

# Reflections

*International  
Catholic Family Newsletter*

Volume 94

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**Bringing Light Into a World of Darkness**

**Persecution Of the Faithful**

**Blessed Mother Speaks to the World**

**Is This The Final Hour**

**Bible Verse for the Day:** "I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world." John 16:33

**Thought for the Day:** The devil works slowly with various temptations to determine how best to steal your soul.

**What to Prayer for Today:** Let others see your good deeds but do so with a humble heart.

Blessing to All:

By: Richard Pickard

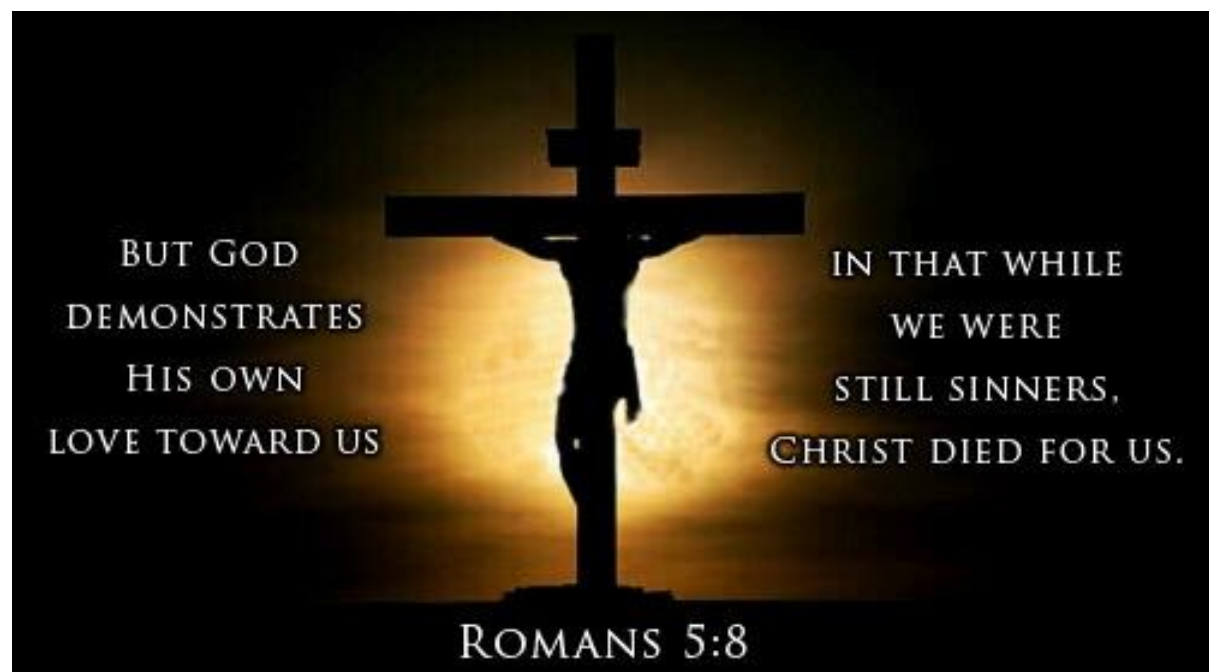
Last month in April, the Church celebrated *Divine Mercy Sunday*. Our Lord said to Saint Faustina, "*I desire that the Feast of Mercy be a refuge and a shelter for all souls, and especially for poor sinners. On that day the very depths of My tender mercy are open. I pour out a whole ocean of graces upon those souls who approach the fount of My mercy.*"

"Oh, what great graces I will grant to souls who say this Chaplet (*Chaplet of Devine Mercy*). **Speak to the world about My mercy; let all mankind recognise my unfathomable mercy. *It is a sign for the end times; after it will come the day of justice.*** While there is still time, let them have recourse to the fount of my mercy; let them profit

from the blood and water which gushed forth for them." (Diary, 848)"

"Say unceasingly the Chaplet that I have taught you. Whoever will recite it, they will receive great mercy at the hour of death. Priests will recommend it to sinners as their last hope of salvation. Even if there were a sinner most hardened, if he were to recite this chaplet only once, he would receive grace from My infinite mercy." (Diary, 687)

