

# What a Gift!!!

*Written by Helen and Michael Rozeluk*

**What** a gift **You** have given us, dear **Mother Mary**! Who could have ever imagined the wonders we would see as a result of Your kiss during our trip to Ukraine - a trip organized by You, yourself, for the glory of Your Son Jesus. Thank you for a trip that we shall never forget: a journey of love, a journey where Your children came running for Your kiss. Yes, dear Mother Mary, Your kiss is travelling throughout the world and, once again, Your words have come true: "Through My kiss, My Son Jesus, will perform many prodigies throughout the world. Distribute these medals..." Never were words spoken with such truth! Here is our attempt to share with you, dear reader, some of our experiences on this journey to Ukraine in October of 2002. Praised be the Lord!

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**O**ur trip to Ukraine was not planned by us, nor by anyone else. After what we experienced there, we have come to realize that this trip was meticulously pre-planned, step by step with perfection by Heaven itself over the course of many years. "Patience and trust" is what Our Lady taught us in Garabandal. Here are the steps, as God's plan for this journey unfolded.

Step One - When the "Message of Garabandal" video first appeared in 1994, Helen, with the permission of Joey Lomangino (who first published the video), translated it into Ukrainian. At that time, Joey also asked us to become the Canadian Garabandal Center. He also said something very prophetic: that our primary mission would be to spread the message in Ukraine. We found his statement not only strange, but also very unlikely. We see now who was wrong! So, when the Ukrainian video came out, it was officially presented on January 1995 to the then archbishop of Ukraine, Lubomyr Cardinal Liubachivsky in Lviv by Yuri Shymko, former Canadian Member of Parliament and President of the Ukrainian World Congress. The Cardinal, after viewing it, arranged to have it shown on public television. Since then, the video and Our Lady's message have been spreading like wildfire in Ukraine as well as in North America. *PHOTO: Yuri Shymko and Cardinal Lubachivsky.*



Since my own miraculous healing in Garabandal, my wife Helen and I began to share our wonderful story with friends. This gradually developed into a full apostleship of public speaking engagements. However, we have always asked the local church authorities for their approval and permission before giving any public presentation about Garabandal. So it was that, several years ago, in 1996 or 1997, when we were speaking at St. Josaphat's Ukrainian Catholic Cathedral in Toronto, Bohdan Shyptur, a musician-composer visiting from Ukraine, came to the Mass and healing service.

Step Two - Bohdan was in a great deal of pain with back problems, allergies and a serious heart condition. He had heard that he should go to confession before the service and, since he had not been for some time, he did go to confession that evening. Later, during the healing service, he was completely cured. From that day on, Bohdan kept pestering us to visit Ukraine with a series of presentations on Garabandal. When we finally agreed to come in the fall of 2002, it was he who did all the footwork, first approaching his bishop for permission, then arranging our entire two-week schedule in various parishes and communities of his province. Upon our arrival, he became our host, chauffeur, manager and bodyguard all in one. One thing, however, worried him: he had no contacts in Lviv, the capital of Western Ukraine, where we were planning to be for the latter part of our journey. However, that was not a problem for Our Lady. She arranged it all Herself!



Step Three - A month or two before our trip, Helen and I were invited to speak at the Mother of God Monastery in Orangeville, just north of Toronto. A gentleman present at the service obtained a miraculous healing there. Somehow the topic of our proposed trip to Ukraine came up in conversation, as well as our difficulty with the Lviv part of the trip. No problem. He contacted his cousin, also a Bohdan, who was an official in that area. This cousin Bohdan arranged the Lviv part of our itinerary and took care of all our needs in Lviv, including welcoming us into his own home.

