

Here is Our Lady's message of the 25th October 1991:

"Dear children, pray, pray, pray."

BY NOW ALL WE CAN DO IS PRAY

The Queen of Peace has been coming for more than 10 years to offer us the divine Grace of conversion and peace. One cannot receive this Grace unless our prayers are united to Hers. Therefore, Her first word is also Her last word: pray.

By now everything has been said. The only thing left that we must do is pray. The events have evolved to a point where there is no more need to sit back and watch and ask oneself if the apparitions of the Virgin at Medjugorje are real or not, if Her messages come from Heaven or not, if She will give a sign from Heaven or not.

Heaven has spoken, and is now waiting for a reply - and after speaking to us, God will respond only to those that know Him and respond to Him. God, in fact, "let's himself be found by those who do not put him to the test, he shows himself to those who do not distrust him." (W's 1.2) "John the Baptist came among you, why did you not believe him?" They did not believe him because they did not want to turn away from their sins. If we do not believe in what comes from Heaven, it is because we are bent over ourselves and the things of the earth. If we are willing to respond to God, the truth and the authority of His Word will become clear to us.

Pray, pray, pray; in other words, dedicate yourselves entirely to prayer because the world's peace and the salvation of mankind is at stake - and not just of Yugoslavia, but of every one of us. The evil that wants to invade us and sweep us all away, can only be defeated with prayer and love. **Pray, pray, pray** means: you men have no chance of winning, of creating peace; God alone can intervene - He alone is our hope and our salvation: therefore pray with me. *Fr. R.*

"I asked Marija if Our Lady had not said Her usual thanks at the end of the message, but the reply was negative. The situation seen from here tells me that this is a very important message... Organize yourselves in your families, in your prayer groups - for adoration, fasts, renunciations of whatever you prefer. This is not just a war that is destroying Croatia, but of many things that are destroying life. Praying together prepares the peace.

What we are going through is not war, some say - another word needs to be found to describe it. Without a doubt we can say that it is a manifestation of Satan's disgraceful face. But we want to believe that all of this is part of the Lord's plan, not because He wants these destructions, but because He knows how to turn everything into our advantage. "Everything turns into good for those who love God." Our Lady is asking for our prayers, to be able to triumph in this world of sin," (*Fr. Slavko*)

Before the situation of the present world that continues to deteriorate, where the order of things wanted by God is overthrown more and more, we cannot do any other thing but pray to the Lord of all things. With a world where disgregation and moral and social catastrophe seems to reign, a world that takes us further and further away from the hope and the grace of God, what else can we do, if not pray? What is there left to do, if not appeal to the Father's omnipotent Love and to the solicitous presence of the Mediator of all Graces?

It is because "the fight is not against human forces, but against diabolic forces," that God alone can bridle and overthrow their plans, like He did with Communism in Europe - He "thwarts the plans of nations, frustrates the intentions of peoples; but the Lord's plans hold good for ever." (Ps 33) We do not doubt that He will do so also for Yugoslavia, where only God is able to stop a war that is being fought by Satan and his accomplices with such blind ferocity, to overthrow in an instant the plans of he who thinks to have won already. "It is best to take refuge in the Lord than rely on men; it is best to take refuge in the Lord than rely on princes." (Ps 118) That is what Our Lady is also teaching us today, through saying: pray.

ANOTHER LOOK AT THE LAST MESSAGE

"I invite all of you in a special way to prayer and renunciation, because now, like never before, Satan wants to show his disgraceful face to the world and through it, sweep as many people as possible onto the path of death and sin... I am asking all of you to offer up prayers and sacrifices for my intentions... Forget your desires and pray for what God wants, not for what you want." (25 Sept. 1991)

"My soul is sorrowful to the point of death. Wait here and keep awake with me. Pray, not to be put to the test." (Mt 26)

"This is the hour of darkness"

keep Jesus company in Gethsemane

It depends on our prayers and renunciations if Mary's Immaculate Heart will triumph and not that disgraceful face. We must forget ourselves and unite ourselves to the Prayers of Our Lady.

In the light of Our Lady's latest messages, it is clear that we are living a moment in history that we could call a state of emergency. Just like Jesus in Gethsemane urged His disciples to stay awake and pray like never before, the Grace that Our Lady is giving us, is to make us aware that this is a period of darkness and She is urging us not to become sluggish or weighed down, because this is a moment of war where we are asked to fight on two fronts: one is within, where we have to fight against our sins, our pride and egoism. The outer one is a fight against a world that is hostile to God where Satan is very active.

