

Holy Trinity Catholic Church
RCIA Class Transcript
Miracles, Apparitions, and Sacramentals
Lecturer: Father Francis Peffley
Date: March 28, 2006

Tonight is our last official class. We have a Prayer Service next week on Monday night here in the chapel. Mark Forrest will be here. Last year when he came he did some beautiful religious music, and we had some Scripture reflections, and Eucharistic Holy Hour. Those that came to it last year said it was the highlight of the year; it was so beautiful. Bring a box of tissues with you, because it's very touching, and very emotional. That's next Monday night, April 5th. The original syllabus said it was Tuesday, April 6th, but we had to switch that to accommodate Mark's schedule.

Tonight's our last class, our 26th class, so congratulate yourselves that you've gone through all this. It's something to be very proud of. Tonight we're going to cover a lot of different topics. We're going to talk about some of the interesting topics in the Church: miracles, apparitions of the Blessed Mother, Eucharistic miracles, incorrupt saints, and run through a couple of handouts with you as well.

Before I erase this, let me just read this over to make sure all of you have gotten this information to us: your Baptismal Certificate and the Sponsor Certificate. If your sponsor, a man or a woman who is going to be sponsoring you into the Church as your Confirmation sponsor, please have them get a certificate from their parish saying that they're a practicing Catholic, in good standing with the Church. Also give us your saint's name. We encourage all of you to take a saint's name: St. Joseph, St. Patrick, Mary, St. Bernadette - whatever saint you particularly admire and like that you want to use as an example and role model. Also, if you have any library books that you've taken out to read, please bring them back, so we can use them again for next year.

The Prayer Service is Monday at 7:30. We have Rosary CD's out there. Mark Forrest and I did a Rosary CD together. Take any of the tapes. We do have tapes from the last three classes as well, if you haven't gotten those. We're also going to get our group picture tonight. Don't run off, so at 8:30 or 8:45, we're going to get our picture taken.

Tonight we'll also touch on other topics too; just a reminder on how to receive Holy Communion, how to go to Confession, and some of the other topics that will be coming up for Holy Week.

Take a look at your handouts. I just want to walk you through some of those handouts. As you know, one of the things that the Lord did during His lifetime was work many miracles. The Bible recounts about 33 different miracles that the Lord worked. Of course, He probably worked hundreds, or even thousands of

miracles. Since the Church is the continuation of Christ in history, there are miracles that still occur within the Church.

Take a look at this handout. This one is the “Miracle Staircase” of St. Joseph in Santa Fe, New Mexico. I’ve never been there to see this, but this tells the story of how the nuns needed a staircase built. Their chapel is about the size of this chapel. There was an error in the design of the building, and there was not enough room for a staircase, so they prayed a novena (which is nine days of prayer). They actually prayed to St. Joseph. On the last day, a man came up and offered to build them a staircase. Three months later, they opened the door and this is what he had built. There are no nails; there are no screws; just a few wooden pegs. When he built it, there wasn’t even a railing on it. He just built the stairs. The nuns added the railing later; they have a fear of heights; they didn’t want to fall as they were going up and down the stairs. They used those everyday for 100 years. It’s in a museum, so you can go and visit it now. If you make your way through Santa Fe, New Mexico, you’ll see the miraculous staircase. Of course, the man disappeared after he built it. We certainly hold that it was most likely St. Joseph that came, made a visit from Heaven, built this incredible staircase, and then disappeared.

On the back is St. Bernadette. What’s interesting in the Church is that many of them, but not all of them, after they pass away, the Church will sometimes later have to move their bodies to a different location, a different church perhaps, a different cemetery. Sometimes, when they’ve opened up the caskets of these saints, their bodies have never decayed or corrupted. That’s the case with St. Bernadette, who died in the year 1879. A couple of years ago, I was in Navarre, France, and I got to see her. I was about as close to her as I am to this pulpit, just a few feet away. I knelt down right next to the glass casket that she’s in, and we got to see this incorrupt body of St. Bernadette.

