



Transformations

An HSCC Youth Newsletter

February, 2006

This month: Apparitions!



Catechism of the Catholic Church:
See paragraph #67
for specific teaching
on private revelation.

Next page:
Lent Quiz
Apparition Word Search

You've probably seen it on the news. A city tunnel stained with the outline of the Blessed Virgin Mary. A statue of Mary weeping tears of blood. A vision of Our Lady in the corner of a painting of Elvis on black velvet. Bystanders weeping and fainting at the sights. What's a nice Catholic to think of all this?

Believe it or not, experts for the Catholic Church do thorough investigations of apparitions. They really aren't looking for ghosts or anything, just times when heavenly beings let themselves be sensed by human beings. From the investigations there are five possible outcomes:

- ★ It's a hoax - unfortunately, there are some people who will do such things for a little publicity.
- ★ It can be explained by natural causes - the city tunnel stain was explained by the leakage of minerals from a crack in the wall.
- ★ It is a supernatural event, but comes from Satan - this can involve messages which mock or go against Church teaching.
- ★ It is truly a heavenly event and is worthy of recognition by the faithful.
- ★ There is not enough evidence to make a definite conclusion.

You may be wondering if Church leaders really believe this stuff. Well, why not? From Genesis through Revelation the Bible is full of the stories of people who have been touched, or sometimes even knocked off a horse, by the presence of a heavenly being. Remember what happened to St. Paul on the road to Damascus?

So, if the apparition is truly authentic, what does it mean for you? The answer is simple. It is up to you to find meaning for yourself. Heavenly events can bring the faithful closer to the teachings of Jesus. However, apparitions are considered *private* revelations. You are free to choose to ignore them. Our deposit of faith is based on the final *public* revelation given to us by Jesus Christ while He was on earth. No more public revelations are expected.

Next time you hear the news that another apparition is sending people on pilgrimages or causing traffic jams in city streets, realize it may help you grow spiritually, then again it may not. It is your decision. We may not have figured out how to put Jesus' teachings into practice every moment of every day, but the information, and the guidance of the Holy Spirit, are there for us whenever we are ready.

CHURCH HISTORY

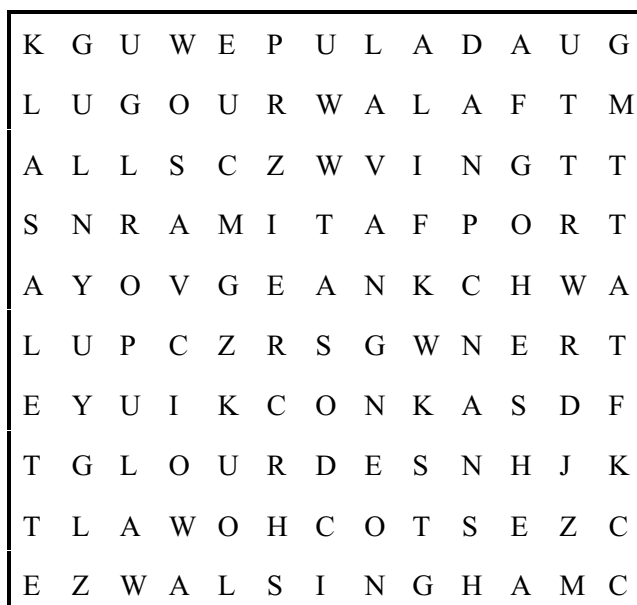
Did you realize Lent is quickly approaching? Let's see how much you really know about this powerful spiritual season.

1. The word Lent means:
 - a. Spring's lengthening of days
 - b. Fasting and abstinence
 - c. 40 days
 - d. Loose, short fibers from yarn or cloth
2. Officially Lent begins on Ash Wednesday. When does it end?
 - a. Holy Thursday's evening Mass
 - b. Good Friday at sunset
 - c. Holy Saturday at sunset
 - d. Easter Sunday at sunrise
3. What traditional discipline(s) have Catholics used to follow the model of Christ and live better lives?
 - a. Fasting
 - b. Almsgiving
 - c. Prayer
 - d. All the above
4. What are the current requirements for fasting during Lent?
 - a. No food or drink for 24 hours
 - b. Water only as needed for 24 hours
 - c. Water and prescribed medications for 24 hours
 - d. One meatless meal and, if necessary, two smaller meatless meals per day.
5. Circle the true statement(s) regarding the ashes used on Ash Wednesday.
 - a. They are made from the palms that were blessed on the previous Palm Sunday.
 - b. They are an ancient sign of repentance.
 - c. They indicate our willingness to do penance for our sins.

Answers to Church History questions:
1-a, 2-a, 3-d, 4-d, 5-a,b,c

Apparitions of Our Lady Word Search

Below are the locations of some Church-approved apparitions of the Blessed Mother. Find the locations listed in bold. The countries in parentheses are just provided to help you improve your geography knowledge!



CZESTOCHOWA (Poland)
FATIMA (Portugal)
GUADALUPE (Mexico)
KNOCK (Ireland)
LA SALETTE (France)
LA VANG (Vietnam)
LOURDES (France)



WALSINGHAM (England)

The Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes is celebrated on February 11th.