It is a fight where our salvation is at stake, both our personal salvation and that of all men. Our weapon is prayer, a strong prayer, said both personally and in community, because "where there are two or more people reunited in my name, there I will be too." Jesus was tempted in the desert by the devil who, "...left him, to return at the appointed time," (Lk 4.13) and Mary is inviting us to pray and fast like when She first came. This is in harmony with Jesus' life - a continuous battle with the devil and especially at the beginning and the end of His public life.

How did Jesus affront these two moments? With prayer and renunciation. Jesus prayed, he fed on the Word of God, His life was completely turned towards God, He left behind Him every other activity. He knew that Satan was superior to the human forces and that He could defeat him only if united with God. I find it difficult not to compare what happened in the first months of Medjugorje (with the soldiers surrounding the area) with what is happening now. Then too, Mary invited everyone to have faith, to pray and fast, and everything ended up in the best of manners.

Perhaps this is Satan's appointed time, and thus Our Lady is urging us to more intense prayer, to offer up sacrifices, to renounce our desires and ambitions (as good as they may be, they would weigh us down and would not permit us to be decisively turned to God). It all costs, but as soldiers of Our Lady, it is our duty to obey, and not to desert from this spiritual battle. Our most important weapon is the Rosary, but every other prayer said with the heart is good, especially if accompanied by sacrifice.

Let's keep our eyes on Jesus in Gethsemane then, Who begs and urges His disciples to stay awake and pray with Him and keep those words live in our hearts, they were said for us too. Let us respond with generosity, and remain united in a strong and persevering prayer. A prospect that will not always be easy, but we cannot betray such a Wonderful Mother like Mary Who loves us so dearly and Who has done so much for each one of us in these last ten years! (*Paolo*)

**Inexorable punishment for those who refuse
God's continuous calls - the Bible tells**

"...Dear children, I would like you to understand how serious the situation is..." You see, we tend to turn a deaf ear to certain things, when things become habitual. We are used to hearing that the situation is grave, (...) to hearing that there are so many nuclear weapons that they could destroy all humanity one hundred times (we know that the Russians who had seized the government earlier this year had managed to get their hands on the box that commands the nuclear weapons). But we've heard it all so many times, it doesn't scare us anymore. At a certain point, the seriousness of a situation ends up being something that just doesn't move us anymore. Why? Well, as one would say, we've heard that one already!

Beware but, because the Lord has always used the same method: He calls, and calls, at times He threatens, He calls and threatens - I'm referring to biblical times which is a model for the whole of history. So many times He called and threatenend Israel: "Turn away from sin, turn back to God..." ("The Lord tirelessly sent them messenger after messenger, since he wished to spare his people and his house. But they ridiculed the messengers of God, they despised his words, they laughed at his prophets, until at last the wrath of the Lord rose so

high against his people that there was no further remedy.” (2 Ch 36) Take the first exile - all slaves and all deported, except for a small group who were allowed to remain. The king did not want to listen to the prophet Jeremiah when he said: “Do this and your life and the lives of your family will be saved.” The sons of the king were all brought before him and killed while he watched, then the king’s eyes were burnt out and, blind, he was taken prisoner, and as a war trophy, made to live like a dog under the table of the opposing king.

The Lord calls, and calls... There are other examples from the Bible that can help us understand: like Sodom and Gomorrah. How many times did the Lord send warnings, before fire from heaven destroyed them? And what about Noah - how many warnings! Just think how long it took Noah to build the ark, and in the meantime he called his fellow citizens to God’s ways. But they didn’t listen, they didn’t care, they had heard him so many times, that they were used to it. But then the flood came. Things went better for Jonah, who had to call back the city of Nineveh: “40 more days and this city will be destroyed.” They believed him and they turned back to God. They reasoned: “The Lord has said that he will destroy us, but if we turn away from our sins, it might be that he won’t punish us anymore, because he is a good God, a merciful God.” They did sincere penance, and the Lord did not punish them.

In the light of these episodes, you can now understand what the following means: **“...and much of what will happen depends on your prayers.”** How many times did God’s people, the Israelites, rebel during the 40 years in the desert and God wanted to destroy them? Moses interceded and God did not send the promised punishment; He let Himself be appeased by prayers. Right from the start Our Lady at Medj. said: “Even wars can be stopped with prayer.”

