

# **A Journey with Jesus!**

**PART TWO OF THREE (The Red Book)**

**Jesus' Early Ministry**

**“From the Bible to the Holy Land and into God’s Book of Life.”**



**Including the “Twenty Proofs” that  
Jesus Christ is the Son of God,  
the Messiah, God made Flesh!**

**By: Mr. Guy Murphy O.P. (Lay Dominican) March 19, 2017**

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**“From the Bible to the Holy Land and into God’s Book of Life.”**

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the Son of God, the Messiah, God made Flesh!**

2000 years ago, Andrew and John asked Jesus. “Where do you live?” Jesus replied; “Come and see.” (John 1:39) They went, they saw, they stayed with Jesus and the world was changed. They stayed because they found with Jesus what fulfilled the deepest longing of the human heart. Perhaps we are here because we have the same question as Andrew and John. For the next several days we are going to respond to Jesus’ invitation and “Come and see” for ourselves.

### **The Journey is split up into three books.**

The ‘Blue Book #1’, that reviews our origins and the Old Testament and is a good preparation before encountering God in the Holy land.

The ‘Red Book #2’, that follows Jesus beginnings of His earthly journey that started out in the womb of Mother Mary in Nazareth, then down to Bethlehem and His early life. Then over to the Jordan River where He was baptized and then on to the Galilee area where Jesus spent much of His time evangelizing.

The ‘Gold Book #3’, that follows Jesus to the culmination of His mission in Jerusalem. We will follow the Palm Sunday entry into Jerusalem, His Last Supper, Agony in Garden, Carrying the Cross, Calvary where He died, the tomb in which He rose, Mount of Olives where He ascended, Pentecost Room where the Holy Spirit carried on the work through Jesus’ Church.

# Journey with Jesus part 2 of 3

## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this book to the Blessed Virgin Mary the Holy Mother of God. I am eternally grateful that She took my confused soul and truly “Magnified the Lord” Jesus Christ for me (Luke 1:46).

## **THANKSGIVING**

Thank you, Jesus, for letting me journey with You!

**Special thanks –  
to the following for helping with this book:**

Eileen Craig  
Monica Hammerschmidt  
Elizabeth Diechl  
Linda Leasure  
Jeff Scott

### **Special Spiritual thanks to:**

Fr. Peter Gnoinski  
Fr. Bill Zimmer  
James and Charmaine Murphy  
Dr. Rosalie Turton  
Dr. Dean Murphy  
Ann Patterson  
Mary Kay Cimino  
Beth Fiset  
Kim White  
John and Colleen Willard

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### ROSARY MYSTERIES      **Book    CHAPTER    PAGE**

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## INTRODUCTION TO BOOK 2

Book #1 gave a summary of our 4000-year human history while highlighting our relationship with God. Once again, encountering Jesus Christ on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land is similar to experiencing a rose. Looking at the beauty of a red rose and smelling its sweet fragrance and feeling its soft texture is appreciated more when we examine the stem, the roots and even the thorns.

Our 4000-year history proves that we are created good but inclined to evil. God invites us to be His children. Whether God blesses us or threatens us or even chastises us, we still as a people spurn His great love and plunge into various forms of wickedness.

Instead of wiping us out, God promise to establish a new covenant with us that will be even better. It will be like that of a Bride to God. He promises to send a Redeemer that will pay the price for all the offenses done to God and then teach us how to live as children of God and even Brides of God.

Book #2 starts off with God Himself coming into the world as a Man in the person of Jesus Christ.

This God-man will pay the price, teach us and give us strength to overcome our evil inclinations so any person in the one human family can become children of God and even Brides of God if they have the good will to do so.

Ben and Meghan represent the typical pilgrim's questions and comments that we received for the past 20 years bringing people to the Holy Land. As we journey with Jesus, we will get to know Him more and when you know Jesus, one can't help but love Him. When one loves Jesus, even the obstacles become a great joy.

In Book #2, Jesus' Journey begins inside the womb of the Blessed Mother and will continue throughout Jesus preaching ministry in Galilee. Hopefully our names will be written in the "Book of Life."

Knowledge of Jesus leads to admiration. Admiration of Jesus leads to imitation. Imitation of Jesus leads to our transformation. Our transformation leads to our destination.

## Chapter 11



### Nazareth, Jesus' Pilgrimage on earth starts here - "Proof #2" Jesus' Virgin Birth

**NAZARETH, Mary's House:** We are here in Nazareth at the Basilica of the Annunciation. Nazareth comes from the word Natzar which means "roots" or "off shoot". This also fulfills Isaiah 11:1, about the Messiah being the "Root of Jesse."

#### **Ben: Why is this special?**

The world is fascinated by the creation of the world at the time of the "Big Bang". The very beginning of the Bible said; In the beginning God created the Heavens and the earth and the earth was a formless wasteland and darkness covered the abyss. **Then the Spirit of God Hovered over the waters and then God said, "Let there be Light!"** (Genesis 1:1-3). Today scientist call this the big bang. That was the old creation. Saint Paul called Jesus' time the New Creation (2 Corinthians 5) The key to catch the association is to know that Mary's name means "Sea" or the waters. Look what will happen in this spot. The Spirit of God will hover over Mary (Waters) Jesus the Light of the World will here. God will forever be created into the Man-God. The Word made flesh.

#### **Ben: That is amazing!**

Two thousand years ago almost all of the Holy Land was in a spiritual mess, but God was going to change it. This is where the angel Gabriel appeared to the Blessed Mother and told Her that She was to be the Mother of God's Son. Where Adam and Eve said "No", Mary the New Eve said "Yes", in this very house. The Holy Spirit came upon the Blessed Mother and the Word of God was made flesh and dwelt among us. Jesus Christ's pilgrimage on earth started right here.

As we walk around the courtyard and upstairs basilica, we see 59 mosaic images and paintings of Mary from various countries all over the world. This illustrates another prophecy fulfilled. Mary is the New Eve, the Mother of all the Living (Genesis 3:20). The doors on the Basilica review our origins, the creation, the fall, and the sins of mankind. This was gone over in much detail in chapters one to four.



The doors also remind us that Jesus is the New Adam and Mary is the New Eve, the “Mother of the Living”, “The Woman most loved.”

**Meghan: Yes, we all love Jesus' Mother Mary.**

**Ben: So, this is the home of the New Eve, wow! This must be a special place.**

And Jesus Christ is the Light of the world and He is now living in the womb of the Blessed Mother.

You will hear many biblical references to the New Creation, but it all starts right here.

**Ben: That is deep.**

**Meghan: I see a statue of Our Lady standing on a snake.**

It is fitting that we find a statue of “Our Lady of Grace” in front of the Basilica. There is much water and fountains in the shrine and that represents God’s grace flowing into the world. This is a statue of Our Lady, the New Eve, crushing the head of the serpent just as she appeared to St. Catherine Labore in Paris in 1831 in response to their government outlawing God forty years earlier during the French Revolution. This same image is on the miraculous medal that was used to start a re-evangelization in France. It combines (Genesis 3:15) with the battle in the book of Revelations. After the fall of man, God told the serpent, I will put enmities between you and the Woman, your seed and Her seed, She will crush your head while you lie in wait of Her heel.

**Ben: Why does God allow the serpent in the garden in the first place?**

As chapter six describes, contemplating evil does not shed light, but contemplating love does. The sun does not love because it does not have a free will. Once we understand that God can’t take away our free will, because it will take away our capacity to love, then we



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know why God allows evil in the world in this weakened form. Just as a doctor puts a weakened form of a disease in a vaccination to help the body learn how to fight it, God does not create but allows evil in a weakened form on earth in order to get good from it.

On the surface using Mary to crush the serpent is very puzzling, yet there are two mistakes that people make about the devil. Some ignore his existence, but unfortunately, they do not protect themselves from him and then get eternally lost.

Others think the devil is equal and opposite of God. The devil is a fallen creature and in comparison with God is less than an atom, just like all creatures. Once we have total faith that God is all powerful and He could click His fingers and all the evil in the world would be gone in an instant and once we appreciate that the total mess we have made throughout our rebellious history is due to our pride, then it starts to make sense that God is going to use the humility of the Blessed Mother to crush the proud head of Satan.

**Meghan: I hope she crushes him soon.**

The two famous scripture quotes associated with this house,

“Mary said, ‘Behold the handmaid of the Lord; let it be done to Me according to thy word.’” Luke 1:38

This is known as the great “fiat” or great “Yes” to God to undo Eve’s “No” to God. This took a great act of humility and courage.

The second scripture quote is;

The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.” (John 1:14)

Just think God Himself becomes man in order to save us and help us love Him more. It is a great mystery.

**Meghan: What will we see inside the Basilica.**

Inside the basilica contains a “grotto” as the main attraction. This “grotto” is the fourth wall of the actual house where Jesus, Mary and St. Joseph lived for many years. Inside the fourth wall grotto is an altar that says in Latin, **The Word was made Flesh, Here!**



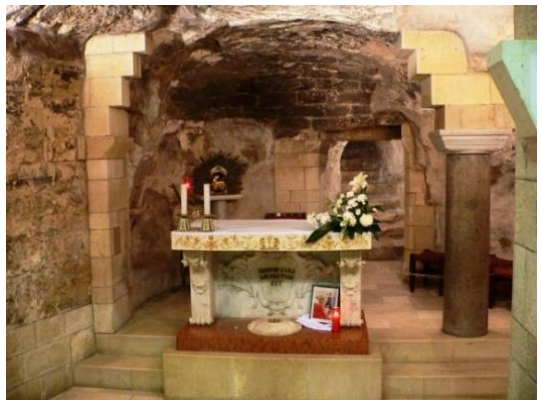
**Meghan: Wow.**

The other three walls are located in Loreto, Italy. To imagine the House of Loreto, picture three walls (just like you see in this picture)

there is a wall on the right, a wall on the left, and a wall in the back. The 4th wall is still here in Nazareth and is carved into the hillside in the grotto area. There is a big archway that was built later. Inside the archway are darker bricks, they are the bricks that match up to the bricks in the House of Loreto in Italy.

**Ben: How do people know that the three walls in Loreto, Italy were once here in Nazareth?**

In America we use British units that do not match up with the metric units. Not only do the color of the bricks here match the three walls in Loreto, but the size, type and the shape match up as well. The brick Builders use something called graffiti, which are markings almost like a signature and the handwriting matches up exactly to the bricks in the House of Loreto.



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The three walls in Loreto also match the foundation found here.

**Meghan: How did it get to Italy.**

The tradition is that as the Muslims were destroying all the shrines in the Holy Land in the late 1292, Our Lady asked Jesus to spare the Holy House because it was a temple of the Lord. Jesus granted Her request and angels picked up the house and moved it to Croatia and then to Italy and eventually where it is now on a hill of Loreto in Italy.

**Ben: That is fantastic but hard to believe. Do people take that seriously?**

Pope Julius II had the whole story of the miraculous translation written in Latin on a marble casing that covers the Holy House in Loreto today. Actually, the Vatican owns the Holy House. John Paul II visited there several times and called it the Holiest place in the world. It is a great place for prayer and meditation.

**Meghan: What do the scientists' say?**

Those who examined it declare that the walls were not knocked down and rebuilt, it actually has original mortar. It was set down gently on the road in Loreto. The walls were not even rebuilt on a new foundation, so individual bricks were not brought over there and set back up. Mortar has real strong compression strength and a real weak expansion. That is why in an earthquake buildings fall apart. So, if you tried to move a house from here it would fall apart just like dust. The House of Loreto was somehow gently picked up miraculously here and carried over there. There is evidence that it actually was moved three times.

**Ben: Awesome but mind boggling. I guess if the angel can move the stone away at the resurrection, God can have him move several stones away as well.**

We will save more details about the angelic translation miracle when we take you on our Journey for Jesus to Italy. For now, we will focus on the historical spot where Jesus started His pilgrimage on earth.

Our group is called Totally Yours or **TOTUS TUUS**, we get the spirituality from St. Louis DeMontfort method for imitating Jesus.

**Meghan: How do we imitate Jesus.**

Mary said a humble “Yes”, but Jesus humility is much greater. Look, He is the mighty God and to come to us, He is going to humble himself and be totally reliant as a slave in the womb of the Blessed Mother. We imitate Jesus and also humbly submit ourselves as a slave of Jesus through Mary’s help and rely on Her for everything just as Jesus did.

**Meghan: That is so profound. St. Louis DeMontfort huh.**

Yes, Pope John Paul II made it famous by declaring the motto for his pontificate to be Totus Tuus and that comes from the consecration to Jesus through Mary by Saint Louis DeMontfort. Mother Teresa of Calcutta practiced it as well.

It is said to be the easiest, shortest, surest way to be united to Jesus and become a saint, through Mother’s help.

There is a simple 33-day consecration booklet that you can get from our totally yours web site to make that consecration. It is the perfect way to renew our Baptismal promises to God with the help of Mary.

**Ben: I will do that. You mentioned that this is one of the proofs that Jesus is God?**

We talked about the “**Twenty proofs**” that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, the second person of the Blessed Trinity, God incarnate. Earlier, we described that Proof #1 was that over 350 scriptures, written hundreds of years before Jesus was born, described details about His life (See chapter 6). One even **prophesied a virgin birth** for the Messiah, 700 years before it happened. “Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son; and they shall call His name Emmanuel which means, ‘God is with us’” (Isaiah 7:14) (Matt. 1:23).

**Ben: Wow, 700 years before Jesus actual birth, the word of God predicted a virgin birth!**

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The “**Proof #2**”, that Jesus is God, is that His Mother **is a virgin and the Holy Spirit was Her spouse**. Almost all Christians, about 1/3 of the world's population, and even almost all Muslims, another 1/3 of the world's population testify to this fact. The Gospels confirm it. **No other leader has ever claimed that they were born of a virgin birth**, not Buddha, not Confucius, not Mohammed, no one except Jesus.

**Ben: That is true, I know the Muslims believe it as well and no one else even claimed it. Only Jesus' Mother.**

**Meghan: I can't wait to go closer to the grotto.**

Remember as we go in, this is where the first Hail Mary was said. As we go to the grotto we will try to say the Hail Mary the way the Angel Gabriel said it, slowly, from the heart with reverence devotion and love. Remember, Mary's “Yes” pleased God to start the New Creation here and Jesus pilgrimage on earth began.

After visiting the grotto, we will go to a quiet spot to contemplate the location and events of this place. As we pray the “scripture decade” of the Annunciation, try to imagine yourself in the scene 2018 years ago.

**Meghan: What is a scriptural decade?**

It is a part of the prayer called the Rosary where the word of God is experienced through prayer with the heart. We will hear the whole story, as we pray it. Meditation is like the movie of what it was like to be there.

**Meghan: Hey, I will give it a try in this Holy Place.**

**Ben: Hail is a different way of saying hello.**

Hail is a very respectful greeting acknowledging someone greater than themselves. Usually a person would say, Hail Caesar to proclaim respect for the emperor of Rome. Therefore, Mary is already greater than the angel Gabriel. When angels visited other people throughout history, they did not get such a respectful greeting. Also, note that Mary is “Full of Grace” before Jesus comes into the world. This supports the Immaculate Conception that Mary's soul is free from Original Sin and Her soul is in a state of Grace.

**FIRST JOYFUL MYSTERY:  
THE ANNUNCIATION**

“Blessed are the meek and humble,  
they shall possess the land.”  
(Matthew 5:4)

“The angel Gabriel was sent from  
God to a town of Galilee called  
Nazareth, to a Virgin betrothed to a  
man named Joseph, of the house of  
David, and the Virgin’s name was  
Mary. And when the angel had come  
to Her, he said, ‘Hail, full of grace,  
the Lord is with Thee. Blessed art  
Thou among women.’ When She had  
heard him She was troubled at his  
word, and kept pondering what  
manner of greeting this might  
be....and the angel said to Her, ‘Do  
not be afraid, Mary, for thou has  
found grace with God.’

(Luke 1:26-30); (Exodus 3:1-22)

**FRUIT OF THE MYSTERY:  
HUMILITY**

**OUR FATHER**

“Behold thou shall conceive in Thy  
womb and bring forth a Son; and  
thou shall call Him Jesus.”  
(Luke 1:31)

**HAIL MARY**

“He shall be great and shall be called  
the Son of the Most High. The Lord  
God shall give Him the throne of  
David His father.” (Luke 1:32);

(Isaiah 9:6-7)

**HAIL MARY**

“He shall reign in the house of Jacob  
forever, and of His kingdom there  
shall be no end.” (Luke 1:32-33);  
(Daniel 6:25-27); (Daniel 7:10-15)

**HAIL MARY**

“Mary said to the Angel; ‘How shall  
this be done, because I do not know  
man?’” (Luke 1:34)

**HAIL MARY**

“The Angel said to Mary, ‘The Holy  
Spirit shall come upon Thee and the  
power of the Most High shall  
overshadow Thee.’”

(Luke 1:35); (Acts 2:1-4)

**HAIL MARY**

“Therefore the Holy One to be born  
shall be called the Son of God.”

(Luke 1:35); (Galatians 4:1-7)

**HAIL MARY**

“Elizabeth Your cousin also has  
conceived a son in her old age and  
she who was called barren is now in  
her sixth month; for nothing shall be  
impossible with God.”

(Luke 1:36-37)

**HAIL MARY**

“Mary said, ‘Behold the handmaid of  
the Lord; let it be done to Me  
according to thy word.’”

(Luke 1:38); (Daniel 14:8)

**HAIL MARY**

“And the Word was God....And the  
Word was made flesh, and dwelt  
among us.” (John 1:1 & 1:14)

**HAIL MARY**

“Behold, the Virgin shall be with  
child, and shall bring forth a son; and  
they shall call His name Emmanuel  
which means, ‘God with us.’”

(Isaiah 7:14); (Math. 1:23)

**HAIL MARY**

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### **The Home of Mary - After visiting the Grotto.**

**Meghan: That was awesome, I could feel the holiness of that place as we prayed. Where do I get that prayer?**

We have all the mysteries in a little Church approved book called Weapon of Medjugorje that is available on our totally yours.org web site.

Now that you actually have visited the spot where Jesus grew up, and you saw the back wall of the house, it will help you to remember three things about the greatness of Mary. Sometimes even our non-Catholic brothers & sisters will say, “Oh what’s the big deal?”

**Ben: Why do we make such a big deal out of Mary?”**

The greatness of Mary is often clothed and hidden in humility but is illuminated in this house. Think of the Old Testament, many non-Catholics say, “faith alone” is what they are rooted on. We agree to a point by saying faith is very important. In the Old Testament, who is known as the Father of Faith?

**Ben: “Abraham!”**

Yes, Abraham has a real high position in the Old Testament, because they said he was the “Father of Faith”. He is the first one to believe and his faith was credited to him as righteousness. In the New Testament, in the Gospel of Luke, the angel Gabriel appeared first to John the Baptists’ Father Zechariah, but he didn’t believe (Luke: 1).

**Who was the first one to believe in Jesus Christ in the New Testament?**

**Meghan: ”Mary!”**

Yes, Mary. She is the Father/Mother of the Faith in Jesus Christ and that was important in the Old Testament. Faith is very important to Catholics too. She is a model for all those who believe. This revelation is huge. The role of being the first believer is even more important than the role Abraham played as our Father in faith. How incredible that Mary came to believe in Jesus in this very house.



**Meghan:** Yes, it is easy to overlook the obvious, you said there were three things in this house that shows the greatness of Mary.



Yes, The second thing which was very important is the Old Testament elevates the character of Moses, because he spoke to God face to face. That is a tremendous thing to be able speak to God face to face, not only thru the burning bush, but as they were going thru the desert as well. But look what happened in this holy house, here. God not only spoke to Mary; **God came to live inside of the Blessed Mother.** So compare those two experiences between God speaking to Moses face to face and God Himself living inside of the Blessed Mother. She not only gives birth to Him, kisses Him & speaks to Him face to face, changes His diapers and tends to all his needs for all those years. Who has the better relationship with God?

**Ben:** Yes, There's no question. Mary's experience with God is greater.

Yes, it is, However, the mystery of Her greatness is always clothed with humility. At first it is not obvious, but when you compare the two, there is no question. When we receive Holy Communion the same God that lived inside the Blessed Mother and is going to live inside of us and that is an incredible experience. Even Moses didn't get to do that. So, who should be our model to receive Jesus Christ, body, blood, soul and divinity in our hearts?

**Meghan:** It is the Blessed Mother.

Finally, although some people say "faith alone" is all I need, that is not what Catholics believe. Catholics believe that in the end three things last, faith, hope, and love and the greatest of these is

**Meghan:** "Love!"

In that little holy house of Loreto Jesus lived until he was 30 years old. Some children live at home with their parents until 18 years old.

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St. Louis DeMontfort said, it gave more glory to God that Jesus was a simple carpenter living at home with St. Joseph and Mary until He was 30 years old, than if He was preaching and making miracles all over the world.

Ponder this question: out of all the people in the New Testament, **who loved Jesus the most?** Was it Peter? Jesus said, “Peter do you love Me”? Peter replied, “Yes, I love you.” But Peter only hung around with Jesus for about 3 years and denied him before he was crucified. Further, John, and all the disciples loved Jesus. Consider the fact that Mary, first in Bethlehem, then in Egypt, then in this house, was with Jesus for 30 years, and even accompanied Him on the way of Calvary up to the foot of the Cross. So, who loved Jesus the most?

### **Ben: Mary**

Yes, it is obvious that She, helped by being full of grace, Her loved Jesus the most out of everybody and Love is the greatest of all the virtues.

When people ask us, what is the big deal about Mary, you'll be able to say, recalling this Holy House, Mary is the first one to believe, Mary is our model for Jesus living in us and Mary is the one who loved the Lord Jesus the most. Praise the Lord.

**Meghan: Yes, praise the Lord, now that I have seen the house, it will be easier to remember Her humble greatness.**

## Chapter 12



### St. Joseph the Worker- St Joseph the Great!

**Ben: Where to next?**

We are going to **St. Joseph's workshop** - Saint Joseph is one of those silent yet very powerful men in the Church. The ancient workshop of St. Joseph is right underneath the main altar.

First, we are going to **St. Joseph's workshop** - Saint Joseph is one of those silent yet very powerful men in the Church. The ancient workshop of St. Joseph is right underneath the main altar.

**Meghan: You said St. Joseph is a great man as well.**

Yes, God chose St. Joseph to look after the body of Jesus Christ. So, what happens? God says if you're faithful in small things, He's going to entrust you with greater things. The Church declared him the universal patron of the entire mystical body of Christ, the Church. So he is a very powerful Saint.

St. Joseph has many titles and was in charge of the Holy Family as well as the protector of Jesus and Mary. His job as protector is clear as we consider the Holy family made the flight



into Egypt to escape Herod's plan to kill Jesus (Matthew 2:13). St. Joseph has also been given the title of patron Saint of all families.

**Meghan: Families need protection these days.**

Further, since the Blessed Mother is a virgin, he is the patron saint and the guardian of all virgins.

**Ben: I suppose that is why the women religious, especially Saint Teresa of Avila asked St. Joseph's intercession so often.**

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St. Joseph is also known as the worker, in the carpenter shop and is the patron Saint of all workers.

**Ben: We celebrate that feast day on May 1 every year. St. Joseph the Worker!**

There is more. In the Old Testament one of Israel's twelve sons name was Joseph. When the big famine came, Joseph was in a position of power. Whenever the Pharaoh needed food or supplies, he just said: "Go to Joseph.... go to Joseph!" That was the plan, "Go to Joseph." That foreshadowed what we do as Christians and many a prayer have been answered through his intercession. We can always "go to St. Joseph" for all our needs.

**Meghan: He can help us out a lot. Some people complain that we ask the saints help, and we should only ask God for help, I do not know how to reply.**

God calls us to help each other out of love while we are on our pilgrimage on earth, when we get to Heaven our love is perfected and actually, we can help each other even more. The saints are our big brothers and sisters in Heaven as we are one family of God. Each saint had their own style or even specialty on how to love and serve Jesus Christ.

**Meghan: That is nice, but shouldn't we go directly to God?**

Didn't I hear you praying to get your car fixed last week?

**Meghan: Yes, I think it gives glory to God to ask Him for the grace so I can make the right decisions and have the outcome not be so severe.**

Didn't you take the car to a mechanic?

**Meghan: Yes, God's Divine Providence often uses human talents to answer my prayers.**

And when you are sick, you go to a doctor?

**Meghan: Yes, I also pray, and I have hope that God provides through the doctor.**

It is the same way for the Saints. If we have lost something, we pray and ask St. Anthony to help. If we have eye trouble? We ask for St. Lucy's help. We are struggling with our family? We ask St. Joseph for his help. It is the same Divine Providence at work as in the earthly world, we just have to make sure we give glory to God.

**Meghan: OK, I get it.**

Someday when Jesus kingdom will reign on earth as it is in Heaven, we will all still have our talents, but we will help each other with more love and give glory to God, just as the saints do for us today.

The saints are part of the mystical body of Christ and since we acknowledge their goodness as coming from the grace and power of Jesus Christ it does give glory to Him.

**Meghan: That sounds like a wonderful world when God's Will, will be done on earth as it is in Heaven. In the back of the shrine, there is a deep hole with some steps in the ruins down there. What is it?**

That is an ancient Baptismal fount. See the small tiles on the floor, that was typical of the Byzantine period around 600 to 800 AD. Many people then as today would ask St. Joseph's intercession as they were baptized into the Faith of Jesus Christ.

**Meghan: I suppose that entering into the Christian family through baptism in this place would be very special.**

Yes. A couple more things, in the corner there is a picture of St. Joseph dying. When he was dying, he was in the arms of Jesus. St. Joseph had the Blessed Mother there praying for him. Because of this, he is also the patron saint of the dying and further, he is the patron saint of the poor souls in purgatory.

**Ben: St. Joseph clearly has a powerful role in the Church. How does that affect us today?**

We cannot only ask St. Joseph for help. By observing his example, we know that if we are faithful in small things, God will entrust us with much more.

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**Meghan: There are two other windows with St. Joseph.**

Two other windows include; St. Teresa of Avila, who is a Carmelite, asked her Sisters to call on St. Joseph frequently as they work on their inner journey because St. Joseph did not speak any words in the Gospel, but he's also the **patron saint of the interior life**.

**Meghan: We always liked St. Joseph, strong but quiet type, anything else?**

Finally, the angels spoke to Joseph in a dream and said, "Fear not to take Mary for a wife, she has conceived of the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 1:20). Again the angel told St. Joseph, "Arise take the Child and His Mother and flee into Egypt. Herod will seek the Child (Jesus) to destroy Him" (Matthew 2:13). Note as we meditate on this, Matthew, was a man of the world, not a naïve guy who would believe any tale spoken to him. Matthew used the phrase "the Child and His Mother" and not "the Child and your wife" to show the chaste relationship between the Blessed Virgin Mary and St. Joseph.

**Meghan: Wow, there are a lot of truths there in the scriptures once it gets pointed out. I know the Church calls Mary a perpetual Virgen. As you said before, sometimes Her greatness is clothed in humility.**

Praise the Lord. While we are in Nazareth, let us go to the synagogue where St. Joseph would have taken Jesus as He grew up.

**Ben: The synagogue is close by, only about three blocks from the carpenter shop.**

**Meghan: The Ancient Synagogue looks like a simple building, almost a cave:**

This is the synagogue where Jesus when as He grew up. We can imagine St. Joseph and Jesus coming here every Sabbath to pray and to hear about the Law, the Psalms and the Prophets. It was God's will that Jesus remained hidden for the first 30 years of his life and worked in all humility as a common worker. It is good to keep that in mind as most of us work at simple tasks but strive for holiness. St.

Joseph was entrusted by God to maintain the secret of the Word incarnate.

When Jesus grew up and started his public ministry, He made many miracles and then came back here. At first his local people were impressed, but then they rejected Jesus. Listen to the scriptures and then ask ourselves why did the people get so angry?

