



FROM THE HEART OF

The Pelican

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Editorial

SR. GERTRUDE GILLETTE

DEAR GOD THE FATHER,

Allow me to preface my question by saying that I believe Your providence is perfect. Nothing happens that is outside of Your foreknowledge or Your ability to use for good. My question is this: what good do You foresee coming out of the Coronavirus and the evils which have followed upon it: the loss of many lives, economic depression, and now the violence in our city streets?

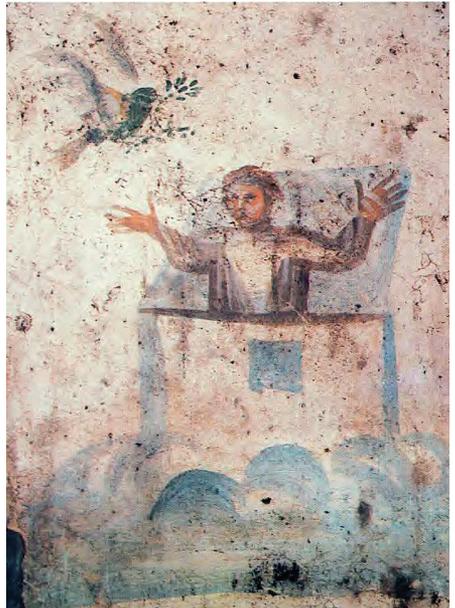
MY DEAR CHILD,

It is My desire that each person I bring into existence shares My life in heaven. The internal life that I share with My Son (Jesus) and the Holy Spirit is offered lovingly and magnanimously. It is Our deepest desire that souls return Our love and desire to spend eternity with Us. To arrive here, a soul must make the proper choices, which often requires it to resist alluring but harmful temptations.

When I create a soul, I see in advance all the particulars of its life: what kind of family and culture he or she will have; what kind of opportunities or lack of them each person will have. It is not the good things in life that produce holiness. A good family, a good education, peaceful times are all good and helpful on the human plane; but they don't make a person holy. A life of virtue comes from making morally good choices; holiness comes from making these choices when it is not easy, when times are tough. It is taking up one's cross and enduring trials and hardships that make a person strong. St Augustine correctly saw that the Church



prosper in times of peace, but saints are made in difficult times. He knew; he lived during the barbarian invasions and the fall of Rome. My children have many opportunities now to make decisions that will make them strong and stable Christians. Are they afraid of getting sick? I will never let a hair from their heads fall without My consent. Let them remember that every hair of their head is numbered (Mt 10:30). Do they have financial worries? Let them recall that the birds of the air are taken care of, and that they are of more value than many birds (Mt 6:26). Are they fearful of the future? Let them say the words



of My Son repeatedly: “Be not afraid!” (Mt 10:31) “I am the first and the last, the beginning and the end” (Rev 22:13). All time is in My hand. If evil looks like it is gaining ground, remember the days of Noah. I will never abandon those who are faithful to Me.

I offer to My faithful children an ark that will shield them from the storm and the rising waters. Just as Noah and his family survived the flood because they entered into the ark, so there is an ark for these times as well: the ark is your heavenly Mother, Mary—she who is *most feared* by the Enemy. Those souls who entrust themselves to her will be under her special maternal protection. She in turn is forming them into strong, humble, loving and joyful warriors who are confident in Christ’s victory over evil. Like Mary, they will courageously stand at the foot of the Cross, believing that I can turn anything to good.

Remember that when My Son went through his Passion, it seemed as if evil had won. But what the Evil One wrought gave Us the most powerful display of love on earth. The death of the Son of God, in all its goriness but also in all its glory, manifested the sublimity of My divine love. His resurrection remains a sign that Love and Goodness have the last word.

And so, the good that will emerge from your present (and future) evils, is the purification of the world and a strengthening of souls for holiness. These souls are now fortifying themselves through prayer, fasting and joyful acceptance of sacrifices. In this way they are participating in the Triumph of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, as promised at Fatima. Let the weak pray for My help, throw themselves on My mercy and enter into the ark of safety, in Mary’s Heart. As

Almighty God, We can demolish Satan at any moment; but We have chosen to allow the victory to come about through her, who in her sinlessness shows the world that evil is only overcome by goodness, by love, and by making the proper choices that lead to eternal life in heaven.

My child, trust Me. Satan is using the present evils to destroy human life and the earth I created. His fruits are chaos, fear, hatred and death. I too am using the present evils, but for good as I explained above; you and your friends can help Me, by remaining humble and faithful. You may be called upon to be heroic in your faithfulness, but never lose heart. Indeed, be of good cheer: all will be well and very well. I, your Heavenly Father, promise you this. +



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News & Updates

EVERYONE WILL REMEMBER 2020 as the year the world changed. Like the rest of the world, we've had to "shelter-in-place" since March, but there have been some silver linings to the confinement and some benefits that go with living in the country. Foremost, we have a **deeper gratitude for every Mass** and for our local pastor who has diligently carried on as usual. Since he has a smaller number of parishioners than city parishes, Fr. Burke has been able to keep to the civil guidelines and still offer Mass. On Sundays, the overflow sat outside or stayed in their cars, and he or one of the deacons would take them communion. We are so grateful to the Lord for this continued privilege of daily Mass. In His mercy, may it continue!