And I tell you that the second world war could have been avoided. Fatima speaks clearly. It was 1917, and the first world war was about to end, Our Lady said: “Soon this war will end, but if men do not convert, if men do not turn back to God, then under the pontificate of Pius XI, there will be the first signs of another, even more terrible, war.” If... if... if... The words of Our Lady were not observed, and the consequences were inevitable. Look then, how these words have a literal sense: “... and much of what will happen depends on your prayers...” I can change the course of history. At present I’m reading with great interest the story of a Portuguese girl called Alexandra Maria La Costa. She died in 1955, at the age of 30. She was an invalid, and for 13 years she lived on the Eucharist alone. She lived the Passion. She was stigmatic. Just think of this young lady, immobile in her bed - the Lord used her to push Pius XII into consecrating the world to the Immaculate Heart of Mary in 1942. It was this girl that obtained the grace of Portugal not entering the war. See the power of prayer! For just one person alone. But what enormous sacrifices she did!

“...Much of what will happen depends on your prayers... and your renunciations...” I would be happy if each one of us could go home tonight and keep just this phrase in our minds.

Our Lady at Medj. has explained many types of fasts to us; not just on bread and water, but also from idle talk, from the TV, from cigarettes, from many types of literature and shows, from many obscene things.. So time to pray can be found, and how! (...)
(Fr. Gabriel Amorth to the “Regina Pacis” prayer group in Rome)

“The situation is very serious,” She says, but it is thanks to the Blessed Mother that the sin that dominates this world will be overthrown, through a sensational intervention of God, to rouse the men from His right, and to foil Satan’s plans of sin and death.

That is why we are asked to **“forget our needs and personal problems”** which are very secondary to His plans: our Blessed Mother will take care of those. We are too busy worrying about our minor problems to know what we really need, but the Spirit knows and comes to our aid and “expresses our plea in a way that could never be put into words...” (Rm 8) “...when you pray and you do not get it, it is because you have not prayed properly, you have prayed for something to indulge your own desires.” (Jm 4.3) Now, like never before, we must ask the Spirit to help us forget ourselves and our designs, even those seemingly good, and unite ourselves to the Blessed Virgin to obtain that which God wants, which alone is important.

MARY’S PLAN FOR US AND THE WORLD

(...) We always think that we can do everything by ourselves... We don’t think that we exist solely because God wants us to exist... He is present in the Eucharist and nobody can do what the Eucharist can do... The importance and the value then, of everything that God did for you, day after day, in the most astonishing of ways, becomes clear...

One would have to be blind then not to see that one of the greatest gifts that God has given us is the presence of Our Lady. People say: but Our Lady was already part of our faith, why is She appearing now? If Our Lady was already a part of our faith, why then did you not know Her? This wonderful gift called Medj. exists because God

wanted it - God sent us His Mother; and remember that God does not owe us anything, nothing at all, and least of all this gift.

Our Lady came as an unexpected and free gift, donated to us by God, Who does not stop before our debates.

It is on this level that the interior conversion must come about, little by little. The man of today thinks that he is the master of every-thing and everyone, and would like the others to bow down to him, full of respect. No-one owes us anything, not even our existence! Our life is a continuous miracle, it is the manifestation of someone’s desire for us to exist, who keeps us on our feet. God does not owe us anything, and least of all that Our Lady should descend from heaven. It is purely a grace! This year has been a continuous, incredible overabundance of grace showering from heaven, called Our Lady. The world has never taught anything in the light of gratuitousness. Never! In front of the Eucharist, however, recovery is total - one gets to the core of the problem: I am His; before God I am forced to be real and sincere. Sincerity takes one to saying thank you Lord! ...

From the gratuitousness of God, man’s gratitude is born. Out of this field, we cannot understand Our Lady’s projects. Infinite debates are held, like in these last 10 years: why does She appear? Why every day? ... Memory, gratuitousness, sincerity, all together, open the way to a new way of listening, to a real comprehension of Our Lady’s projects; which doesn’t mean understanding totally, just that we are open to entering a new level.

The history of these years tell us three simple things: 1. Our Lady appears, She continues to appear, despite the debates held by the theologians, etc. 2. She is not static, She reveals things, She makes Her desires be known. 3. She reaches us, She lets us be involved. She goes right to people’s hearts, without us knowing it. In a way that is unexpected, humanly incomprehensible, She reaches you - because She is the bride of the Holy Spirit, and like the Pope says, the Spirit finds ways that men could not even suspect. And this is one of the ways found by Him, in His marvellous imagination.