### **The Rejection of Jesus at Nazareth (Luke 4:16-30)**

“When he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the sabbath day, as was his custom. He stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written:

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,  
because he has anointed me  
to bring good news to the poor.  
He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives  
and recovery of sight to the blind,  
to let the oppressed go free,  
to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”

And he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. Then he began to say to them, “Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.” All spoke well of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his mouth. They said, “Is not this Joseph’s son?” He said to them, “Doubtless you will quote to me this proverb, ‘Doctor, cure yourself!’ And you will say, ‘Do here also in your hometown the things that we have heard you did at Capernaum.’” And he said, “Truly I tell you, no prophet is accepted in the prophet’s hometown. But the truth is, there were many widows in Israel in the time of Elijah, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, and there was a severe famine over all the land; yet Elijah was sent to none of them except to a widow at Zarephath in Sidon. There were also many lepers in Israel in the time of the prophet Elisha, and none of them was cleansed except Naaman the Syrian.” When they heard this, all in the synagogue were filled with rage. They got up, drove him out of the town, and led him to the brow of the hill on which their town was built, so that they might hurl him off

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the cliff. But he passed through the midst of them and went on his way.” The word of the Lord.

**Ben: So, why did they get so angry? They wanted to throw Jesus off the cliff!**

Because Jesus out-did everything that the greatest figures in their scriptures had done, and they were reading about in the synagogue for years, yet they knew him as a carpenter's kid, someone who they felt was inferior to themselves. To make it worse Jesus reminded them that only a few foreigners got the miracles. It was too much for them to handle. As Jesus said; No prophet is without honor except in His own town. We **pray for priests here because** sometimes they need to deliver tough messages to their parishioners but fear to be thrown off the cliff can prevent them.

**Meghan: We will pray.**

**Ben: Are the Synagogue and the Temple different?**

The Temple was the place where Worship took place and that included a sacrifice. There is only one official Temple in Jerusalem. A Synagogue is where they would gather together, especially on the Sabbath and read the Scriptures and have it explained to them.

Today the Mass at Church that Jesus Christ establish fulfills and replaces both. The Liturgy of the Word includes the readings and explanations. The Liturgy of the Eucharist fulfills the worship of God by offering a sacrifice in a miraculous way as we will encounter during this pilgrimage. It was prophesied, “For from the rising of the sun even to the going down, my name is great among the Gentiles, and in every place, there is sacrifice, and there is offered to my name a clean oblation: for my name is great among the Gentiles, says the Lord of hosts” (Malachi 1:11) (Around 500 years before Jesus fulfilled it)



## Chapter 13



### The Angels on the way to Bethlehem

#### Travelling to Ein Karem & Bethlehem - The Angels

The scriptures state that after the Angel Gabriel announced to Mary that She was to be the Mother of God, Mary made haste and went to the hill country of Judea to visit her cousin Elizabeth who is to be the Mother of St. John the Baptist. She stayed with her for three months.

**Meghan:** This looks like a very pleasant journey as we look at the beautiful country side. How far of a journey is it?



Yes, it is beautiful for us because we are in an air-conditioned bus. The journey is around 85 miles. Mary is on foot or on a donkey. It is a good opportunity to think about what it was like for Mary to have God living inside of Her and making such long journeys.

We just completed the “Camino” or “the Way of Saint James” in northern Spain. Our group walked 70 miles over a 6-day period. The terrain was similar to this. It was very beautiful but difficult. All of our legs were sore, but we were all smiling because we did the pilgrimage for Jesus. After the Camino, I will always have a greater appreciation for what Our Lady went through, considering She was pregnant and took this trip three times in less than a nine-month period.

**Ben:** Wow, it would have taken Our Lady at least a week each time. I never really thought of that.

Yes, what is more amazing is Jesus' first pilgrimage was inside the womb of the Blessed Mother. We can imagine that the bus is the womb of the Blessed Mother and we are inside with Jesus going to Ein Karem to visit Elizabeth. As Jesus took the journey three times

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inside the womb of the Blessed Mother, every time we travel in a bus, we can imagine that we are under the mantle of the Blessed Mother. That is where the Totally Yours Consecration puts us.

**Meghan: So that is what it means to travel to Jesus through Mary.**

Yes, on our Totally Yours pilgrimages, we imitate Jesus and rely on Mary for everything. Although Jesus is the almighty God, He is relying on Her for everything. What a paradox of humility and love. As She helped Jesus to get there, She helps us as well.

**Meghan Since Jesus is God and full of love, I bet His favorite place on earth was when He: was living inside of Mary who loved Him so much.**

Yes, that is a great mystery.

Although we are journeying in Jesus footsteps, we will only make this trip once, because Ein Kareem and Bethlehem are fairly close to each other. Later on, in Jesus public ministry, we are going to see how he was the tireless perpetual pilgrim, constantly on the move as he evangelized all over Palestine.

**The Angels** Since the angels were very present at Nazareth and at Bethlehem where Jesus was born, we will mention a few things about the angels.

**Meghan: I love the angels.**

**Ben: Personally, I always struggled with the angels, it is hard to believe in invisible but intelligent spiritual beings.**

I understand but remember Blue Book #1. When we look at who you are, 95% of your body is made up of four elements, Carbon, hydrogen, oxygen and Nitrogen. You are an intelligent spiritual being with a Carbon, hydrogen, oxygen and Nitrogen casing around it. So, what is harder to believe, that there is an intelligent angel without the Carbon, hydrogen, oxygen and Nitrogen casing or there is an intelligent you with a Carbon, hydrogen, oxygen and Nitrogen casing.

**Ben: (Laugh) When you put it that way, I guess I am pretty mind boggling.**

When we wrap our heads around the wonderfulness of our own existence, it is not so hard to believe in angels. Actually, our weak human body helps to humble our spirit that tends to pride.

**Ben: Joking aside, I guess if we can accept our existence, we can accept the angels as well.**

Very good. A few things that the Holy Spirit revealed to the Church about the angels include:

**CCC #311: Angels and men, as intelligent and free creatures, have to journey toward their ultimate destinies by their free choice and preferential love. They can therefore go astray. Indeed, they have**



**sinned. Thus has moral evil, incommensurably more harmful than physical evil, entered the world. God is in no way, directly or indirectly, the cause of moral evil. He permits it, however, because he respects the freedom of his creatures and,**

**mysteriously, knows how to derive good from it.**

This is puzzling to us because of our limited intellect. When an unfortunate event occurs we usually consider how it affects us or very few people today or in a very limited time. God allows things to happen because He can derive the greater good that can come from the situation while He takes into account the seven billion people on earth today and how they are affected. He also regards the people who will live in the future and the numerous consequences actions have for all eternity. To believe in God's goodness when unfortunate events occur takes much faith and this faith reaches its culmination

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when Jesus Christ is suffering and dies on the Cross. We went over the mystery of suffering much in episode #4, But the point is, we have free will. The angels and us, can and have fallen.

**CCC #328 The existence of the spiritual, non-corporeal beings that Sacred Scripture usually calls “angels” is a truth of faith. The witness of Scripture is as clear as the unanimity of Tradition.**

**Meghan Yes, I believe.**

**CCC #330 states;**

**As purely spiritual creatures, angels have intelligence and will: they are personal and immortal creatures, surpassing in perfection all visible creatures, as the splendor of their glory bears witness.**

**Ben: More perfect than me, I accept.**

**Jesus Christ “with all his angels” CCC #331 states that**

**“Christ is the center of the angelic world. They are his angels: “When the Son of man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him....” They belong to him because they were created through and for him: They belong to him still more because he has made them messengers of his saving plan:**

So, the angels glorify God through Jesus Christ.

**CCC #332 teaches that**

**Angels have been present since creation and throughout the history of salvation, announcing this salvation from afar or near and serving the accomplishment of the divine plan: they closed the earthly paradise; protected Lot; saved Hagar and her child; stayed Abraham’s hand; communicated the law by their ministry; led the People of God; announced births and callings; and assisted the prophets, just to cite a few examples. Finally, the angel Gabriel announced the birth of the Precursor and that of Jesus himself.**

So here we are and Luke chapter 1 and 2 are filled with the Angels especially as we journey with Jesus.

**Ben: So how can we benefit from the Angels?**

Angels help us think of the spiritual world and our spiritual life. There's a lay apostolate called Angels of the New Era. It is an apostolate to teach us how to encounter God through meditation. It is based on fifteen stories of angels in the Bible split up into a thirty-three-day period. When we watch the angles, listen to the angels and imitate the angels, we pick up all the principles of mental prayer. It is the "Drivers Ed" of teaching your soul how to fly.

**Meghan Encountering God through the help of angels, I like it.**

**Ben: So how can we be called angels?**

The word "Angel" means "messenger servant of God."

St. Thomas Aquinas says the real angels are messenger servants by their function, not by their nature. By nature, they are pure spirits. Humans can share in that title, "angel", because we can also be a messenger servant of God by our function. That is how we can be called an angel.

**Ben: What about the new era?**

Last days/New Era comes from Peter on Pentecost Sunday. In the Act of the Apostles, Chapter 2, the Holy Spirit comes upon Mary and the Apostles. Some of the by passers complained when they heard them speaking in tongues and said, "you guys are drunk." Peter is the Pope and he gives the first sermon of the Church. Peter says "no", this is what the prophet Joel talked about. He said, "In the last days says the Lord, I will pour out My Spirit upon all flesh. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams... and I will show wonders in the heavens above, and signs on the earth beneath" (Acts 2:17,19). So, what is St. Peter describing? He's describing days in which God is going to use His messenger servants, or His angels to help renew the face of the earth. So that's how Angels of the New Era is defined in that little book, "Angels of the New Era."

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**Meghan: This follows up when you described the true Armageddon is headed to the triumph of the immaculate heart of Mary. Is that the New Era?**

Yes and a very important part of being a messenger servant is to meditate. It helps us to apply all the graces that Jesus Christ gave to His Church to help give that great peace to the world.

We're going to do one of the stories at the shepherd's field, but to start flying you can say this prayer several times.

**Angels of the New Era prayer:**

**Let us recall we are with the angels in the presence of God. Are we there?**

**Ben: YES**

**“Dear God, “Dear God, I beg you, I beg you, to please give me the grace , to please give me the grace that the three powers of my soul that the three powers of my soul my memory, my memory, my intellect, my intellect, and my will, and my will will be for the greater glory of God. , will be for the greater glory of God. Amen.” Amen.”**

**Meghan: I think I am starting to fly already.**

Keep learning that angel prayer and we will encounter God through mental prayer as we journey with Jesus.

## Chapter 14



### Ein Karem: Visitation to Elizabeth and Spiritual Vision.

In the hill country about four miles west of Jerusalem, is the village of Ein Karem, the home of the priest Zechariah and his wife, Elizabeth. The mosaic above the entrance shows the angels escorting the Virgin Mary as She visited her cousin here, and down below, the actual birthplace and home of St. John the Baptist.



**Meghan: It is very beautiful and peaceful in this hill country. It was a little hike to come up the hill to arrive here.**

It is here that Jesus Christ was living inside of the Blessed Mother and was about to perform His first miracle. Imagine that Our Lady dressed in blue greets her pregnant cousin Elizabeth and the baby leaps for joy in her womb. Scholars say, in (Luke 1:15), **“the angel Gabriel told his father Zechariah that his son shall be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb.”**

Therefore, the miracle is that Jesus is cleansing John of original sin at the time of the visitation.

Elizabeth filled with the Holy Spirit cries out in a loud voice; **“Blessed art thou among women and blessed is the fruit of your womb”** (Luke 1:42). The Holy Spirit through Elizabeth delivers the second half of the Hail Mary.

Elizabeth says something profound. **“Who am I that the mother of my Lord should come to me?”** In Greek, the word is “Theotokos” meaning “Mother of God” (Luke 1:43). Out of all the hundreds of

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titles that the Holy Spirit revealed, **this actually is Our Lady's greatest title.**

Mary responds with her prayer of praise called "The Magnificat". The first words are, "My soul magnifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my savior" (Luke 1:46).

On the wall outside, we can see several plaques of Mary's "Magnificat" prayer in over 65 languages. Every evening, priests, sister and Lay People who pray the Liturgy of the Hours say this prayer.

**Ben: Many people, even amongst our Catholic brothers, say that; "we are too close to the Blessed Mother and we have to focus more on Jesus." What do we say to them?**

When we hear that, we have to understand the truth of devotion to Mary thru this scriptural prayer, the Magnificat. When we see these plaques, we will understand a truth that is revealed here.

For example, let's look at a person who wears eye glasses. The first line in the Magnificat, **Luke 1:46**, says, "My soul magnifies the Lord." Imagine telling someone with glasses, "take those glasses off so you can see this person more clearly." What actually happens is they will get a distorted view of the person. The glasses help magnify the object. In a similar way, because of original sin, we have blurred spiritual vision. Just like we are close to our glasses to see things properly, we have to be close to our Blessed Mother to see Jesus properly.

**Meghan: Yes, when I put my glasses on, it is like looking at a whole new world.**

Exactly, without Mary, we get a distorted view of Jesus. So when someone says that we should remove Mary, we ask them, "do you have spiritual blurred vision? Do you see Jesus Christ in the Holy Eucharist as in John Chapter 6? If not, maybe you need Mary. Do you see Jesus Christ in His representative, the Vicar of Christ, the



Pope? If you don't see Jesus there, maybe you need the Blessed Mother to see these spiritual things more clearly." Praise the Lord!

**Ben: Come to think of it, most people that I know that complain about Mary do not see Jesus in the Eucharist or follow Jesus vicar, the Pope. Very interesting. I guess they do have spiritually blurred vision.**

**Meghan: What is in this cute little church?**

The church, completed in 1995, was erected over the remains of earlier Byzantine and Crusader buildings. The lower chapel area dates from the sixth century.



The name John means a gift of God. King Saul's son John, a friend of David, got out of the way so David could increase. Jesus is the Son of David and John said, "He must increase, and I must decrease."

Standing at the entrance, notice ahead a tunnel leading to an old well. There is an ancient tradition that the waters joyfully sprang out of the rock here when the Virgin Mary greeted her cousin.

**Meghan: How beautiful;**

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The three large paintings on the walls of the chapel portray Zechariah performing his priestly duties in the Temple; the Visitation; and the slaughtering of the innocent babes by King Herod's soldiers. Below this is a rock set in a niche known as the Stone of Hiding, which, according to the second century "Testimony of James," is reputed to have concealed St. John the Baptist from being slaughtered. St. John was in hiding most of his life in the wilderness until God inspired him with his baptism ministry.

**Meghan: Wow, this is the rock that hid John the Baptist, how frightening.**

That is a nice picture of an angel guiding him to safety.

This is a great place to pray the scriptures for the second Joyful mysteries the Visitation, let us open up our hearts to encounter God and have him write the mystery into our hearts.

**SECOND JOYFUL MYSTERY:**

**THE VISITATION**

“The one who serves the rest, is the greatest among you.”

(Matthew 23:11)

“Mary arose and went with haste into the hill country, to a town of Judah...

When Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the babe in her womb leapt.

And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit, and cried out with a loud voice, saying, ‘Blessed art thou

among women and blessed is the Fruit of thy Womb!\* And how have I deserved that the Mother of my Lord should come to me? For behold, the

moment that the sound of Thy greeting came to my ears, the babe in my womb leapt for joy.’ ...Mary

stayed with her for three months (Luke 1:39-45,56); (Jgs 5:24); (2Samuel 6:9-11); (Rom 15:7).

**FRUIT OF MYSTERY: LOVE OF NEIGHBOR**

**OUR FATHER**

“Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you.”

(Jeremiah 1:5)

**HAIL MARY**

“Blessed is she who has believed.”

(Luke 1:45)

**HAIL MARY**

“Mary said, ‘My soul magnifies the Lord.’” (Luke 1:46); (Psalms 34:4); (Romans 15:11)

**HAIL MARY**

“My spirit rejoices in God my Savior.” (Luke 1:47); (1Thes 5:16); (Psalms 34:9)

**HAIL MARY**

“Because He has regarded the humility of His Handmaid; for, behold henceforth all generations shall call Me blessed.” (Luke 1:48);

(Matthew 23:12)

**HAIL MARY**

“He that is mighty has done great things to Me. And Holy is His name.” (Luke 1:49); (1Pet 1:16); (Matt 6:9)

**HAIL MARY**

“He has scattered the proud in the conceit of their heart.

He has exalted the humble.” (Luke 1:51-52); (Isa. 26:5)

**HAIL MARY**

“He has filled the hungry with good things.” (Luke 1:53); (Psalms 33:11); (1Samuel 2:5)

**HAIL MARY**

“Even as he spoke to our fathers-to Abraham and to his seed forever.”

(Luke 1:55); (Genesis 17:7)

**HAIL MARY**

“Behold the tabernacle of God with men... and God himself with them, shall be their God.”

(Rev 21:3); (Exodus 40)

**HAIL MARY**

**Meghan: I enjoyed praying that here.**

This is a very pro-life mystery.

**Ben: How is that?**

Note as we look close at the Word of God, note how the terms are used of “The Mother of my Lord” and “Babe in my womb leapt for joy” and not “fetus blob of cells”. In 1981, the United States Senate Bill 158 entitled the Human Life Bill, petitioned scientists about the knowledge of the facts of human life. In an overwhelming majority, they declared that it is a scientific fact that human life begins at conception. Everything is determined by his/or her DNA, height, approx. weight, sex, color of eyes, he/or she only takes nourishment and protection from the mother. God and science agree that it is an individual human life upon conception, so we can't let the highly financed secularist media elites tell us the opposite. For our culture where one out of three pregnancies end in an abortion, we are thankful the Savior is Merciful.

**Ben: This mystery makes pro-life so simple and obvious. How come it gets so confusing in our society.**

Well, the devil is at work, but if we prayed the mysteries more, we would certainly be unconfused. It is a great weapon.

**Ben: Praise the Lord!**

Scholars analyzed Mary's prayer of the Magnificat and have written volumes about it. Note: “All generations will call Her Blessed.” (Even the Muslims call Mary Blessed).

Also, “God, Who is mighty has one great things to Me and holy is His Name (Luke 1:49).” Mary is God's work and she reflects the praise back to the Creator.

**Ben: Yes, I wish all Christians including Catholics remember to call Mary Blessed.**

**Meghan: Where do these stairs lead?**

To the Visitation Upper Angelic Church

**Meghan: Lets go!**

Hello pilgrims, we're here in the upper basilica of the Visitation. We see paintings of Mary and the Angels all around this Church. I will tell you why this is one of my favorite shrines.

**Ben: Why is it your favorite?**

I remember there was a time when I had real spiritual blurred vision. I thought I was right-brained retarded. Actually, nothing in religion made sense to me at all, including Marian devotion, because I didn't have my spiritual glasses on. So, I figured I had to read the whole bible for myself. In reading Genesis, we all know about Adam & Eve, and they weren't supposed to eat the forbidden fruit. Eve eats it, so does Adam. And it's been a comedy and tragedy of the whole history of the human race ever since. But in Genesis 2 and 3 it talked about another special tree, "The Tree of Life". If they ate from the Tree of Life, they would live forever. And I remember the first time I saw that, I literally fell out of my chair onto the floor. I said, "there is an antidote to the forbidden fruit? Why didn't I hear about this tree before? Where could I find this fruit?" Being a troubleshooting engineer who is trained to find solutions amongst all the alarms and whistles at an industrial plant, I thought this is the solution to all the problems in the world. Finding the "Tree of Life" would be the greatest historic and religious discovery of all times so I continued to diligently search.

**Ben: I never heard about that special tree in Genesis either.**

I thought the whole Bible would give us clues on how to find the Tree of Life, and then we can eat the fruit and live forever. So, I muscled thru the whole Bible looking for clues.

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Finally, in the book of Revelations, it talks about this big battle, everybody's battling, the whole world is going up in chaos. Then all of a sudden, they are eating fruit from the Tree of Life, and then there is this great peace (Revelation 22:14). Aha! There it is again! But there must have been a clue that I missed. I was looking for it for years and eventually I ended up going on a pilgrimage to a Marian shrine. For those of you who know the book, *The Weapon of Medjugorje*, the details were in that book. I was looking for a high-tech laser show to explain the miracles and I got a little bop on the head. After I got back home from the pilgrimage, I knew Blessed Mother had a real in with our Lord. So, I prayed to Her and asked "OK, Blessed Mother, I've been looking for that "Tree of Life" for so long.

Where is it? I want to find that tree." And in the depths of my heart, I heard Her say to me, "Pray the Rosary for all you ask of Me." It is one of those messages that she tells everybody. And I didn't like that inspiration, but I reluctantly I start praying the Rosary anyway. I said, "OK." So, the first joyful mystery, the Annunciation went well. The second joyful mystery was the Visitation. I was trying to meditate more at that time using the three powers of the soul, the



memory, the intellect and the will to encounter God. I imagined Blessed Mother was going to the hill country just like we saw here, to visit her cousin Elizabeth. I was looking at the beautiful trees in my meditation. Then I started daydreaming about the Tree of Life. If I could only find that special tree, then I would eat the fruit and could live forever. What clue did I miss? It's got to be a very special tree. Maybe it is an apple tree...a cherry tree. It must be a very special fruit. Then the mystery of the Rosary came back to me. It was Blessed Mother Who was right in front of Elizabeth. Then Elizabeth is filled with the Holy Spirit. I was still thinking....it must be a very special

fruit. What kind of fruit is it? Then Elizabeth filled with the Holy Spirit, sees the Blessed Mother. And then she said, blessed are You among women, and blessed is the Fruit of Your womb! I gasped, “Fruit! That’s it!” Blessed Mother! You are the true Tree of Life! And the Fruit that we are looking for, to eat forever, is Jesus Christ, the fruit of your womb, especially in the Eucharist. Once we eat that, it is the antidote for the forbidden fruit. **And that is what the whole world is longing for right now**, Jesus Christ in the Eucharist. It is our new and everlasting covenant with God. So that’s the mystery that was revealed right here, at the Visitation, where that little clue, that’s in the Bible, was revealed.

**Ben: That is so profound. The antidote to the forbidden fruit available to us.**



**Meghan: Jesus Christ in the Eucharist which is our true Fruit from the Tree of Life so we can live forever. That is awesome.**

Praise the Lord!

**Ben: We have a lot to think about as we climb down the hill and go to the next spot.**

**Meghan: It is a nice view also.**

## Chapter 15



### The Birth of St. John the Baptist.

**Ben:** Such a peaceful village.  
What happened here?

Inside the church is an altar on the left side that marks the location where St. John the **Baptist** was born. The plaques in front of the Church of St. John the Baptist display the prayer of his father Zechariah prayed when he regained his speech.

Chronologically, this is the first thing that takes place in the New Testament.

Recall in Luke Chapter 1:5-25, the Angel Gabriel did not come to the Blessed Mother first, but to Zechariah. Zechariah did not believe and was struck dumb. He could not talk until John the Baptist was born.



**Ben:** I guess we all have to be careful when doubting an angel.

#### The Birth of John the Baptist Foretold

“In the days of King Herod of Judea, there was a priest named Zechariah, who belonged to the priestly order of Abijah. His wife was a descendant of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. 6 Both of them were righteous before God, living blamelessly according to all the commandments and regulations of the Lord. 7 But they had no children, because Elizabeth was barren, and both were getting on in years.

8 Once when he was serving as priest before God and his section was on duty, 9 he was chosen by lot, according to the custom of the



priesthood, to enter the sanctuary of the Lord and offer incense. 10 Now at the time of the incense offering, the whole assembly of the people was praying outside. 11 Then there appeared to him an angel of the Lord, standing at the right side of the altar of incense. 12 When Zechariah saw him, he was terrified; and fear overwhelmed him. 13 But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you will name him John. 14 You will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth, 15 for he will be great in the sight of the Lord. He must never drink wine or strong drink; even before his birth he will be filled with the Holy Spirit. 16 He will turn many of the people of Israel to the Lord their God. 17 With the spirit and power of Elijah he will go before him, to turn the hearts of parents to their children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord." 18 Zechariah said to the angel, "How will I know that this is so? For I am an old man, and my wife is getting on in years." 19 The angel replied, "I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to you and to bring you this good news. 20 But now, because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled in their time, you will become mute, unable to speak, until the day these things occur."

21 Meanwhile the people were waiting for Zechariah and wondered at his delay in the sanctuary. 22 When he did come out, he could not speak to them, and they realized that he had seen a vision in the sanctuary. He kept motioning to them and remained unable to speak. 23 When his time of service was ended, he went to his home.

24 After those days his wife Elizabeth conceived, and for five months she remained in seclusion. She said, 25 "This is what the Lord has done for me when he looked favorably on me and took away the disgrace I have endured among my people." The Word of the Lord.

Throughout the world, priests, sisters and Lay People, who pray the Liturgy of the Hours, say this prayer every morning. The 35 plaques state the Blessing prayer he said.

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**The Canticle of Zechariah.** (Luke 1:68-79)

**<sup>67</sup> Then Zechariah his father, filled with the holy Spirit, prophesied, saying:**

**Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel;  
he has come to his people and set them free.  
He has raised up for us a mighty savior,  
born of the house of his servant David.**

**Through his holy prophets he promised of old  
that he would save us from our enemies,  
from the hands of all who hate us.  
He promised to show mercy to our fathers  
and to remember his holy covenant.**

**This was the oath he swore to our father Abraham:  
to set us free from the hands of our enemies,  
free to worship him without fear,  
holy and righteous in his sight all the days of our life.**

**You, my child, shall be called the prophet of the Most High;  
for you will go before the Lord to prepare his way,  
to give his people knowledge of salvation  
by the forgiveness of their sins.**

**In the tender compassion of our God  
the dawn from on high shall break upon us,  
to shine on those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death,  
and to guide our feet into the way of peace.**

**<sup>80</sup> The child grew and became strong in spirit, and he was  
in the desert until the day of his manifestation to Israel.**

As the prophecy was, John the Baptist had a mission to “Go before the Lord to prepare His ways.” That he did.

**Ben: There is a real presence by the spot underneath the altar  
where John the Baptist was born.**

We will hear more about John the Baptist when we get to the Jordan River.

## Chapter 16:

### The shepherds Field -



### The “Proof #3”, the Angels.

**Angel’s Field – Meditate – Peace on earth to men of good will!**

**Meghan: Look at the beautiful trees, where are we?**

Jesus Christ was born in Bethlehem. On the outskirts in the area of Beit Sahur southeast of Bethlehem was the shepherd’s field. Here we have the “**Proof #3**” that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. **The proof is God’s supernatural manifestation to witnesses.** Here in this field, God sent angels from Heaven to actually speak to people to be witnesses and to share the message that a Savior has been born to us, who is Christ the

Lord. This third proof contains an entire **category of proofs**, because an angel appeared to Our Lady as well, manifested himself to St. Joseph and even the **miraculous star** that led the wise men here,



are all miraculous manifestations that comprise of the “**Proof #3**”.

Note, that no other leaders had these miraculous manifestations to witnesses regarding them, not Confucius, not Buddha, not Mohamed, only Jesus Christ, Him and none other.

**Ben: Yes, that is true, I guess we take the angels and things like the “wise men’s star” for granted about Jesus Christ in Christianity, but it is very unique.**

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### The Shepherds and the Angels

8 In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. 9 Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. 10 But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: 11 to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. 12 This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.” 13 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying,

14 “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to people of good will!”

15 When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us.” 16 So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. 17 When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; 18 and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. 19 But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. 20 The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.” The Word of the Lord.



The chapel at the top of the hill is very special. It was designed by Antonio Barluzzi and has excellent acoustics for singing Christmas songs. There are three beautiful murals the

first one illustrates when the angel appears to the shepherds, the second one of them is finding baby Jesus, the third mural shows them returning filled with joy and ready to share the “Good News”.

**Meghan: Even our group sounded good when we sang “Angels we have Heard on High”, “Come all Ye Faithful”, “Hark the Harold Angels Sing”, I think the angels were helping us.**

Praise the Lord. As we come down off the upper part of the hill towards the back, we can see the side area that contains caves that the shepherds stayed in during severe weather.

It is good to see this, because as the shepherds guarded their flock, we have to guard the Faith from the wolves of the highly financed secularist agenda that are always trying to undermine our history and traditions. Christmas is such a universal feast that even pagans understand that there is something different and transcendent about it. It is a feast of God's Love for mankind. The prince of this world hates that very much, so we have to be on guard.