I encourage you to read this article. Many other saints are incorrupt: St. John Vianney, who’s in France; St. Catherine Labouré in Paris. If any of you go to Paris, make sure you go to the Chapel of the Miraculous Medal, on the Rue de Bac. You’ll see the incorrupt body of St. Catherine Labouré. Two blocks around the corner is another saint, St. Vincent de Paul. He’s also incorrupt, but there’s a wax mask over him. It’s very fascinating to hear about the saints.

Why does God work these miracles in our centuries and recently? I think it’s to get our attention, to let us know that He’s still out there, and to try to encourage our Faith. Miracles can, just like they got people’s attention in the time of the Scriptures, the Lord gets our attention by continuing to work miracles even in our own century.

We also have quite a few *Eucharistic miracles*. This one is also a miracle I’ve been privileged to see. I was in Siena, Italy in 1997. I took about 50 people. We went to this church. Here you can see the Hosts that are 250 years old that have

never disintegrated. Obviously, bread would normally begin to corrupt and disintegrate rather easily and quickly. The whole story is that the consecrated Hosts, after Mass, were placed in the tabernacle as they always are. The Hosts that are not distributed at Mass are placed in the locked tabernacle. Somebody broke into the tabernacle, wanting the gold ciborium, which the Hosts are contained in. They broke open the tabernacle, took the gold ciborium, went over to the poor box, dumped the Hosts into the poor box, and then stole the gold. They eventually discovered that these Hosts were in the poor box. Those were the old poor boxes that were only opened once a year, so there were a lot of cobwebs, dust, and dirt. They did not consume those Hosts. They were then just placed back in the tabernacle in a special container, in a ciborium. They figured that they would just wait a few weeks or a few months until they began to disintegrate; and after they disintegrated, then the Lord's presence would no longer be there.

As you know, after you receive Holy Communion, the Lord stays within you for about 15 minutes. It takes that long for the body to break down the elements and appearances of the bread and the wine. But what happened was a month went by, and the Hosts were still perfectly fresh. A year went by; five years went by; 50 years went by; and the Hosts had never begun to change. Here it is now, 250 years later, and the Hosts have still been perfectly preserved.

Some of the Popes and Bishops who have gone to that church have had the privilege of receiving one of those Hosts in Holy Communion. When that's happened, it still tastes just like it's fresh as newly baked bread. I've had the privilege of seeing that. They didn't give me Communion or anything, but they did let the group come very close and kneel down and adore the Lord in the Blessed Sacrament. It is a very interesting Eucharistic miracle.

On the other side is probably the most famous of all the Eucharistic miracles. It's called the Miracle of Lanciano. It's in Italy. You can read here that way back in the 700's a priest was saying Mass. He doubted the miracle of the *Transubstantiation*, of how the bread and the wine became the Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity of Christ. At that moment, the Lord worked a great miracle, and the Host began to change. The bread actually changed into a circle of flesh; the wine became blood. This was preserved all these years at that church. This is 1,200 years ago that this occurred. In 1970, the Vatican did allow scientists to examine the Blessed Sacrament. You can read the studies of how it is true human blood, true human flesh, heart tissue, and AB blood type. It's amazing that this Eucharistic miracle has continued to remain with us with no artificial preservatives for about 1,200 years. If you do go to Italy, not only should you visit Siena and see this Eucharistic miracle, but go to Lanciano and see this one as well.

(A question). Yes. In fact, what I would recommend, there are entire books written about that. There's a book called Eucharistic Miracles, and in there are

about 60 Eucharistic miracles from throughout the world. I would imagine about 25 of them are in other parts of Italy. You're probably referring to one of the other ones, like in Oviedo or different places like that. There's also a book called The Incorruptibles, which is about all the incorrupt saints. If you're interested in learning more about 200 saints whose bodies have been miraculously preserved even many years after their deaths, I'd recommend the book called The Incorruptibles. Bob and Penny Lord, who are on EWTN, have a book called This Is My Body, This Is My Blood, and that's also about Eucharistic miracles. There are many books out there that will explain these miracles.

