



Reflections

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St. Paul Ministry

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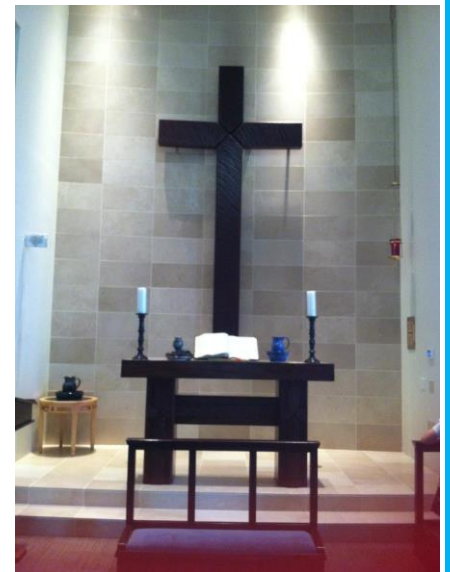
The Kneeler Prayers of Hope



Blessings to All:

In the Chapel at Methodist Willowbrook Hospital are two kneelers that are on either side of a huge cross that dominates and overlooks the Chapel and the Altar. The Chapel is available 24 hours each day. Many people visit this Chapel each day.

If you were to go into this Chapel your eyes would not discern anything special about these kneelers. You would expect to see them in a Chapel. But these kneelers tell stories of prayers and deep suffering and heartfelt agony from patients and family members who have come to take refuge in the Chapel and pray for help.



If you look closely at the top of the wooden kneelers, where your forearms would rest, you will see the unmistakable stains from tears that have fallen. Some are small droplets and others show a perfusion of tears both big and small that congregate where a person bowed their head in prayer. The tears that fell from their eyes tell a story of anguish; of pleading; of sorrow; of pain and finally of hope. Tears are prayers.

This small chapel is not unlike churches all over the world that hide the tears of millions of people

pleading for a loved one or a miracle to take place. Some pray to Jesus and others pray to God while others ask Our Blessed Mother to intercede. All of the tears that fall are the hearts reaction to an emotional happening in the lives of millions.

I know that many of you reading this Newsletter have shed such tears for loved ones. Perhaps when a family member died suddenly or a long illness finally took the life from a friend, a loved one or a child.

God made your heart to be a Chapel since His spirit resides in you. You need not look any further to find a place to kneel to pray and shed your tears then in your own home. God is always listening.



Our Blessed Mother helps those who are suffering in their hearts. She sees your tears. She shed many holy tears at the suffering of her son Jesus and covered the earth with her pure tears at the foot of the cross.

Tears of the heart are some of the greatest prayers you can offer for others. It is the emotional release that overcomes the body and flows out of our heart to become tears of love and of hope.

Next time you visit a Church or a Hospital Chapel, you are entering a place where thousands of tears have been shed for many different reasons.



The millions of tears that fall and dry up are not forgotten. They may seem invisible to us but Jesus does not forget. Jesus also offered up His tears in the Garden of Gethsemane asking for help. His humanness was in full view of His Father and His Father sent Him an Angel to comfort Him. Jesus' tears still stain the earth to this day in His redemptive offering of love and hope for our salvation.

A Catholic is said each Wednesday at noon in the Chapel at Methodist Willowbrook where patients, hospital staff and visitors come to celebrate the Eucharist and to pray. After each Wednesday Mass, a Rosary is said for all the intentions of those in attendance; for patients; for hospital staff; for their families and for those in most need of prayer.

A Chaplet of Divine Mercy is also recited by those in attendance asking for sufficient grace for salvation be given to all those that are near death or who will die that day.



The next time you have need of reaching out to Jesus for a miracle or a special intention do not worry about the tears that may fall from your eyes. They are like prayer diamonds of the finest quality.

Talking to Jesus...Worth The Read

By: Dr. Robert Stackpole

Dr. Robert Stackpole answers questions posed by Catholics on the Divine Mercy website (<http://www.thedivinemercy.org>). One of his readers, a Mr. Tom Bailey, recently sent him a question that has surely been on the minds of many of us at one time or another.