The two ways they try to confuse the celebration of Christmas is;

1. Instead of a cold December night seeking shelter, they sow the seed that it must have been in the spring. When you press them on why they conclude this, they usually reply, “the shepherds were keeping night watch over their flocks. It would have been too cold in winter, so the time must have been spring.” When you connect the dots, you have to ask yourself, “Did the sheep fly south for the winter? Did the shepherds take the flock to a foreign country further south in the winter? Of course not, that's ridiculous, even today they have sheep in winter time. What you see in shepherd's field is some caves, where they would have taken shelter in the most severe weather.

**Ben: Wow, I like those caves, it was easy for me to imagine that I was a shepherd while I was in there. What is the second way the rascals try to spoil the Christmas feast.**

God became man to be part of human history. It gives glory to God that most people in the civilize world mark the years of human history based on the year that Jesus Christ was born. This year is 2018 AD, where AD stands for Anno Domini or The Year of Our Lord Jesus

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Christ. To try and spoil the Christmas celebration some will say, it is obvious that Jesus was born in 4 or 6 BC and others will say He was born in 7 AD. However, the embraced historical facts throughout 2000 years of history from people who truly wanted to know the truth about their God made flesh is Jesus Christ was born in 1 AD.

The reign of Tiberius Caesar, which was bench marked in the Gospel of Luke 3 and information about the construction of the Temple, Herod's reign, Pontius Pilates reign, St. Paul's conversion, the census from Caesar Augustus all point to Jesus being born in 1 AD based on documents that exist today.

The papal bull issued by Pope Gregory XIII in 1582 used the scientist at the time to come up with a more accurate calendar than the Julian calendar that was in place since 45 BC. The difference was only 10 days, not 4 to 10 years so we know the birth of Jesus is accurate. That Gregorian calendar is still used today. There were even more documents that existed in the past that convinced most people for the past 2000 years that Jesus was born on 1 AD as well. The calendar was deliberately set by the Vicar of Christ assisted by the scientist, historians and theologians to give glory to our God Who became Flesh and dwelt among us. All of time is marked by the birth of God made flesh and dwelling among us.

**Meghan: I have to admit that some people do cause confusion that only serves to take away from the celebration of such a special event.**

As the shepherds took turns watching the flock by night, now it is our turn to watch out for the wolves.

**Ben: That is why I like coming to the Holy Land.**

While here in the shepherds' field, we are going to try and fly like the angels. We introduced in Chapter 10, mental prayer is to spiritually fly like the angels up to God. The Lay Apostolate of the Angels of the New Era is dedicated to learn and share how to teach your soul how to fly. This skill also helps us to connect the dots so there is less confusion about the faith.

We are going to try a little meditation. **THE ANGELS OF CHRISTMAS!** Jesus's Birthday (Luke 2:1– 16)

Let us take a moment to recall the reality that we are with the Angels in the presence of God and pray:

**“Dear God, “Dear God, I beg you, I beg you, to please give me the grace , to please give me the grace that the three powers of my soul that the three powers of my soul my memory, my memory, my intellect, my intellect, and my will, and my will, will be for the greater glory of God. , will be for the greater glory of God. Amen.” Amen.”**

The first step in Christian Meditation is the **MEMORY**:

We ask the question What. **What** do I see? **What** do I hear? **What** do I feel? **What** do I smell?

We are with the shepherds in the fields. We see the bright stars twinkling on a clear night. We feel the cold air; we hear the crickets and the sheep bleating in the distance. We smell burnt wood from the fire that was made to keep us warm. We look up. We see light in the sky that gets very bright. The light takes the form of a beautiful Angel. The Angel has a soft glow around his white wings. We become afraid of the unusual but magnificent sight. His voice was young but powerful as if it echoed all the way back up to heaven.

We recall the Angel of the Lord appeared to the shepherds and said, “Be not afraid, I bring you tidings of great joy [good news] which shall be shared to all the people; for today in the town of David, a Savior is born to you who is Christ the Lord” (Luke 2:10–11). We look at the face of a shepherd. What do we see? The words of the Angel echo in our memory, “Be not afraid! Be not afraid! Be not afraid!”

**INTELLECT:** **Why** is the Angel saying to the shepherds “be not afraid”? How can we imitate the Angel? God is calling the shepherds to boldly seek out the Savior and then to share the good news. God knows that fear will paralyze the shepherds.

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**WILL: Our resolution.** First of all, we learn from the Angel to “be not afraid.” Be not afraid to get closer to our God, Jesus Christ. Especially, be not afraid to meditate. It is easy and with time, you will become a master of mental prayer. Also, be not afraid to read the Bible. Read especially Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. God is good. He gives us the Bible so we can know Him better. Much spiritual strength will be obtained through reading the Bible. Like the Angel, we will tell others to be not afraid to get closer to God through mental prayer.

Typically, we take a five-minute flight with the Angel by putting yourself in his place. Make a picture in your mind, and look at the faces. Use the three powers of your soul: your Memory to ask, “What do I see? What do I hear? What do I feel? What do I smell?” Use your Intellect to analyze, “Why and how?” and then your Will to make a resolution in your life all for the greater glory of God. Since we are here, and it is a nice place to give quiet time and meditate we will take fifteen minutes to walk around.

After the show, the audience can take five minutes and think of these questions about the angels of Christmas.

**Ben: I have to admit, it was easy to think about the angels of Christmas when we are here in the actual fields and spend a little quiet time. I was thinking about how excited I would have been to go and find the baby Jesus.**

Very good and we can close the meditation by saying; “Dear God, I thank You for giving me the grace, that the three powers of my soul, my memory, my intellect, and my will, will always be for the greater Glory of God, Amen.”

**Meghan: Amen. I think I started to fly already, I felt a joy thinking about that first Christmas night.**

Wonderful and let us go to the spot where Jesus was born, just like the shepherds did, it is over that hill in the distance.

**Meghan: Lets go.**



## Chapter 17

### Bethlehem –



### The Birth of Jesus Christ.

**Ben: We made it to Bethlehem!**

Praise the Lord! Yes, we are in Bethlehem, Jesus' Birthplace – While we are here, we will see how this place helps us also understand the mystery of the Eucharist.

**Meghan: How is that?**

When Jesus Christ was born poor and homeless, mankind can see the real value of every human being; no matter how poor they are, because they are created in the image and likeness of God.



14 point star where Jesus was born

Inside this church, we see the main altar with several hanging lamps around it. This is a Greek Orthodox altar. Underneath the altar is the little cave of Bethlehem that made up the stable where Jesus Christ was born. To get to the location, we enter from the right side of the main altar and go down the steps. There is a little star under the altar along the right wall that marks the spot. There is another small altar to the left that marks the spot where Jesus was laid in the manger.

**Meghan: There is something very holy about this spot.**

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We are often talking about the Eucharist. A marvelous fact is the first home where Jesus lived, even though He was born in a stable, was the town of Bethlehem. The Old Testament prophesied that the Messiah would be born here (Micah 5:2). **The name Bethlehem actually means “the house of bread.”** There’s a close mystery of Baby Jesus and the Eucharist. What happened was, not everybody understood when they looked at Baby Jesus. Who were the ones who got it? Did Herod get it? No. It was the Wise Men who saw the signs of the times and knew how to meditate and actually went on a pilgrimage. They found Jesus and they changed their lives. The other ones who got it were the simple Shepherds who listened to the messages from Heaven. Most of the other people closed the door on the Blessed Mother and St. Joseph. A lot of them just didn’t get it. If you look a little bit closer at the mystery of Baby Jesus, one could say, “Wow, I see a Baby there. He’s too simple. He’s too humble. He’s too weak. He’s powerless. How could this be God?” What a mystery.

Now look at the Eucharist. When we look at the Eucharist, “It’s so simple. It’s so humble. On the outside, it’s so powerless. How could that be God?” It’s the very same mystery.

### **Ben: Wow that is amazing?**

Most people do not get it. Mighty God clothed in such humility. For many years, I did not get it. We are called to respond like the Shepherds to the messengers in Heaven. We can say, “Hey! Go take another look at that simple Jesus Who is there. Look deeper. Look beyond the surface.” And that’s what meditation helps us do. It helps us to go beyond the surface of things. Like the Wise Men too, they took that pilgrimage, they saw the signs of the times. In Matthew, Chapter 2, where did they find Jesus? They found the Child with Mary His Mother, and falling down they worshipped Him, and gave Him the gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. On our pilgrimage, just like the Wise Men gave Him the gifts of gold, frankincense & myrrh, we could give Him gold, that’s our golden hearts. That’s what He wants us to prepare, the gift of our hearts. The frankincense, the smoke that goes up, is our prayers. The mortification, our little penance, is our myrrh. So as we think about Christmas, we think about the Baby Jesus. Now that you have been in

that spot, we will also remember how Baby Jesus relates to the mystery of the Eucharist. Praise the Lord that we got to go to this Holy Place. It is nice to sing Silent Night at the special spot.

**Ben: When we sang Silent Night, some people were moved to tears.**

To experience the scriptures and this special place, we like to take a little extra time here and move to the back of the cave and meditate as we pray with the scriptures on the Third Joyful Mystery, the Birth of Jesus.

After the decade of the Rosary, we will leave the Stable area and walk through St. Ann's church where many Catholic Masses are celebrated,

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### **THIRD JOYFUL MYSTERY: THE BIRTH OF JESUS**

“Blessed are the poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.” (Luke 6:20)

“Joseph...do not be afraid to take Mary for a wife...She has conceived of the Holy Spirit.” (Matthew 1:20)

“A decree went forth from Caesar Augustus that a census of the whole world should be taken. And Joseph also went to the town of David, which is called Bethlehem - to register, together with Mary his espoused wife, Who was with Child... while they were there She brought forth Her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling clothes, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.” (Luke 2:1-7); (Micheas 5:2); (Wisdom 7:3-5)

**FRUIT: POVERTY**

### **OUR FATHER**

“The angel said to Joseph...’Call His name Jesus; for He shall save His people from their sins.” (Mat. 1:21)

**HAIL MARY**

“To the shepherds keeping night watch over their flock...the angel said; ‘Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you tidings of great joy, for today a Savior has been born to you, who is Christ the Lord.’” (Luke 2:8,11); (Isaiah 52:6-10)

**HAIL MARY**

“Suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying: ‘Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of good will.’” (Luke 2:13-14)

**HAIL MARY**

“When the angels departed from them into heaven, the shepherds went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the Babe lying in the manger. And when they saw...they understood.” (Luke 2:15-16)

**HAIL MARY**

“The Wise Men came from the East to Jerusalem, saying, ‘Where is He that is born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East and have come to worship Him.’” (Matthew 2:2); (Psalm 72:10)

**HAIL MARY**

“Seeing the star, they rejoiced with great joy...They found the Child with Mary His Mother, and falling down they worshipped Him...and offered Him gifts: gold, frankincense, and myrrh.” (Matt.2:10-11); (Isaiah 60:6)

**HAIL MARY**

“There will arise the Sun of Justice with its healing rays” (Mal.4:2).

“Jesus said, ‘I am the Light of the world.’” (Jn 8:12) (Isaiah 9:2); (2Machabees 1&2&10:1-8);

**HAIL MARY**

“Jesus said, ‘I came that they might have life, and have it more abundantly.’” (John 10:10); (Exodus 30:15-20); (Genesis 1:20-31)

**HAIL MARY**

“They that received Him, He gave them power to be made the sons of God.” (John 1:12)

**HAIL MARY**

“Mary kept all these words, pondering them in Her heart.” (Luke 2:19); (Matthew 6:21)

**HAIL MARY**

## Chapter 18



### The Tombs of the Holy Innocence & St. Jerome

There are stairs in back of St. Catherine's Church that goes to a place close to the back of the Bethlehem cave that has great significance to our visit to Bethlehem, let us go.

Down here is an altar that marks the spot of the Tombs of the Holy Innocence.

The remains of children in a mass grave are located close to the Holy Spot where Jesus was born. It is estimated that 30 babies were buried here.



We will listen to the word of God to hear the story;

**“Behold an angel of the Lord appeared in sleep to Joseph, saying: Arise, and take the child and his mother, and fly into Egypt: and be there until I shall tell thee. For it will come to pass that Herod will seek the child to destroy him.**

**Then Herod perceiving that he was deluded by the wise men, was exceeding angry; and sending killed all the men children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the borders thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently inquired of the wise men. Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying: A voice in Rama was heard, lamentation and great mourning; Rachel bemoaning her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not” (Matthew 2:13, 16-18).**

**Meghan: I am really chocked up seeing this.**

**Ben: How can humans do such a thing? I guess we really do need Jesus coming into the world.**

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(St. Jerome’s chapel - The “Official Word of God!”- The Latin Vulgate translation.)

**Meghan: There is another cave here.**

Next to the spot where Jesus was born is the cave of St. Jerome. St. Jerome was one of the fathers of the Church who lived from 347 to 420 AD. He was a priest, hermit and Doctor of the Church who spent twenty-five years here translating the Bible.

CCC #81 states that “Sacred Scripture is the speech of God as it is put down in writing under the breath of the Holy Spirit.”

**Meghan: I heard of St. Jerome.**

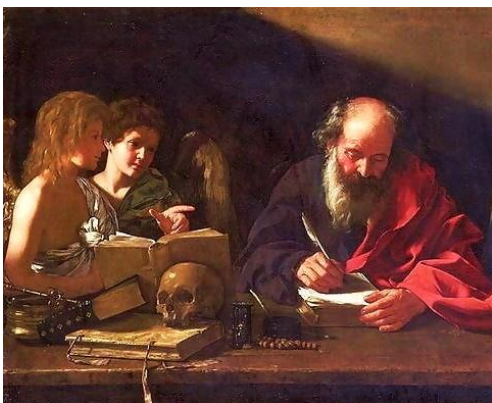
Today we notice that there are thousands of English translations of the Bible.

**Meghan: “why are there so many translations?”**

Most people say they want a reliable translation because they are afraid that once man handles it, they disfigure the authentic Word of God.

So, everybody wants to

go back to the original languages as well and try and translate something anew. But in reality, what is really happening, they are butchering it up even more.



**Meghan: Yes, I wish we knew the correct version.**

To get a correct translation, Pope Damasus asked St. Jerome to help and gave him access to several of the existing ancient documents that are no longer in existence. St. Jerome translated, using all the existing languages into a version called the Latin Vulgate.

The Pope and all the successors of the apostles, the bishops, gather together in councils of the Church to determine important issues. Now

Councils were a gathering of the Church's representatives in the name of Jesus. They called on the Holy Spirit and pray for enlightenment on some topic. When they make a declaration and the Pope agrees to it, then it is infallible. Three times in history they declared one version, the Latin Vulgate, was the infallible Word of God.

**Ben: So you are saying there is and can only be one Word of God and that is the Latin Vulgate Bible?**

Yes, and to help us understand this truth, next door is where the Word was made Flesh and dwelt among us. So the Word of God itself, made flesh an entire person. Similarly, when the Church, the Pope and the Councils, declared the authentic Bible, they called the Bible the Word of God. They didn't say it is a bunch of words in chapters in a book. They called all the words together, all the books, the entire thing, made up the Word of God. There's no pulling books out of the bible, no pulling words out of the bible, it all belongs as one. And the Church came together in three Councils to discuss which books and which scriptures belong as the Word of God. Three times, once in the council of Hippo, also the council of Carthage, and the council of Trent, the Holy Spirit declared infallibly the Latin Vulgate version was the Word of God.

**Meghan: What happens when we can't read Latin?**

We read a translation into a language that we do understand. We praise the Lord for the work that St. Jerome had done. Sometimes when we have thousands of translations and some scripture passages are a little skewed, one can go back to a translation from the Latin Vulgate, and actually look at that meaning to it. It usually helps in meditation. One of the English translations, although it's usually more difficult to read, but for short meditations it helps out, it's called the Douay-Rheims version. They try to be faithful to the Latin Vulgate text.

**Ben: Are there any differences between translations?**

One example is the Latin Vulgate used the word "Soul" 665 times. Over the years, as newer translations come out, the number gets

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reduced. Right now the New Revised Standard Version Catholic Edition uses the word “Soul” 223 times. This greatly advances the agenda of the highly financed secularist movement, because they want everyone to forget they have a soul. In Matthew 16:26, Jesus really said; “For what does it profit a man, if he gains the whole world, and suffer the loss of his own **soul**?”

The new version says, “For what will it profit them if they gain the whole world but forfeit their life?”

**Ben: Wow, the word for our eternal “soul” is disappearing. Are the wolves at it again?**

It is always a battle out there.

**Meghan: Are the other translations bad?**

No, they are good, and if it is easy for you to read, it has a good value. But if you want to check the exact meaning of God’s Word, we go to the Latin Vulgate.

**Meghan: How can St Jerome and the Councils get the right translation, the perfect Word of God?**

Imagine on Good Friday, when wicked men handled the Word of God, Jesus is scourged. Pieces of His Flesh are missing and disfigured. What happened on Easter Sunday? The Resurrection, His Glorified Body is miraculously restored perfectly. Even if St. Jerome, the holy and great doctor of the Church, made a mistake, when the Holy Spirit declared through the Council of the Church this version is the Word of God, it is miraculous and we have the perfect Word of God. Praise the Lord.

**Meghan: I think I understand.**

**Ben: I understand. The Popes and the Councils infallibly confirmed that the Holy Spirit revealed that the Latin Vulgate is the word of God, no words or books can ever be removed or added to it?**

Yes, you got it. Praise the Lord.



## Chapter 19



### The Milk Grotto

This time we will go to a special place called the Milk Grotto. We will hear about how Baby Jesus was driven out of His own country by a corrupt king and lived as a refugee in Egypt and we will see a humongous wall that today's governments made that is driving out the Christians and others so they have to live like refugees in foreign countries.

**Ben:** That sounds intense? Is this the spot where the wise men came to visit?

Many people think that the wise men visited on Christmas night and they fled into Egypt a few days later. As we look close at the word of God, we see that the wise men found the Child in the "House" with Mary His Mother. Jesus was already in the "House" and not a cave with a manger. Also, Luke tells us that after forty days Jesus was presented in the temple. Many speculate that Jesus would have been around 6 months old when they fled into Egypt.

**Ben:** That makes sense.

Let us listen to the word of God in Matthew chapter 2 because it is the visit of the wise men that sparked the violence from King Herod.

#### **(Matthew 2:1-12) The Visit of the Wise Men**

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, 2 asking, "Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage." 3 When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; 4 and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. 5 They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet:

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6 ‘And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who is to shepherd my people Israel.’”

7 Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. 8 Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, “Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage.” 9 When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising until it stopped over the place where the child was. 10 When they saw that the star had stopped they were overwhelmed with joy. 11 On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. 12 And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

**Ben:** Wow a miraculous star and wise men that figured out that God was telling the world that His Messiah is born, how beautiful. I liked the part when they saw the star they rejoiced with great joy. Personally, I love looking at stars at night, it makes me think of God. Some people say that it had to be a supernova exploding or something like that.

No, the nearest star is 25 trillion miles away. When you do the math, you find that when something is trillions of miles away, and the earth is rotating, a supernova can only point a direction like north, south, east or west and cannot point out a little town on our little earth. It had to be a miraculous light in the sky that looked like a star that had a tail that came down to little Bethlehem. All stars in the sky appear to rise in the east and set in the west as the earth rotates. This one probably did not do that but just hovered over Bethlehem. The wise men (which Saint Jerome called them) knew there was something miraculous about its movement and it must have been a sign from the good God. It encouraged them to make the first Christian pilgrimage. They found Christ and were changed. The tradition was that they were baptized by Jesus followers many years later and their bone relics are found today in the Cathedral in Cologne, Germany.

**Meghan:** How wonderful.

The joy was short lived. Soon, Jesus, Mary and Joseph had to flee Bethlehem.

As we leave the Church of the Nativity, we make two sharp left hand turns and only around 100 yards or so away is the Milk Grotto. According to Christian tradition, while Mary and Joseph were fleeing Herod's soldiers on their way to Egypt, they stopped in this cave while Mary nursed the baby Jesus. A drop of Mary's milk fell upon the stone and it turned the cave walls white.

**Meghan:** Very good, but that sounds kind of strange.

Actually, I thought it was a little hoaky so for many years, I did not take pilgrims there. On one pilgrimage, a few years back, one pilgrim was begging to go. We had a little extra time so we checked it out. The exploring adventure sometimes makes the pilgrimage.

To my surprise the Franciscan Friar there had kept documented records of how many reported miracles took place there. He did not have 2 or 3 or even 10, he had several thousand letters sent in thanksgiving for favors received. I was genuinely impressed, so I looked deeper into its surprisingly rich history.

**Ben:** Thousands of reported miracles?

Yes, the Friar had about 10 scrap books of letters and pictures sent in. The letters come from all over the world. Most of them were for couples who were able to conceive babies. One couple had triplets. Some letters attribute other miracles, such as healing from cancer, blindness, paralysis, and awakening from comas, to Jesus through Mary's intercession at the Milk grotto.

**Meghan:** Yes, I am impressed as well. I am glad you take pilgrims there. How long have miracles been taking place there.

It has a tradition dating back many centuries, the old chapel built over the grotto even dates back to the year 385 AD. From as early as the

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7th century, fragments from the cave were sent to churches in Europe. The site was recognized by a proclamation of Pope Gregory XI in 1375 AD. The Franciscans erected a church around the Milk Grotto in 1872.

**Ben:** Wow, 385 AD, so it has probably always been around since the time of Jesus.

For sure it has a great history and today pilgrims can take home tiny packets of white powder from the grotto, and together, the couple for 40 days follows a devotion that includes drinking small amounts of the powder and saying a prayer.

It is the faith in Jesus Christ along with Mary's intercession that sometimes gets a grace of a miracle.

I tell people, this is the spot where the most documented miracles occur in the Holy Land, so be not afraid to include it in your adventure to the Holy Land. Praise the Lord!

## Chapter 20 - The Infamous Wall



**Learning how to meditate. Jesus is a refugee.**

**“Peace on earth to men of good will”**

We will be leaving Bethlehem. Immigration, migration and refugees are big topics these days. This is a good time to listen to the Word of God regarding the flight into Egypt.

### **(Matthew 2:13-18) The Escape to Egypt**

#### **The Escape to Egypt**

13 Now after they had left, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, “Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him.” 14 Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother by night, and went to Egypt, 15 and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet, “Out of Egypt I have called my son.”

#### **The Massacre of the Infants**

16 When Herod saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, he was infuriated, and he sent and killed all the children in and around Bethlehem who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had learned from the wise men. 17 Then was fulfilled what had been spoken through the prophet Jeremiah:

18 “A voice was heard in Ramah, wailing and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be consoled, because they are no more.”

**Meghan:** The thought of your own government trying to kill you and other innocence for getting in the way, out of fear of losing control or power makes the soul shudder.

That is another reason we need Jesus Christ to reign in the world.

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We saw the tombs of the innocence earlier, and today we are going to see a similar mystery of the “Wall that makes Refugees.”

**Meghan:** The Wall that makes refugees? What is that?

You will have to see it to believe it.

Brace yourselves, we are going to look at this sensitive topic through Christian principles not politically correct ones. As we leave Bethlehem and go through the check points, you will see something shocking.

**Meghan:** What is that?

This is the humongous 28-foot-high wall. This is absolutely shocking and mind boggling because most Americans have never heard of this wall even though we paid for its construction.



**Ben:** It seems like we hear news about the Holy Land every day, how does something this massive slip under the radar. I am shocked!

If people who cherish freedom knew about it, they would demand that it be taken down. The Berlin wall was 9 feet high and 100 miles long and the world rejoiced that it was taken down in 1989. It was a victory for humanity, justice and freedom everywhere.

**Ben:** How big is this wall?

This wall is 28 feet high and 400 miles long. The government here says it needs this wall for security to prevent terrorism.

**Meghan:** Security is good isn't it.

It is if it is not an excuse to perform other heinous crimes.

In 2006, our pilgrim group had an interview with the then Archbishop and Patriarch of Jerusalem, Michael Sabbah. He said that "The Wall" did not bring security but insecurity. He said it did not bring peace but a permanent war. He said much of this was an abuse of the rich against the poor.

Often, Patriarch Sabbah has often spoken in support of Palestinian rights, the two-state solution and the Palestinian refugees' right of return. He has criticized the West Bank barrier and called for an end to the Israeli occupation of the Gaza Strip and West Bank including East Jerusalem. In 2006, Patriarch Sabbah was one of the signatories of the Jerusalem Declaration against Christian Zionism, which repudiates Christian Zionism as inconsistent with Christian teaching.

**Meghan:** What is Christian Zionism.

"Christian Zionism" is where some Christians support the concept that Zionist Jews should control everything in the Holy Land and everyone else should be expelled as unclean.

**Ben:** What are these injustices?

What do you call the relatives of Peter, James and John, who were good Jews but embraced Jesus Christ the Messiah, the Son of God?

**Meghan:** What do you call them?

Today they are called Palestinians, Christian Palestinians.

**Meghan:** I guess I never thought of Palestinians as being Christians.

We are at the infamous Wall on the outskirts of Bethlehem.

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**Meghan:** When you visit a place and talk with the people, you get a different viewpoint from what is projected by the media elites. I am still digesting the thought of the relatives of Peter, James and John, and those that embraced Jesus' Gospel, that still live there today are called Palestinians. I thought the Palestinians were foreign invaders. Where does the term Palestine come from?

In Genesis chapter 21, this land was called Palestine. Remember that almost 3000 years ago, Solomon brought in many pagan gods here because of his 700 wives and thus the twelve tribes of Israel split up. Ten of the tribes (Kingdom of Israel or Northern Kingdom) intermarried and had various religious practices. Only the tribe of Judah and Benjamin stayed together and they controlled Jerusalem as their capital (1&2 Kings). This was known as the Kingdom of Judah (Jewish) or Southern Kingdom. Jerusalem was just a single city in a small and divided country/state.

**Ben:** What happened to the other 10 tribes?

The other ten tribes were known as the Kingdom of Israel; their capital was Samaria. In 722 BC they were broken up and carried away to exile in Assiria. Later, these ten tribes were despised by the Jews and the Jews did not call them Israelites but called the separated tribes Samaritans.

**Ben:** I heard of Samaritans, how far away is Samaria from Jerusalem.

Only 25 miles away. Many of them were blood brothers from the 12 tribes, but they were all engaging in what the Lord and the prophets called wickedness. Many leaders of the Kingdom of Israel (Samaria) were carried away to exile. Eventually the wickedness of the kingdom of Judah (Jerusalem) caused them to be carried away as well in about 580 BC in the Babylonian exile. God intervened and about 500 BC the Jewish people were allowed to return and the second temple was built.

**Meghan:** I remember the repeated warnings of the prophets before it happened. What happened during the time of Jesus?

2000 year ago, the Romans called the whole divided area Palestine.



Most historians agree that in the first 1000 years after Jesus Christ, the majority of the people in Palestine/ Israel were converted to Christianity. Many Jews and pagans converted to Christianity. Some people remained Jewish, some remained pagan. In the year 629 was the Arab invasion took place that controlled the government, but the majority of the population was still Christian. With the Muslims in control, and the tax imposed on non-Muslims, over the next 1000 years, the majority converted to Islam. Basically, they are all blood brothers. Should the land be given to one religious group of the brothers or should it be peacefully shared?

**Ben:** How big of an area are we talking about anyway?

Palestine is the area 1/7th the size of the state of Illinois that had a mixture of people living there. The Ottoman Empire (Muslims) ruled the area for over 400 years until after World War I was the Mandate for Palestine. This mandate was for the British to rule while giving the Jewish people a home and respecting everyone's faith who already lived in the area. After World War II, the mandate was set to expire and Israel declared its independence in May, 1948. This kicked off the Israel Arab war of 1948 which Israel won.

**Ben:** Shouldn't Israel be able to keep the land since it won the war?

The United Nations try to set up some standards of Justice that all the nations of the world agree upon that is based upon fairness and not "might is right" or we know we are headed for World War III, for example if China decides to take over a country because it is more powerful, the world community lets them know that if they want to trade with others, we have to respect borders etc.

