

Miraculous Medal Novena Reflection

Second Day of the Novena 5-12-20 Our Lady of Lourdes

A little boy was with his mother as she was shopping in a very large department store. Somehow or another, they got separated. As soon as she realized that he was missing, she almost panicked. Then she heard a familiar voice calling her name, "Marjorie, Marjorie!" She ran toward where the voice was coming from and, sure enough, it was her little boy. She scooped him up and hugged him. "Jimmy," she said, "I was afraid you were lost! I'm so glad I found you." Then she added: "But why did you call me Marjorie instead of Mommy?" The boy said, "I tried that first, but you'd be amazed how many wrong mommies there are out there!" You know, folks, Mary wants us to call out to her. We can call out to her with different names. We call her by the name Mother when we address her as our Blessed Mother. We also call her by her first name, Mary. We can also call her by the various titles we attribute to her.

A few years ago, a woman from Hollywood Florida says that for lunch she prepared for herself a grilled cheese sandwich. She says that after she had taken a bite out of it, she spotted the image of Our Blessed Mother. She put the rest of the sandwich on E-Bay. She drew bids as high as \$22,000 before eBay pulled the item from its web site. I have come across many stories like this: people claiming to see an image of our Blessed Mother on a pizza pie or on a store window. I think I can assure you that Mary does not appear to us in those ways. But she has appeared to us in other ways.

Perhaps one her most famous apparitions took place at Lourdes in France. When most people think about Lourdes they think about miracles especially with regard to one's health. In a film documentary about Lourdes, called "A Question of Miracles," they pointed out that in over the 150 years that the shrine at Lourdes has been attracting visitors, only 66 cures have been certified as occurring without medical explanation. That is about one every two years. Yet thousands of invalids and terminally ill persons make the trip to the grotto each year. When a documentary worker interviewed the pilgrims, each testified to having their prayer answered, though not in the manner they originally intended. Mainly, most of the people said that Mary had helped them to accept their infirmity, giving them peace of mind, giving them the courage to carry their cross. The thought comes to me today. People do seek out miracles. They go to Lourdes in France to ask Mary to perform a miracle, to heal them. And, I am sure that great miracles are performed there. But I also believe that great miracles are performed when we pray a novena in honor of our Blessed Mother.

Some time ago, when I was conducting a Retreat for 8th graders, I asked them to give a one-sentence prayer of thanks for something good that happened during the previous week. Most gave typical responses: "I thank God that I hit a home run in a baseball game, "I thank God that it didn't rain on our family picnic day," I thank God that I got a good mark in my Math test." Then one boy said, "I thank God that I was sick on Friday so I didn't have to go to school." I doubt very much if most people would thank God that they were sick. On the contrary, I think that they would ask Jesus to help them or a loved one to remain healthy or to get over some illness. And that is what we are doing now, during this novena.

During this pandemic, let us pray in a special way for those who are critically ill and for the elderly and those who are more likely to contract the virus because of existent medical conditions. Jesus had a special love, concern and compassion for people who were sick.

Let us ask Mary to intercede for us and to beg her son Jesus to have that same compassion for them now, that he reach out and heal those affected by the virus.

Let us ask Mary to bring them hope, that she will make them able to face whatever lies ahead, that she will give them the courage to endure what might not be able to be avoided.

O MARY CONCEIVED WITHOUT SIN, PRAY FOR US WHO HAVE RECOURSE TO THEE.