"It pleases me to grant everything souls ask of me by saying the chaplet. When hardened sinners say it, I will fill their souls with peace, and the hour of their death will be a happy one. Write this for the benefit of distressed souls; when a soul sees and realises the gravity of its sins, when the whole abyss of the misery into which it immersed itself is displayed before its eyes, let it not despair, but with trust, let it throw itself into the arms of My mercy, as a child into the arms of its beloved mother. *Tell them no soul that has called upon My mercy has been disappointed or brought to shame. I delight particularly in a soul that has placed its trust in My goodness. Write that when they say this Chaplet in the presence of the dying, I will stand between My father and the dying person, not as the Just Judge but as the Merciful Saviour.*" (Diary, 1541)



## Catholic Mass Attendance

A compilation of new data by the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) at Georgetown University sheds light on the countries around the world that have the highest Mass attendance numbers.

CARA researchers used data from the World Values Survey (WVS), a major international study of religious belief that has been conducted for decades, to examine 36 countries with large Catholic populations. Of those countries, the researchers ranked them by the percentage of self-identified Catholics who say they attend Mass weekly or more, excluding weddings, funerals, and baptisms.

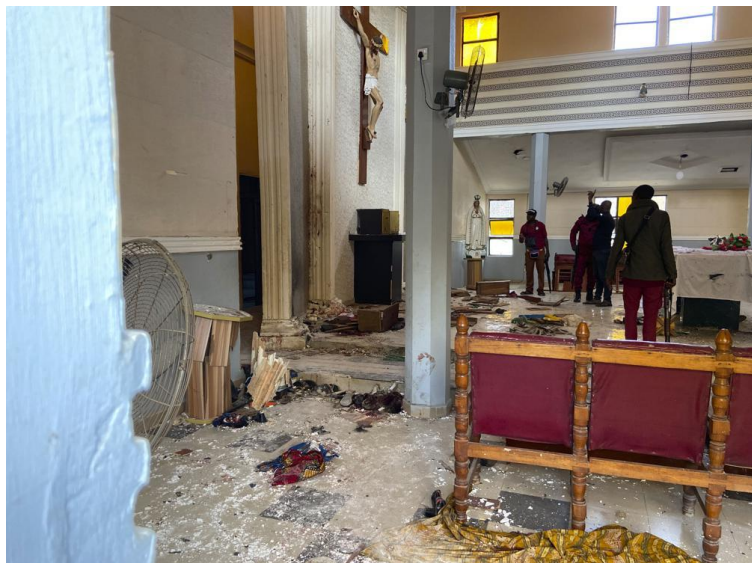
According to the data, Nigeria and Kenya have the highest proportion of Catholics who attend Mass weekly or more, with Nigeria as the clear leader. ***Ninety-four percent of Catholics in Nigeria say they attend Mass at least weekly. In Kenya, the figure was 73%, and in Lebanon it was 69%.***



**Like the early martyrs of the Church, the persecution continues.**

## Persecution Of the Faithful

The level of Mass attendance in Nigeria is notably high given ***the high number of violent attacks against Christians across the country in recent years.***



Terrorist incidents inside Catholic churches are not infrequent; notably, in June of 2022, gunmen believed to be ***Islamic extremists opened fire on Catholic worshippers attending Pentecost Mass at St. Francis Xavier Catholic Church in southwestern Nigeria, killing at least 50.***

Father Andrew Abayomi, assistant parish priest at the Church of St. Francis Xavier in Owo, in Nigeria's southwestern Ondo state, was speaking two days after the attack that left scores of faithful dead.

The faith in Nigeria is strong. Father Abayomi said ***"The moment you say "yes" to Christ, it's like putting a tag on yourself. But "We are continuing to proclaim and witness the Gospel."***