**Meghan:** What happened after 1948?

After 1948, Israel controlled the country of Palestine even though they made up around 32 percent of the population. Further, the United Nations (UN) Partition granted them about 55% of the land. The United States showers billions of dollars each year in aid and military technology to Israel.

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Many visitors from all over the world of many faiths want to come here to visit their roots. Actually, the British wisely split up Jerusalem into quarters so the Jewish, Christian, Muslim and Armenians can come here and visit without fighting with each other.

**Meghan:** When they share, and come to pray, that sounds good.

Yes, it is, however, with different peoples with different ideologies, there are always tensions, but in the year 2000, the Israel government started to build the 400 mile, 28-foot wall. The biggest problem with the “Wall” is they did not build it on Israeli property but on Palestinian property. The Wall separated the people from their city to their own farm land.

**Meghan:** So, the Israeli wall was built on Palestinian property? Why would they do that?

Do you see that city on the Hill over there?

**Meghan:** Yes, it looks like a big city on a hill.

Have you ever heard of the term “settlements?”

**Meghan:** Yes, I hear the term all the time, but I do not know exactly what they are.

A settlement is a quickly built city on other people’s property that is confiscated. The Israeli government would close the borders of “The Wall” and take the land on the other side and put up a settlement on the Palestinian land for “Jewish” people to immigrate. Due to massive immigration the population in Israel has been exploding and has doubled from a little over 4 million in 1990 to over 8 million today. A lot of the immigration takes place into these “Settlements”.

**Ben:** The government does that to the people that they are trying to govern? It sounds terrible. This is all here even at Bethlehem. Where are all the Jewish immigrants coming from?

The bulk of the Immigration to Israel is coming from Russia. In 1983 they switched the rules from a patriarchal society (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob etc,) to a matriarchal society. The critics complained that they

can recruit millions of non-Jewish Russians who want to leave Siberia for a better life if they say their grandmother was a Jew. Once in Israel they can vote in favor of their policies.



The Book of Revelations warns twice: “Beware of those who say they are Jews but are not” (Revelations 2:9) (Revelations 3:9). Given the massive immigration of people who claim to be Jews, the population went from 32% Jewish to around 80% “Jewish.” The Christians are being driven out and their population dropped from 8% to 2%. Even one of our Christian guides recently came to America to try and get a better life for his family.

**Meghan:** Isn't this all done for security reasons?

The critics to the government say, the excuse for security is not true because when you move in a million people in such a short time onto settlements on stolen Palestinian property, it was preplanned. It is a classic example of the rich and powerful taking advantage of the poor. It is so secretive because some day the history will show that this Refugee Maker Wall is not a security Wall but a “Wall of Shame”. The international community considers the settlements in occupied territory to be illegal, and the United Nations has repeatedly

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upheld the view that Israel's construction of settlements constitutes a violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention.

**Meghan:** It does look like a big prison wall.

The complaints of many injustices starting with “The Wall”, which has Palestinians locked in as if in a prison. If the government decides to close the borders they are left with rotting produce. Further, people are left without medical treatment. For example, women in labor are denied access to a hospital delivery, causing mother and child both to die or medical emergencies arise and people die because they cannot get to a hospital. Eventually in despair, someone in the culture cracks and blows themselves up in retaliation. That gives the government license to fire rockets at terrorist suspects and many civilians die.

**Meghan:** How sad, who is being a voice for the poor?

The Dominican Order, has long been a voice for peace and justice in the Holy Land. They have a lot of information on their web site. I happen to be a Lay Dominican, so I am aware of the problem.

**Ben:** Has any of the media outlets picked up the story?

Kino Lorber made a film called the “Wanted 18”. The “18” were the cows that produced milk. It is a mix of animation and interviews of Palestinian people telling a true story on how the army pursued 18 cows, because the independent milk production was a threat to the national security of the state of Israel.

**Meghan:** I will have to look the “Wanted 18 movie up.”

Some Palestinians, like former Patriarch Michael Sabbah want a two-state solution because when you are a citizen in a country where the government wants you gone, it is going to lead to problems. This is not a religious matter it is a tyrannical abuse of power matter. Since United States support the people who were implementing this behavior, tensions rose throughout the world.

**Ben:** It sounds like a tough situation. Whose side should we be on, the Palestinian's or the Jew's side?

When we are asked the question, “Whose side should we be on, the Palestinian’s or the Jew’s side?” We should answer that we are on the side of Jesus Christ. The one for liberty and justice for all including the poor. What would Jesus do? Jesus preached, “Whatever you do to the least of My brother, you do it to Me” (Matthew 25). Jesus was poor and He was persecuted by His government. Thanks to King Herod, Jesus was also a refugee. It is very important to learn the facts and not just rely on the media elite who only tell us one side of the story. Pray for peace and justice in the Holy Land!

**Ben:** The names are changed since Jesus time, but the story is the same. Lord have mercy on us all.

All the problems in the world actually illustrate that we need Jesus Christ, His law of love and His saving grace. Many times, we think we can fix things by ourselves or some distant committee will solve our problems, but in reality with our fallen nature, without Jesus we tend to a culture of selfishness and death. Come Lord Jesus Come!

**Meghan:** So, Jesus left here and fled as a refugee into Egypt. How long was He there?

Scholars estimate that Jesus was around 5 years old when they returned. Let us listen to the Word of God.

### **(Matthew 2:19-23) The Return from Egypt**

When Herod died, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and said, “Get up, take the child and his mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who were seeking the child’s life are dead.” Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus was ruling over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. And after being warned in a dream, he went away to the district of Galilee. There he made his home in a town called Nazareth, so that what had been spoken through the prophets might be fulfilled, “He will be called a Nazorean.”

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Now the good news. Jesus Christ came back and lived as a humble carpenter's son until He was 30 years old and then He started His public ministry to set the world on fire with the love of God.

Jesus started building up His beautiful Kingdom of peace, Justice, Love, while giving glory to God. Jesus continues His work through us and someday His promise that God's Will, will be done on earth as it is in Heaven, will happen. This will coincide with the Triumph of Our Lady's Immaculate Heart. There will be no more tears and the earth will be a beautiful place, living in Christ's civilization of love.

## Chapter 21



### On the way to the Jericho/ Dead Sea area.

#### Introduction: Angels of the New Era

**Ben: How do I teach my soul how to fly?**

The first step is to hear the introduction to the angel apostolate called the “Angels of the New Era” where you can teach Your Soul How to Fly in Thirty-three Days!

**Ben: Let’s hear the introduction, I want to fly!**

A young man named Ben was walking with his Angel during a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. The Angel was tall and had very large wings. Ben was a feisty but cynical guy who liked to challenge the status quo. As they approached Bethlehem, Ben said to his Angel, “There are so many problems in the world today such as drugs, violence, divorce, wars, stealing, abortion, corruption in politics, and look, even here in Bethlehem! Look at that monster twenty-eight-foot-high prison wall that they are building. Where are the principles of freedom? What a disaster!”

There was a slight pause, and then Ben complained, “Jesus Christ was born two thousand years ago and there are still so many problems in the world. I guess it didn’t do any good, did it?”

The Angel’s piercing eyes looked at him but kept on walking. After a short time, they came upon three children playing in the mud. The Angel said with his thunderous voice, “Look, Ben, at these children. Soap was invented four thousand years ago and they are still dirty. I guess the soap did not do any good, did it?” There was a long pause then Ben, being a tough nut to crack, argued. “This is different. These children should have listened to their mothers and stayed out of the mud. Even now, there is nothing wrong with the soap, you just have to apply it.”

The Angel said, “It is the same thing for the world today. God sent our Heavenly Mother to ask us not to go into the spiritual

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mud, but we don't listen. Even today, all the graces to bring peace and joy to Earth are available through Jesus Christ's church. All we have to do is apply it." Ben was in awe and then said, "Grace?"

"Yes, grace! The truth is, without the grace of God thru Jesus Christ, you humans would have blown yourselves up a long time ago," replied the Angel. "Go on," invited Ben.

The Angel continued, "Mental prayer (meditation) is the key to applying the grace of Jesus Christ and His Church effectively into your lives and into the world."

"What is mental prayer (meditation)?" Ben asked.

"Ben, God created you with a body and a soul. Mental prayer is to use the three powers of your soul, the Memory, the Intellect, and the Will to encounter God."

"Encounter God?" Ben asked. "At times, God feels so far away."

"With mental prayer, the Kingdom of God is at hand! Yes, God is speaking to you all the time. Mental prayer will help you experience God speaking to you." "I thought God only spoke to

Moses thru the Burning Bush," stated Ben.

"Follow me," said the Angel. Ben followed the Angel past the check point of the large wall around the town of Bethlehem and into the Church. The Angel pointed out the star located underneath the altar where Jesus was born.

"Here is where it happened! Jesus Christ is God's Word made flesh and He spoke to men. God continues to speak through the Gospel and the Holy Spirit. The normal gifts of the Holy Spirit include wisdom, knowledge, and understanding. These gifts come as thoughts to the mind, especially during mental prayer!" the Angel explained.

"How come God feels so far away?" asked Ben.

"Because there are other voices that speak to you that are not from Heaven. These are temptations, distractions, and confusions. If you have faith, love, and are committed to the truth, you will hear God's voice!" exclaimed the Angel.

"How do I know when God is speaking?" asked Ben. "You will know the voice is from Heaven because the gifts of the Holy Spirit will always encourage you



on the path that gets closer to God. Jesus's Church describes that path.

"Anything else?" asked Ben.

"God's voice also gives you the gifts of peace and joy. Peace is a gift that only comes from God and you cannot have joy without peace. Mental prayer is a spiritual exercise that can help you hear God more clearly."

"Spiritual exercises?" asked Ben.

"Spiritual exercises help develop the soul's ability to fly, so to speak. We, Angels, do this all the time. We fly to God and experience that peace and joy."

Ben protested. "That sounds nice, but I attended a weekend retreat that taught St. Ignatius spiritual exercises and the whole thing went over my head. I just drew a blank. I don't think this is for me."

The Angel asked Ben, "Do you remember last year when your brother started to drive?"

"Yes," Ben chuckled. "He froze the first time he got behind the wheel. He did not know where to start. He could not decide whether to press on the gas or put it into

gear or press on the brake. He gripped the steering wheel so tight that sweat came from his forehead."

The Angel said, "That is how you acted on that retreat. How was your brother after the month of driver's education?"

"He is a natural. He says he can't be without his car. It is part of his lifestyle." Ben replied.

The Angel said, "Meditation is like driving a car. Once you learn how to do it, it is easy and even fun. After a short time you will not know what to do without it. The Angels of the New Era method is teaching your soul how to fly in 33 days. One day for each year that Jesus Christ was on Earth."

"Oh yeah!" said Ben, "What is this Angel Method and where do I start?" "You start by learning the Angel Members' prayer and repeating it often to get the grace from the good God to meditate. God is everywhere. First, you must take a moment to recall that you are with the Angels in the presence of God and pray: 'Dear God, I beg You to please give me the grace, that the three powers of my soul, my memory, my

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intellect, and my will, will be for the greater Glory of God.”

“Keep praying this Angel Prayer and then someday the Holy Spirit will put a burning desire in your heart to read the first Angel story in the Angels of the New Era constitution.”

“Angel stories?” Ben asked.

“Yes,” said the Angel. “The Constitution is based on 15 stories of Angels in the Bible that are split up into a 33-day period. As you read the story, you watch the Angel, listen to the Angel, and imitate the Angel. Each day, you read a story in the morning and you try to recall it several times during the day. As that is done, you will pick up the principles of mental prayer and your soul’s wings will develop muscles to fly. Here is a copy of the Constitution.”

“Does this have any use in today’s society?” “Yes, it is used very effectively in advertising. Why do cola companies spend over one million dollars for a one-minute commercial when they do

not even say ‘buy this cola’?” asked the Angel.

“Why?” asked Ben. “Because in one minute, they fill your memory and give your intellect something to think about. The next time that you are thirsty, your will, will prompt you to reach for their cola,” said the Angel. “In addition to this, the people in the mass media use this power to move most of the world to go wherever they want. They especially move the people who do not know how to meditate.”

“OK, I would like to start. As you walk with me on this pilgrimage, can you do me the favor and walk me through a sample meditation?” asked Ben.

“Yes,” the Angel said, “If you say the Angel prayer several times today, tomorrow we will begin our 33-day journey. You can always conclude your encounter with God by saying, ‘Dear God, we **thank you** for giving us the grace that the three powers of our soul, the memory, the intellect and the will, will always be for the greater glory of God. Amen.’”

**Ben: I think I am going to like to fly with the angels.**

## Chapter 22: The Baptism of Jesus.



### Proof #4 The Precursor

“No man born of a woman was greater than John the Baptist” (Luke 7:28). He is the great figure that bridges the gap between the Old and the New Testaments. This is the place where the 4<sup>th</sup> proof that Jesus Christ is “God made flesh” was revealed.

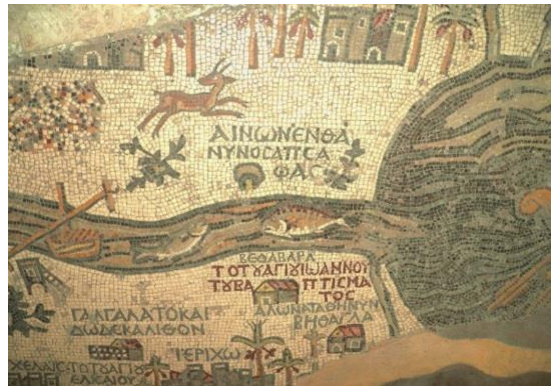
The Judean desert looks very desolate and then you see what looks like an Oasis in the desert. That happens to be where the Jordan River flows by before it goes into the Dead Sea.

**Meghan: This does not look like the pictures that I saw of people being baptized.**

There is a tourist Baptismal spot closer to the Sea of Galilee, but this is the real location.

**Ben: How do we know that this is the real location?**

The Gospel of John (3:23) refers to Enon near Salim as the place where John the Baptist performed baptisms in the River Jordan, "because there was much water there". There is an ancient Madaba map that points out this location. Pope John Paul II came here in 2000. This baptismal place was reopened in 2009 and I am happy that we are able to visit here.



**Ancient Madaba map showing Salim as a place where John was baptizing.**

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**Meghan: It is always good to go to the real places. What made John so special?**

John lived a life of penance in this wilderness and was able to read hearts. He called sinners to repentance and to prepare the way of the Lord.

In the Old Testament Isaiah prophesied John the Baptist as being a precursor to Jesus Christ: “The voice of one crying in the desert:



Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the wilderness the paths of our God” (Isaiah 40:3). Also; “Behold I will send you Elijah the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of

the Lord. And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers: lest I come and strike the earth with anathema” (Malachi 4:5-6).

**Ben: Wow, the Old Testament not only predicts numerous things about Jesus mission, it predicted a precursor for Jesus as well.**

That is not all, the Angel Gabriel confirmed it when he told John the Baptist’s father Zachariah; “And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah; that he may turn the hearts of the fathers unto the children, and the incredulous to the wisdom of the just, to prepare unto the Lord a perfect people” (Luke 1:17).

**Meghan: So, what is proof #4?**

“**Proof #4**” is John the Baptist is a **precursor** to the Christ in order to prepare His way. No other world or religious leader had a precursor, not Buddha, not Confucius, not Mohamed, only Jesus Christ, Him and none other.

**Ben: A precursor is being a great man that predicted and pointed out that someone much greater was starting His public ministry.**

Exactly. As we look close at John's mission, we find that he reveals great things about Jesus Christ. John did not say, "Behold the great teacher" or "Behold the great miracle worker" or "Behold the wisest of men" rather John said; "Behold the Lamb of God, Who takes away the sins of the world" (John 1:29). John the Baptist announced Jesus Christ's true mission as the Redeemer of the World.

**Meghan: Yes, you mentioned that many people misunderstood Jesus great mission for a pure worldly one.**

John the Baptist also revealed two other great things about Jesus;

"And John gave testimony, saying: I saw the Spirit coming down, as a dove from heaven, and he remained upon him. And I knew him not; but he who sent me to baptize with water, said to me: He upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining upon him, he it is that baptizes with the Holy Ghost. And I saw, and I gave testimony, that this is the Son of God" (John 1:32-34)

1. John revealed that Jesus Christ (through His Church) would baptize with the Holy Spirit.
2. John gave testimony that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

As we look at the slow-moving Jordan River just before it enters the Dead Sea, and ponder the green reeds swaying in the wind, we will picture what John the Baptist mission was like as we meditate on the "Scripture Story" through the first luminous mystery of the Rosary. Here it is easy to imagine St. John the Baptist clothed in camel's hair and shouting out, "Repent, The Kingdom of God is at hand!" We can imagine thousands from all over the Holy Land coming here to be baptized.

**FIRST LUMINOUS MYSTERY:**

**THE BAPTISM OF JESUS**

“John was in the desert, baptizing and preaching the baptism of penance, unto remission of sins. And there went out to him all the country of Judea and all they of Jerusalem and were baptized by him in the river of Jordan, confessing their sins...

John was clothed in camel’s hair and leather. He ate locusts and wild honey.” (Mark 1:2-6) He that shall come after me, is mightier than I, Whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: He shall baptize you in the Holy Spirit and fire.” (Matthew 3:11)

**OUR FATHER**

“The people asked; ‘What shall we do?’ John replied; ‘He that has two coats give to him that has none.’” (Luke 3:10-11)

**HAIL MARY**

“Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan, unto John, to be baptized by him.” (Matthew 3:13)

**HAIL MARY**

“But John resisted Him, saying: ‘I ought to be baptized by You, and You come to me?’ And Jesus answering, said to him: ‘Let it be so now...to fulfill all justice.’” (Matthew 3:14-15)

**HAIL MARY**

“And Jesus being baptized, came out of the water...the heavens were opened to Him: and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove, and it came upon Him.” (Matthew 3:16)

**HAIL MARY**

“And behold a voice from heaven saying: ‘This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.’”

(Matthew 3:17)

**HAIL MARY**

“I will pour upon you clean water, and you shall be cleansed...I will give you a new heart, and put a new spirit within you...and you shall be My people, and I will be Your God.”

(Ezekiel 36:25-28)

**HAIL MARY**

Jesus answered, “Amen, amen I say to you, unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter the Kingdom of God.” (Jn 3:5)

**HAIL MARY**

Jesus said, “He that believes and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believes not shall be condemned.”

(Mark 16:16)

**HAIL MARY**

“In the days of Noah, when the ark was being built, eight souls, were saved by water. Baptism...now saves you also.” (1Peter 3:20-21)

**HAIL MARY**

John said, He that has the bride, is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, rejoices with joy because of the bridegroom's voice...

He must increase, but I must decrease. (John 3:29)

**HAIL MARY**

**Meghan:** As we were praying it was so easy to imagine the people being baptized here, as if it has happened yesterday.

**Ben:** I could imagine the Heavenly Father's voice thundering and shaking the waters as he said; "This is My Beloved Son in Whom I am well pleased."

You will see that when you pray the rosary in the future, all those images will come back to your mind, because you were actually here!

**Ben:** What is so important about being baptized?

When we are baptized, what God spoke to Jesus, applies to us. You are God's beloved children in Whom He is well pleased. By God's grace through the Sacrament of Baptism by a miraculous cleansing of the Holy Spirit, we are transformed from the children of Adam to children of God (CCC #1212-1284). This is sometimes called the initiation sacrament. Jesus Christ commanded that all believers be baptized. (Mark 16)

**Meghan:** It is so easy to take for granted that great gift of Baptism. I am very glad that we are made children of God, because that means we are heirs as well, in Heaven.

Very good. Let us step down to the Jordan River and renew our Baptismal vows.

**Baptismal Vows:** Do you reject Satan the evil spirits and all their works and empty promises?

(Together) **I do.**

Do you believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth?

(Together) **I do.**



**Jordan River, where Jesus was baptized.**

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Do you believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord. Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended to the dead. On the third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty. From there He will come to judge the living and the dead.

(Together) **I do.**

Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting? **Amen.**

(Together) **I do.**

**Ben: Baptism is such a beautiful sacrament. All Christians today are baptized, most of them get baptized when they a babies or when they are converted to Christianity. There are a few non-Catholic Christians that say we should not baptize the babies, but let them make up their own minds when they are old enough. I am not sure how to answer them.**

Some people do not appreciate what a great gift Baptism is from God. Our first parents passed down to us the slavery of “Original Sin” that leads to death and we do not have a choice about that. Our parents and loved ones can help us apply God’s grace to undo that damage. It is literally an exorcism where our oppressors are washed away by God’s grace and we receive an indelible spiritual mark on our soul. God’s grace really makes us children of God.

**Meghan: I see we are called to help the little ones, not abandon them.**

Some people think that the relationship is only between me and God. In reality the personal relationship between God and each one of us will also include our neighbor, especially members of the mystical Body of Christ.



The old testament showed that they circumcised their children on the eighth day. So, God always worked through children. Remember Jesus said, Let the children come to me and do not hinder them.

Also, Acts of the Apostles chapter 16, St. Paul baptized the entire household of the jailer that he converted. The apostles and early Christians baptized their children as well.

**Meghan: When people bring their children to Church to have baptized, the prayers are very inspiring and we are filled with hope for the child's future.**

Out of love our parents feed us good foods and educate us, sometimes under the protest of the child. In the real world does the parents say I will not impose my child to read or write, I will wait until he grows up and he can decide for himself weather he wants to be a doctor, lawyer or just play all day long. Or I will not impose nourishing food on my child but let my child eat candy all the time and he can decide if he wants nourishment when he grows up.

Once they are grow up, it may be too late to catch up on everything they missed out. A loving parent provides the best for the child so the child has opportunities and can make good decisions when he grows up.

Think how much Satan gains by having a soul under his slavery and influence, throughout a childhood.

Ben: Yes. What parents, who loved their children want Satan to have a foothold in their lives throughout their childhood instead of the opportunity to grow in God's grace. I will remember that.

**Meghan: I feel like I know John the Baptist now, can you tell us anything else about him?**

Another great point about John the Baptist is the first two disciples of Jesus, Andrew and John, were originally disciples of John the Baptist (John 1:37). Andrew and John recruited their brothers Peter and then

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James and their numbers increased as Jesus called others to join them. You could say, that they were a gift by St John the Baptist to Jesus.

**Ben: Hey, thanks John.**

Finally, John the Baptist reveals something very special about Jesus. It was when Jesus and His disciples were baptizing more people than him. Not only did he say, "I am not the Christ" and "I must decrease but He must increase" but he said; **"the best man rejoices when the bridegroom arrives" (John 3:29).**

**Meghan: Why is that important?**

John the Baptist **reveals that the relationship Jesus Christ**, our God, is going to have with His people. **Jesus Christ our God is the Bridegroom of our souls:** The entire people of God called the Church will be the bride. Some people were used to God being distant and only revealing Himself through fire and smoke on Mount Sinai of old. John's announcement ushered in a new time. This is a new and incredible intimacy of a personal relationship with God that Jesus will repeat in His Gospel.

**Meghan: It sounds too good to be true.**

Remember in Book #1 when we reviewed the Old Testament. The people acted so poorly that we would expect God to wipe them out. In His Incredible Mercy He promised in (Isaiah 54) (Ezekiel 16) (Hosea 2) to forgive, heal and love us as His special bride.

**Meghan: Jesus is the bridegroom and the whole human family can be his bride if we want to. How wonderful.**

This special relationship was pointed out in the Old Testament and made available here and now. Praise the Lord! We will keep the wedding of God and humans type of relationship in mind to truly understand how great Jesus Christ mission is in the world.

**Meghan: God is so good!**

**Ben: Jesus public ministry started right here at this spot. Is there something else special about the spot God has chosen?**

At the end of the 40 years of wondering in the deserts of Egypt, the Israelites miraculously crossed the Jordan River with the Ark of God somewhere in this area.

Also, before taken up in a fiery chariot, in this area the great prophet Elijah struck the Jordan River with his mantle and it miraculously parted and Elijah and Elisha crossed the Jordan.

We will hear more about that when we go to our next spot at ancient Jericho.

**Ben: Lets go.**

## Chapter 23 JERICHO the ancient city

### Seeing Jesus with the Eyes of our Heart.

We are headed towards Jericho. As Jesus Christ was journeying through Jericho, a blind man met him. Let's listen to the Word of God on what happened.

“And they came to Jericho: and as he went out of Jericho, with his disciples, and a very great multitude, Bartimeus the blind man, the son of Timeus, sat by the way side begging.

Who when he had heard, that it was Jesus of Nazareth, began to cry out, and to say: Jesus son of David, have mercy on me. And many rebuked him, that he might hold his peace; but he cried a great deal the more: Son of David, have mercy on me.

And Jesus, standing still, commanded him to be called. And they call the blind man, saying to him: Be of better comfort: arise, he is calling you. Who casting off his garment leaped up, and came to him. And Jesus answering, said to him: What will you have me do to you? And the blind man said to him: Rabboni, that I may see. And Jesus said to him: Go your way, your faith has cured you. Immediately he saw, and followed him along the way” (Mark 10:46-52).

(The word of the Lord)

As we are in Jericho, it is a fitting reminder that life on earth is a pilgrimage. Let us take a look at the story of the blind man. We hear him begging out for mercy; “Son of David, have Mercy on me, have pity on me.” Jesus sees him, and what does He say? What do you want Me to do for you? Jesus knows he is blind. Why is Jesus asking that?

#### **Meghan: I don't know, why is Jesus asking him?**

He is prompting a little response from him. To engage him in a conversation. He is encouraging him to ask for that mercy. Jesus is encouraging him to ask for that grace. Then the blind man answers, he says; “Lord, that I may see.” Jesus already knew he needed that grace already, but now he gets that response. He gets that act of faith.

And then Jesus says, “OK, you got it. Go your way, you are cured now.” He gave him his sight back. The scriptures state: “Then he followed Him on the way.”

**Ben: That is a great miracle and why is that important for us?**

Faith is very important. We are going to ask Jesus on this trip; “Son of David, Jesus, have mercy on us.” Jesus will say to us, “What do you want Me to do for you on this pilgrimage?” “Why are we coming here?” We are going to say, “Lord, we want to see You more clearly.” “We want to see Him with the eyes of our heart.”

**Meghan: Lord, I want to see you.**

We call this a “Journey with Jesus,” and that is what we hope to get for each and every one of us on this journey. We want to see Jesus walking with us. He knows we need that already, like the blind man needed his sight, but we are going to ask within our hearts and say: “Have mercy on us Lord.” So tonight before going to sleep let us ask Jesus for this grace, so we could see Him walking with us on this whole journey here in the Holy Land and when we get back home.

**Ben: Lord Have mercy on me, I want to see you.**

Upon entering Jericho we see a Sycamore Tree.

We recall Jesus walked by and a short tax collector climbed up a Sycamore tree to see Him. Let’s look at the large green tree and listen to the word of God and see what happened.

**“And entering in, he walked through Jericho. And behold, there was a man named Zacchaeus, who was the chief of the publicans, and he was rich.**

**And he sought to see Jesus who he was, and he could not for the crowd, because he was low of stature.**

And running before, he climbed up into a sycamore tree, that he might see him; for he was to pass that way. And when Jesus was come to the place, looking up, he saw him, and said to him:

**Zacchaeus, make haste and come down; for this day I must stay in your house. And he made haste and came down; and received him with joy. And when all saw it, they murmured, saying, that he was gone to be a guest with a man that was a sinner. But Zacchaeus standing, said to the Lord: Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have wronged any man of anything, I restore him fourfold. Jesus said to him: This day is salvation come to this house, because he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost” (Luke 19: 1-10).**



The theme of Jesus being the Savior and showing merciful love and others criticizing Jesus will be repeated throughout the Gospels.

**Meghan: What ever happened to Zacchaeus.**

Fortunately, the tradition as recorded in the Apostolic Constitutions identify "Zacchaeus the Publican" as the first bishop of Caesarea (7.46). Praise the Lord!