Step Four - We now step back several years: The very next day after his own healing at St. Josaphat's in Toronto, Bohdan Shyptur shared his good news with a friend of his, Petro Hrynchychyn, an author-stage director, who also had a serious back problem. Petro came the following week to St. Josaphat's, went to confession and was also miraculously healed upon kissing Our Lady's medal. In addition to this physical healing, he also experienced a deep conversion of heart and felt compelled to research Our Lady's apparitions throughout history and to write a book about Mary. Soon afterwards, in the year 2000, his book, "From Zarvanytsia to Garbandal", was published in Ukraine and completely sold out within a very short time. In the book, Petro included not only the story of the Garabandal apparitions but also the story of my healing in Garabandal and our (mine and Helen's) subsequent apostolate, as well the testimony of his own miraculous healing. Petro's book is now being passed around from reader to reader in Ukraine and a second publication is in the works. Our Lady was preparing Her people for Her arrival. The stage was being set for our coming. In fact, while we were there, people came from miles around with these books in their hands. The books were often well worn from frequent use and had tattered pages, precious books held by many hands. Here was hope -- a hope of love from the Mother of God Herself!



*Helen and Michael with Bishop Cornelius Pasichny of the Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy of Toronto just before the trip to Ukraine.*

Step Five - Shortly before we were to leave for Ukraine, our own bishop in Toronto, Bishop Cornelius

Pasichny gave us his official letter of recommendation to all bishops and priests. He himself, also, while on official business in Ukraine only a couple of months previously, put in a good word about us with the local bishop(s).

Step Six - Our Lady needed to re-ignite the religious fervor of her people in Ukraine. She wanted to remind them that they are particularly dear to Her Heart. After all, it was this country and these people who, in the year 1015 A.D., were one of the first to be officially consecrated to The Blessed Mother by the then reigning monarch, Prince Yaroslav the Wise of Kyiv. The communist system of the twentieth century had tried but failed to destroy the Church, to crush the very people. They and the Church survived against all odds, but the smoldering flame now needed rekindling. This came in the summer of 2001 with the memorable visit to Ukraine of the Holy Father, Pope John Paul II himself. The love shown to him by the people of Western Ukraine was unprecedented. His visit changed the country. The Holy Father re-ignited, reaffirmed and blessed that fire of love Ukrainians have for Mother Mary and their love of the rosary. Religious zeal soared to an all-time high. The stage was now set.

Upon accepting the invitation to speak in Ukraine, we soon realized that there would be many problems. We would need some sort of video-projector to enable showing the documentary film of Garabandal to large gatherings. We would need a large quantity of printed material, both leaflets and holy cards. Sending it all by mail would be too expensive: a printing company would have to be found in Ukraine to print everything in the quantities needed. We also needed many rosaries. All travel costs were also up to us because the country is poor and the people could not possibly afford even the smallest expenses associated with this trip. Their hearts are wonderful and we knew that they would greet us with open arms, provide for our food and lodgings and arrange the locations for our talks but what about costs for the halls, travelling costs, etc? Those were enormous expenses we had to take on ourselves. Still, we were not worried; concerned - yes, but not worried. We knew that if Mother Mary wanted this trip, She would also take care of "minor" details.

Here is an example of how Our Lady works: About one month before the trip, we counted up the rosaries we had on hand. There were only 25. We were heartbroken and did not know what to do. Our previous sources for rosaries were gone. So we prayed. The next day, my dental assistant, Lisa, brought us another 25. The mail that day also included a package from our friends in the USA, Bob and Donna, containing another 350 rosaries. The day after that, Olga D. called unexpectedly, saying that she had procured some (a couple thousand) rosaries that were left over from the World Youth Day here in Toronto. Then retired Bishop Lacey of Toronto gave us another 1000. All this happened in a total four days. Several of us then met at Fr. Miroslav's church to bless and pack the rosaries for shipping. That evening, over 6,500 rosaries were packed and shipped to Ukraine! Two weeks later, another 1,500 were sent there and yet another 1,000 came with us in our luggage. God showed us - not to worry. He was in charge. By the time we were to leave Toronto, many generous souls had come forward with donations, so that, in the end, every need was met, every expense was fully covered! Even a video projector "dropped into our laps"!