Other than our daily trip to Mass and necessary errands, **our life is normally very shelter-in-place** by nature. We simply carry on our monastic routine of *ora et labora* (prayer and work). The area most impacted has been our contact with visitors. Our usual First Saturday Devotions and our Oblate meetings were cancelled from March 15–June 1, and our guest house remained empty except for two guests who came for the Easter Triduum. The healthy and the brave would occasionally drop by to help with some chores. Thanks to the Lord, we have remained healthy, and hope all our friends and readers have as well.

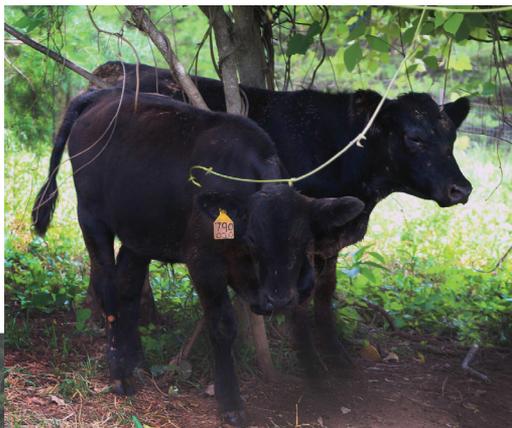


We've been able to make a few improvements to the property in the past six months. In January, a **hand pump** was installed which involved enlarging the **pump house** (in height) so that the new pump can be operated by someone standing upright. If electricity goes out, we can now pump water for ourselves and the animals. Ingeniously, the pumped water flows directly to the kitchen faucet (or any other faucet which is turned on). That sure beats filling the buckets outside as we used to do as children on the farm!



Also in January, we had a lesson in **candle making**. We are attempting to melt down used and discarded stubs from parishes and reuse them for our chapel liturgy.

In March, we were presented with a **chasuble from Medjugorje** which was worn by the stigmatist priest, Fr. Sudac! We thank the kind benefactor and Our Lady for bringing us such a lovely gift.



Also in March, our **garden was enclosed with a fence** to keep our dog and other critters out. The garden itself got a slow start but seems to be doing moderately well. We planted a variety of crops, but are specializing in tomatoes, hoping to harvest enough to store up for the winter months. We'll see! 🍅

In April, our trusted workers (Bob and Johnny) built a **“cow-port”** in one of the pastures which lacked shade. The cows for some odd reason, haven't taken to it yet, preferring to jam themselves into a lean-to that was built for pigs. Go figure! Speaking of cows, we bought two new calves—three and six



months old—in June, named BBQ and Max by their perspective “sponsors”. They are pretty shy at the moment, but will eventually warm up to us as our original steers finally did. The latter now eat out of our hands. The friendliness helps when we move them from pasture to pasture, or when we need to approach them.

The new batch of **40 meat chickens** were processed in mid-July. Given the present unpredictable future, it seems lots of folks are now raising their own chickens. For those contemplating meat chickens, we have had very good luck with the **Freedom Rangers**. They are gentle, strong birds with a good amount of dark meat. We enjoyed our last batch all year long.



UPCOMING EVENTS: we are the invited guests at **Inspire**, a young girls’ retreat and summer camp in TN the last week in July. We also plan to make our annual retreat at **Our Lady of the Mississippi Abbey** in Dubuque IA in late September. Of course, given the present situation in the world, one makes only tentative plans, and adds “if it’s God’s will” to any engagement. +