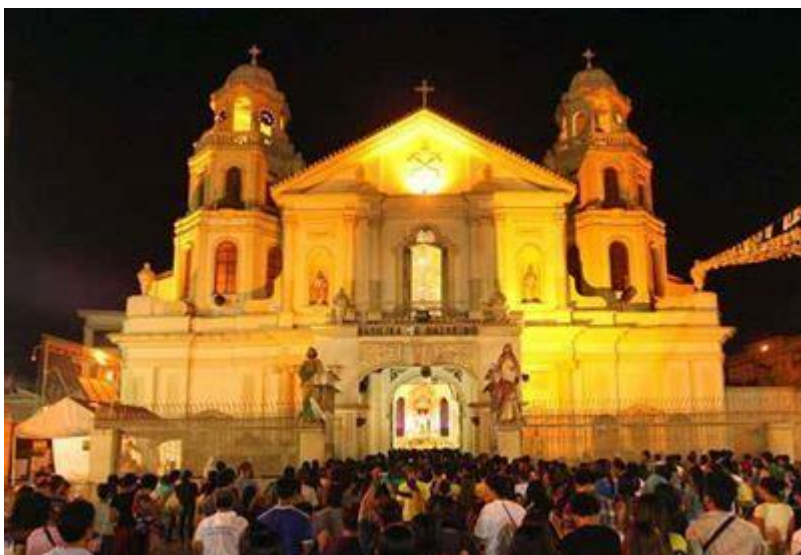
Criminal attacks, including on priests and churches are increasingly frequent in Nigeria where, especially the northern region has been facing security challenges in the past years with criminal gangs fueled by the activities of the Boko Haram Islamic extremist group, as well as clashes between nomadic herdsmen and indigenous farmers.

**Christianity in Nigeria is estimated at 49%. Although 2023 has just started, over 1,000 Christians have already been murdered.**

Although Nigerians face death each day, they proclaim their faith and belief in the gospel message.

## Highest Mass Attendance

More than half of all Catholics attend weekly or more in the **Philippines** (56%), **Colombia** (54%), **Poland** (52%), and **Ecuador** (50%). But in 29 of the 36 countries examined, fewer than half of self-identified Catholics attend Sunday Mass.



Huge crowds attend morning Mass in Philippines

## Mass Attendance in America

<sup>1</sup>The Catholic Church is seeing its biggest decline in Mass attendance in the U.S. in decades that started between the papacies of Pope Benedict XVI and Pope Francis, a new Gallup poll says.

“From 2014 to 2017, an average of 39% of Catholics reported attending church in the past seven days. This is down from an average of 45% from 2005 to 2008 and represents a steep decline from 75% in 1955,” the poll found.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.lifesitenews.com/news/catholic-mass-attendance-in-u-s-plunges-under-francis-pontificate/>

## Other Countries Report Lower Mass Attendance

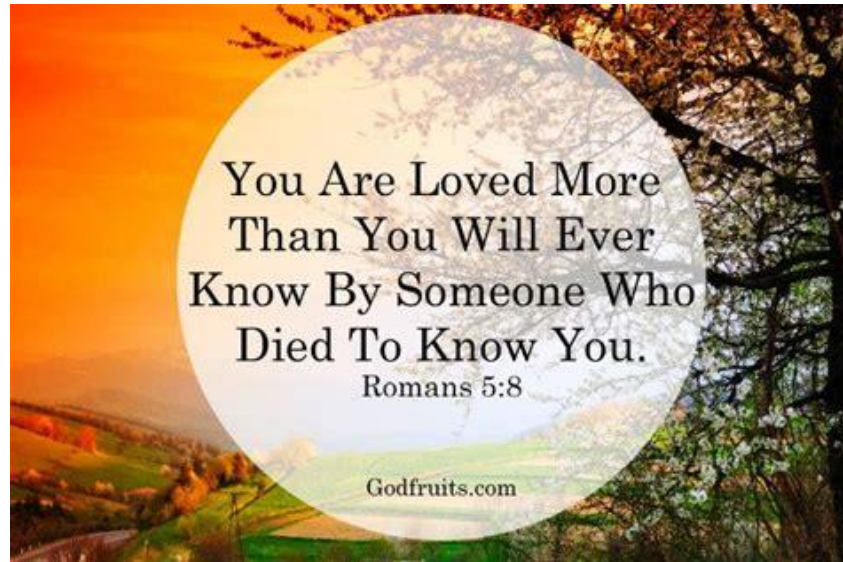
Continuing down from there, the lowest levels of weekly attendance were observed in **Lithuania (16%), Germany (14%), Canada (14%), Latvia (11%), Switzerland (11%), Brazil (8%), France (8%), and the Netherlands (7%).**

Countries with a higher Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita had lower levels of Mass attendance and vice versa. Chasing money rather than the Gospel message.



