



Mary Held the Treasure of Treasures

St. Peter Damian said of Mary:

“All the treasures of the mercy of God are in Her hands.”

From Noah’s Ark to the Ark of the Covenant to the Cave of Bethlehem the system and order of God’s will is evident. The mathematics imparted to Noah to build an ark exactly so many cubits wide, and so many cubits long, was echoed in the instructions to Moses to build a portable ark of specific materials in specific dimensions. Into Noah’s Ark was led the living things God treasured in that day. In Moses’ day the treasure of God’s law was secured inside the Ark of the Covenant. In the Cave of Bethlehem, the ark of Mary’s womb released into the world the greatest treasure of all — the Son of God.

At the very moment the young Virgin Mother raised the babe to Her breast it could indeed be said: ‘All the treasures of the mercy of God were in Her hands’. At the foot of the Cross, ‘All the treasures of the mercy of God were in Her hands’. At the beginning and at the end of the greatest drama in human history, Mary held the treasure of treasures, the Desire of the Everlasting Hills in Her hands.

At Fatima, the promise of Her Son, the Prince of Peace, was in Her hands. That promise was peace for all mankind. Not

peace as the politicians view it and shape it and betray it, but the Peace of Christ.

In the beautiful economy of Fatima, the five steps of the Five First Saturdays allow us to be led into understanding why God had placed the treasure of treasures of His Mercy in Her hands. In the five ways God honored Her, man has dishonored Her. The Five First Saturdays are an Act of Reparation to Her for the offenses thrown at Her Immaculate Heart by ungrateful mankind. They are intended to provide each of us with the opportunity to honor Her Immaculate Conception, Her Perpetual Virginity, Her Divine Maternity, to make amends for mankind sowing in the hearts of children indifference to the Immaculate Heart, and to honor Her in Her images. In spite of inspiring the greatest artists in history, the images of Mary have been the subject of dishonorable attention over the centuries, and especially in this century since Vatican II, when Her images in statues and paintings have been literally thrown out of churches and onto the garbage heap of our modernity.

God loves Her purity, Her virginity, Her motherhood, the place He has created in the hearts of children for Her, and the great beauties that make up Her earthly and heavenly person, the latter pre-figured in the esteem with which Assuerus held Esther.

Mary is the jewel box in which is stored all the treasure of God’s mercy; She has been throughout the ages the beauty attested to by the lives and work of the most gifted of musicians and artists. In the descriptions of the Woman made of light seen at Fatima, the glory of God’s mercy is manifest. The Lady Clothed with the Sun is indeed, as William Wordsworth declared, “Nature’s Solitary Boast”. †



In This Newsletter ...

Mary Held the Treasure of Treasures.....	1
Saint Joseph’s Stairway	2
Internet Update	3
Letters from Friends	4

St. Joseph's Stairway — Miracle, or Wonder of Construction?

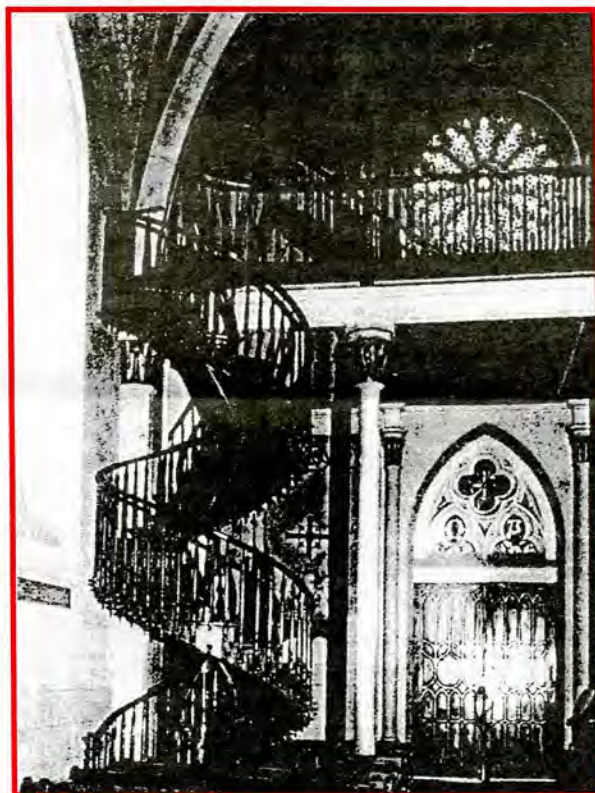
by Carl R. Albach

Editor's Note: *The following is from a 1965 edition of Consulting Engineer, a secular, professional journal.*

Are there such things as miracles in this day and age? Miracles in architecture, engineering, or construction? We will not attempt to answer that question, but we believe that there are people living in Santa Fe, New Mexico — especially the Sisters of the Loretto Academy — who have some definite ideas along this line.