But we are on a superior level, because everything is dictated by the Holy Spirit, and not from the minds of men who want to decide what Our Lady should or should not do and even say. These times belong to the Holy Spirit and to Our Lady. Our Lady was with the Apostles during Pentecost; the Holy Spirit descended upon them, and the Church began from there. Why are we surprised that Our Lady is with us again? Let’s not get into a flutter, because if the Holy Spirit and Our Lady want to do something, They will not be stopped by people who think differently. They have a project and They are carrying it out... like Jesus in Gethsemane, left alone and even betrayed, but He did not give in. Also in these times, Our Lady will not stop before our debates...

The apparitions are not just a fact, they are also an event, in other words, a fact with great consequences - like conversions, forgiveness of the past, real joy, fullness, regaining of the sense of life, blessings, providential encounters, healings from physical and spiritual illnesses, miracles, portents, (the votive offerings in the sanctuaries are reminders of the miraculous interventions by Our Lady, and for this reason it is good that they stay in the sanctuaries).

The Apparitions then are a grace, they are an event. When Our Lady appears, She does not remain silent, but She speaks, She communicates with people. She has the right to do so, because She is the Mother of God and of the Church, the Mother of Christians, She is the Queen of the angels, of the prophets ... If She appears, then it is because She has the right to do so, She has the right to reach Her children, to wake them that they may receive the truth, to tell them that they are sons of God. She does not deceive.

With this in mind we must be very careful not to **fall into two terribly negative and widely spread errors**: 1. Continue to interrogate Mary and pretend that She has to answer. Our Lady is not your everyday person. When we approach the Mystery, we have to remember that it is a mystery - Moses removed his sandals from his feet. We should all see how our Polish brothers approach Our Lady of Czestochowa to understand that approaching Our Lady and Our Lord is a serious matter. (In the same way, it is a waste of time telling children that Jesus is a friend if we don’t know how to tell them that He is the Son of God.) Thus, do not pretend that Our Lady should answer us. A first condition in understanding Mary’s plans, therefore, is to remain silent and listen to what She has to tell us. Be silent and listen - that goes for all of us, including theologians.

2. To understand Her plans we cannot compare Our Lady to any other person, no matter how good, and not even to the saints, because She is the Queen of the Saints. What She says is unique. To think that what the parish does or what a certain movement within the Church does is better than what She says or does, is an objective, theological, pastoral error. What Our Lady does cannot be compared to what any other pastor is able to do. The respect that Our Lady shows all of us (and including the Pope, the Bishops and the priests) should be a lesson for us all, even though She most humbly says: it would best if you do as I say. After two years of Our Lady’s apparitions, the Bishop of Split said how Our Lady had done more in Bosnia and Herzegovina in those two years, than all the bishops put together in 40 years.

She has come to teach the Church of today to live the Gospel that we may be converted and not damned

Once these two errors have been eliminated, we can humbly say that Our Lady appears because She loves Her Son and She loves all mankind. She wants us to see and remember what He did for us - i.e. He saved us, He showed us the path to salvation. That is why She repeats many times: I want you in heaven, I want you all to be saints, etc. Our Lady wants to show us the Gospel in its depth and its entirety, not the latest thoughts of the theologians or of any other person. She is not here to tell us things that fall into our habitual schemes, that even the Church may get caught up in. She is not here to tell us about our opinions on the Gospel - She is here to tell us about the Gospel.

In France I heard people saying that Our Lady does not say anything new, that what She says is all in the Gospel. Certainly, but because no-one lives the Gospel anymore. Our Lady does not limit Herself to telling us about the Gospel, She makes us live the Gospel. Our Lady started with the people in Medjugorje, with a group of young people from a normal parish and started making them live the Gospel. That is why Medjugorje has become a "spectacle" for the world and the angels. **She did not come then, to tell us about the Gospel, but to make us live it.**

The Gospel is full of one particular element - conversion: "Turn away from your sins and believe the Good News." (Mk 1.15) Conversion, however, demands certain conditions. First of all, it is God that concedes it, because it is His gift. Secondly, He lays down the law. If He concedes you the gift of conversion, then your degree of conversion depends on the respect that you will have for He Who has reached out His arms to you, and on your acceptance of what He will propose to you. Our Lady has come to propose the Gospel to us in a practical manner, starting from the beginning, since we had forgotten what conditions were necessary and indispensable for conversion.