(A question). Why is it that some saints' bodies are incorrupt and others decay? The Church has never come out and made a declaration on that. Just recently, you remember when Our Lady appeared at Fatima in 1917. You might have read that account. She appeared to the three young children (Jacinta, Francisco, and Lúcia). Lúcia, in fact, is still alive. She's about 90 or 95 years old, living in a convent in Portugal. Her two cousins, Jacinta and Francisco, died about the year 1919. When their bodies were transferred from the cemetery into the church, both of them were incorrupt, from what I read, which was very interesting. The Church doesn't have any theory on why. Ninety-nine percent of all the saints die, and their bodies go to dust and ashes, just like ours will. Once in a while, it will happen where God works a miracle to preserve them.

It was interesting in the case of St. Bernadette; she saw the Blessed Mother 18 times at Lourdes. Also, Jacinta and Francisco saw the Blessed Mother too, which was unique. As far as I know, Juan Diego, who saw the Blessed Mother in Mexico, or some of the other visionaries, that has not happened to them. I don't know if there's any speculation on why some are and some aren't.

Let me touch on a couple of the *apparitions* of the Blessed Mother. Perhaps the most famous one is Guadalupe, where the Blessed Mother appeared to Juan Diego. How many of you are familiar with that? Mexico, 1531, I believe, was the year. Mexico was predominately Aztec Indian, and the Spanish that came over only had maybe a few thousand converts at the time. When the Blessed Mother appeared, and said she was the Mother of these people, that she loved them, that she wanted a church built on this spot; an incredible number of conversions took place. An estimated 10,000,000 people became Catholic Christians within about 15 years after Our Lady appeared, which was an incredible number of mass conversions; never have that number of conversions come into the Church in that short period of time. Before Mary appeared to these Aztec Indians, they were doing all sorts of terrible things, like human sacrifices. They did about 50,000 human sacrifices a year in Mexico. If you go to Mexico today, you can still see these pyramids scattered throughout Mexico. There are 271 of the pyramids scattered throughout Mexico. On each of these, they were doing human sacrifices. After the Blessed Mother appeared, and they got baptized, and became Catholics, the human sacrifices stopped. Mexico, as you know, is a very

Catholic country today. That was probably one of the major apparitions of the Blessed Mother.

Another one was in 1830. Our Lady appeared in Paris. This is called the "Image of the Miraculous Medal." Remember when we talked about Mary, we gave all of you medals? That's when this one originated. Mary appeared to St. Catherine Laboure, who was a young nun, and said that God wanted a medal made; and whoever wore the medal would receive great graces from God, especially if they wore it around their neck. They began to make these medals, and among people who began wearing them, some of them were cured; some of them were healed; some of them came back to Church, came back to the sacraments after many years.

The name of the medal was "The Medal of the Immaculate Conception," because it had to do with the fact that Mary was conceived without Original Sin. Pretty soon it became known as "The Miraculous Medal," which was the nickname because of all the miracles that took place. Some of you, if you ever go to Paris, make sure you visit the Shrine of the Miraculous Medal, right there in the heart of Paris.

In 1858, Our Lady appeared at Lourdes. Lourdes is in southern France. Mary appeared 18 times to a young girl named Bernadette - St. Bernadette, whose picture you just saw is now an incorrupt saint. Mary's messages, basically, in all these apparitions, have always been the same: pray, do penance, convert, give up a life of sin, turn your life over to God. It's really the Gospel message. Mary is just repeating the message of the Gospel. None of these apparitions give us any new information that we need to be saved; it's just reiterating the pure message of Christ: repent of your sins, turn your life over to God, pray, and do penance. Those are the basic messages of all these.

There have been other apparitions in more recent years. You have Knock, over in Ireland, let's say in 1875, around that period. In all these apparitions the Blessed Mother gave messages, for example, to pray, and do sacrifices for the conversion of sinners. In Knock, when she appeared to the Irish, she didn't say anything. In Knock, it was a silent apparition. Mary appeared there on the side of the church in prayer. Next to her were St. Joseph, and St. John the Evangelist. There were about 30 farmers that got to see that. That's an approved apparition.