It is recorded that more than a century ago, in the fall of 1852, the Sisters of Loretto left Kentucky to travel up the Mississippi River to St. Louis and then on to the Southwest. During their trip of many months across the country, the Sisters suffered from

many struggles, fears, privations, illnesses, and even Indian attacks. Their difficulties in establishing a convent under the direction of Bishop Lamy in Santa Fe, then a small town inhabited mostly by Indians and Mexicans, is a story in itself.



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Here's just a few of the guests featured:

- † "The Fatima Crusader" editor **Coralie Graham** on the Holy Rosary
- † Catholic theologian **Father Paul Leonard** on the Consecration of Russia
- † "Catholic Family News" writer **John Collorafi** on Fatima
- † Housewife and mother **Liz Holdsworth** on Guardian Angels

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Loretto Academy History

According to Sister M. Florian in "The Inexplicable Stairs,"¹ Mexican carpenters built Loretto Academy of Our Lady of Light several months after the Sisters arrived in Santa Fe. It was not until some 20 years later that construction began on a Gothic chapel that was patterned, at the request of Bishop Lamy, after the Sainte-Chapelle in Paris. The chapel, which was designed by architect P. Mouly, was to be 25 feet wide, 75 feet long, and 85 feet tall, with a choir loft in the rear. Sister Barbour states² that the construction was begun on July 25, 1873, and completed about 5 years later at a cost of \$30,000.

It was not until the structure was nearly finished that a terrible mistake was discovered. Both chapel and choir loft were beautiful, but there was no way to get from one to the other. And because of the height of the loft, a conventional stairway would take up too much room in the chapel. The Superior called in many carpenters, but each in turn said that it was impossible to build a suitable staircase. It was a question of either using a ladder or rebuilding the balcony.

The Sisters, of course, were quite disappointed, but being women of great Faith, they decided to wait and make a novena.

continued on page 3

ST. JOSEPH'S STAIRWAY continued from page 2

Since the Sisters of Loretto are greatly devoted to St. Joseph, it seemed only natural to turn to him in this dilemma.

As the legend goes, on the last day of the novena a gray-haired man with a donkey and a tool chest stopped at the Academy. When he asked if he could build a stairway for the Sisters, the Mother Superior gladly consented.

One account states that the work was done very quickly, while another claims that it took 6 to 8 months. According to the Sisters then present, the only tools the old man used were a saw, a T-square, and a hammer. They also saw pieces of wood soaking in basins. The man mysteriously disappeared before he could be paid, and even the local lumber yard had no record of any wood being purchased for the project.

Circular Staircase Construction

The stairway, which the builder apparently left as a gift to the Sisters, is circular, consisting of 33 steps and two complete turns of 360 degrees each. Unlike most wooden circular staircases, it has no center support. It rests against the loft at the top and on the floor at the bottom, where the entire weight appears to rest. Wooden pegs, rather than nails, were used throughout.

Through the years, architects and builders from all over the world have come to inspect this masterpiece of beauty and construction. They never fail to marvel over how it was built, and how it manages to still be standing. Some have felt that it should have collapsed the first time it was used, yet it has withstood daily use for many years.

Among the students who attended the Academy when the staircase was built was a girl of thirteen who later became a Sister of Loretto. She often spoke of how she and her friends were so eager to climb to the loft that they were among the first to do so. When they got to the top, however, they were so frightened that they had to come down on their hands and knees. This is because the railing, itself a work of art, was not part of the original construction, but was added about two years later.

Some experts are especially baffled by the great precision of the construction of the curved stringers. The wood is spliced in seven places on the inside and in nine places on the outside, with each piece forming part of a perfect curve. How this was done in the 1870's by one man with only the most primitive tools has never been explained. Furthermore, the wood seems to be of a hard variety, and according to some experts on wood, is not native to New Mexico. Where the man could have obtained it is still a mystery.