**It appears that giving thanks to "money" is more important than giving thanks to God.**





***Satan's Time is Coming to an End***



## **OUR BLESSED MOTHER of MEDJUGORJE**

### **SPEAKS TO THE WORLD**

#### ***Is This The Final Hour***



*Please read her warnings and her pleas to return to God while there is still time. Mary, Our Mother, loves us and weeps for us. Help her and Jesus with your good examples and daily prayers, especially for your family and those far off from God.*

***<sup>2</sup>Compiled from the Message of Our Lady, Queen of Peace, in Medjugorje from 1981 through 1987. Monthly messages are still being received on the 25<sup>th</sup> of each month. You can read all the messages at <https://www.medjugorje.ws/>***

I am the Queen of Peace. I have come to tell the world that God exists. He is the fullness of life. And to enjoy the fullness and obtain peace you must return to God. ***So be converted while there is still time.***

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<sup>2</sup> Reprint from September 2018 Catholic Family Newsletter



The only words I wish to say are reconciliation, conversion, prayer and fasting.

Dear children, you must become reconciled with God and between yourselves. To do this you must believe, pray, fast and confess your sins. Venerate the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Make atonement for the wounds inflicted to the Heart of My Son. That Heart has been offended by all sorts of sins. My beloved, I am your Mother and I have come to earth to teach you how to listen out of love and how to pray out of love. Open your hearts to God like flowers in the springtime, yearning for the sun. I am your Mother and I always want you to be closer to the Father. Then He will always give abundant gifts to your heart. And so, I am calling you to reconciliation with God. Tell God you love Him.

Dear Children, with love you will achieve everything. Even what you think is impossible. You have a great and heavy Cross but do not be afraid to carry it. By means of **the cross God is glorified through** every person. The West has advanced civilization which evolved from God. They act as if they created everything and thus, they have forgotten God. Monthly confessions will cure the Western Church. Whole sections of the church could be healed if the believers went to confession once a month.

I your Mother love you all. And at any moment when it is difficult for you, do not be afraid. I love you even when you are very far away from me and my Son. I ask you not to allow my heart to cry tears of blood because of the souls who are being lost in sin. Promise my dear children, that you will not offend Jesus and that you will not insult Him nor the Cross. My Beloved Son, please forgive these numerous serious sins which with humanity offends You.

O My dear children on earth, tell the world not to wait any longer, it needs to convert. When God comes, He will not be joking. I tell you that you must take My messages seriously. Many people have begun their conversion, but not all. Convert before it is too late while there is still time. Do not wait for the sign. Yes, I will leave a sign on the hill. It will be a sign of proof for those who do not believe that I am here. It will be very beautiful and indestructible and permanent. It will be the source of many conversions, healings, and miracles. But do not wait for the sign. *The sign will come too late for those who do not believe.* The only word I want to say is conversion. I ask for

nothing but the conversion of the whole world. I will suffer for you, but you must convert yourselves.

I beg my Son not to punish you. You do not understand what God's plans are and you do not know what God will send and cause to happen. I ask nothing but conversion. That's what I want. That is all I want to say. Give up everything. Do not be so preoccupied about the material things of the world. In the material you lose everything that God wants to give you. I am inviting you my dear children, to pray for the gifts of the Holy Spirit that you need now.

My dear children abandon yourselves to me so that I can leave you holy. When you are in difficulty or need anything come to me. Consecrate yourselves to the Immaculate Heart. Abandon yourselves completely and I will protect you. I will pray to the Holy Spirit and you must pray as well. In prayer you will come to know the greatest joy and the way out of every situation that has no way out. Do not worry. Let peace reunite your hearts. Troubles come only from Satan. He is trying to turn you off course. Those that have given themselves to God will be the objects of his attacks.

Satan is trying to destroy the Church. He presented himself before the throne of God and requested permission to put the Church on trial during a period of one century. God permitted Satan to try the Church for a century. **This century is under the powers of the devil. But when these secrets are realized, that are confided to the visionaries here in Medjugorje, his power will be destroyed.**

He has already begun to lose his power and he has become aggressive. He destroys marriages and creates divisions between priests and causes obsessions and murders. You are to protect yourselves from these things by fasting and prayer. Especially by community prayer. Carry blessed objects with you. Keep them in your houses. Come back to the custom of using Holy Water.

Dear children, I beg you to listen and to live Your Mothers call. I am calling you because of my love so that I can help you. So, I beg you to put more blessed objects in your homes and to carry blessed objects on yourself. That everything be blessed, so that Satan will tempt you less because you are armed against him. I ask all of my children to pray the Rosary.