One of the other famous ones was in 1917 in Fatima. Fatima is in Portugal. Our Lady appeared at this time in World War I. Her main message was to pray for the end of the war, to pray the Rosary every single day. Our Lady appeared beginning in May of 1917. Through October, she appeared on the 13th of every month, except one month when the children were thrown into prison by the government, because they didn't like all the commotion that was occurring. On October 13, 1917 the great miracle occurred, which was called "The Miracle of the Sun," when about 70,000 people saw what looked like the sun moving in the

sky and coming towards the Earth, and then being pulled back. It's called "The Day the Sun Danced." Even the socialistic and atheistic newspapers reported seeing this as well. When that occurred, it had been raining for three days before everybody had come to the shrine, or to this field, where Mary had been appearing, and where it was told she was going to appear one more time. They came, and they brought the crippled, the blind, the lame; and the majority of them were cured when this miracle occurred. All their clothes were dry, and people thought it was the end of the world. They were spared and converted by that appearance at that point.

Sometimes people say, "Why does God send Mary to Earth?" One way to look at it is that when Christ comes again, it's all over. He's coming again to judge the living and the dead, to put an end to human history. Until that time, He sends His Mother to get us ready, to get us in shape, to get our attention, and to get us back to the basics - back to the Gospel message of prayer and penance. Our Lady said at Fatima, "Pray the Rosary every day." The Rosary, as you know, is pure prayer. It's meditating on Scripture; it's thinking about the Life of Christ. Mary said, "Many souls go to Hell, because they have nobody to pray and offer sacrifices for them." She said, of course, many other things as well.

There have been other apparitions. There was an interesting one in La Salette, which is in France. Off the top of my head, I would probably say around 1860. I had the privilege of going to La Salette a few years back. It's beautiful. It's up in the French Alps. It's surrounded by the snow-covered mountains. There was a statue of Mary, just as she appeared to these two children, Maximin and Melanie. She was sitting, and she was weeping. Her face was in her hand, and she was shedding tears. They walked up to her and said, "Why are you crying?" The basic message in La Salette was that Mary was crying because of all the sins that were being committed, especially people who use God's Name in vain, and who did not keep holy the Lord's Day: those who did not go to Church on Sundays, and treated Sunday as a regular day, didn't keep it sacred and special by not working. That was the main message in La Salette.

There also have been other ones that have been approved by the Church in Beauraing, Belgium and Banneux, Belgium in 1929 and in 1932. There's a great book called [A Woman Clothed with the Sun](#), and it lists these eight approved apparitions of the Blessed Mother.

There are other possible apparitions that people talk about a lot. They speculate that Mary has appeared. Some of these have been approved by local Bishops. There's one in Akita, Japan, that was apparently approved by the local Bishop. There's one in Venezuela, in Betania. Apparently that's been approved by the local Bishops. There are still other ones. Over in Yugoslavia, in Medjugorje, that as far as I understand, is still being looked into, still being investigated. It hasn't been approved yet, or denied yet. It's still under study.

Normally what happens is it takes many years for these apparitions to be approved or condemned. It's interesting that when Mary appeared at Lourdes 18 times, there were many other appearances of so-called "Mary" appearing in other areas. See, the Devil could also appear in the form of an Angel of Light, as it says in Scripture. He could appear in the form of the Blessed Mother. It's possible, we know that all these are approved by the Church, but if somebody says the Blessed Mother is appearing to them in their backyard, we have to be skeptical. I would say it's best to be prudent. It's best to be cautious. You shouldn't reject it outright, nor should you accept it outright. I think the message should be look at the fruit; wait until the Church makes its approval of it. If the Church does approve it, that means that the messages are authentic, and it is safe to accept. You don't have to believe any of these to be a Catholic in good standing, but they are approved by the Church.