Here is the question...*"Jesus mentions to Sr. Faustina and to other holy souls that we should talk to Him. What do you think He means? Structured prayer? Praise and glory worship? Or does He mean just talking with Him like He was your good friend? He says we must be like little children, and little children talk plainly; they explain their feelings openly. What is your opinion on this matter of talking to God?"*

Jesus invites us to approach Him with complete trust and openness, with all the freedom and spontaneity of a child. Over and over again, this is exactly what he encouraged St. Faustina to do as well. You will find the most vivid example of this in her Diary, entries 1485-1490, where Faustina records her conversations with Jesus in the various states of her soul: sometimes sinful, sometimes despairing, sometimes in great suffering or striving after perfection, and even at times attaining perfect love for Him. At every step of the way, Jesus encourages her to be completely honest and sincere with Him:



Be not afraid of your Savior, O sinful soul. I make the first move to come to you, for I know that by yourself you are unable to lift yourself to Me. Child, do not run away from your Father; be willing to talk openly with your God of mercy who wants to speak words of pardon and lavish His graces on you. ... You will give Me pleasure if you hand over to Me all your troubles and griefs. I shall heap upon you the treasures of My grace (1485).

Tell me all, My child, hide nothing from Me, because My loving Heart, the Heart of your Best Friend, is listening to you (1486).



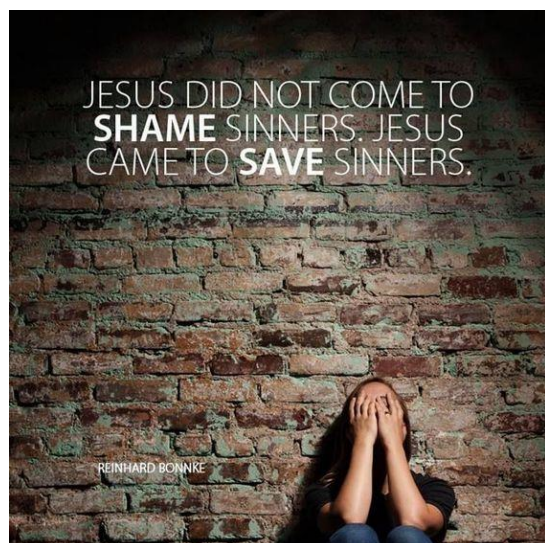
Poor soul, I see that you suffer much and that you do not have even the strength to converse with Me. So I will speak to you. Even though your sufferings were very great, do not lose heart or give in to despondency. But tell Me, My child, who has dared to wound your heart? Tell Me about everything, be sincere in dealing with Me,

reveal all the wounds of your heart. I will heal them, and your sufferings will become a source of your sanctification (1487).

Now, we may wonder, why does Jesus ask us to "reveal" all our miseries to Him? Doesn't He know all about them already? Doesn't He see everything, and understand the sorrows of my heart even better than I do myself?

Of course, that is perfectly true: He does know all about them already. In the same way, you may go to the doctor, and He may already have seen your x-rays before you come in the door of his office. But he still needs you to show him your injured limb, because unless you permit him to, he cannot begin to apply the remedy that you need. In the same way, Jesus, the Beloved Physician of our souls, knows very well what we need even before we ask Him. But asking Him, sincerely sharing everything with Him, is our way of showing Him our spiritual wounds, entrusting our spiritual illnesses into His care. When we do that, He takes it as our consent to do all that He can to heal and sanctify us. That is why He said to St. Faustina when she dared to begin to trust in His mercy in a time of great discouragement:

You have a special claim on My mercy. Let it act in your poor soul; let the rays of grace enter your soul; they bring with them light, warmth, and life (1486).



By the way, this free and spontaneous way of talking to Jesus, and to our heavenly Father, in the Holy Spirit, who is the Spirit of Truth (Jn 16:13), means that we can and must be completely truthful with Him, even opening to Him our negative feelings: anger, frustration, confusion, and despair.

Jesus prayed to His Father with complete candor — and even brutal honesty at times: "Abba, Father, all things are possible to Thee; remove this cup from me. ... ***My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken me?***" (Mk 14:36, 15:34). The Psalms too are filled with this kind of honesty before God:



Talk to Jesus. He is your very best friend and will understand. Formal prayers are nice, but talking to your best friend moves you into a closer relationship that says...“Jesus, I Trust in You”.