**Meghan: Yes, praise the Lord.**

**Ben: Yes, we are in Jericho and we are looking at a large Sycamore tree. You get the feeling that Jesus could have just passed by yesterday. The scriptures and Jesus' life just seem to come alive.**

## Chapter 24: Ancient Jericho



### Battles

#### Elisha's Well - Holy Water & Salt.

#### **Meghan: What is that building down there?**

Just down the hill from ancient Jericho is Elisha's Well. Towards the end of his life, when the great prophet Elijah struck the Jordan River with his mantle it miraculously parted



and Elijah and Elisha crossed the Jordan. Soon after that, Elijah was taken up into Heaven in a fiery chariot. His mantle fell to the ground to Elisha. Elisha struck the Jordan with the mantle and it parted for him also. (2 Kings 2)

#### **Ben: So, Elisha, the successor, got that double portion of the spirit that he asked for.**

Yes. When Elisha was here, it says the waters were bitter. Remember with the spiritual level of the Bible, that foreshadowed another very special thing that is in our Catholic faith.

#### **Meghan: What is that?**

Jesus made a cross-over gap, when He talked about waters again. Remember, he said, "Come to Me all of you who are all thirsty and drink, from within him should flow rivers of living water" (John 7:37). And then John says...remember, he is talking about the **Holy**

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**Spirit.** So when, in the Old Testament when he is talking about bitter water, you could think of it as a bitter or bad spirit.

**Meghan: I do not like the bad spirits?**

What did Elisha do when the waters were bitter here? Elisha took salt and he blessed the salt. It sounds kind of unusual, but he took this blessed salt, he threw it in the bitter waters, it says, the waters were made clean and made sweet. But once He blessed it, it all became beautiful vegetation again and it's growing (2 Kings 2:21). That is not only a real historic event that happened, and even the buildings are here to show it. This is one of the best areas of fertility in the Holy Land.

**Meghan: It is very beautiful and we can see the fruits growing down the valley there.**

Remember, that event also foreshadowed the fulfillment of Holy Salt that Catholics use. In Chicago, we have Fr. Grob, he is an exorcist Priest, and he came to our past conference. What they do in an exorcism is to get rid of the bad spirits. Remember, Elisha had the bad water. At times we have the bad spirits around. How do we dispel them? How do we get rid of them?

**Ben: How?**

They do exorcism prayers over the salt, and they will perform blessing prayers over the water, and then then they will mix the salt with the water to make Holy Water. They will bless the area by sprinkling it around the room. The Church states that there are tremendous graces that God gives through the holy water and the holy salt.

What the exorcizing priest reminds us is that we get many of these temptations, frustrations, and distractions, coming from the bad spirits, and we don't know how to fight them. Actually God gives us all the tools to fight them, but we have to use the tools.

**Ben: I am all for using tools that God gives.**



Upon meditating on those things, you may see the fulfillment of actually what Elisha did here and get more appreciation for the tools that God gives us thru the Catholic faith. Personally, I sprinkle Holy Water around my room every night before I go to sleep. If you are in a battle and you want to survive, the motto is, “No free shots!”

**Meghan: Yes, I know Father Grob, and I have first-hand experience how powerful Holy Salt and Holy Water are.**

**Ancient Jericho**

**Meghan: Where are we now? What is this place?**

This is known as the oldest walled city in the world called ancient Jericho. Remember, at the end of the 40 years of wondering in the deserts of Egypt, the Israelites miraculously crossed the Jordan River with the Ark of God in a location that was close to where Jesus was baptized and came here. The Holy land was the Promised Land, but it was occupied. Remember the descendants of Canaan lived there.

**Meghan: Those were the same people that lived in Sodom and Gomorrah and were so wicked that they wounded each other and made themselves more wicked.**

Unfortunately, yes. Before the smile of God came to earth in the person of Jesus Christ, there was no hope for cultures to turn their wickedness around. A chastisement from God was actually a form of mercy. God used the people with the covenant and the “Ark of God” to do many of the battles to teach us.

**Meghan: What a mystery.**

There were going to be big battles taking place. Those battles in the Old Testament foreshadowed the supernatural battles that you and I are going to face. It is very important to know that Jesus Christ doesn't want you fighting with your hands; he wants you fighting with the spirit. But those spiritual battles are very real. The Catechism calls it, they use a fancy word, “anagogical” that means

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many battles that you see, has lessons in the spiritual life to overcome the battles that you are going to run into.

**Ben: I guess we all do have our own spiritual battles every day, so watching how the Israelites won their physical battles will help us to learn how to win our spiritual battles?**

Exactly, the Israelites came here 3500 years ago to conquer this city, but it was well fortified. This is described in Joshua 6.

1 Now Jericho was in a state of siege because of the presence of the Israelites. No one left or entered. 2 And to Joshua the Lord said: I have delivered Jericho, its king, and its warriors into your power. 3 Have all the soldiers circle the city, marching once around it. Do this for six days, 4 with seven priests carrying ram's horns ahead of the ark. On the seventh day march around the city seven times, and have the priests blow the horns. 5 When they give a long blast on the ram's horns and you hear the sound of the horn, all the people shall shout aloud. The wall of the city will collapse, and the people shall attack straight ahead.

Joshua had commanded the people, "Do not shout or make any noise or outcry until I tell you, 'Shout!' Then you must shout." 11 So he had the ark of the Lord circle the city, going once around it, after which they returned to camp for the night.

14 On this second day they again marched around the city once before returning to camp; and for six days in all they did the same.

15 On the seventh day, beginning at daybreak, they marched around the city seven times in the same manner; on that day only did they march around the city seven times. 16 The seventh time around, the priests blew the horns and Joshua said to the people, "Now shout, for the Lord has given you the city. 17

20 As the horns blew, the people began to shout. When they heard the sound of the horn, they raised a tremendous shout. The wall collapsed

and the people attacked the city straight ahead and took it.“ This is the word of the Lord.

**Ben: It looked like they marched around in obedience and God provided the victory for them.**



Just an interesting thing about Joshua, he said, anybody who tried to build this ancient city, it will be cursed, and then they always tried many times, over the years. But look at it now. It's still not built. It never seems to get going.

In that battle they used the Ark, remember that foreshadowed today's battle. Does anyone remember what is in the Ark?

**Ben: The Ten Commandments.**

Yes, the Ten Stone Commandments and also Aron's Rod, the first five books of the Bible and then some of the Manna that fell from the sky.

The Ark itself had Angels on it, and the Angel wings were folded over and it made the mercy seat.

They would always take the Ark in battle. And although the Ark was not God, they knew the Lord was with the Ark. And inside the Ark, remember is the Ten Commandments and the Bread. Now that also foreshadowed something in the New Testament, in our fulfillment of that event. What is the Ark that we bring into battle with us, in those spiritual battles?

**Meghan: The ark foreshadows the Blessed Mother.**

Yes. So, the Blessed Mother is not God, but the Lord is with Her. We say that in every Hail Mary. Look at what was in the Ark, the Ten Commandments. What is in the Blessed Mother's Heart? The Ten

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Commandments. They put the Manna in the old Ark. The true Bread from Heaven, Jesus Christ, ends up going inside of Her as well.

**Meghan: Yes, our wonderful Mother.**

We all have spiritual battles. If we bring struggles to a human level, we start fighting with our fists, rocks, stones and guns. When you look at the candle light processions at Lourdes, France or Fatima Portugal, we see the modern day peaceful way that God wants us to win the real battles.

**Meghan: In those processions I feel the love of God also.**

When we look at our problems today as a spiritual battle, Our Lady always reminds us to pray for them, because “they are My children too.” We want to convert them. So, through prayer and fasting, as Jesus said, the



evil spirits will be driven out that can be influencing people. Our Lady helps us to remember to keep those real spiritual battles on a spiritual plain, and then we respond with good Christian actions. Recall that in Genesis 3:15, God was going to use the humility of the Blessed Mother to crush the proud head of Satan. Amen.

**Ben: When we go to the shrine in Lourdes France or Fatima Portugal and join in those candle light processions, where they carry a statue of Our Lady, it is the fulfilment of the people of God carrying the ark of God around the walls of Jericho.**

### Interesting Point

As we step to the west side of Ancient Jericho, we will point out one last thing. What is interesting, I heard from Dr. Scott Hahn, a biblical

scholar, from Steubenville, Ohio. He said that when they went around the city seven times and blew the horns, when they all shouted, when the walls collapsed, he said it didn't collapse by falling over.

**Meghan: How did it fall?**



He says it was a miracle. What God did, He opened up the ground and the walls fell straight in. We can see it here. Even the top of the watch tower fell right into the ground.

**Meghan: I see the tower.**

There is even a staircase that is in the tower that is still intact. It fell 30 feet or so. And Boom! The whole people just rushed in and demolished them. And that was one of those battles. God helps when we are with the Ark when we follow God's directions, even though it doesn't make sense at the time.

How are we going to win today's battles? Stick close to the real Ark of God, the Blessed Mother, the Lord is with Her.

Another tool in the spiritual battle that is foreshadowed by the large shout is the name "Jesus." If you are struggling with spiritual battles, loudly call out the name Jesus and He will come to our rescue. Amen.

**Meghan: Jesus!** Kaboom, there goes the walls.

## Chapter 25



### The Mount of Temptations.

#### **Meditate with Jesus on His Retreat – Memory, Intellect, & Will**

Jesus was baptized at the Jordan River less than 10 miles from here. The scriptures say, “the Spirit drove him out to the desert,” (Matth 4).

The Mount of Temptation is a large, desolate and intimidating place to stay. It was to prepare Jesus for His mission. Remember Jesus lived a private life until He was 30 years old and He knew His public ministry was about to begin. The Spirit directed Jesus to do a 40-day retreat consisting of prayer, fasting, meditation and penance. That took place right here. As we look at the view let us practice our little meditation based on the scripture readings that tell us what Jesus endured here.

#### **Ben: This place looks very isolated, where are we?**

This is the Mount of Temptation. As you can see it is a large, desolate and intimidating place to stay.

Jesus was baptized at the Jordan River less than 10 miles from here. The scriptures say, “the Spirit drove him out to the desert,” (Matth 4).

This was to prepare Jesus for His mission. Remember Jesus lived a private life until He was 30 years old and He knew His public ministry was about to begin. The Spirit directed Jesus to do a 40-day retreat consisting of prayer, fasting, meditation and penance. That took place right here. As we look at the view let us practice our little meditation based on the scripture readings that tell us what Jesus endured here.

“Then Jesus was led by the spirit into the desert, to be tempted by the devil. And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterwards he was hungry. And the tempter coming said to him: If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. Who answered and said: It is written, ‘Not in bread alone does man live, but in every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.’ Then the devil took him up into the holy city, and set him upon the pinnacle of

the temple, And said to him: If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down, for it is written: 'That he hath given his angels charge over thee, and in their hands shall they bear thee up, lest perhaps thou dash thy foot against a stone.' Jesus said to him: It is written again: 'Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.' Again the devil took him up into a very high mountain, and shewed him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them, And said to him: All these will I give you, if falling down thou wilt adore me. Then Jesus said to him: Be gone, Satan: for it is written, The Lord thy God shalt thou adore, and him only shall you serve. Then the devil left him; and behold angels came and ministered to him" (Matthew 4:1-11).

**Ben: Looking at the desolate mountain helped that dialog come to life.**

While we are here, in order to experience that retreat with Jesus more deeply, we can do a little meditation. Are you up for it?



**Both: Yes, we are!**

We will do that little prayer which helps us to meditate.

**Both with Guy: "Dear God, I beg you, to give me the grace that the three powers of my soul, my memory, my intellect and my will, will be for the greater glory of God."**

**First the Memory** asks the question, what? What do we see, what do we hear, and what do we feel? As we look around, what do we see? We see Jesus in the desert. We look at His face. We see his face is thin, because he has just fasted for 40 days.

What do we feel? We feel the warm air...the dry air. We hear the wind whistling thru the rocky cliffs. We hear a distant vulture call. We feel Jesus' hunger pangs.

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We see the devil appear as a man, tempting Jesus. We hear the devil say, “if You are the Son of God, command that these stones be turned into bread.” We hear Jesus say to the devil, “Not on bread alone does man live, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.”

We see the devil take Him to the holy city and set Jesus, on a pinnacle of the temple. He says: “If thou art the Son of God, cast Yourself down, for it is written, He has given His angels charge over You, and they shall bear You up, lest perhaps You dash your foot against a stone.”



We hear Jesus reply to him, “it is written again, thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. “

After Jesus was tempted in the desert, we see the angels come to minister Him.

As you meditate on what you see, what you hear, something attracts you. Something gets your attention. When something gets your attention, you start asking with your intellect, why, or how? One of the things we are going to ask is “how do we overcome the tricks of the devil?” Our intellect tells us that the devil himself was quoting scripture to try and trick Jesus. He was quoting Deuteronomy Chapter 8 Verse 3 when he said, it was written, “He has given his angels charge over you” and the devil was trying to get Jesus to throw Himself off the temple.

### **Meghan: Oh my, the devil is quoting scripture.**

Using our intellect to analyze the interaction reveals that Jesus exposes the trick by showing that the devil took the quote out of context. This means the devil tries to give the scriptures a meaning from a few words they don't really have. The enemy of your soul can use this to slow down your own conversion. If somebody quotes scripture and you feel it paralyze your soul, know that the enemy is attacking.



**Meghan: What do we do to overcome the attack?**

Our intellect reminds us that Jesus Christ did not write a Bible, but He started an apostolic Church that is guided by the Holy Spirit. God used His one holy, Catholic Church guided by His Spirit to give us the Bible. God gave the same Church guided by the Holy Spirit to give a correct interpretation of the Bible. Our intellect reasons that many of these true interpretations of the Bible are found in the Catechism of the Catholic Church. Now that this truth has been revealed, it is a good time to make a resolution with our will.

**The Will, “what is our resolution, our next step forward? We are going to not only be men and women of the Word, we are also going to get a copy of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* which has the correct interpretations to the scriptures. We are going to get nourished by the Word of the Scriptures.**

**Ben: I already have a copy and I will read it more.**

We are also going to pray the Scriptural Rosary. Because our Lady knows when we are rooted in learning the Bible in the 20 mysteries of the rosary we will know the Bible in context. Further, being filled with this grace from the Holy Spirit we will be able to effectively handle the types of attacks that come from people who take scriptures out of context. We imagine that we entered into and completed the 40-day retreat with Jesus on the mountain and we will continue our journey with Jesus as He begins His public ministry.

**Meghan: The Rosary is a good weapon in that regards as well.**

We pray in conclusion: “Dear God, we thank You for giving us the grace, that the three powers of our soul, our memory, our intellect and our will, will always be for the greater glory of God. Amen.”

**Ben: That was great!**

## Chapter 26



### The Dead Sea Scrolls, the Dead Sea.

### Spiritual Sense of Scriptures contain “Proof #5.

**Meghan:** Where are we at now?

**We are at the caves of Qumran where the Dead Sea Scrolls were found.**

#### **Dead Sea Scrolls – The - Importance of Holy Scripture:**

The Dead Sea scrolls were found in the caves of Qumran by some Bedouins in the winter of 1946. The community here was called the Essenes and they were a sect that was broken off of the Jewish Religion who revered the Sacred Scriptures. They lived in the area from approximately 135 BC to 73 AD. Some of the oldest copies of sacred scriptures that are still in existence were found in these ruins.



**In Cave number four**, a copy of Isaiah the prophet was found. What is comforting to note is the words match up almost exactly to what the Roman Catholics use in their Sacred Scriptures today. Praise the

Lord. Also, they found copies of the Book of Wisdom and the Book of Tobit in which the Holy Spirit revealed to the Church to include them in the Canon of scriptures as the authentic Word of God.

This is very important because most of our protestant brothers and sisters do not have the Book of Wisdom in their Bible. As explained in chapter 18, it is a sin against the Holy Spirit to change words or books in the Holy Bible. No human has the authority to do that.

**Look at Wisdom 2:12-20** and ask if we see Jesus in the Old Testament quote.

I ask Christians, "I understand why anti-Christian forces would want to remove this book, but why would Christians want to remove the Book from the Word of God?"

"Let us lie in wait for the righteous man,  
because he is inconvenient to us and opposes our actions;  
he reproaches us for sins against the law,  
and accuses us of sins against our training.

13 He professes to have knowledge of God,  
and calls himself a **child of the Lord**.

14 He became to us a reproof of our thoughts;  
15 the very sight of him is a burden to us,  
because his manner of life is unlike that of others,  
and his ways are strange.

16 We are considered by him as something base,  
and he avoids our ways as unclean;  
he calls the last end of the righteous happy,  
and **boasts that God is his father**.

17 Let us see if his words are true,  
and let us test what will happen at the end of his life;  
18 for if the righteous man is God's child, he will help him,  
and will deliver him from the hand of his adversaries.

19 Let us test him with insult and torture,  
so that we may find out how gentle he is,  
and make trial of his forbearance.

20 **Let us condemn him to a shameful death**, for, according to what he says, he will be protected" (Wisdom 2:12-20) The Word of the Lord.

**Ben: That sounds like they are talking about Jesus and the Pharisees who condemned Him.**

It is good to review a few things about Jesus Christ – The Unique Word of Sacred Scriptures. CCC #81 states that "Sacred Scripture is the speech of God as it is put down in writing under the breath of the Holy Spirit."

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Also CCC #104 states; “In Sacred Scripture, the Church constantly finds her nourishment and her strength, for she welcomes it not as a human word, “but as what it really is, the word of God.” “In the sacred books, the Father who is in heaven comes lovingly to meet his children, and talks with them.””

**Ben: God is good.**

CCC #106 clarifies that God inspired the human authors of the sacred books. “To compose the sacred books, God chose certain men who, all the while he employed them in this task, made full use of their own faculties and powers so that, though he acted in them and by them, it was as true authors that they consigned to writing whatever he wanted written, and no more.”

CCC #107 The inspired books teach the truth.

CCC #138 The Church accepts and venerates as inspired the 46 books of the Old Testament and the 27 books of the New.

**Since God is the author, there are many levels to the Sacred Scriptures (CCC 116- 118)**

There is the **literal sense, Proof #1 (See chapter 6)** like details of Jesus Birth, His Miracles, His suffering, etc. but there is also a **spiritual sense, Proof #5** in which events themselves can be signs.

**Ben: What is the spiritual sense?**

The spiritual sense can be split up into three categories.

**The allegorical sense.** We can acquire a more profound understanding of events by recognizing their significance in Christ; thus the crossing of the Red Sea is a sign or type of Christ's victory and also of Christian Baptism.

**The moral sense.** The events reported in Scripture ought to lead us to act justly. As St. Paul says, they were written “for our instruction.”

**The anagogical sense** (Greek: anagoge, “leading”). We can view realities and events in terms of their eternal significance, leading us toward our true homeland: thus the Church on earth is a sign of the

heavenly Jerusalem. **The battles they faced are our spiritual battles.**

CCC #139 The four Gospels occupy a central place because Christ Jesus is their center.

CCC #140 states: **The unity of the two Testaments proceeds from the unity of God's plan and his Revelation. The Old Testament prepares for the New and the New Testament fulfills the Old; the two, shed light on each other; both are true Word of God.**

**Meghan: That sounds a little deep, can you give an example of what that means?**

A **good example** of this allegorical level is manifested when we turn around and look at the Dead Sea. Moses lead the people of Israel through Egypt and then on to the opposite side of the Dead Sea. Mount Nebo is to the north side of the Dead Sea and that is where God showed Moses the entire Holy Land. They crossed the Jordan River and entered by Jericho which we will go to this afternoon. That historic journey also foreshadows our journey as Christians. As we meditate on these details, we are strengthened.

**Meghan: Wow, Because God is so great, He can choose the history to help us understand Jesus Christ and His mission better.**

Yes, it is very amazing.

**Ben: Is there more?**

The whole Bible is loaded with it. While the Israelites were in Egypt and the Angel of Death Pass-over them, what did the Angel look for to not to kill the firstborn in their home?

**Ben: The Blood of the Lamb**

If the Angel saw the **blood of the lamb** on their door posts, then they would live. In a similar way, we are Redeemed by the **Blood of the true Lamb of God, Jesus Christ**. It is Jesus Blood that saves us.

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**Ben: Yes, and John the Baptist even said He was the lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. Awesome.**

When they were leaving the place of slavery, the Red Sea parted and then cleansed them of their oppressors. What does this foreshadow in our Christian lives?

The Sacrament of Baptism cleanses us from the oppression of sin. God washes the demons away that oppress us.

**Meghan: That is nice and clean.**

They are headed to the Promised Land and guess what our true Promised Land is,

**Ben: Heaven.**

We do not just accept Jesus as our Savior and then we are in the Promised Land, we have to go through the journey in the desert which is this life on earth.

What did they eat to strengthen them on the journey?

**Ben: They ate bread from Heaven**

This foreshadows our **True Bread from Heaven, the Holy Eucharist** that we receive in Holy Communion.

**Meghan: Wow our Holy Communion.**

What did they drink?

**Ben: They drank water from the rock,**

Eventually we will see that Jesus will give us the “Living Waters” when we are **nourished by the Holy Spirit from His Church.**

**The spiritual sense, (the many levels of allegorical, moral and anagogical sense together) of the bible, the Sacred Scriptures that describes Jesus is God is the fifth proof.** It is God describing details of Jesus life with the pictures of history.

We will be pointing out many of these spiritual foreshadows of Jesus Christ as we continue our journey with Jesus. Actually, almost every book in the Old Testament has spiritual foreshadows of Jesus. Jesus is God's Word made flesh. Nobody else has this extensive foreshadowing, not Buddha, not Socrates, not Confucius, not Mohamed only Jesus Christ, Him and none other. Praise the Lord!

**Meghan: God is great!**

Meditation helps us see Jesus Christ in all the levels of all the Sacred Scriptures. We can develop the ability to see beyond the surface of things.

**Ben: I want to see those mysteries.**

## Chapter 27 The Dead Sea



### Meditation on the preciousness of life on earth

Alright pilgrims! This is the Dead Sea. We are in the lowest spot on earth, besides the bottom of an ocean. This is as low as it gets. The surface and shores are 1385 hundred feet below sea level. The very bottom of the sea is over 2,300 feet below sea level.

**Meghan: It looks kind of stagnant. Why is this Sea important?**

This has a historical and Biblical significance. When Moses and the people of Israel came to the Promised Land, they entered on the east side of the Dead Sea. The Jordan River feeds the Dead Sea. They had to cross there to get to the Holy land, and then they went to Jericho and conquered that city. Way on the south side of the Dead Sea is a very famous city from the book of Genesis. It is Sodom and Gomorra, remember Abraham and his nephew, Lot. He said, I'll go one way, you go another way. Lot ended up coming over there...all the way on the south side. And then God destroyed those cities with fire and brimstone because the wickedness was so great that it was crying out to Him day and night. They were part of the Canaanite god of Baal clan.

**Ben: I remember from Book #1 that Baal is the sexual deviant instigator.**

In Christianity, we love the sinner, but hate the sin. It's not politically incorrect to call Sodomy a sin anymore. But that's where they got their name from... Sodomy is homosexual acts. The other sexual disordered behavior in the culture starts wounding the children and they in turn wound their children. When the culture became so damaged and wicked, then Sodomy became rampant. In Genesis chapter 19 God sent fire and brimstone to demolish these cities. Remember God is Merciful and He would have spared the whole place if he found 10 righteous people there. Without the ten just people and at a time before Jesus walked the earth with His saving grace, God knows that the wounds inflicted on the new children of the people there would be too great, so God's chastisements are also an act of mercy. The buried cities of Sodom and Gomorrah are located



at the very south end of the Dead Sea. Today, we have the grace of Jesus Christ to nourish, heal, change and strengthen us, so there is always hope with Jesus Christ and His grace and Mercy.

**Meghan: Lord have mercy on us.**

**Ben: Why do they call it the Dead Sea?**

Nothing lives in this sea.

**If water is grace, the two seas represent the spiritual life.** In the Sea of Galilee, the water comes in from the Jordan and flows out, it gives and it is full of life. In the Dead Sea, the water flows in, but nothing comes out, it is selfish and there is only death here.

The entire sea is like a big pot of boiling water, where nothing could get out. Therefore, the concentration of salt goes up more and more until it gets super saturated. Normal sea water contains about three percent salts and the Dead Sea is over 30% salts. There are actually industrial salt crystallizers located at the Dead Sea because it is very rich in salts and minerals.

When you go in for a swim, the water is so full of salt that you will float as if you were on a raft. Be careful, the salt will burn your eyes.

After our swim, we will meditate on the preciousness of life.

**Ben: I floated as if I were on a raft. There was one person even reading a newspaper as he floated on his back.**

**Meghan: Why do people wipe the mud all over their body?**

There is evidence that the minerals are good for your skin. If you stay in the Salt Sea for more than 20 minutes, it can be harmful to your body because the salt will soak into your skin.

After our swim, we will meditate on the preciousness of life.

**Meditation on the preciousness of Life on Earth! Use a handful of sand.**

We are going to continue to learn how to meditate in order to walk with Jesus more effectively.

Picture a beautiful, large, sandy beach along the ocean and take a moment to recall that you are with the Angels in the presence of God. Pray: “Dear God, I beg You to please give me the grace that the three powers of my soul—my memory, my intellect, and my will—will be for the greater glory of God.” Also ask God for a specific grace: “Help me to appreciate the gift of being alive.”

1. The Memory: In which we recall the subject and ask



questions such as WHAT—What do I see? What do I hear? What do I feel? What do I smell? Ben smiles and says, “It is a beautiful sunny day, and I see a very long, sandy beach. I feel the soft sand underfoot as we go for a walk. The sun is warm; the gentle breeze is cool and refreshing. The white seagulls are swooping

down for food and making a high-sounding chirp. The white clouds look like soft cotton balls floating in the blue sky. The waves can be heard crashing on the shore.”

“Now scoop up a handful of sand as we continue to walk,” said the Angel. “What do you notice?”

“While looking closer at the many grains in my hand, I notice that most are light brown, some are black and others are white.

The grains are numerous; however, the amount of sand is so very small compared to what is on the beach and underwater,” said Ben.

2. The Intellect: In which we reflect and analyze the subject. We often ask the questions why and how. “Ben, how many days are there in a year?” “Three hundred sixty-five,” Ben answered. “How many days are there in 100 years?” “That would be 100 times 365 or 36,500 days,” Ben answered again. “There are at least 36,500 grains of sand in your hand. If you live to be 100 years old, each grain would represent a day in your life on Earth. During your life, some days are exceptionally good, as can be seen in the white specs. Some days are tough, as can be

seen in the black specs. Most days are average, as can be seen in the light brown specs. Even though the grains are numerous, they are soon gone. Every day that passes by on Earth is like a grain of sand trickling through our hands. "If the small amount of sand in your hand represents your life on Earth, the large amount of sand on the beach and under the water represents your life after Earth. The way you spend the days of life on Earth determines how you will spend all the days of life after Earth. Jesus Christ gives us many opportunities on Earth to build up our treasure in Heaven" (see Matthew 6:20).

"There are three paths one can take: the first path consists of endeavoring to love God with all our hearts, minds, souls, and bodies, and our neighbors as ourselves. During our eternal life in Heaven, each day will be filled with joy so great, it is unimaginable. 'For eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither has it entered into the heart of man, what things God has prepared for those who love Him.' (1 Corinthians 2:9). We will shine like the bright stars in the sky." "Forever is such a long time,"

interrupted Ben, "won't we get bored?" "Will you get bored with power or beauty or truth or knowledge or peace or love or goodness?" Actually, when you experience how awesome God is, you will be saying in your soul for all eternity, "WWWWWoooooooooooo!"

"The second path consists of doing the minimal to get by and of keeping our soul out of the state of mortal sin. During our life after Earth, we will spend a long time suffering in the fires of purgatory (see Matthew 5:26, 1 Cor. 3:15). After this, we will experience incredible, unimaginable joy in Heaven, but not as much joy as the first path.

We will shine like the very dim stars in the sky."

"On the third path, we let our souls fall into the state of mortal sin, blame and curse God for our foolishness and then die without repenting. During our eternally long life after Earth in Hell, each day will be filled with tortures so terrible and painful that they cannot be imagined. The truth, that we are in Hell through our own fault, tortures us even more." "Actually Hell is so horrible, you

will be saying in your soul for all eternity, “Ooowww!”