I think that they can definitely help people. Most people are converted to the Lord by going to holy places, like the Holy Land, or going to some of these shrines. If you're on a trip somewhere in Europe, or one of these places, definitely go to the shrines and visit them, because they are incredibly inspiring. A lot of people come back to Confession after many years, after going to these places. Lourdes is amazing because they have Eucharistic processions, and they have the miraculous waters, called "The Baths," where you can go in and get dunked into the miraculous waters. There have been over 5,000 cures in Lourdes. People have been cured of every illness under the sun by going to Lourdes. Everybody leaves Lourdes healed. Most leave Lourdes spiritually healed; some, emotionally healed; quite a few leave physically healed as well. They're all very interesting and very holy places. Sometimes by going there on a pilgrimage, it deepens a person's Faith, and it gets them back on the right track spiritually.

(A question). You'll see at Lourdes, and sometimes at Fatima, they have areas where people actually walk on their knees. Sometimes they put pads on their knees and they walk, and they just go on their knees sort of a large area, almost like making the Stations of the Cross, or the Way of the Cross. Then, they pray the Rosary. It's a form of doing penance. In the Old Testament, Jonah went through the town, and said, "Forty days more and Nineveh will be destroyed," and called people to prayer and penance. Our Lady is like a modern day prophet, calling people to prayer and penance, to save their souls, and to get back on the right track. It's very inspiring. I've seen women carrying their children in line, taking their crippled children to be healed. Many of them have been miraculously healed there.

(A question). It is, if the Church does leave it up to the local Ordinary, or the Bishop, to approve or to condemn a particular apparition. In the case in Japan, and in the case of Betania, it was the local Bishop that approved them. He did the study and looked at all the fruit that was there. There are a lot of criteria to determine whether or not these apparitions are authentic. In those cases, they did. Sometimes in a particular case, if it gets really big, the Church will step in

and say it's out of the hands of the local Bishop, and it's going to be studied by the Vatican itself. I think that's the case in Medjugorje, where it was taken out of the local Bishop's hands, and investigated by the Church. All the Bishops can oversee that to determine its authenticity. It has been quite a place of conversions and healings and miracles, that's for sure. I've not been there myself. I have been to most of these approved places.

Some of the other things on the handouts, I encourage you to take these with you and read, is a very nice one called "Are You Too Busy For Christ?" It's written in the form of a C.S. Lewis story, all about the importance of daily prayer. We have some other recommendations for you. These are some books recommended by Scott Hahn for every family library. Scott Hahn was a convert to the Faith. On the back is "The Catholic Resource Guide," which is very good if you're looking for good books, publishers, colleges, or other organizations.

These other handouts that we have here are "A Guide To Spiritual Reading." This is an excellent brochure put together by a wonderful priest in Washington, DC, Father Morrow. Once you leave RCIA, and if you're looking for opportunities or books to continue your studies on the Faith, this is a good place to start. In fact, the first book on here is called Our Lady of Fatima, by William Thomas Walsh. Another book is The Day the Sun Danced at Fatima. You can work your way through all these books.

On this sheet, you'll see spiritual practices and some definitions. On the back, a spiritual checklist. We don't have to do all these things everyday; but it is something that if people want to do these things, they're certainly encouraged to do as many of them as they could fit into their daily schedule without neglecting the duties of their state in life as a mother or as a father.

Let me just go down this daily spiritual checklist, just to go over these things. Some of these things we may not have gone over during this past year together.

How many of you are familiar with what *The Morning Offering* is? Most of our born and raised Catholics have. The Morning Offering is basically your morning devotions; it's your morning prayer. What you do is when you wake up, you dedicate the day to God. You say, "Jesus, through the Blessed Mother, I offer You today all of my prayers, works, joys, and sufferings of this day." Then you can offer it up for whatever you want to offer it up for: the special intentions that the Pope might have. You can offer it for the conversion of poor sinners, the release of souls from Purgatory, the end of abortion - there are all sorts of things you can offer up your daily duties for. You offer up your prayers, works, joys, and sufferings every day, and dedicate your day to God.

I think when we had the talk on Prayer, we went through *Vocal Prayer*, where we say often times prayers that are written by other people (Our Fathers, Hail Marys). There's also *Mental Prayer*, where you might read a passage from

Scripture and then you talk to the Lord about it. It's more like conversational prayer. It's reflecting upon the Word of God.