Satan watches for every individual. He particularly wants to bring confusion to each one of you. But I am calling you to pray against Satan in a special way. Satan wants to battle more, now when you are aware of his activity. My dear children, dress up in clothes of armor against Satan. With Rosaries in your hands, you will conquer.

Pray, Pray, always. Again, I invite you to the prayer of the heart. If you pray from the heart dear children, the ice-cold hearts of your brothers will be melted. And every barrier will disappear.

Conversion will be easily achieved by those who want it. Help others to be converted. Especially those who are coming to Medjugorje.

Dear children, my dear children, do not allow Satan to reign in your heart. Do not be an image of Satan. Be my image. God gave everyone a free will and it is up to you to decide. Satan is working even more violently to take this joy from each of you. Through prayer you can totally disarm him and insure your happiness. I desire you to be the reflections of Jesus, who enlightens an unfaithful world which is walking in darkness. Witness to the Light. You are not called to darkness My dear children, you are called to Light. So, live the Light in your lives.

My dear ones, you must pray more. I, your Mother say that you pray too little. Pray for the conversion of sinners, because the world is in great sin. Pray the Rosary every evening. Read the Bible every day in your home. Let it be in a visible place there, so it will always encourage you to read and pray. Meditate especially on the sixth chapter of St. Matthew, versus 24 to 34.

They speak of total abandonment to God. When you pray dear children, you become more beautiful. You become like flowers which after the snow, show forth their beauty and whose colors become indescribable. And so dear ones, pray and open your inner selves to the Lord. so that He may make of you a harmonious and beautiful flower for Heaven.

Some Christians are no longer believers. Because they do no pray. And faith cannot live without prayer. Pray the Apostles Creed. Talk to God simply as would a child. Tell Him what you need and desire and speak to Him of the situations in your day. Then pray from your hearts. Pray the Creed daily to combat the atheism of the world. The Mass is the greatest prayer of God. And you will never comprehend its greatness. And that is why you should be

perfect and humble at Mass and why you should prepare yourselves for it. Adore continually the Most Holy Sacrament. I am always present when the faithful are in Adoration. Special graces are then being received. A flower cannot grow without water. Neither can you grow without God's blessings.

You should pray for blessings from day to day so that you can grow up normally and carry out your activities with God. And pray that God's blessings will protect everyone of you from all the evil that's threatening.

I am calling you to prayer of the heart. Let prayer, my dear ones be your everyday food. In a special way now when your work exhausts you and you cannot pray from the heart, Pray, and then you will overcome every tiredness. Prayer will be your happiness and your rest. Pray for the Holy Spirit to come down upon you. When you have the Holy Spirit, you have everything.

My dear, dear children. The world has forgotten the value of prayer and fasting. With prayer and fasting, wars would be stopped, and natural laws suspended. The best form of fasting is on bread and water. If you are not able to fast on bread and water, then you can give up other things. It would be very good to give up television because it wastes your time. And after watching the programs, you are distracted and unable to pray. You can renounce alcohol, cigarettes, and other pleasures. You know yourself what you must do. Only the seriously ill are free from fasting. Fasting cannot be replaced by prayers and almsgiving except by those who are very ill. Pray and fast on behalf of the sick. It is easy for God to heal the sick, but it is not easy for men. Listen to what I say. With prayer and fasting you can stop wars and suspend natural laws. Think of it my children. Think of it.

I ask you to start fasting from your heart. There are many people who fast, but only because everyone else is fasting. It has become a custom which no one wants to stop. My dear children. Fast and pray with your heart. And always pray before and after your work. If you do that, God will bless you and your work. You usually work too much and pray too little. Be humble. Be humble my children. Live in humility.

You are ready to put yourselves in the hands of Satan. Because you are not reflecting on your actions. I invite each one of you to conscientiously decide yourself to be for God and against Satan. I am your Mother and I therefore want to lead you all toward perfect holiness. I want everyone of you to be

happy here on earth and for everyone of you to be with me in heaven. This is my dear, dear children, my desire and my mission here.

In your life, my dear ones, you have experienced light and darkness. God gives to each person the knowledge of good and evil. I am calling you to the Light, which you have to carry to all people who are in darkness. From day to day, people who are in darkness come upon your path. Give them dear children, the Light.



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**Powerful graces are received when you pray the Rosary and the Chaplet of Divine Mercy. The Rosary is the 'weapon' for these times. - Padre Pio**