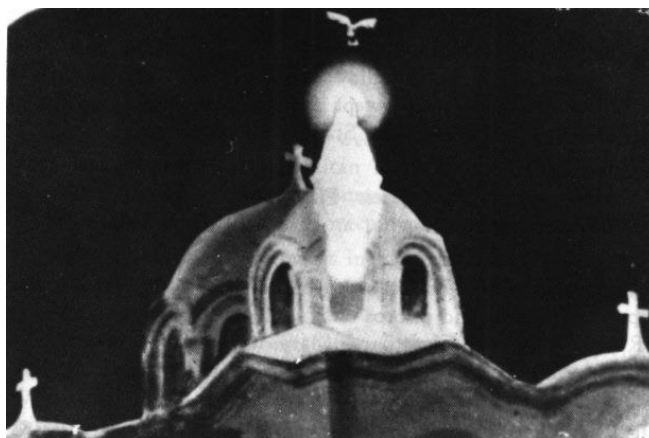
Famous Sayings of St. Padre Pio

Pray, Hope and Don't Worry

“Let us bind ourselves tightly to the Sorrowful Heart of our Heavenly Mother and reflect on its boundless grief and how precious is our soul.”

Love the Madonna and pray the Rosary, for her Rosary is the weapon against the evils of the world today. All graces given by God pass through the Blessed Mother.”

Our Lady of Zeitoun, Cairo Egypt



Actual photo of apparition that was seen in 1968, when the Blessed Mother appeared atop a Coptic Orthodox Church of St. Mary in the town of Zeitoun, a suburb of Cairo, Egypt. Hundreds of thousands of people witnessed this event over a period of 2-3 years beginning April 2, 1968.

The evening of April 2, 1968 began just like any other in Zeitoun, the sprawling suburb of Cairo. The hot, dusty streets were alive with the cacophony of horns, carts, and street peddlers making their way home through the dusky haze.

Farouk Atwa—a 31 year-old construction worker—had just completed his shift in a parking garage across from St. Mary’s Coptic Church, when he saw the woman in white robes perched on the basilica’s main dome. “Don’t do it, lady!” he shouted, summoning curious onlookers, “Don’t jump!” The woman, who did not hear him, appeared to glide effortlessly over the smooth, sloping roof toward the church’s cross, with her head bowed and hands folded in prayer.



Courtesy of Zeitun-eg.org

A large crowd formed in the streets below, gazing at the luminous woman in disbelief. Suddenly, what appeared to be a small flock of sparkling doves appeared, flittering around her head like a revolving crown. Many noticed the thick aroma of incense. As the local paper, *Watani*, later reported, several onlookers began shouting “Setana Mariam”, meaning, “Our Lady, Mary.” Word spread, and hundreds poured into the streets below, scrambling to catch a glimpse of the Virgin atop the church that bore her namesake. Many were praying the rosary. After nearly an hour, the apparition disappeared.

The next day, Atwa went to the doctor for a scheduled operation to amputate his finger due to gangrene. Both he and his surgeon were shocked to discover his finger was inexplicably healed.

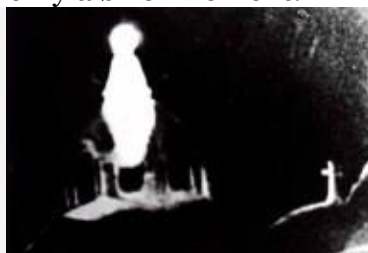


St. Mary's Church,

St. Mary's Church in Zeitoun has a long history of devotion to the Mother of Jesus.

According to Coptic tradition, the site is one of the locations where the holy family stayed during their flight into Egypt. In 1918, it is [alleged](#) that Mary appeared in a dream to Khalil Ibrahim, who owned several plots of land in the region, and told him to build a church in her honor at that location. St. Mary's was completed in 1924 and has served as a shrine to the Holy Family ever since.

Incredibly, the apparition on St. Mary's roof returned the following week, and continued intermittently through the summer months of 1968; returning several times a week, sometimes for hours at a time, other times for only a brief moment.



Zeitun-eg.org

La'ami Tawfia remembers her experience at Zeitoun, "I saw her once. A light, that was weak. After a while, it grew brighter. She was completely white, her face, her robes, everything." Though Mary never spoke to those below, witnesses recounted how she always appeared to be praying, or bowing her head toward the cross, and on many occasions posed similarly to

the Miraculous Medal, with her arms open and palms outward. Some occasions she remained stationary, while other instances, she glided across the church roof.