“Think about how much sand there is out there compared to the small amount in our hands and realize that eternity is even longer than the days/number of grains of sand on the beach. Know for sure that the days in eternity are greater than all the grains of sand on the entire planet Earth. This thought helps us realize that the short time we are given here on Earth is very precious and important. Your life on Earth may even be less than a hundred years or an even smaller handful of sand. God let us know that we can build up our treasure while on Earth (see Matthew 6:20). When we get to Heaven, we cannot build up our treasure, we can only enjoy it. We must ask ourselves, how do we take advantage of the precious time we have on Earth?”

Make a resolution - The Will:  
“Ben, what resolution are you going to make regarding this

subject?” “I will try to do my best to choose the first path every day during our short life on Earth. I promise to get to know and love Jesus, by learning to pray the Rosary mysteries and reading the Bible. I promise to be true to my covenant with God and to be united to Jesus by receiving Him in Holy Communion. To build up my treasure in Heaven, I will use mental prayer. I promise to beg God for the grace that the three powers of my soul—my memory, my intellect, and my will—will be for the greater glory of God,” replied Ben.

“I will ask the Holy Spirit to remind me that every time I see sand, I will remember how short and precious this life is, and how eternally long the afterlife will be. I will have confidence that Jesus Christ won the big W for me so my eternal ‘Oooww!’ will be an eternal ‘WWWoowww!’”

“Very good, Ben, I see progress in your soul.

## Chapter 28 The Seashore of Galilee

**The call of the apostles.**

**Meghan: The Sea of Galilee is so beautiful.**

The Sea of Galilee, also called Lake of Gennesaret, or Lake Tiberius is the largest freshwater lake in Israel. It is approximately thirteen miles long, eight miles wide and around one hundred and forty feet deep. The Sea being around seven hundred feet below sea level makes it the lowest freshwater lake on Earth. Its main source is the Jordan River, which flows through it from north to south. Capernaum and the Mount of Beatitudes lies to its north shore and Tiberius lies to its west shore.

**Ben: This really is not a Sea but a big lake.**

Yes. Jesus' first disciples were fishermen and this is the place He called them. Let's listen to the word of God on how it all began.



Jesus began to preach and say, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” As he was walking by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon who is called Peter, and his brother Andrew, casting a net into the sea; they were fishermen. He said to them, “Come after me, and I will make you fishers of men.” At once they left their nets

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and followed him. He walked along from there and saw two other brothers, James, the son of Zebedee, and his brother John. They were in a boat, with their father Zebedee, mending their nets. He called them, and immediately they left their boat and their father and followed him (Matthew 4:17-22).

This is a good place to look at the beautiful see and imagine Jesus walking by and calling His disciples by name, “Peter, James, John, come follow Me. Imagine Jesus looking at you and calling your name. “(Your Name) Come Follow Me!”

**Ben: As we could hear the waves lapping on the shore and smell sea air, when the priest called out the names of everyone in the group individually, you could see the impact that it had on everyone.**

**Meghan: Yes, it is easy to imagine that Jesus just called me and now I am walking with Him all around the Holy Land.**

**Relationship** – Most religions have a very distant and abstract god. None of the religions proclaim that they have a god that knows and loves us. Here, Jesus, God made flesh, looks fisherman and us in the eyes and calls us by name. God invites us all to journey with Him. As His disciples respond, they would journey both externally and internally with Jesus. They developed a relationship with Jesus as they learned and shared the “Good News” with everyone.

## Chapter 29 Cana



### Always invite Jesus and Mary to your wedding. “Proof #6” – Jesus miracles.

Jesus was considered to be an itinerant preacher. That means He would move about from town to town to preach the Gospel and heal. As we pass by the little villages along the way, we can imagine that we are walking with Jesus and his disciples.

**Meghan: If we were walking, that is a long way. I could imagine them travelling as friends and learning a lot as they journeyed with Jesus.**

The first lesson at Cana is to always invite Jesus and Mary to your wedding.

Cana is where Jesus performed His first public miracle. It was carried out at His Mother's request. This was done at a marriage feast that had run out of wine. Jesus changes water into wine to save the wedding feast.



This is a great place for married couples to renew their wedding vows or marriage covenant with each other. The Cana wine is very good as well. Marriage is very special in the Church; it actually is a Sacrament. The Church attaches great importance to Jesus' presence at the wedding at Cana. She sees in it the confirmation of the goodness of marriage and the proclamation that thenceforth marriage will be an efficacious sign of Christ's presence (CCC #1613).

**Meghan: Our God of love is present at weddings.**

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Also recall the great mystery of the promised relationship between God and His people. Instead of smacking us, he was going to give us a new heart and make us His Bride.

The Catechism says the marriage covenant shows the image of the love for **Jesus Christ Our God and His Bride**, the people of God, the Church. This prepares us for the ultimate “the wedding-feast of the Lamb” (CCC #1612).

**Meghan: That sounds too good to be true.**

Regarding the holiness of marriage, **Jesus quoted Genesis**, “Have ye not read, that he who made man from the beginning, Made them male and female? And he said: For this cause, shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife, and they two shall be in one flesh. Therefore, now they are not two, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate (Matthew 19:4-6).

**“Proof #6” is the numerous miracles Jesus Christ made.** Miracles of every nature, healing of sight, restoring of speech, curing leprosy, making the lame walk, raising the dead, changing water to wine, multiplying the loaves of bread, walking on water and even the forgiveness of sins. Miracles that showed the power of God. No other world or religious leader had these miracles, not Buddha, not Confucius, not Mohamed, only Jesus Christ, Him and none other.

**Meghan: Praise the Lord! Yes, Jesus, Him and none other.**

**Ben: Jesus not only had one type of miracle, but such a variety of miracles for every occasion.**

**Ben: Where do the stairs lead.**

Down below the main altar, we see an ancient 30-gallon stone washing jar which is similar to what Jesus filled with water then turned it into wine. Here is where the 2<sup>nd</sup> Luminous Mystery took place. Let us pray and use the scriptures to experience this place.



**SECOND LUMINOUS MYSTERY**

**THE WEDDING FEAST AT CANA**

“There was a marriage in Cana of Galilee: and the Mother of Jesus was there. Jesus and His disciples also were invited to the marriage. When the wine ran out, the Mother of Jesus said to Him: ‘They have no wine.’

And Jesus said to Her: ‘Woman, what is that to Me and to Thee? My hour is not yet come.’ His Mother said to the waiters, ‘Do whatever He tells you.’” (John 2:1-5)

**OUR FATHER**

“Now there were six water-pots of stone, according to the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three measures apiece.” (John 2:6)

**HAIL MARY**

“Jesus said to them: ‘Fill the water-pots with water.’ And they filled them up to the brim.” (John 2:7)

**HAIL MARY**

“Jesus said to them: ‘Draw out now and carry to the chief steward of the feast.’ And they carried it.” (Jn 2:8)

**HAIL MARY**

“The chief steward had tasted the water made wine, not knowing where it came from, but the waiters who had drawn the water knew.” (John 2:9)

**HAIL MARY**

“The chief steward called the bridegroom, and said to him, ‘Every man at first serves good wine, and after the men have been drinking, then a lesser vintage. But you have kept the good wine until now.’” (John 2:10)

**HAIL MARY**

“This is the beginning of miracles that Jesus did in Cana of Galilee and He manifested His glory. And His disciples believed in Him.” (John 2:11)

**HAIL MARY**

“The Kingdom of Heaven is like a king who made a marriage feast for his son.” (Matthew 22:2)

**HAIL MARY**

“A man shall leave his father and mother and cling to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh...What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate.” (Matthew 19:5-6)

(Matthew 19:5-6)

**HAIL MARY**

“Let us be glad and rejoice and give glory to Him. For the marriage of the Lamb is come: and his wife has prepared herself.” (Revelations 19:7)

**HAIL MARY**

“Blessed are they that are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he said to me, ‘These words of God are true.’” (Revelations 19:9)

**HAIL MARY**

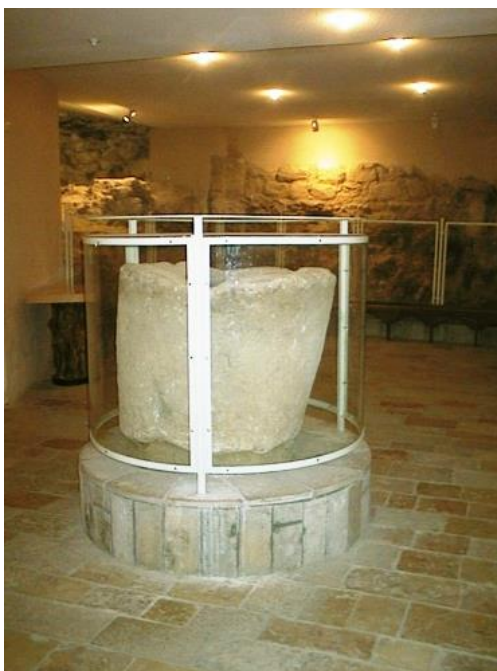
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**Ben: Seeing this large stone jar helps me to image Jesus filling 6 large ones with water. That would have been a lot of good wine.**

**Possible Foreshadowing:** It is just an opinion. The event of Cana may have foreshadowed a super event that is happening today. 2000 years ago, they ran out of wine at the wedding feast in Cana. What happens when there is no wine? Everyone gets bored and the party is over. If that marriage feast foreshadowed the “marriage supper of the Lamb” which is the Mass (CCC #1329), then Cana may foreshadow Marian Apparition sites especially Medjugorje.

**Meghan: How is that?**

Several times in history it seems as if Catholics get a little sluggish with their faith. In 1981, it seemed everyone was bored at Mass as if the party was over. As Our Lady intercedes to Jesus for the couple and on behalf of everyone at the party, Our Lady intercedes for Her children who are in a spiritual coma. Then She told Jesus, “there is no more wine.”



In 1981 She saw us sleeping and said, there is no more Spirit in them. Jesus calls her, “Woman”, the same word that is used in Genesis and Revelations Chapter 12. Mary instructs the servants, “Do whatever He tells you.” In Medjugorje, that is Her message, “Do whatever Jesus tells you.”

“Now there were six water-pots of stone, according to the manner of the purifying of the Jews.” Note that six stone pots were not the typical vessel that was used to distribute wine at the banquet. The six simple children were not the typical vessels that were used to distribute the grace of the Holy Spirit to the people.

**Ben: Yes, Medjugorje has six visionaries, there is six clay pots.**

The chief steward eventually said; “You have kept the good wine until now.” We think the chief steward is Pope Francis and he will proclaim, “Medjugorje is a good spirit that we did not have before now.” Just as the party was saved in Cana, the Church will be renewed through Medjugorje. Praise the Lord.

In all the authentic Marian apparitions, like Lourdes and Fatima and others, that is Her message, “Do whatever Jesus tells you.”

**Ben: Yes, that is the theme in all those apparitions.**

The chief steward eventually said; “You have kept the good wine until now.” The chief steward is the Pope and he will eventually judge if the Marian apparitions are authentic or not. Just as the party was saved in Cana, the Church has always been renewed through Marian Apparitions. It is the 100-year anniversary of Fatima and they expect millions of people to go in 2017. Praise the Lord.

**Ben: Marian apparitions do promote conversion and renewal. It is good that the party goes on.**

**Meghan: There is a beautiful picture of Jesus and Mary at the wedding feast above the main altar in the Church.**

**Renewal of Marriage Vows. (Each spouse says the vow)**

I, \_\_\_\_, take you, \_\_\_\_, to be my (husband/wife). I promise to be true to you in good times and in bad, in sickness and in health. I will love you and honor you all the days of my life.

The priest will then say aloud "You have declared your consent before the Church. May the Lord in his goodness strengthen your consent and fill you both with his blessings. What God has joined, men must not divide. Amen."

## Chapter 30:

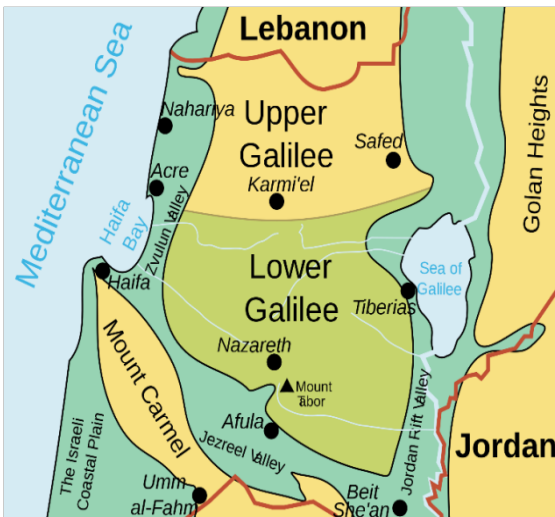


### Traveling through Galilee (Mark 1-2) (Matthew 4) (Luke 4-6)

#### “Proof #7” – Jesus power over evil spirits.

Jesus was considered to be an itinerant preacher. That means He would move about from town to town to preach the Gospel and heal. Capernaum was like a home base where Jesus went often, but He travelled on foot all over Palestine. This day we will be traveling from the Sea of Galilee about 20 miles north close to the Lebanon Boarder. As we pass by the little villages along the way, we can imagine that we are walking with Jesus and his disciples.

**Evangelization mission:** And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom: and healing all manner of sickness and every infirmity, among the people. And his fame went throughout all Syria, and they presented to him all sick people that were taken with various diseases and torments, and such as were possessed by devils, and lunatics, and those that had palsy, and he cured them: And much people followed him from Galilee, and from Decapolis, and from Jerusalem, and from Judea, and from beyond the Jordan. (Matthew 4:23-25)



**The Cure of a Demoniac.** Then they came to Capernaum, and on the Sabbath he entered the synagogue and taught. The people were astonished at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority and not as the scribes.

In their synagogue was a man with an unclean spirit; he cried out, “What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God!” Jesus rebuked him and said, “Quiet! Come out of him!” The unclean spirit convulsed him and with a loud cry came out of him. All were amazed and asked one another, “What is this? A new teaching with authority. He commands even the unclean spirits and they obey him.” His fame spread everywhere throughout the whole region of Galilee. (Mark 1:21-28)

**“Proof #7” is the absolute power Jesus Christ had over the demons.** God revealed that He is all powerful and even the demons are fallen creatures. Jesus displayed this power by casting them out. Every Gospel testifies to this. No other world or religious leader had this power over the evil spirits, not Buddha, not Confucius, not Mohamed, only Jesus Christ, Him and none other.

**Meghan: Thank God that the demons were limited in their power by God.**

That is very important because we mere mortals could see something supernatural and be impressed with it. Demons could be given more power than our mere weak humans. But Jesus had to display His total power over them to clearly show that He was God and they were fallen creatures.

**The Cleansing of a Leper.** A leper came to him and kneeling down begged him and said, “If you wish, you can make me clean.” Moved with pity, he stretched out his hand, touched him, and said to him, “I do will it. Be made clean.” The leprosy left him immediately, and he was made clean. Then, warning him sternly, he dismissed him at once. Then he said to him, “See that you tell no one anything, but go, show yourself to the priest and offer for your cleansing what Moses prescribed; that will be proof for them.” The man went away and began to publicize the whole matter. He spread the report abroad so that it was impossible for Jesus to enter a town openly. He remained outside in deserted places, and people kept coming to him from everywhere. (Mark 1:40-45)

**Meghan: That is quite a display of power.**

**The Healing of a Paralytic.** When Jesus returned to Capernaum after some days, it became known that he was at home. Many gathered together so that there was no longer room for them, not even around the door, and he preached the word to them. They came bringing to him a paralytic carried by four men. Unable to get near Jesus because of the crowd, they opened up the roof above him. After they had broken through, they let down the mat on which the paralytic was lying. When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, “Child, your sins are forgiven.” Now some of the scribes were sitting there asking themselves, “Why does this man speak that way? He is blaspheming. Who but God alone can forgive sins?” Jesus immediately knew in his mind what they were thinking to themselves, so he said, “Why are you thinking such things in your hearts? Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Rise, pick up your mat and walk’? But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority to forgive sins on earth”— he said to the paralytic, “I say to you, rise, pick up your mat, and go home.” He rose, picked up his mat at once, and went away in the sight of everyone. They were all astounded and glorified God, saying, “We have never seen anything like this.” (Mark 2:1-12)

**Meghan: Think of the hope that was instilled into the people as Jesus went around.**

### **Jesus Raises the Widow's Son at Nain**

“Soon afterwards he went to a town called Nain, and his disciples and a large crowd went with him. As he approached the gate of the town, a man who had died was being carried out. He was his mother's only son, and she was a widow; and with her was a large crowd from the town. When the Lord saw her, he had compassion for her and said to her, “Do not weep.” Then he came forward and touched the bier, and the bearers stood still. And he said, “Young man, I say to you, rise!” The dead man sat up and began to speak, and Jesus gave him to his mother. Fear seized all of them; and they glorified God, saying, “A great prophet has risen among us!” and “God has looked favorably on his people!” This word about him spread throughout Judea and all the surrounding country” (Luke 7:11-17). The Word of the Lord.

### A Sinful Woman Forgiven

One of the Pharisees asked Jesus to eat with him, and he went into the Pharisee's house and took his place at the table. And a woman in the city, who was a sinner, having learned that he was eating in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster jar of ointment. She stood behind him at his feet, weeping, and began to bathe his feet with her tears and to dry them with her hair. Then she continued kissing his feet and anointing them with the ointment. Now when the Pharisee who had invited him saw it, he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet, he would have known who and what kind of woman this is who is touching him—that she is a sinner." Jesus spoke up and said to him, "Simon, I have something to say to you." "Teacher," he replied, "speak." "A certain creditor had two debtors; one owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. When they could not pay, he canceled the debts for both of them. Now which of them will love him more?" Simon answered, "I suppose the one for whom he canceled the greater debt." And Jesus said to him, "You have judged rightly." Then turning toward the woman, he said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave me no water for my feet, but she has bathed my feet with her tears and dried them with her hair. You gave me no kiss, but from the time I came in she has not stopped kissing my feet. You did not anoint my head with oil, but she has anointed my feet with ointment. Therefore, I tell you, her sins, which were many, have been forgiven; hence she has shown great love. But the one to whom little is forgiven, loves little." Then he said to her, "Your sins are forgiven." But those who were at the table with him began to say among themselves, "Who is this who even forgives sins?" And he said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace." (Luke 7:36-50)

## 120 Journey with Jesus - #2 of 3 – Jesus' Early Ministry

### THIRD LUMINOUS MYSTERY: ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE KINGDOM

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that those who believe in Him may not perish but have life everlasting." (John 3:16)

"Jesus came in Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God. Jesus said, 'The time is accomplished and the Kingdom of God is at hand. Repent and believe the gospel.'" (Mark 1:13-15)

### FRUIT: EMBRACING JESUS WILL CHANGE THE WORLD

#### OUR FATHER

"(Jesus) taught them. They were astonished at His doctrine. For He was teaching them as one having power, and not as the scribes." (Mark 1:21-22)

#### HAIL MARY

"Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the Kingdom of God." (Matthew 5:3)

#### HAIL MARY

"Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice sake, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven." (Matthew 5:10)

#### HAIL MARY

"The Kingdom of Heaven is like a treasure that is hidden in a field. A man sells all that he has, with joy, to buy the field." (Matthew 13:44)

#### HAIL MARY

"The fame of Him spread into all the country of Galilee.

(Jesus) healed many that were troubled with various diseases. And He cast out many devils."

(Mark 1:28,34)

#### HAIL MARY

"So you may know that the Son of Man has power on the earth to forgive sins, I say to you arise take up your bed and go home."

(Mark 2:10-11)

#### HAIL MARY

"Whoever shall not receive the Kingdom of God as a child shall not enter into it." (Mark 10:15)

#### HAIL MARY

"Do not worry, seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness." (Matthew 6:33)

#### HAIL MARY

"The Kingdom of God is within you." (Luke 17:21)

#### HAIL MARY

"Jesus breathed on them and said, 'Receive the Holy Spirit. Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; those sins that you shall retain are retained.'" (John 20:21-22)

#### HAIL MARY



## Chapter 31



### Jesus empowers His Disciples

#### Proof #8, Jesus passes on power in His Name

**The Mission and call of the Twelve Apostles** In those days he departed to the mountain to pray, and he spent the night in prayer to God. When day came, he called his disciples to himself, and from them he chose Twelve, whom he also named apostles: Simon, whom he named Peter, and his brother Andrew, James, John, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James the son of Alphaeus, Simon who was called a Zealot, and Judas the son of James, and Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor. (Luke 6:12-16)

**The Mission of the Twelve** “These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: “Go nowhere among the Gentiles, and enter no town of the Samaritans, but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. As you go, proclaim the good news, ‘The kingdom of heaven has come near.’ Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons. You received without payment; give without payment. Take no gold, or silver, or copper in your belts, no bag for your journey, or two tunics, or sandals, or a staff; for laborers deserve their food. Whatever town or village you enter, find out who in it is worthy, and stay there until you leave. As you enter the house, greet it. If the house is worthy, let your peace come upon it; but if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you. If anyone will not welcome you or listen to your words, shake off the dust from your feet as you leave that house or town. Truly I tell you, it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah on the day of judgment than for that town (Matthew 10:5-15). The Word of the Lord.

**Proof #8, Jesus passes on the miraculous power in His Name. No other world or religious leader had the power and none of them were able to pass it on in their name,** not Buddha, not Confucius, not Mohamed, only Jesus Christ our God, Him and none other.

## Chapter 32



### Mount of Beatitudes (Matthew 5-7)

#### “Proof #9” The Divine Wisdom of Jesus Christ

The Mount of Beatitudes is a very important mountain for Christians. God revealed the “Ten Commandments” to Moses on **Mount Sinai**. Jesus revealed the “Eight Beatitudes” which is the heart of the teachings of Jesus’ Gospel, here on the **Mount of Beatitudes**.

“Totally Yours” was able to be present here in the Jubilee year, when St. John Paul II visited the Holy Land. It had rained the night before and it was crowded because over 100,000 people showed up. There was a lot of mud but we found a dry place to stand right in front of the large speaker. When he delivered in his homily, the message of, “Know and live the “Ten Commandments” and the “Eight Beatitudes”, was very clear and it was so loud it was as if God Himself had thundered on Mount Sinai. I think Our Blessed Mother wanted me there so I would not forget that message, for that I am grateful. Praise the Lord!

**“Proof #9” is the teaching and wisdom of Jesus Christ that has stood the test of time.** The wisdom of Jesus Christ in His teaching is unmatched by any human being in history. As time goes on, we can find mistakes in even the smartest of people’s works and ideas. Jesus Christ is the perfect truth and His teaching has stood the test of time. No other world or religious leader had this truth and wisdom, not Buddha, not Confucius, not Mohamed, only Jesus Christ, Him and none other.



This is one of my favorite places in the Holy Land because it is so peaceful up here. This mountain provides such a beautiful view overlooking the Sea of Galilee that the land almost calls you to quiet

down and reflect on Jesus' words. This is a good place to pray the third Luminous Mystery "The Announcement of the Kingdom of God!" Also, while we are here, we will try and read the entire "Sermon on the Mount". We will split it up and read sections at different times.

### Chapter 5

**The Sermon on the Mount:** 1 When he saw the crowds, he went up the mountain, and after he had sat down, his disciples came to him. 2 He began to teach them, saying:

#### The Beatitudes

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

4 Blessed are they who mourn, for they will be comforted.

5 Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the land.

6 Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be satisfied.

7 Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.

8 Blessed are the clean of heart, for they will see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers for they will be called children of God.

10 Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

11 Blessed are you when they insult you and persecute you and utter every kind of evil against you [falsely] because of me. 12 Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great in heaven. Thus they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

#### The Similes of Salt and Light. 13

"You are the salt of the earth. But if salt loses its taste, with what can it be seasoned? It is no longer good for

anything but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot.[1] 14 You are the light of the world. A city set on a mountain cannot be hidden. 15 Nor do they light a lamp and then put it under a bushel basket; it is set on a lampstand, where it gives light to all in the house. 16 Just so, your light must shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your heavenly Father.

**Teaching About the Law.** 17 "Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets. I have come not to abolish but to fulfill. 18 Amen, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or the smallest part of a letter will pass from the law, until all things have taken place. 19 Therefore, whoever breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do so will be called least in the kingdom of heaven. But whoever obeys and teaches these commandments will be called greatest in the kingdom of heaven. 20 I tell you, unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter into the kingdom of heaven.

**Teaching About Anger.** 21 "You have heard that it was said to your ancestors, 'You shall not kill; and whoever kills will be liable to judgment.' 22 But I say to you, whoever is angry with his brother

will be liable to judgment, and whoever says to his brother, 'Raqa,' will be answerable to the Sanhedrin, and whoever says, 'You fool,' will be liable to fiery Gehenna. 23

Therefore, if you bring your gift to the altar, and there recall that your brother has anything against you, 24 leave your gift there at the altar, go first and be reconciled with your brother, and then come and offer your gift. 25 Settle with your opponent quickly while on the way to court with him. Otherwise your opponent will hand you over to the judge, and the judge will hand you over to the guard, and you will be thrown into prison. 26 Amen, I say to you, you will not be released until you have paid the last penny.

**Teaching About Adultery.** 27 "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.' 28 But I say to you, everyone who looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart. 29 If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one of your members than to have your whole body thrown into Gehenna. 30 And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one of your members than to have your whole body go into Gehenna.

**Teaching About Divorce.** 31 "It was also said, 'Whoever divorces his wife must give her a bill of divorce.' 32 But I say to you, whoever divorces his wife (unless the marriage is unlawful) causes her to commit adultery, and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.

**Teaching About Oaths.** 33 "Again you have heard that it was said to your ancestors, 'Do not take a false

oath, but make good to the Lord all that you vow.' 34 But I say to you, do not swear at all; not by heaven, for it is God's throne; 35 nor by the earth, for it is his footstool; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. 36 Do not swear by your head, for you cannot make a single hair white or black. 37 Let your 'Yes' mean 'Yes,' and your 'No' mean 'No.' Anything more is from the evil one.

**Teaching About Retaliation.** 38 "You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' 39 But I say to you, offer no resistance to one who is evil. When someone strikes you on [your] right cheek, turn the other one to him as well. 40 If anyone wants to go to law with you over your tunic, hand him your cloak as well. 41 Should anyone press you into service for one mile, go with him for two miles. 42 Give to the one who asks of you, and do not turn your back on one who wants to borrow.

**Love of Enemies.** 43 "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' 44 But I say to you, love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you, 45 that you may be children of your heavenly Father, for he makes his sun rise on the bad and the good, and causes rain to fall on the just and the unjust. 46 For if you love those who love you, what recompense will you have? Do not the tax collectors do the same? 47 And if you greet your brothers only, what is unusual about that? Do not the pagans do the same? 48 So be perfect, just as your heavenly Father is perfect.

**Chapter 6****Teaching About Almsgiving.** 1

“[But] take care not to perform righteous deeds in order that people may see them; otherwise, you will have no recompense from your heavenly Father. 2 When you give alms, do not blow a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets to win the praise of others. Amen, I say to you, they have received their reward. 3 But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right is doing, 4 so that your almsgiving may be secret. And your Father who sees in secret will repay you.

**Teaching About Prayer.** 5 “When you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, who love to stand and pray in the synagogues and on street corners so that others may see them. Amen, I say to you, they have received their reward. 6 But when you pray, go to your inner room, close the door, and pray to your Father in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will repay you. 7 In praying, do not babble like the pagans, who think that they will be heard because of their many words. 8 Do not be like them. Your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

**The Lord's Prayer.** “This is how you are to pray:

**Our Father in heaven,** hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done,

on earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread;  
and forgive us our debts,  
as we forgive our debtors;  
and do not subject us to the final test,

but deliver us from the evil one.

If you forgive others their transgressions, your heavenly Father will forgive you. But if you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your transgressions.

**Teaching About Fasting.** 16 “When you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites. They neglect their appearance, so that they may appear to others to be fasting. Amen, I say to you, they have received their reward. 17 But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, 18 so that you may not appear to others to be fasting, except to your Father who is hidden. And your Father who sees what is hidden will repay you.

**Treasure in Heaven.** 19 “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and decay destroy, and thieves break in and steal. 20 But store up treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor decay destroys, nor thieves break in and steal. 21 For where your treasure is, there also will your heart be.