Of course, the *greatest prayer is the Mass*, because that's when you get to receive Christ Himself in the Eucharist.

The *Angelus* is a prayer said usually at noontime, when you say three Hail Mary's and a few other prayers that remind us of the prayer of the Angel Gabriel to the Blessed Mother. Some of you have heard that if you come to daily Mass. We say that every morning at 9:00 o'clock here in the Chapel.

You can *make visits to the Blessed Sacrament*. The Adoration Chapel is right back here, for those of you who have not been back to that room. It's called "The Blessed Sacrament Chapel." You might want to go back before you leave here tonight and make a little visit to the Lord in the tabernacle.

Pray the Rosary. I believe we covered the Rosary well enough during this time. The Rosary is an incredible prayer, because it combines vocal prayer, mental prayer, and meditation. We use our imagination by picturing the scenes in our mind. While we're picturing the scenes in the Life of Christ, like the Crucifixion, and that's where I think the movie The Passion can help a lot when you say the Sorrowful Mysteries, and you're picturing the Agony in the Garden, the Scourging at the Pillar, the Crowning with Thorns, the Carrying of the Cross, and the Crucifixion. The idea of the Rosary is to try to get that mental image in your mind, and really think about and reflect on the event in the Life of Christ and the Bible. While you're doing that, you say those prayers: the Our Father's and the Hail Mary's. The Rosary is a very powerful prayer, because it combines the reflecting on the Word of God, on the Scripture, while at the same time praying the prayer that Jesus taught us, which is the Our Father; and then saying the Hail Mary, which the first part is from the Angel Gabriel, the second part is from Elizabeth. Her cousin said, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the Fruit of your womb." The third part was added by the early Church, "Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death."

Spiritual Reading means to take a good book, say the Bible, or some other book about the saints, read it slowly and reflectively; and then meditate upon it. Gospel reading is one of the most important forms of reading that we do, because it's meditating upon the Life of Christ, as told to us by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

An *aspiration* is a little tiny prayer that you say during the day when you need help, like, "Help me, Jesus." That's an aspiration. You're stuck in traffic – you can say, "Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, have mercy on me;" "Immaculate Heart of Mary, pray for me;" "Jesus, Mary, Joseph, I love you, save souls." If you're about to receive Communion say, "My Lord and my God." Those are called aspirations, little tiny prayers.

In the talk on prayer, it was mentioned that we should pray at certain times of the day. It's a good idea to pray in the morning, when you wake up and dedicate your day to God. Pray before you go to sleep at night. There should be other times where we can pray as well, maybe at Mass, maybe when we're praying the Rosary. In other words, prayer is like the food for our soul. Just like you eat three meals a day, we should try to have at least three times during the day when we can talk to God and pray. Have your spiritual breakfast, which is your Morning Offering, your lunch, and your dinner; maybe a daily Mass and daily Rosary. But also, sometimes during the day we just need a little snack. That's where the aspirations come in. If prayer is the food for our soul, sometimes during the day when you're washing the dishes you can say, "Jesus, I love you," or, "Jesus, Mary, Joseph, I love you; save souls." Aspirations are very good to make use of.

In a *Personal Examination of Conscience* and a *General Examination of Conscience*, we go through the Ten Commandments, and look at each day and think how are we doing in regards to patience, charity, and whatever virtue we're trying to do.

Mortifications means to die to oneself, or to make a sacrifice. During Lent, we make mortifications, maybe giving up sweets, desserts, chocolate, alcohol, or whatever. Those would be mortifications.

Use Holy Water after you come into the church. Make sure you get a bottle of Holy Water. It's a good idea to keep that in the house. Bless yourself with the Holy Water. It's a reminder of your Baptism. It can also help to keep the evil spirits away. If we're ever called to a house where there might be a either a haunted house or a possession, the priest always blesses that house with Holy Water. The priest prays a prayer over that water, and that way everywhere that water is sprinkled, that prayer is placed. That's why it's like a little exorcism prayer that's done over the water. Those priests that do exorcisms know how important it is to have Holy Water. You might want to have some as well in your house.