## **DAY ONE - THE MIRACLES BEGIN**

We arrived in Ukraine on September 20, 2002, at the Lviv airport, where the great air show tragedy took place only two months earlier. We were met by several family members and by Bohdan Shyptur and Bohdan P., our trip organizers. After a brief visit with cousins and family, we were whisked away to the city of Ivano-Frankivsk where we spent the night at the Shyptur home.

The following day, Saturday, September 21, we were already scheduled for a television interview. It was quite short and to the point. We also found out that, prior to our arrival, local television stations had already aired the Garabandal documentary video twice. There were also newspaper articles announcing our arrival and our itinerary.

On Saturday evening we spoke in the village of Radcha, near Ivano-Frankivsk. This first presentation was to be for the children of that area. When we arrived, there were over 800 children along with their parents and grandparents: a total of about 1500 people. As is customary when greeting honoured guests, a group of three little girls in folk costume greeted us with ceremonial bread and salt on a beautifully embroidered cloth. Their greeting consisted of a beautiful poem, composed especially for our arrival by the pastor of the village church. We were then escorted inside where, after briefly introducing us, the pastor, Fr. Zenovy Kasko, celebrated a Moleben (devotions) to Mother Mary followed by the recitation of the Rosary, while priests from other parishes were hearing confessions. Afterwards we spoke about Garabandal and our association with these events. Then we proceeded to make the medal from Garabandal available for the children to venerate. However, there were so many people crowding around that there was no room to move. Father then asked all the adults to go into the neighbouring hall to watch the Garabandal documentary video while the children came to venerate the medal of Our Lady.



So many children were seriously ill. So many with back problems, stomachs ailments, heart conditions, kidney disease, liver problems, headaches, crippled arms and legs. Our hearts ached to see that only a small number of them were completely healthy. One boy, about 12 years old, paralyzed from the waist down, was carried in by his parents. I took him from his mother and held him myself. When he kissed my medal, we both fell to the floor, felled by the power of the Holy Spirit. Everyone was alarmed and someone cried, "Give him air!". "No, he is Ok," I replied, and instructed everyone to recite the "Our Father" and "Hail Mary" instead. When I finished praying for him and lifted him up, I suddenly felt the strength of God in him. I let him go and he stood there by himself. I told everyone to make room. Putting my arm gently around his waist, I said to him, "Let's walk together." And he did! We walked about 10 meters (30 feet) straight ahead. People cried. Then we walked back together. And again and again. His mother was crying when he finally walked towards her all by himself. She was waiting there with her arms outstretched as he walked right into her open arms! Everyone was crying and so was I! The boy and the parents went back home to the next village, walking together hand-in-hand. Praise the Lord! That was the first of many wonderful miracles Our Lady performed.

After that incident, the crowd became even more adamant in venerating this medal kissed by Our Lady, for they had witnessed God's love and power. The pushing and shoving seemed that it would never end. The pastor, Fr. Zenovy, then decided that we had to move to a more "friendly" location where the crowd's access to us could be controlled more easily. He led us to the church bell-tower, a small separate building, which contained the church bell and a small chapel accessible by a single doorway and a narrow winding staircase. At that time it also contained the tabernacle and the priest's vestments because the church itself was being rebuilt and regular Church services were held either at the school or, weather permitting, outdoors.

The prayers felt particularly special in the bell tower, for we were now praying in front of the tabernacle, in Jesus' presence. Here it was more peaceful, with no pushing or shoving. And the children kept coming. A boy came up whose right arm was all contorted in an unusual way. He was unable to move it or use it at all. It was paralyzed in this position. He kissed my medal and I prayed for him there in front of the tabernacle. Then I asked him to move his arm. Suddenly, his arm straightened out and moved freely! He waved it up and down. The joy in his face was something to behold! He went outside, waving his arm for all to see. All evening long and well into the night the prayers and veneration of Our Lady's medals continued until everyone had kissed the medal. In the early hours of Sunday morning, Father Zenovy was finally able to take us to his home for a very late supper. Wow --- what an evening the Lord had prepared for all of us! And how much more was still in store!