Coiled Spring Effect

In connection with the redesign of the main electrical service for this building, which incidentally came into the attic space above the choir loft, I climbed the stairway a number of times. Each time I felt a slight vertical movement, as if the two 360 degree turns were taken out of a large coiled spring. The present Superior, in discussing the history of this modern wonder, told me that during

the few times she had occasion to climb the stairs, she, too, had noted a certain amount of springiness. Perhaps this is a part of the secret of its construction.

The Sisters of Loretto Academy feel sure that this staircase was the answer to their prayers to St. Joseph, although they are hesitant to make bold statements about occurrences of this kind. Some even feel that the carpenter was St. Joseph himself. Sister Barbour points out that the legend of the miraculous staircase had its beginning during the period of its construction.

Regardless of how willing one might be to accept this legend of the Miraculous Staircase, one cannot help but be impressed by its architectural beauty, its engineering design, and its sound construction, which has withstood the test of time. As one gazes upon it and realizes it is the work of an old carpenter with only a few basic tools, it really does seem to be a miracle.

Footnotes:

1. Sister M. Florian, O.S.F., "The Inexplicable Stairs," *Joseph Magazine*, April 1960.
2. Sister Richard Marie Barbour, S.L., *Light in Yucca Land*, Centennial Commemorative Volume, Schifani Brothers Printing Co., Santa Fe, New Mexico, 1952. †

— Reprinted with permission from the May, 1999 issue of *Catholic Family News*





Reverend Father Gruner:

May God in the Most Holy Trinity of Heaven together with the Immaculate Heart of Virgin Mary, together with Saint Joseph and all the angels and saints bless you and protect you and your Fatima Apostolate every moment of your existence.

I just wanted to thank you for the most recent video you sent me regarding a documentary by TVO of Ontario on your Fatima Apostolate. In my humble opinion, it seems as if it has been directed by Our Blessed Virgin Mary Herself! No doubt, you are one of Her predilect children on earth. No doubt that every new day of the Fatima Apostolate is a clear triumph of Her Immaculate Heart, a triumph that will soon be rooted on every nation, every person on earth, thanks to your love and perseverance for Our Lady.

Yours in Jesus, Mary and Joseph.

Mrs. Consuelo H., NJ

Dear Father Gruner,

Received your letter about the need of replacing your outdated equipment to reach out to millions of people around the world with Our Lady's Television Ministry.

You are so right Father - more than ever - we all need to hear what is happening - and the truth of our Holy Catholic Faith. I hope and pray - everybody can see and hear about Fatima on TV program broadcasting.

Daily you are in my prayers - may the dear Lord reward you for all the hard work to spread Our Lady's Message.

We Want to Hear From YOU!

You are such an important part of our Lady's Peace Plan. Because of you, through the means of the television media, we are able to spread Her message to millions more souls. We love to hear from you; your comments and suggestions for programs. Maybe you even know someone who would make a very interesting and inspirational guest. Or, maybe you have some news for our Immaculate Heart Newsletter. Send them in. I'm looking forward to hearing from you, even just to tell us you are joining us in our Three Hail Mary's.

God bless you for all your hard work - may it be successful.

Love and Prayers,

Mrs. Mary M., OH

Dear Fatima Crusader,

I recently became aware of your magazine through the internet page entitled "Fatima Network". Since accessing this site recently, I hadn't been aware of the controversy surrounding the Fatima Message.

Growing up as a Catholic, I was well aware of the visions at Fatima and can vividly remember watching the film "The Miracle of Our Lady of Fatima" every Easter on television.

For years I've also been aware of the story of the so-called "third part of the secret" but hadn't realized that the matter was creating such a furor in the Vatican. I've sort of been re-discovering my own faith recently and been doing a lot of reading in regards to visions, messages, the Divine Mercy and numerous other topics and haven't been able to satisfy my curiosity in these matters. That is why when I read the web page entitled "The Fatima Crusader", I knew that this was something I've been looking for for a long time. I would greatly appreciate my name being added to your mailing list. I will be happy to send an offering whenever possible to help in the support of this publication.

Sincerely,

Mr. James L., OH

Greetings,

I am a traditional Roman Catholic and greatly appreciate all that Father Gruner and the International Fatima Rosary Crusade are doing. I often remember Father Gruner and his valiant efforts to promote the full message of Our Lady of Fatima, when I pray daily the 15 decades of the Rosary.

I also, from time to time, peruse your fine website, have read a lot of your literature, and have seen many times your television show, "Fatima: The Moment Has Come." Keep up the great work.

Thank you so much and may God bless you. Bye.

From Ben via email.

The Editor,

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