the time.

The Angel's last visit was a day when they were out pasturing their sheep and decided to pray after lunch the prayer he had taught. After praying it many times, an extraordinary light shone upon them. Sister Lucia recalls, "We sprang up to see what was happening and we beheld the Angel. He was holding a chalice in his left hand, with the Host suspended above it, from which some drops of blood

fell into the chalice. Leaving the chalice suspended in the air, he knelt down beside us and made us repeat three times: 'Most Holy Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, I adore you profoundly, and I offer you the most precious Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ, present in all the tabernacles of the world, in reparation for the outrages, sacrileges and indifference with which He Himself is offended. And through the infinite merits of His most Sacred Heart, and the Immaculate Heart of Mary, I beg of you the conversion of poor sinners.'"<sup>8</sup> Then, rising, he took the chalice and Host in his hands. He offered Lucia the Sacred Host and her cousins the Precious Blood from the chalice saying, "Take and drink the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, horribly outraged by ungrateful men! Make reparation for their crimes and console your God."<sup>9</sup>

Before leaving them for the last time, he fell prostrate on the ground and repeated with them three times the same prayer, "Most Holy Trinity..."

It was thus that the Angel of Peace prepared the children to see the Mother of God "through the transforming Divine Graces he showered upon them, and his instructions about prayer, sacrifice and offerings."<sup>10</sup> While yet young children, they became masters of prayer and the spiritual life seeking every opportunity to heed the Angel's instructions and make of everything they could "a sacrifice and offer it to God as an act of reparation for the sins by which He is offended, and in supplication for the conversion of sinners."<sup>11</sup>

With the Angel of Peace, and through the intercession of the little shepherds of Portugal, may we receive Jesus this Christmas Season in Holy Communion with deep devotion and gratitude.

<sup>1-6</sup> *Fatima in Lucia's Own Words: Sr. Lucia's Memoirs*, 62 (1995) 9<sup>th</sup> Ed.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 65.

<sup>8-9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 63.

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.fatima.org/essentials/facts/1916appar.asp>

<sup>11</sup> *Op.Cit.*, p. 62.



August 1917 (l to r) Jacinta age 7, Lucia, 10, Francisco, 9  
The young shepherds at the home of Jacinta and Francisco.

### As Always...

This newsletter is made possible through the generosity and skills of Miss Nicolette Bardele.

We are so grateful for any donation to the Center. All donations are tax deductible and may be made payable to **Our Lady of Grace.**