Wear the Brown Scapular. This is the Brown Scapular. Probably we'll do that as a gift on the Easter Vigil. Traditionally, after the kids make their First Holy Communion in Second Grade, they're then enrolled in the Brown Scapular. The Brown Scapular is a piece of brown cloth over the front and the back. Originally, it was made from the habit of the Carmelite nuns, because they wore the long brown habits. It represents wearing the Mantle of the Blessed Mother, having her arms wrapped around you in spiritual protection, to keep you close to Christ. It's like wearing a shield or a Mantle of our Blessed Mother. The Brown Scapular is just a very beautiful sign of Mary's maternal caring for your soul. I would definitely recommend you wear the Brown Scapular, especially after you come into the Church, almost like an armor or shield of protection. The scapulars will be blessed. We then entrust ourselves to Our Lady's care, in imitation of what Jesus did for us. Remember, Jesus became Incarnate within Mary's womb. He was the

first one to entrust Himself to Mary, so we do the same – we entrust ourselves to Our Lady.

We talked about the *Miraculous Medal* a little bit. The great thing, it says, about wearing the medal is that whoever wears the medal receives great graces, especially if they wear it around their neck. I would recommend obviously wearing your Miraculous Medal.

These things are not good luck charms. They're not superstitions. They're blessed, holy objects. God can often, and does often, work through blessed objects. We baptize babies using Holy Water; we anoint people with Sacred Oil. In the Bible, it says they called the priests in; they prayed over people, anointing them with oil. Using these things can be channels of how the Lord gives His blessings to people.

There are all sorts of passages in the Old Testament where Aaron would use his rod to bring about a miracle. God can use things like holy objects as well. When the Lord cured a blind man once, He made a mud paste and put it on the man's eyes. That was a sacramental principle of using material things through which He can give a blessing.

The *Prayer to the Guardian Angel* is a beautiful prayer. You can say that every day when you wake up: "Angel of God, my guardian dear, to whom God's love commits me here. Ever this day be at my side, to light and guard, to rule and guide. Amen."

The *Prayer to St. Michael the Archangel* is again, a very powerful prayer. We say that every day at the end of Mass.

The *Act of Contrition* is good to memorize and say every night before you go to sleep, just in case you don't wake up. That's really the prayer to say every night before you go to sleep, because there are a certain percentage of people that won't wake up the next day. You always want to be in the right state of soul to go meet our Maker, to meet the Lord.

The great promise attached to the Brown Scapular is, "Whoever dies wearing this scapular shall not suffer eternal fire. It shall be a sign of salvation, protection from danger, and a pledge of peace." That's probably one of the most amazing promises that the Blessed Mother has ever given. The great thing about that is that is if we are faithful to our baptismal commitments, in following the Lord, being truly devoted to our Blessed Mother, and being close to Christ, she will make sure by her prayers that we'll have a priest there at our death.

Note: At this point, the first side of the tape ended. The talk resumes below.

... the end of the Mass at the Easter Vigil. At the close of the Mass we will have all of you given a Brown Scapular and we'll enroll you in that. I would recommend that you wear it. If you take a shower or something like that, and slip on a bar of soap, or whatever, don't think that you have to wear it all the time. If you take a shower you're allowed to take it off, or if you go swimming you're allowed to take it off. It's not a good luck charm. It's not superstition. What it is though, it's a sign of your asking Mary to watch over you. For example, if somebody took off the Scapular to go out and commit adultery, that would be wrong. That would be like taking off your wedding ring to go commit adultery. It's okay to take off your wedding ring to wash the dishes. You know what I mean, so there's a difference there of why you would remove the Scapular. If you're wearing it to take a shower, no problem. I think it's always a good idea to have it on, just like it's a good idea to wear your wedding ring, just as a sign of your love for your spouse. That's one way to look at it.

On the back of this is "The Spiritual Plan of Life." I went through those already; you might want to consider that.

Note: The class ended with these presentations: 1) one family's journey into the Catholic Faith; 2) the Legion of Mary; 3) the Knights of Columbus with a Bible given to each person in the class. A group picture was taken after class as well.