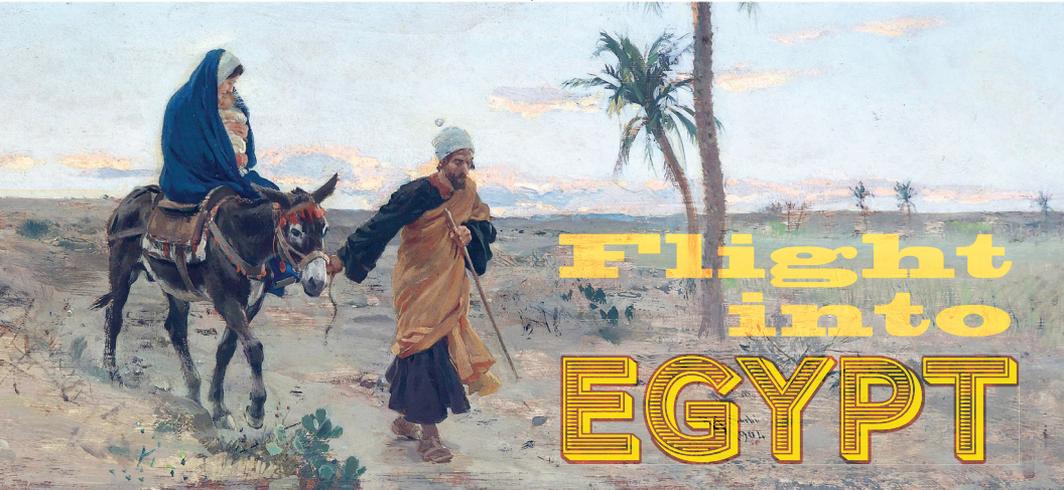
WE CONTINUE

in this issue our series on Mary, this time gleaning truths hidden in the flight into Egypt. Since my theological reflections are few, I will supplement these with some spiritual thoughts in the light of our own present situation that some of our readers may find helpful.

Behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, “Rise, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there till I tell you; for Herod is about to search

in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying, “Rise, take the child and his mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the child’s life are dead.” And he rose and took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel (Mt 2:13-23).

Note that Mary and Joseph did not plan on a trip to Egypt when they set out for Bethlehem. They didn’t know that Magi would come to adore their new born son and that the presence of these impressive foreigners would cascade into a series of



for the child, to destroy him.” And he rose and took the child and his mother by night, and departed to Egypt, and remained there until the death of Herod. . . . Then Herod, when he saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, was in a furious rage, and he sent and killed all the male children in Bethlehem and in all that region who were two years old or under, according to the time which he had ascertained from the wise men. . . . But when Herod died, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared

events, leading to their rather hasty departure for Egypt and the slaughter of many innocent children. As regards the innocents, if their slaughter—their convenient murders—is a sign that the Messiah has arrived and is beginning his redemptive mission, then I think we should be aware that we are entering into a **new redemptive phase of Christ’s mission on earth** in our own times. The useless shedding of so much innocent blood in abortions is a herald that Christ—the Innocent Lamb par excellence—will be put to death in a violent way, perhaps this time in his faithful

followers—you and me—who, refusing to flee, will take their place with Mary at the foot of the cross.

I would like to draw attention to two of Mary's virtues that I see in this story: **docility** or **flexibility** and **trust**. In the middle of the night she has to flee to a pagan land. She is instructed to go to a place of refuge and live in exile. Do you know how humanly difficult it is to live in exile, the kind of exile where you know you are not going to be there permanently? How does one make long-term decisions? You can't, you just have to go on day by day in a provisional way. It can be very trying to be permanently in a temporary situation. Yet there is no complaint from Mary about their plight. Besides the pagan culture all around them, the pagan influence on their Jewish neighbors must have been a trial for Joseph and Mary. As difficult as it may have been, I see Mary accepting it all as part of God's plan to protect them and to teach them to rely totally on Him. His plan and His timing are perfect.

These virtues of Mary are perfect for our times. We too are called to **praise God for His perfect plans**, even if we find ourselves very far from home in a strange place. We are also called to be **flexible** and ready at any moment to go where we are summoned. Perhaps flexibility does not mean physical movement, but a spirit that is open to new ways of doing things. Others who are not rooted in the Lord are experiencing fear, confusion, depression alongside sickness, loss of loved ones, financial difficulties, to name but a few trials of our age. Even with all the social restrictions (distance, masks, etc.) we can still give a helping hand, make a phone call to console an anxious friend, or leave some food for those hit the hardest. Being docile or flexible means flowing with the Spirit, who moves us out of our little

world for His bigger plans. Our Lady was not attached to where she was going to live. She was attached only to the will of God; may she help us to be flexible and may God's bigger plans for the world materialize through us.

The virtue of **trust** dovetails nicely with docility. Our Lady's docile spirit showed that her heart trusted the Lord totally. She would go where He wanted and do whatever He asked because she was confident that His plans could not be thwarted by evil princes. God is always in control. He who made heaven and earth and every creature in them fears no created entity, be it an earthly prince (Herod) or an angelic demonic prince (Satan). God in His wisdom can use the very machinations of those perpetrating evil, to bring about His own plans. Mary knew this well, and experiencing this in her life only confirmed it more strongly in her heart.

So for us. Our present global and national situation is not thwarting God's plan to bring the world back to Himself. Rather, He is allowing the Enemy to try His faithful ones (us), so that they (we) can learn deep trust. If the blood of the martyrs in the early Church—those great souls who trusted the Lord absolutely—brought about a great harvest for Christianity, so may we too learn from them and from Our Lady to trust the Lord perfectly. The alternative is to fall victim to fear and thus to be manipulated by those who use frightening threats to get control over the masses. The faithful of our age will bring about an even **greater harvest** for God's vineyard in the **time of peace** that Our Lady of Fatima predicted. For now, realize that there are levels of trust. You don't have to be perfect in trust to walk the path of trust. Following Mary's example, we move with the Spirit and grow daily as we say: Jesus, I trust in You! +