## **DAY TWO - THE MIRACLES CONTINUE**

### ***The First Shall be Last***

The following day, Sunday, September 22, 2002 we returned to the village of Radcha for the 9:30 a.m. Divine Liturgy. As we were approaching the village by car, we passed hundreds of people, all walking from miles away, all going in the same direction as we were. Some came in wheelchairs, some were being carried, some hobbling on crutches, walking, walking from afar. When we arrived at the school grounds for the outdoor Mass, there were approximately 2,000 people there. The news of Our Lady's miracles had already spread. However, after Holy Communion many people started going inside the school building where the event had been held the previous night, expecting it to be there again. They did not even wait for the Divine Liturgy to end completely. Some even beckoned us to follow them, saying that it would be easier to get in now. We were already recognised. We politely told them, "No, the Holy Mass has not ended and we were staying until it's over."



After Mass, Father Zenovy introduced us and invited us to talk to the crowd that was standing in the school yard. We talked about Garabandal, about Our Mother Mary's visit there and about our story. Then we announced that everyone would be able to come and venerate the medal in the place designated by the pastor. And it was not inside the school, as some had presupposed, but in the bell-tower. Thus it was that those who thought they would be first (those who had left the Mass early to be first in the school building) ended up being last! They were the last ones to arrive at the bell-tower.

As we were making our way to the bell-tower, Fr. Zenovy asked me to pray for a young lady in a wheelchair. She was about 24 to 26 years old and paralyzed. We stopped and prayed together over her. She kissed the medal of Our Lady. Then, for some reason unknown to me, I knelt down in front of her, I moved away her foot rests and placed her feet, with some difficulty, onto the ground and told her to walk with me. I asked the crowd to say the rosary. Again, an astounding thing happened - she walked with me! All saw! People cried!

Father then took me to visit those in the village who were bedridden. We went from house to house and prayed with them. Fr. Zenovy and I visited several people in their homes. One man, about 30 years old, was

lying on the floor of his room. For several days and he had been extremely weak and unable to get up on his feet. His parents and relatives were crying and praying for him when we came in. Father asked him to get up but he could not. After we prayed over him, he stood up but said that he had to sit down again. OK. We left but asked the family to continue praying. Later on that day, we received word that this man did get up again and stood for a long time. Then he went outside the house, walked around and even sat in the family car. His family was ecstatic.

Helen, in the meantime, proceeded to the bell-tower to make the medal available to others. The crowds were so huge! But what happened at the bell-tower was even more amazing. When Father and I came back to the bell-tower building, we had to elbow our way through the huge crowd that was trying to get in to see Helen with her medal. We made our way upstairs to the chapel. When we arrived, Helen had just finished praying for a small boy, about 7 years old, whose right arm was paralyzed from birth. Indeed, the right arm was half the size of the other and was dangling uselessly at the boy's side. When Helen placed her medal on the lad's hand and prayed for him, the medal became quite hot. So Helen decided to ask the boy if he could "wiggle his fingers". And he did. Then she asked him to wave his hand. And he did! Then she asked him to raise his arm up and down. And he did! It was at this very moment that we walked in. When Father Zenovy was made aware of what had just happened, he took the child into his arms. The boy wrapped BOTH his arms around Fr. Zenovy's neck and squeezed him with all his might, while Father, with tears streaming down his face, carried the boy to Our Lord in the tabernacle and prayed in thanksgiving for this enormous miracle. Father knew this boy and he had seen his useless arm for some time. Now the arm was totally functional as God meant it to be. Here was another instant miraculous healing through Our Lady's kiss, just as She had promised!

The prayers continued until Father told us that we had to leave for our scheduled appointment with the local bishop, Bishop S. Mudry in Ivano-Frankivsk. We had a light lunch and something to drink and were whisked away to meet with the bishop.

*[Continued with PART 2 ....](#)*

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