Word quickly spread that something incredible was occurring at St. Mary's, and the crowds multiplied by the thousands to see the Virgin and pray with her. At one apparition, the crowd swelled to nearly 250,000, containing onlookers of many faiths: Orthodox, Catholics, Jews, and Muslims. There are several accounts of skeptics who came to witness for themselves, converting upon witnessing Our Lady.



Youtube screenshot

Government authorities, concerned with the growing crowds, sent investigators to determine the source of sensation, convinced it was an elaborate hoax. After an extensive search—including the church's rooftop—turned up no sign of a projector device, many of the investigators joined the crowd, convinced they too were indeed seeing the Virgin Mary. Even Egypt's former president Abdul Nasser witnessed an apparition, admitting that he was indeed seeing the Virgin Mary.

Pearl Zaki was visiting Cairo from Minnesota in the summer of 1968, and described her encounter with Mary at Zeitoun, "How the light came, I can't explain it. It was like space opened up, and she was there, on top of the big dome. She looked like a full-figured person in the light. When she moved, you could see the back of her head."



New York Times

The extraordinary events received coverage in the Egyptian press, yet went virtually unnoticed in the Western media, receiving [minor blurbs](#) in the papers, at a time when the Vietnam conflict, campus demonstrations, and the Cold War dominated the public's attention. While the majority of apparitions occurred in 1968, they continued intermittently over the following two years, and gradually tapered off until the last recorded vision in 1971.

Later that year, a papal envoy from Rome who witnessed the apparitions sent a detailed report to Pope Paul VI attesting to their authenticity. Since there was no specific "message," and the apparitions occurred in the jurisdiction of the Coptic Church, the Vatican has taken no official position on Zeitoun, although it is widely reported that Pope Paul VI and John Paul II spoke favorably of the apparitions.

In 1968, the Coptic Patriarch Kyrollis VI assembled an investigative committee, consisting of several high-ranking Coptic clergy, who formally concluded that the apparitions were genuine.

Bishop Anthanasius of Beni Souieff, one of the committee members who witnessed several of the apparitions, described the visions: “Clouds covered the dome,” he later recounted, “Something like fluorescent lamps began to illuminate the sky. Suddenly, there she was.”

Unable to provide any rational explanation, Egypt’s state-run General Information and Complaints Department issued the following statement: “The official investigations have been carried out with the result that it has been considered an undeniable fact that the Blessed Virgin Mary has been appearing on Zeitoun Church in a clear and luminous body seen by all present in front of the church, whether Christian or Moslem.”

Although Islam has a robust devotion to Mary—viewing her as the mother of a holy figure—several Muslims converted after witnessing her devotion to the cross, especially after one instance where she was reportedly holding the infant Jesus.

In Arabic, “Zeitoun” translates to “olive,” a fact not lost on the onlookers, who witnessed Mary holding an olive branch on many occasions. At a time when Coptic/Muslim relations were tense, and Egypt was reeling from defeat in the 6-Day War, it was the only time anyone could recount people of diverse faiths, Copts, Catholics, and Muslims, honoring the Mother of God in such a fashion.

Today, when Christians—Coptic and Catholic alike—are subject to persecution and martyrdom from radical Islam, many look to the unity Our Lady inspired at Zeitoun, and pray to Mary’s intercession that someday, peace will return to the Holy Family’s place of refuge.

This Brother and Sister Will Raise Your Spirits



He Raised Me Up

I just had to put the web address for this video! It is the most amazing video I have ever watched! These kids are so incredibly talented and sing "He Raised Me Up" to delight the heart! Copy and paste to your Browser. Enjoy

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LxDXnM1Jd6Q>

When you need time to pray or to get away from it all or just need to relax, then copy and paste the web address to your browser. Tim Janis' "Beautiful America" can be found at the address below. It is narrated by George Clooney. God is alive in beautiful music. Enjoy.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nu_KwMEI-Kw



When Life Gets Too Hard to Stand.... Kneel

The *Reflections* Newsletter is published each month, free of charge. If you want to be on the mailing list, please send your request to r44pick@aol.com.

Our mission statement is to motivate people to pray and to be Christian examples in their work, home and with others, for those needing the Light in a world of Darkness.

St. Paul Ministry, Cypress, TX