**The Light of the Body.** 22 “The lamp of the body is the eye. If your eye is sound, your whole body will be filled with light; 23 but if your eye is bad, your whole body will be in darkness. And if the light in you is darkness, how great will the darkness be.

**God and Money.** 24 “No one can serve two masters. He will either hate one and love the other, or be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.

**Dependence on God.** 25 “Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat [or drink], or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? 26 Look at the birds in the sky; they do not sow or reap, they gather nothing into barns, yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are not you more important than they? 27 Can any of you by worrying add a single moment to your life-span? 28 Why are you anxious about clothes? Learn from the way the wild flowers grow. They do not work or spin. 29 But I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was clothed like one of them. 30 If God so clothes the grass of the field, which grows today and is thrown into the oven tomorrow, will he not much more provide for you, O you of little faith? 31 So do not worry and say, ‘What are we to eat?’ or ‘What are we to drink?’ or ‘What are we to wear?’ 32 All these things the pagans seek. Your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. 33 But seek first the kingdom [of God] and his righteousness,[s] and all these things will be given you besides. 34 Do not worry about tomorrow; tomorrow will take care of itself. Sufficient for a day is its own evil.

## Chapter 7

**Judging Others.** 1 “Stop judging, that you may not be judged. 2 For as you judge, so will you be judged, and the measure with which you measure will be measured out to you. 3 Why do you notice the splinter in your brother’s eye, but do not perceive the wooden beam in your own eye? 4 How can you say to your brother, ‘Let me remove that splinter from your eye,’ while the wooden beam is in your eye? 5 You hypocrite,

remove the wooden beam from your eye first; then you will see clearly to remove the splinter from your brother’s eye.

**Pearls Before Swine.** 6 “Do not give what is holy to dogs, or throw your pearls before swine, lest they trample them underfoot, and turn and tear you to pieces.

**The Answer to Prayers.** 7 “Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. 8 For everyone who asks, receives; and the one who seeks, finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened. 9 Which one of you would hand his son a stone when he asks for a loaf of bread, 10 or a snake when he asks for a fish? 11 If you then, who are wicked, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give good things to those who ask him.

**The Golden Rule.** 12 “Do to others whatever you would have them do to you. This is the law and the prophets.

**The Narrow Gate.** 13 “Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the road broad that leads to destruction, and those who enter through it are many. 14 How narrow the gate and constricted the road that leads to life. And those who find it are few.

**False Prophets.** 15 “Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but underneath are ravenous wolves. 16 By their fruits you will know them. Do people pick grapes from thorn bushes, or figs from thistles? 17 Just so, every good tree bears good fruit, and a rotten tree bears bad fruit. 18 A good tree

cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a rotten tree bear good fruit. 19 Every tree that does not bear good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire. 20 So by their fruits you will know them.

**The True Disciple.** 21 “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven. 22 Many will say to me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name? Did we not drive out demons in your name? Did we not do mighty deeds in your name?’ 23 Then I will declare to them solemnly, ‘I never knew you. Depart from me, you evildoers.’

of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock. 25 The rain fell, the floods came, and the winds blew and buffeted the house. But it did not collapse; it had been set solidly on rock. 26 And everyone who listens to these words of mine but does not act on them will be like a fool who built his house on sand. 27 The rain fell, the floods came, and the winds blew and buffeted the house. And it collapsed and was completely ruined.”

28 When Jesus finished these words, the crowds were astonished at his teaching, 29 for he taught them as one having authority, and not as their scribes.

**The Two Foundations.** 24 “Everyone who listens to these words

### **The Mount of Beatitudes:**

**Meghan: This is such a peaceful place. I loved imagining that Jesus was teaching us here.**

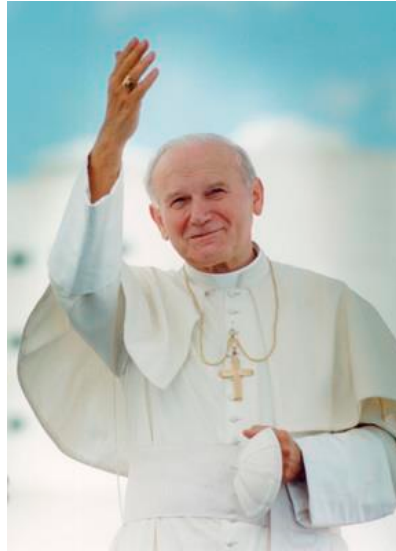
Being at this peaceful place allows us an opportunity to reflect on the underlying theme of all God’s covenants throughout history. God says, “We are created in the image and likeness of God.” At the heart of the “Ten Commandments” is “Thou Shalt Not Kill.” At the heart of the “Eight Beatitudes” is “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

Today the highly financed secularist movement is repeating over and over in the media, that all wars are because of religion. Another great thing St. John Paul II did when this movement was beating in the media drums, this “violence” accusation against God was to organize the first World Day of Prayer for Peace. It was held on October 27, 1986, in Assisi, Italy.



He said the leaders who gather do not believe in the same God so they could not “pray together”, but in respect for each other they could be “together in prayer”. All 160 religious leaders representing 32

Christian religious organizations and 11 other non-Christian world religions, made a statement that if you are using violence in God’s name, you are using God’s name in vain. “You are holding God hostage.” This seemed to greatly minimize the tension that was growing at that time. Saint John Paul II repeated that meeting in 1993 when troubles were erupting in former Yugoslavia. In 2011, Pope Benedict held a third meeting. In 2013, Pope Francis has called for a day of prayer and fasting and maybe he will repeat this meeting in our day.



**Ben: I loved Pope John Paul II.**

If people who are saturated with what the media is repeating today, ask them, “what religion was Hitler promoting, what religion was Stalin promoting, what religion was China’s Mao promoting when together they murdered well over 100 million people so they could be a tyrannical ruler?” It is not religion, it is control, greed and corruption in man’s heart that causes wars and violence. When people want to blame religion for violence, invite them to look closer at who stands to make much profit if they can get two religions to fight with each other.

Jesus Christ is the “King of Peace” without His Grace and Doctrine, we would be lost both in this world and in the next. Further, God has sent Our Lady time and time again to pray for peace.

**Meghan: Amen**



## Chapter 33: Multiplication of Loaves – (Matt 14) (Mark 6) (Luke 9) (John 6) (2 Kings 4:40-44)

### The Prophet Elisha + the Foreshadowing of the Eucharist

We are at the Church of the Multiplication of the Loaves and there are two points to highlight. Imagine that the Pharisees, Sadducees, and scribes were reading their 4000-year history in the Law, Psalms and Prophets (Old Testament) in the synagogues on the Sabbath.

#### **Meghan: What stories would they have been reading?**

The prophet Elisha performed some impressive miracles. Elisha took 20 **barley loaves** and said, “Give it to the people to eat.” “How can I set this before 100 men?” His servant asked. But Elisha said, “Give it to the people to eat. For this is what the Lord says.” “They will eat and have some left over.” Then he set it before them, and they ate and had some left over according to the Word of the Lord (2 Kings 4:40-44).

Jesus Christ performed many, many more miracles than all the prophets together throughout the entire Old Testament and Jesus' miracles were more



astounding than all of their miracles put together. So not only is Jesus going to feed 100 men with 20 barley loaves, He is going to feed 5000 families with 5 barley loaves and a few fish. They were so impressed with the miracle that they wanted to make Jesus an earthly king. Jesus refused that because His mission as Messiah and universal King of Kings was much greater than that. (John 6)

**Ben: Jesus is our hero Who tops them all.**

**The Feeding of the Five Thousand:** “The apostles gathered together with Jesus and reported all they had done and taught. He said to them, “Come away by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while.” People were coming and going in great numbers, and they had no opportunity even to eat. So, they went off in the boat by themselves to a deserted place. People saw them leaving and many came to know about it. They hastened there on foot from all the towns and arrived at the place before them” (Mark 6:30-33).

**Furthermore, the scriptures say,**

“When he disembarked and saw the vast crowd, his heart was moved with pity for them, for they were like sheep without a shepherd; and he began to teach them many things. By now it was already late and his disciples approached him and said, “This is a deserted place and it is already very late. Dismiss them so that they can go to the surrounding farms and villages and buy themselves something to eat.” He said to them in reply, “Give them some food yourselves.” But they said to him, “Are we to buy two hundred days’ wages worth of food and give it to them to eat?” He asked them, “How many loaves do you have? Go and see.” And when they had found out they said, “Five loaves and two fish.” So, he gave orders to have them sit down in groups on the green grass. The people took their places in rows by hundreds and by fifties. Then, taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he said the blessing, broke the loaves, and gave them to [his] disciples to set before the people; he also divided the two fish among them all. They all ate and were satisfied. And they picked up twelve wicker baskets full of fragments and what was left of the fish. Those who ate [of the loaves] were five thousand men (Mark 6:30-44).

**Ben: God is awesome!**

**Great Foreshadowing:** The second point about the Church of the Multiplication of the Loaves is that the great historic miracle not only took place here, but Jesus is also foreshadowing an even greater miracle, which is going to be the Holy Eucharist. The Holy Mass is sometimes called “The breaking of the bread”. When a Priest celebrates the Holy Mass, he can feed 5000 souls because Jesus Christ is miraculously present under the appearance of bread. The

Bread from Heaven multiplies, and we never run out as long as we have priests to consecrate the bread.

**Meghan:** Praise the Lord!

All four evangelists wrote about this miracle. Each added some unique details. St. Mark said they sat down in groups on the green grass. (100's and 50's)

St. John said what type of loaves they were. He said they were barley loaves. These are the same type of loaves that Elisha broke for 100 men.

The third point is detailed in John's gospel. How did the people react when they were filled by the loaves?

“They gathered up therefore and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of **the five barley loaves**, which remained over and above to them that had eaten.

Now those men, when they had seen what a miracle Jesus had done, said: This is of a truth the prophet, that is to come into the world.

Jesus therefore, when he knew that they would come to take him by force, and make him king, fled again into the mountain himself alone.

And when evening was come, his disciples went down to the sea” (John 6:13-16). The Word of the Lord.

This is a huge point. The multitude wanted to take Jesus and make Him an earthly king by force. They were so convinced that Jesus was the earthly messiah that they were looking for.

Jesus would have nothing to do with that, He has a much bigger mission than a petty earthly king. Jesus is going to reign in every heart.

Jesus fled again to the mountain up there and the apostles went on the boat down there.

## Chapter 34 - The Sea of Galilee Boat Ride



### Proof # 10 – Total Power over Nature.

Jesus Christ is God made flesh. He is perfect God and perfect Man, He is one person with two natures. The union cannot be separated. The Church uses a fancy word called “hypostatic union” to describe Jesus Christ. Some people identify with Jesus as God more than as a man. Others identify with Jesus as man more than as God.

So many people who already appreciate Him as God, come to understand Jesus as a man, when they come here to the sea of Galilee and take a boat ride.

**Ben: I think seeing the same sea that Jesus and getting into a little boat like Jesus did brings out His human nature.**

Taking a boat ride gives the impression that you are with Jesus. On the peaceful Sea of Galilee, as we see Jesus with the eyes of our heart on the boat, we will listen to the Word of God about the amazing things Jesus did on this lake.

There are a few stories regarding Jesus Christ and this beautiful Sea/Lake, but we will pick it up where we left off. Right after the multiplication, they wanted to make Jesus King. Jesus makes the disciples go into the boat and He flees up the mountain to pray. We will read what happened next.

**Jesus walks on the Water.** “Then he made the disciples get into the boat and precede him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. After doing so, he went up on the mountain by himself to pray. When it was evening he was there alone. Meanwhile the boat, already a few miles offshore, was being tossed about by the waves, for the wind was against it. During the fourth watch of the night, he came toward them, walking on the sea. When the disciples saw him walking on the sea they were terrified. “It is a ghost,” they said, and they cried out in fear. At once [Jesus] spoke to them, “Take courage, it is I; do not be afraid.” Peter said to him in reply, “Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water.” He said, “Come.” Peter got out of the boat and began to walk on the water toward Jesus. But

when he saw how [strong] the wind was he became frightened; and, beginning to sink, he cried out, "Lord, save me!" Immediately Jesus stretched out his hand and caught him, and said to him, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?" After they got into the boat, the wind died down. Those who were in the boat did him homage, saying, "Truly, you are the Son of God." (Matth.14:22-33)

**Ben: After that story and looking at the beautiful sea, I was asking Jesus to let me walk on the water with Him. My faith in Jesus power is increasing.**

Very good. You noticed that even though Peter sunk with the strong wind because of his little faith, you did not see any of the others volunteering to walk on water.

**The Catch of Fish.** "While the crowd was pressing in on Jesus and listening to the word of God, he was standing by the Lake of Gennesaret. He saw two boats there alongside the lake; the fishermen had disembarked and were washing their nets. Getting into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, he asked him to put out a short distance from the shore. Then he sat down and taught the crowds from the boat. After he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into deep water and lower your nets for a catch." Simon said in reply, "Master, we have worked hard all night and have caught nothing, but at your command I will lower the nets." When they had done this, they caught a great number of fish and their nets were tearing. They signaled to their partners in the other boat to come to help them. They came and filled both boats so that they were in danger of sinking. When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at the knees of Jesus and said, "Depart from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man." For astonishment at the catch of fish they had made seized him and all those with him, and likewise James and John, the sons of Zebedee, who were partners of Simon.

Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching men." When they brought their boats to the shore, they left everything and followed him" (Lk 5:1-11).

**The Calming of a Storm at Sea.** "Jesus said to them, "Let us cross to the other side." Leaving the crowd, they took him with them in the

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boat just as he was. And other boats were with him. A violent squall came up and waves were breaking over the boat, so that it was already filling up. Jesus was in the stern, asleep on a cushion. They woke him and said to him, “Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?” He woke up, rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, “Quiet! Be still!” The wind ceased and there was great calm. Then he asked them, “Why are you terrified? Do you not yet have faith?” They were filled with great awe and said to one another, “Who then is this whom even wind and sea obey?”” (Mark 4:35-41)

**“Proof #10” is the total power Jesus had over nature.** Miracles of the wind and sea obeying Jesus. The power of nature is so vast that this gets its own category. These miracles show the power of God. No other world or religious leader had any power over nature and Jesus' power was complete, not Buddha, not Confucius, not Mohamed, only Jesus Christ, Him and none other.



**Payment of the Temple Tax.** “When they came to Capernaum, the collectors of the temple tax approached Peter and said, “Doesn’t your teacher pay the temple tax?” “Yes,” he said. When he came into the house, before he had time to speak, Jesus asked him, “What is your opinion, Simon? From whom do the kings of the earth take tolls or census tax? From their subjects or from foreigners?” When he said, “From foreigners,” Jesus said to him, “Then the subjects are exempt. But that we may not offend them, go to the sea, drop in a hook, and take the first fish that comes up. Open its mouth and you will find a

coin worth twice the temple tax. Give that to them for me and for you”” (Matthew 17:24-27).

**Meghan: This is beautiful here. I can really picture Jesus as a person with us in this boat on the lake.**

**Christianity is designed to be shared.**

We mentioned how the land itself speaks to you. Now that you saw both seas, the arid Dead Sea and this beautiful Sea of Galilee, they speak to us about Christianity. Jesus said, “Let anyone who is thirsty come to me, and let the one who believes in me drink. As the scripture has said, ‘Out of the believer’s heart shall flow rivers of living water.’” Now he said this about the Spirit, (John 7:37-39)

The Jordon River flows into this Sea of Galilee and the Sea embraces it. On the south side it gives the Jordon River, so it flows throughout the Holy Land. Life is abundant here with fish, birds and green plants and all is beautiful.

The Dead Sea also embraces the Jordon River, but it does not give back and keeps it all to itself. It gets bigger, but the salts build up and kills everything. The selfishness leads to death.

We drink the Living Waters, the Holy Spirit from Jesus. If we share Jesus with others, we are like the Sea of Galilee. We will be all beautiful and full of life. If we do not share Jesus/Christianity with our neighbor, we become like the Dead Sea. It is in giving that we receive.

While we are here on this boat with Jesus on this beautiful Sea of Galilee, let us promise the Lord we will always share Jesus out of love for others, so our souls will remain beautiful like this sea.

**Ben: Amen.**

## Chapter 35 Capernaum



### The Bread of Life (Eucharist) – Synagogue - The most important

**Capernaum** means town of mercy. It was Jesus' home base while He Evangelized. Peter's mother-in-law lived there and Matthew the tax collector worked there.

**Do you want your soul to live forever?**

**Meghan: YES!**

The Catholics understanding and importance of the greatest gift which is the Eucharist was explained here in this synagogue in Capernaum.



While my niece was in college, she was dating a non-Catholic. They had discussions and arguments about the Catholic faith. She was not sure how to answer so her dad said, “ask Uncle Guy”. She warned me that he was very intelligent and an arguer. In emails, he shared his objections.

First, I confirmed our common ground, we both love Jesus and we believe the Bible is the Word of God.

Regarding the questions about the “Popes”, I sent him the “Keys to the



Kingdom” presentation about Matthew 16 that we heard in Caesarea Philippi. (Chapter 21) He was surprisingly silent and my niece said



that he wanted to hear about the Eucharist before he responded. So, I emailed him our visit to the Synagogue in Capernaum.

To the objection: “The Catholics take literally (John 6:24-72) to eat Jesus flesh and drink His Blood when Jesus said at the end of the discourse, “that the flesh profits nothing, the words I have spoken to you are spirit and life.” (John 6:64) Therefore, Catholics should take the Eucharist as a symbolic and not literal.

As discussed, there is an interpretation difference on the Eucharist. We have the same Bible, but scriptures are interpreted differently. These miss interpretations can happen when things are taken out of context. Let us look at the Eucharist in context and consider who it is that is speaking and who Jesus is talking to.

**Meghan: That sounds good to me, I hear the same argument.**

The Church teaches that the Eucharist, the Bread of Life is Jesus Christ Himself, alive, under the appearance of bread.

What happened here in the synagogue of Capernaum is that Jesus Christ gave the most important teaching for us Catholics out of all His teachings. Let us take a close look at (John 6). Who is Jesus audience? The ones He is speaking to heard Jesus' “Sermon on the Mount” (Matthew 5, 6 and 7). They witnessed Jesus perform many miracles, the sick are cured, the lame could walk, demons are cast out, the blind could see, the dead are raised. These people just finished eating from the multiplication of the loaves and they wanted to make Jesus king. Now they are coming into the synagogue.

The one speaking is God made flesh. The ones listening were not the hard hearted Pharisees, but people who wanted to make Jesus Christ an earthly king. In this setting, Jesus, the Son of God, is going to give us the most important doctrine out of all His doctrines for especially for Catholics. It is also a very clear doctrine but it is also very difficult. It is the most difficult doctrine, the teaching that the Holy Communion is Jesus Christ and it is not just a symbol. So we're going to listen to that closely as we will go into the synagogue.

**(Part 1, Jesus the Bread of Life John 6:25-41.)**

25 When they found him on the other side of the lake, they asked him, “Rabbi, when did you get here?”

26 Jesus answered, “Very truly I tell you, you are looking for me, not because you saw the signs I performed but because you ate the loaves and had your fill. 27 Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. For on him God the Father has placed his seal of approval.”

28 Then they asked him, “What must we do to do the works God requires?” Jesus answered, “The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent.” So, they asked him, “What sign then will you give that we may see it and believe you? What will you do? Our ancestors ate manna in the wilderness; as it is written: ‘He gave them bread from heaven to eat.’”

32 Jesus said to them, “Very truly I tell you, it is not Moses who has given you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. 33 For the bread of God is the bread that comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.” “Sir,” they said, “always give us this bread.”

35 Then Jesus declared, “**I am the bread of life.** Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty. But as I told you, you have seen me and still you do not believe. All those the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away. For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me. And this is the will of him who sent me that I shall lose none of all those he has given me, but raise them up at the last day. For my Father’s will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day.”

41 At this the Jews there began to grumble about him **because he said, “I am the bread that came down from heaven.”** 42 They said, “Is this not Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How can he now say, ‘I came down from heaven’?”

**(Commentary) Jesus Beginning to tell them**

You see, Jesus is starting to tell them about the Eucharist and eternal life. He said, "I am the Bread of Life." Remember Jesus said, "because you have seen Me (and the miracles), but I could tell a lot of you don't believe". Right away they are grumbling. Why are they grumbling? Because they are understanding Jesus literally. Look how Jesus clarifies the matter. Keep track at how many times Jesus repeats this teaching as we hear what happened from the Gospel reading:

**(Part 2, Jesus the Bread of Life. John 6:43-52)**

43 "Stop grumbling among yourselves," Jesus answered. "No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws them, and I will raise them up at the last day. It is written in the Prophets: 'They will all be taught by God.' Everyone who has heard the Father and learned from him comes to me. No one has seen the Father except the one who is from God; only he has seen the Father. Very truly I tell you, **the one who believes has eternal life. I am the bread of life.** Your ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness, yet they died. But here is the bread that comes down from heaven, which anyone may eat and not die. **I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats this bread will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.**"

52 Then the Jews began to argue sharply among themselves, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?"

### Jesus clarifies the teaching

As we pick it up again, now, Jesus is telling them about the Holy Communion that the Church is going to give us. "I am the Bread of Life." They start murmuring because they couldn't grasp it. What does He do then? He says it again. Even more clear. "I AM THE BREAD OF LIFE." If you want eternal life, you have to eat this Bread from Heaven. Upon reading it, we can see how they are digesting that whole concept. It's not so easy. Even today, it's not so easy... after 2000 years this teaching can only be grasped with the eyes of faith. (So, we will pick it up from vs. 52 – 59) **And just ask yourself, is Jesus making it clear enough?** That's the question that we have to ask. Is the Word of God clear enough that Jesus is the Bread of Life? Has Jesus Christ repeated any other doctrine over and over so many times?

### **(Part 3, Jesus the Bread of Life. John 6:53-59)**

53 Jesus said to them, "Very truly I tell you, **unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you.** 54

Whoever **eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life**, and I will raise them up at the last day. 55 **For my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink.** 56

**Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in them.** 57 Just as the living Father sent me and I live because of the Father, so **the one who feeds on me will live because of me.** 58

This is the bread that came down from heaven. Your ancestors ate manna and died, but **whoever feeds on this bread will live forever.**" 59 He said this while teaching in the synagogue in Capernaum.

### **Jesus repeats the clarification**

We notice that they are quarreling among themselves and still can't grasp this teaching. They're saying, "No" and questioning amongst themselves, "how can Jesus give us His flesh to eat?" So Jesus says it again, the 4th time and.....the 5th time! "I am the Bread of Life." He also says this a 4th and 5th time ....I paraphrase, "Eat My flesh to live forever." You know that big sign your ancestors received, the manna from Heaven, well they are all dead. If you want to live forever, this is the Bread to eat. They are really struggling with this teaching. We will see how much they are struggling with it in the last part, in the conclusion of the readings..... He's going to clarify it one more time.

### **(Part 4, Jesus the Bread of Life. John 6:60-71)**

#### **Many Disciples Desert Jesus**

60 On hearing it, many of his disciples said, "This is a hard teaching. Who can accept it?"

61 Aware that his disciples were grumbling about this, Jesus said to them, "Does this offend you? 62 Then what if you see the Son of Man ascend to where he was before! 63 The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you—they are full of the Spirit and life. 64 Yet there are some of you who do not believe." For Jesus had known from the beginning which of them did not believe and who would betray him. 65 He went on to say, "This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless the Father has enabled them."

66 From this time many of his disciples turned back and no longer followed him. 67 "You do not want to leave too, do you?" Jesus asked the Twelve. 68 Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. 69 We have come to believe and to know that you are the Holy One of God." 70 Then Jesus replied, "Have I not chosen you, the Twelve? Yet one of you is a devil!" 71 (He meant Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, who, though one of the Twelve, was later to betray him.)

**The response of many**

When Jesus said; “My Words are Spirit and Life”, does that nullify the five times he said to eat His Flesh and drink His Blood, and now He is saying it is only a symbol? Since when is the Spirit a symbol? Since when is life a symbol?

Alright, so He says it again and again, and still, what happens? It was so clear, that what do they do? They're all leaving Him! The whole time they had been following Him, He had been explaining things to them and answering their questions and He doesn't take the opportunity here to say, “hey, you guys, this is just a symbol.” Here, let Me explain it to you. No, no you don't understand, I'm just talking symbolically.” So why did they leave Jesus?

**Meghan: Because they understood that Jesus really did mean it was His Flesh and Blood that we have to eat to live forever.**

Yes, they knew exactly what He was talking about, He was saying, “this is the true Bread from Heaven. This is My Body & Blood and the bread will literally be Me. And if you want eternal life then this is what you have to do.” Sadly, they were all walking away and many of His own disciples said this was the hardest doctrine for them so they left Him too (John 6:60). Look at how much faith Jesus Christ exacts from His disciples, Jesus let them walk away! Faith is very important. We always have to be humble and ask for faith.

Jesus then turns to the twelve. Only the twelve apostles are left. Picture the large crowds of people who saw all the miracles...they heard this doctrine about the Holy Communion...and whoosh...they're all leaving. Jesus turns to the twelve apostles, and He says, “Are you going to leave Me too?” And what does Peter do? You could tell he doesn't “get it” either. What does he say though? “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.” He was saying, I don't get it, but we know you are God, we know you are the Messiah. We are going to hang in there, we will understand eventually.

**What did the Apostles eventually understand?** When Jesus says flesh and blood, the Greek translation actually means to chew. How could this be? It sounds like cannibalism.

**Meghan: So, what is Jesus talking about regarding The Bread of Life?** When Jesus said the flesh counts for nothing, He means that we are not eating Jesus' toes or fingers, but **Jesus Christ is ALIVE** under the appearance of bread.

**Meghan:** Praise the Lord!

**Jesus the Bridegroom.** It is such a beautiful teaching from Jesus. Can we borrow one of the married couples who renewed their marriage vows in Cana? We will bring you right in the middle of the synagogue here. Please face each other. Holy Communion can be properly understood by watching this couple. The groom is going to be Jesus and the bride is going to represent the whole Church.

**Remember the great John the Baptist revealed Jesus as the Bridegroom,** when he said “the best man rejoices when the bridegroom arrives” (John 3:29). Also, St. Paul exclaimed this great mystery in Ephesians chapter five.

When Jesus rose from the dead, the room was locked. All of a sudden, Jesus walks thru the door and He says, “Peace be with you.” He was just there and now Jesus wants to take His throne. Where is His desired throne

located? Jesus wants to go into our hearts. He could come invisibly if He wanted to, but that is not the will of God. He is going to come in physically and the two of us are going to become one flesh, and Jesus will take the



throne of your heart. When we receive Holy Communion, it is actually the living Jesus Christ under the appearance of bread.

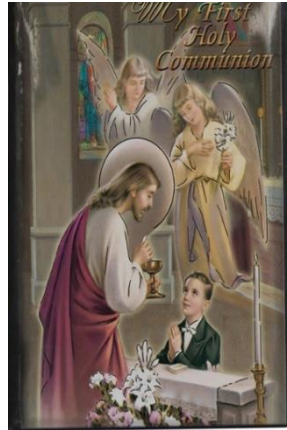
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So give her a hug then. When you are receiving Holy Communion, you are giving God a hug. And when God hugs you, its boom! When you receive Jesus, boom! He takes the throne of your heart. The two become one flesh. Marriage foreshadows what happens between us and God in Holy Communion.

**Meghan: I think I understand. Jesus is wonderful.**

### Upon leaving the synagogue

A little last thing on Communion with Jesus. When I talk with non-Catholics or Muslims or Buddhists, I ask them, “Do you guys even dream of something like that? Do you dream that God would physically come into your body and live in your heart”? Thomas Aquinas says that for 15 minutes, His Body is in there. Again you two are becoming one flesh for 15 whole minutes, the grace remains after. “Do you guys even dream that you could have this kind of intimacy with God?”



**Ben: How do they reply?**

They all looked at each other and responded, “No we don’t even dream of something like that.” Let them know that when they are ready to dream big, they can become good Catholics. So, again, the Church teaches that the Eucharist (Body and Blood) is the source and summit of our faith (Lumen Gentium, 11 (Dogmatic Constitution on the Church)) (CCC #1324); (Canon 897).

**Ben: I like to dream big. I am glad that I am a Catholic. Jesus is so awesome that I wish I could share Him with the whole world.**

**Meghan: How do we prepare to receive Jesus.**

We read the Bible, so we get to know Jesus Who is going to come into our heart. All the Sacraments like Confession; we take that to purify our hearts so we could receive Jesus.



Do you remember the sand mediation on the beach?



**Ben: Yes.**

At the end of our earthly pilgrimage we finally embrace that eternal moment when we come to God at the throne of grace and meet Him face to face... What's going to happen when we enter Heaven? The Beatific Vision is where we not only see God, but we do the same thing as we have been doing all along, we give Him an embrace, an eternal embrace where we two become one forever. We possess God that is actually what Beatific Vision really means. Remember, it is the eternal "WWWWWOOOOOOOWWWW" There is no better way to build up our treasure in Heaven and prepare us for our eternal embrace from God than receiving Him frequently in Holy Communion. Jesus taught this teaching right here in the synagogue.

**Ben: Wow, I have been taking the Holy Communion for granted.**

What we want to do is say a little prayer for all of us to increase our faith in the Eucharist. Because as we look out at the thousands of protestant denominations that say they have the bible and that is all they need, even though they have the bible, they will not interpret it this way. They say, "No! That teaching is too hard. It is too good to be true."

Is it clear enough? Is it the Word of God? Well yeah, but it's too hard so they don't want to read that part and they walk away. It's sad but they walk away even though they don't have to. We had some non-Catholics who came on a pilgrimage and they received the grace to recognize Jesus in the breaking of the bread. They almost busted down the door to become Catholic after that. Many protestant believers are usually much more devout than the average Catholic because they appreciate what the Word of God is saying. I like to say that we as Catholics have some things we need to share with them and we also have some things we can learn from them too.

**Meghan: I would like to share Jesus' life giving food to the world.**

Jesus talked about the Bread of Life discourse right here as John 6 describes. Jesus actually gives His flesh and blood to the apostles at the Last Supper (Matthew 26), (Mark 14), (Luke 22), when He institutes the Eucharist. We will be visiting the place where that happened in a few days.

**Ben: We do not seem to get too excited about Jesus in the Eucharist back home.**

**They took a poll, 80% of the Catholics**, even those who go to Church on Sunday, **don't know that that's God under the appearance of bread.** I grew up Catholic and I did not know that it was God under the appearance of bread until I went on a pilgrimage. There's a diabolic confusion that goes on. They think it's some kind of a symbol....this...or this...or this. They have all different definitions. Unfortunately, they do not prepare and they do not achieve that personal relationship that Jesus Christ is offering. That is why we have to dream big and evangelize all those people who do not even come to Church and hear the Priest. In your lives, you know the people God is placing in your path, your family members, your friends in the workplace and even the Buddhist's who all need to hear the good news. They are looking for the Bread from Heaven and it is right here in our Church. Jesus died for us out of Love and we are called to Love. He prayed, "Father, as I am in you and you are in Me, I pray that they may be one in us" (John 17:21).

One of the most Loving things we can do is to lead someone to a personal relationship with God and it doesn't get any more personal than the Eucharist ie, Holy Communion. We are called to help so let us say an Our Father and when we get to our daily bread we will know what God is referring to. In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, Amen. "Our Father.."

## Chapter 36 - Caesarea Philippi



### **Peter the first Pope and The Keys to the Kingdom! (Matthew 16)**

Alright pilgrims! We are here in Caesarea Philippi, the northern part of Israel. This is a very beautiful and one of the most important places in history, especially for Catholics. A very unique doctrine was clearly revealed here. There is going to be a quiz at the end of the pilgrimage, on the scriptures. If there is no other scripture quotes that you remember at the end of the trip, we want you to remember this one. Mathew 16. Think sweet 16. It is very important. This is what differentiates Catholics from all other protestant religions. This is the place where Jesus Christ gave Simon Peter the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven fulfilling Isaiah 22.

**Meghan: Matthew 16, huh.**

*“When Jesus went into the region of Caesarea Philippi he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?” They replied, “Some say John the Baptist, others Elijah, still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.””* PAUSE.

Everyone has an opinion about how to interpret who Jesus is and what He wants from us. Are they right or wrong?

**Ben: They were all wrong.**

*“He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” Simon Peter said in reply, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.” Jesus said to him in reply, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah. For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my heavenly Father. And so, I say to you, you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of the netherworld shall not prevail against it.”* PAUSE.

Every organization in the world has a visible leader who makes decisions and this is good because otherwise there would be total chaos. A ship has a....**“Captain!”** A school has a.... **“Principal!”**

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A Sports teams has a.....**Coach!** A company will have a  
.....**“CEO!”** Even our country has a....**“President!”**

Every organization has a visible leader who can make decisions, or you will have total chaos. Now when Jesus Christ the son of God started His Church, He showed no less prudence. He wanted to make sure it would be good for all times. When He started the Church, He gave us what is called, God given authority. So, what does He do? When something important is about to happen, a new role or a new call God makes a change. For example, In the Old Testament, God changed Abraham's name. Abraham was originally called Abram. God changed his name to Abraham to tell him, He is going to make something new....Father of many. In the New Testament, Simon, actually means a reed, it means something that blows in the wind. Jesus, our God, is going to change his name to Rock. The Gospel of John and writings of St. Paul use the Aramaic word “Cephas”, which means big rock. And he said it right in front of here, look at the big rock. Upon this rock, I am going to build My Church. So, who's Church?

**Meghan: “Jesus's Church.”**

“The universal or Catholic Church.” And the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it.

**Ben: I see the big rock in the background. That is a nice effect.**

***“I will give you the keys to the kingdom of heaven. Whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.”*** (Matthew 16:13-19) (Isaiah 22)

Would you give the keys to your house or your car to just anyone?

**Meghan: Nope. I would be afraid to give them away. The person would get control.**

Now Jesus does something different here when he says, “I give you Simon Peter, the Keys” (Pull out your keys, jingle them as a visual). Now is He giving the keys to the carpenter shop? Is he giving the keys to the chariot? No. Jesus said, “I am going to give you the Keys to the Kingdom of Heaven.” And He goes on to say, “what you bind on earth shall be bound in Heaven, and what you loose on earth, shall

be loosed in Heaven.” It is God given authority that He is bestowing on Peter.

Once again, when was the last time you gave your house keys to just anybody? “Here are the keys to my house!” To anyone walking by would you say here are the keys to my car?” When you give someone your keys you entrust them with the responsibility to take care of your house or your car. What is Jesus Christ giving the man, Peter? (Pull out keys, jingle them as a visual). He is giving him the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven and by doing so



He is establishing an office that has God given authority. The Papal office and Pope Francis is the 265th Successor of St. Peter, which means the office has remained an unbroken line of successors since the day Jesus handed the keys to Peter.

Some people object by saying, “Oh he is just a man.” Well, Moses was a man, but the people had to follow him, because God appointed him in that role. Abraham was a man. Isaac was a man. Jacob was a man. Joshua was a man. They were all men that were chosen by God to lead the people of God. The lineage of Matthew and Luke can be tracked from Jesus going all the way back to Abraham and even Adam. Today we have a lineage that goes from Jesus all the way to Pope Francis. God respects that lineage.

So, we praise the Lord, and remember, you are going to get your quiz at the end of the trip. What Scripture quote was that?....

**Meghan: “Matthew Chapter 16!”** Praise the Lord!

### **Moving Closer to the Big Rock**

We are going to walk closer to the Big Rock to point out one more amazing thing. Remember how the Old Testament foreshadows the New Testament, and the journey through the desert reflects our Christian journey. To review, parting the Red Sea foreshadows

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**Baptism**, being nourished on manna bread foreshadows the true bread from heaven the **Eucharist**, and they were on the way to the Promised Land which foreshadows **Heaven**.

The Israelites were in the desert. Where did they get water to drink? Moses struck the rock and water came right out of the rock and the people could drink.

To understand how Jesus fulfilled this allegorical level in the Word of God, we are going to look at two scriptures. David said: "The Lord is my rock," (2 Samuel 22:2). In the New Testament, John, Chapter 10, Jesus says, "Come to Me all you who are thirsty and drink, for within him flows rivers of living water." John says He is talking about the Holy Spirit. Put them together and Jesus is the rock and the water is the Holy Spirit. Jesus calls His representative or vicar the Pope, "The Rock," and the Holy Spirit flows out of the Church.



The amazing part is look here where this water is coming from. It is a spring coming right out of the Big Rock here in Caesarea Philippi. This

is part of three springs. Right where Jesus named Peter, Cephas or Big Rock, that is the start of the Jordan River which is the water source for the entire Holy Land. It starts here, and it flows to the Sea of Galilee and ends up in the Dead Sea.

**Ben: Absolutely Amazing!**

Our amazing God helps us to understand the nourishment of the Spirit. Our soul gets its nourishment from the sacraments of the Church. As water goes through this rock, the Spirit goes through the church. Isn't God amazing! Praise the Lord!

Ezekiel 47 describes a miraculous growing river of water coming out of the temple. This image confirms the Catholic Church with the Holy Spirit.

**Meghan: Yes, I remember reading that and I did not know what it meant until I saw this rock with the water coming out.**

I know someone who is a Lutheran and he told me that he did not think this was a proper interpretation. I asked him, "If you were Matthew and you wanted to make it clear that Jesus was starting a Church and appoint a successor, how could you rewrite Matthew 16 to make it **even clearer**?" He looked at Matthew 16, saw the words Rock and Keys, and after a while of trying to change some words he said, "You can't it is already very clear!" I smiled and asked him, "Does that mean you are going to become Catholic?" He paused and then said "NO!" and ran away and would never talk about the bible with me again. So, it is more than just knowledge that will bring unity, we need much grace from Heaven for conversions. That is another reason why we pray. Remember we will have that quiz at the end of the trip. When we answer, we can imagine Jesus looking us in the eyes and asking, "Who do you say that I am?"

**Side note: Look as we depart the park area and see the ruins across the street.**

There are some ruins of a Catholic Church that use to be here until the 6-day war. The population went from 120,000 down to around 5000. Unfortunately, the Church was destroyed and the statue of St. Peter with the keys were taken away from the shrine area. The Israeli government controls this spot and people talk about the pagan god of panis instead of unity in Jesus Church.

**Ben: I guess it is a battle to share the faith, but I want to drink and share the living water with others.**

## Chapter 37 - Primacy of Peter Church



### **Proof #11 is the Infallibility of the Church's teaching.**

**Do you love Me? Feed My Sheep!** We are here at the Primacy of St. Peter Church and this is where Jesus said three times to Simon Peter, “Feed My Sheep!” Although Jesus made St. Peter the visible head of the Church, (Jesus is the invisible head), **he gave the disciples the power to do all the great miracles in His Name.** (Mark 16:17) Did anyone else pass on visible supernatural power in His Name?

**Ben: No. No one ever!**

Correct. Not Buddha, not Confucius, not Mohamed, only Jesus Christ, Him and none other.

In Caesarea Philippi, in front of the big rock with the stream gushing out of the rock, is when Jesus promises to give Peter the keys of the Kingdom. Jesus did not give them yet because He was still leading, teaching, forming and journeying with them around Galilee. Peter had a lot of his ups and downs and he even ended up sinking in the water at one time when he stepped out of his boat. (Matthew 14)

We remember just before the Crucifixion Jesus told Peter, “you will deny Me three times before the cock crows” (Matthew 26:34). Peter ended up denying Jesus three times in front of a **charcoal fire** where Peter was warming himself. Jesus even told him, “you will deny Me three times before the cock crows.” There was a charcoal fire, and the maid asked him, and Peter said, “I don't even know the man.” (Luke 22:60)

**Meghan: You point out a specific detail of the charcoal fire.**

The last thing that happens before the Ascension is at the very end of John's Gospel, chapter 21. That was this spot here. Jesus had just performed another miracle by filling their nets with fish after they had been fishing all night with no catch. Jesus is cooking fish before another **charcoal fire** and Jesus asks Simon Peter three times, “do



you love Me? And Jesus says to him each time, “Feed My sheep”. We think of the three denials.

“Simon Peter said to them, “I am going fishing.” They said to him, “We also will come with you.” So they went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing. <sup>4</sup> When it was already dawn, Jesus was standing on the shore; but the disciples did not realize that it was Jesus. <sup>5</sup> Jesus said to them, “Children, have you caught anything to eat?” They answered him, “No.” <sup>6</sup> So he said to them, “Cast the net over the right side of the boat and you will find something.” So they cast it, and were not able to pull it in because of the number of fish. <sup>7</sup> So the disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, “It is the Lord.” When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he tucked in his garment, for he was lightly clad, and jumped into the sea. <sup>8</sup> The other disciples came in the boat, for they were not far from shore, only about a hundred yards, dragging the net with the fish. <sup>9</sup> When they climbed out on shore, they saw a **charcoal fire** with fish on it and bread. <sup>10</sup> Jesus said to them, “Bring some of the fish you just caught.” <sup>11</sup> So Simon Peter went over and dragged the net ashore full of one hundred fifty-three large fish. Even though there were so many, the net was not torn. <sup>12</sup>

Jesus said to them, “Come, have breakfast.”



And none of the disciples dared to ask him, “Who are you?” because they realized it was the Lord. <sup>13</sup> Jesus came over and took the bread and gave it to them, and in like manner the fish. <sup>14</sup> This was now the third time Jesus was revealed to his disciples after being raised from the dead.” The Word of the Lord.

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We have to admire Peter's zeal to get close to Jesus. When he hears John say, "It is the Lord!" Peter jumps out of the boat and swims to shore.

**Jesus and Peter.** <sup>15</sup> When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, <sup>[i]</sup> "Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you." He said to him, "Feed my lambs."<sup>16</sup> He then said to him a second time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you." He said to him, "Tend my sheep." <sup>17</sup> He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" Peter was distressed that he had said to him a third time, "Do you love me?" and he said to him, "Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you." [Jesus] said to him, "Feed my sheep. <sup>18</sup> Amen, amen, I say to you, when you were younger, you used to dress yourself and go where you wanted; but when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go." <sup>19</sup> He said this signifying by what kind of death he would glorify God. And when he had said this, he said to him, "Follow me"" (John 21:3-19). The Word of the Lord.

Now the three times. Peter says, "I love you, I love you, I love you". Jesus says, "feed My sheep". Earlier in John's gospel, Jesus said, I am the Good Shepherd. My sheep hear My voice and follow Me (John 10:3). Jesus said there should be one-fold and one Shepherd (John 10:16).

When Jesus is saying feed My sheep, He is making Peter His successor also as the Good Shepherd who fills the office of Peter, the first Pope, and he is called the Vicar of Christ.... Christ's representative.

**Ben: I hear some people say the name Peter, comes from Greek and it means Petros, the little stone, and therefore we don't have to follow him, we will just do our own thing and interpret the Bible as we see fit.**

However, St. John was careful to use the word "Cephas" in his translation (John 1:42) and so did St. Paul (1 Cor 15:5). Jesus didn't

He spoke Greek, which is Petros. He spoke Aramaic, so the actual word that the Lord used was Cephas.

Just like the big boulder was there in St. Caesarea Philippi. That is what Cephas means, the big rock, not the little stone. We believe the Lord is my Rock and my Salvation (Psalm 18:2). Jesus chooses His Successor. Jesus Christ is Who the Popes get their authority and power from. It is God given authority.

**Ben: I will remember that. Cephas, Big Rock.**

When the Rock gives us a Vicar of Christ, a representative who He calls a big Rock, and he gives him the keys of the kingdom of Heaven, and says,



“what you bind on earth is bound in Heaven” (Matthew 16:18). We praise the Lord for that. He makes it crystal clear who is going to be His representative.

**Meghan: Praise the Lord. Now, there is no confusion.**

At the end of John's gospel, Jesus talked about other men who would lead St. Peter where he would not want to go, signifying the death that would glorify the Lord (John 21:18) The Word of the Lord.

**Meghan: How did Peter die?**

St. Peter eventually went to Rome, and then he was crucified upside down at the Circus Maximus and buried there on Vatican Hill, which now the Vatican and is St. Peter's Basilica, built directly over St. Peter's tomb.

Pope Francis is the 265th successor of St. Peter. There is a board here that shows the names of all 266 popes. Praise the Lord that God appointed someone who can clarify the authoritative interpretation of

the Sacred Scriptures. The Pope does not have to be the smartest, the strongest, the richest, the best speaker. Peter was not any of these. Peter was chosen by God and has an office. It gives glory to God to follow the Pope, because he is the Vicar of Christ. Amen.

**Ben: Some people complain: “There have been some bad Popes,”**

They will site three to five questionable examples and then justify their behavior of disobedience. That is 3 to 5 out of 266. In the Old Testament, less than 10% of the leaders were good and the people had to obey them. Today, the good Popes were 261 out of 266, that is over 98% good. The batting average went way up through the grace of Jesus Christ and the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

**Meghan: The percentage of good leaders did go way up with the grace of Jesus. What about the ones who commit sin?**

Everyone sins. The miraculous gift of Papal **infallibility** means the Holy Spirit will not allow the Pope to **teach against faith and morals**. The Popes **do not** receive the gift of impeccability, where they are perfect in every way. The faithful must pray for them.

**Meghan: OK. We will help by praying for the Pope.**

One could go into a church and it is not too uncommon to hear a homily from a priest and it could have an error of faith or morals. An amazing fact is that with all the writings of the 266 Popes, not one error in faith or morals has been made. What a gift from the Holy Spirit. Praise the Lord! Pray for and follow God's vicar the Pope.

**Proof #11 is the Infallibility of the Church's teaching. With 2000 years of experience. All the teachings of the Church, although there have been numerous accusations against the teachings of the Popes, after the dust settles for 50 or 100 years, there has not been one error in faith and morals proclaimed by a Pope.**

**Meghan: Amen. Will it always be this way.**

Jesus said; “The gates of hell will not prevail against her.” However, this lesson is important because the scriptures predict that before Jesus comes again, the anti-Christ will come. First there will come a

great falling away from the faith. (2Thes 2) This means a great number of people will be deceived to break off from the Vicar of Christ the Pope. The Prince of this World, will most likely spread evil propaganda, known as fake news to poison the hearts of the people. In 1937 Pope Pius XI writes an encyclical letter on Atheistic Communism and describes the coming "Fake News".

*#17. There is another explanation for the rapid diffusion of the Communistic ideas now seeping into every nation, great and small,, This explanation is to be found in a propaganda so truly diabolical that the world has perhaps never witnessed its like before... It has at its disposal great financial resources,,, and countless trained workers. It makes use of pamphlets and reviews, of cinema, theater, and radio, of schools and even universities. Little by little it penetrates into all classes of the people and even reaches the better-minded groups of the community, with the result that few are aware of the poison which increasingly pervades their minds and hearts.*

**Ben: That sounds like today! Let's get under Our Lady's mantle.**

**Meghan: I am always sticking with the Vicar of Christ the Pope.**

## Chapter 38 - Mount Tabor

### Climbing the mountain of the Lord.

### Proof #12, God the Father's voice!



The top of Mount Tabor overlooks the beautiful Jezreel Valley or **Valley of Armageddon**. It is an inspiring place to pray the scriptures of the Transfiguration that took place on this mountain. When you are up on a mountain, all the world looks so small down below. Our problems look smaller. Our God seems closer. Praise the Lord!

#### **Meghan: What a view up here!**

When Jesus Christ decided to do a private retreat with Peter James and John, He led them up this high mountain to pray (Luke 9:28). Jesus was transfigured, and brilliant glow of white light exuded from Him. Moses and Elijah appeared, and the three apostles witnessed it.



God the Father spoke to them and said, “This is My beloved Son, listen to Him” (Mark 9:6). Peter replied, “Master, how good it is that we are here” (Luke 9:33)!

The “**Proof #12**” that Jesus Christ is God is **God Himself spoke directly to His people (witnesses) here and said; “This is My Beloved Son in Whom I am well pleased, Listen to Him” (Matthew 17:5). God speaking** about Jesus happened three times. God not only spoke here in on top of Mount Tabor with a loud voice from Heaven, but also when Jesus was baptized at the Jordan River by John the Baptist (Matthew 3:17) and again at the Temple in Jerusalem (John 12:28). No other world or religious leader had God's voice from Heaven speak **directly to witnesses to confirm Who He Is.** Not Buddha, not Confucius, not Mohamed, only Jesus Christ our God, Him and none other. **Ben: This is true. Praise the Lord!**

Later on Peter said; “For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we had been eyewitnesses of his majesty” (2 Peter 1:16).

Mount Tabor is about 11 miles west of the Sea of Galilee and is almost 2000 feet high and this is the place the Lord removed the veil and revealed His Glory to His closest friends. There are three chapels, one for Moses, one for Elijah, and one for Jesus. At the main altar, we see the beautiful images of Baby Jesus, the Eucharist, a lamb slain, and the Risen Lord to show the mystery of the Pascal Lamb and how that relates to the Holy Mass.

**Meghan: We hear the expression “Climbing the mountain of the Lord.” What exactly does that mean.**

We are created “good” by God but we are inclined to evil. Many people during their pilgrimage on earth decide to pay attention to their spiritual life after they retire. This is a big mistake! If something is on an incline and they put it in neutral, which way will it go?

**Meghan:** it will naturally move downhill.

Same with the spiritual life. Moreover, we are given one life to live and sometimes it takes our entire life to work out our salvation as St Paul recommends, (Philippians 2:12).

Living this challenge of overcoming our evil inclinations, traveling this journey, can be considered “climbing the mountain of the Lord.”

**Ben: I get it, it is our struggles to keep us on the path to Heaven.**

Very good. In chapter 2 we asked, “Why did Adam and Eve eat the forbidden fruit?” The answer came, “They had a disposition that wanted to please themselves more than they wanted to please God.” This is at the heart of all the decisions and even has an effect on our growth in the spiritual life.

The angels at Christmas caroled, “Peace to men of good will.”

**Meghan: What is good will?**

It is a will that strives to please God more than trying to please itself. The upward climb on the mountain or spiritual growth starts with striving to **please God more than pleasing ourselves** that leads to self-giving, which leads to self-sacrifice, which leads to true love, which in turn, leads to life, which leads to total holiness, which finally, through God’s grace and mercy, leads to **Heaven**.

**Meghan: That is the challenging path I want.**

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The downward climb or slide on the mountain starts with falling into the trap of trying to **please ourselves more than pleasing God**, which leads to self-taking, which leads to selfishness, which leads to true hatred, which leads to death, which leads to total evil and complete rejection of God's grace and mercy, which leads to **Hell**.

**Ben: I heard that called the slippery slope. It is a scary thought.**

Today it seems that most people are eager to go on that downward slide or are not even aware they are on it because they have rejected spiritual principals all together (that is called denial). A new springtime in the Church is coming when most everyone will want to climb the mountain of the Lord and cooperate with God's grace.

The prophet Isaiah predicts in Isaiah 2:2-5, a **time when everyone will understand the spiritual life and they will want to place themselves under the mercy of God and take the upward path that leads to Heaven**. There will be no more wars, just peace and giving glory to God as we walk with Him.

In days to come, The mountain of the Lord's house shall be established as the highest mountain and raised above the hills. All nations shall stream toward it. Many peoples shall come and say "Come, let us go up to the Lord's mountain, to the house of the God of Jacob, That he may instruct us in his ways, and we may walk in his paths." For from Zion shall go forth instruction, and the word of	the Lord from Jerusalem. <sup>4</sup> He shall judge between the nations, and set terms for many peoples. They shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks; One nation shall not raise the sword against another, nor shall they train for war again. <sup>5</sup> House of Jacob, come, let us walk in the light of the Lord! (Isaiah 2:2-5)
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**Meghan: This sounds like a beautiful future. Jesus Christ' Kingdom will be on earth as it is in Heaven.** Everyone will get it! They will want Jesus for the fullness of life and peace. It will happen!



**FOURTH LUMINOUS MYSTERY:  
THE TRANSFIGURATION OF CHRIST**

“Jesus took with Him Peter and James and John, and led them up a high mountain apart by themselves to pray. (Luke 9:28) Jesus was Transfigured before them. And His garments became shining and exceeding white as snow, as no fuller upon earth can make them.”  
(Mark 9:1-2)

**FRUIT:  
CLIMBING THE MOUNTAIN OF LIFE  
WITH JESUS**

**OUR FATHER**

“Behold two men were talking with Him. And they were Moses and Elijah, appearing in majesty.” (Luke 9:30-31)

**HAIL MARY**

“They spoke of His death that (Jesus) should accomplish in Jerusalem.”  
(Luke 9:31)

**HAIL MARY**

“Peter said to Jesus: ‘Master, it is good for us to be here.’”  
(Luke 9:33)

**HAIL MARY**

“Let us make three tabernacles, one for Thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah.” (Luke 9:33)

**HAIL MARY**

“He knew not what he said: for they were struck with fear.” (Mark 9:5)

**HAIL MARY**

“There was a cloud overshadowing them. And a voice came out of the cloud, saying: ‘This is My most beloved Son. Listen to Him.’”  
(Mark 9:6)

**HAIL MARY**

“The disciples hearing the voice, fell...they were very much afraid. Jesus came and touched them and said; ‘Arise and fear not.’”  
(Matthew 17:6-7)

**HAIL MARY**

“As they came down from the mountain, He charged them not to tell any man what things they had seen, until the Son of man shall rise again from the dead.” (Mark 9:8)

**HAIL MARY**

“They kept the word to themselves; questioning together what Jesus meant by; ‘He shall rise from the dead.’” (Mark 9:9)

**HAIL MARY**

“We all, beholding the glory of the Lord with open face, are transformed into the same image from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord.” (2Corinthians 3:18)

**HAIL MARY**

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**Meghan: What happens to the soul as one climbs the mountain of the Lord as we and the apostles climbed Mount Tabor?**

Upon climbing the mountain of the Lord, through union with God, one moves away from the seven deadly vices of Pride, Lust, Greed, Wrath, Envy, Gluttony, and Sloth and grows towards the seven



virtues of Faith, Hope, Charity, Prudence, Justice, Temperance, and Fortitude. This climb increases our capacity to love.

**Ben: This capacity to love sounds like to become holy or like God.**

Yes, you got it. Jesus Christ gives us tremendous help in climbing the mountain of the Lord by giving us the seven Sacraments. We have all the tools we need for sanctification, but it is a battle. Thankfully, God sends Our Lady with a message that helps us apply those tools in the most effective way. As long as we are alive here on earth, there is hope.

The Triumph of the Immaculate Heart of Mary will coincide with everyone finally “Getting it”. Today, God is sending our Lady to stimulate “Good Will”. She is trying so hard to convince us to choose to climb the mountain of the Lord.

**Meghan: I hope I get it!**

Taking a pilgrimage to the Holy Land is a good place to start this spiritual climb. When the Father says, “Listen to Him!” It is a call for all of us to read the Bible more. Read especially Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. This will help us climb.

**Ben: Will we continue this climb when we get home?**

That is up to you. Let’s ask for God’s grace to persevere.



When it comes to persevering, the Psalm of David, #24 sets before us a challenge, “Who shall climb the mountain of the Lord, who shall stand in the Holy Place?”

**Meghan: I hope I will, but it seems difficult. Is there an easier or surer way?**

In Psalm 10, the question is asked, “How can you say to your soul, fly like a bird to its mountain?”

The answer is “loving meditation;” “mental prayer” will teach your soul how to fly.

**Consecrating our souls to Jesus through the Immaculate Heart of Mary and learning how to meditate** will help us apply the grace that Jesus Christ obtained for us, into our souls. This will be the key for the “Triumph” of Her Immaculate Heart to be realized.

**Meghan: I want the sure way!**

Look how beautiful it is on top of this mountain. Ultimately it will be the certainty of the beauty of peace, joy and love in our hearts along with the future beautiful view of God that will attract people to climb the spiritual mountain and convince them that it is worth the effort. We will be convinced that God is good, so let’s walk with Him.

**Ben: Amen.**

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