Why has She been appearing for 10 years? We have no right to know this answer, but just think of the **incredible patience needed in teaching us all those things that we had forgotten**, those things that are heard no longer in the Churches, those things that are called the alphabet and education of the Gospel. Our Lady started right from the beginning, not even first class, but pre-school. She did not come down from heaven for the sake of a few willing people, but to tell all humanity that it must convert. It is more than a century, however, that She has been saying the same things, and so the danger must be imminent: **the danger of us being damned** - because in the Gospel it is called damnation.

Jesus often speaks about the devil, and therefore it is a waste of time being scandalized by Our Lady coming here to say the devil exists. Jesus has always said that he exists. And it is time that we started hearing it again from the pulpits of the churches. Satan exists, but for 20 years nobody has been talking about his existence anymore, and the terrible consequences are visible for all to see.

Our Lady, as Queen of the Earth and Heaven, wants us to see Her coming as a great hope for all - for the Church, for the non-believers, for those who believe in something, for the desperate, the sick, the lost and for whoever you wish. We are invited then to look beyond the lines, and see that something very big is happening in our lives, something much bigger than our fragile existences.

(Niki - reflections - to be continued)

EVANGELICAL NON-RESISTANCE - UTOPIA?

"Offer no resistance to your adversaries; Love your enemies."

Some people just lately, who bear a certain authority, have been heard justifying the use of weapons for legitimate defence, but we would like to raise the other side of the question. Jesus talks about being violent with oneself, but to agree with our adversaries, to offer the other cheek to those who hit us. God forbid that we dare judge our brothers who have had to undergo the most horrid forms of aggression, and who we fully sympathise with. But let us try and see what would have happened had their defence been evangelical love instead of weapons - and without wanting to blame the heads of state or those peoples who have not been able to do such a thing - after all, have we been able to offer the other cheek?

There is no form of aggression that must be stopped at all costs with the use of weapons. With regards to the Gulf war, Card. Ratzinger asked himself if opposing the unjust adversary would not cause more damage even when one is in the right, given the deadliness of modern weapons and the chain of negative reactions that a war would cause. These days, the war is "an adventure with no return." (John Paul II) It is an endless evil and that is why the Church invoked: "A peste, fame et bello libera nos, Domine." (Oh Lord, free us from the plague, hunger and war.)

The Pope could see right when he repeatedly and totally condemned the war. A month ago, the Pope once again declared that it is a nation's right to desire freedom and selfgovernment, and then to the President of Croatia (a nation that has been unjustly attacked) he said, "First of all, silence the weapons," alluring perhaps to the siege

on the Federal barracks which became easy pretence for the Federal Army to legitimize and increase their aggressiveness on the front.

The evangelical reply (show the other cheek to those who hit you) seems insane - or is it the contrary that is more insane?

But one would say: what would the people in charge of defending a nation do? Now, from a human side of view, let's take a look at what the (though heroic) Croatian defence has brought upon the nation: cities destroyed, villages razed to the ground, places of worship destroyed, intensification of hate, endless mourning, destruction of essential means such as industries, transport services, communications - an economy gone to ruin.

It is now clear that the territories invaded by the Serbians were destroyed to completely uproot the Croatian culture and civilization, to make room for their own settlements. The Croatian defence, however, favoured this situation. On the other hand, if the Serbian invasion had been a rapid, unresisted one, there would have been none, or very little loss in lives and property and it couldn't have justified or determined the terrible ruins of war that were intensified by the vindictive fury of the invaders who saw themselves being opposed. We can imagine (unfortunately, not see) what would have happened if the age-old questions and concern for power had been placed aside, and the Croatian Christians had used a new spirit to make peace with the invading enemies (ethnic groups and minority Serbians) by offering no resistance, but by "offering them even food and drink, and thus placing the hot coals of Christian love on their heads!" How much ruin would have been spared! The devil was sly in fanning the flame, more than the children of the Light in putting it out...

Had it been a question of territorial integrity, political solutions (perhaps warless solutions) would have defended the country better, and perhaps earlier; thus leaving the country unharmed. We must turn that old pagan saying - "if you want peace, prepare for war (with your enemies)" into "if you want peace, love (your enemies)."

Oh, if only the pastors had welcomed the Queen of Peace, and if only the peoples had placidly let themselves be educated by the Holy Spirit, we would not be talking about weapons today, but of love, and the peace would have won there where the war is now winning.

"Surrender yourselves totally to God" and pursue love on all levels: this is the solution contained in the messages of Our Lady, which is the same as the message contained in the Gospel: "love your enemies, be good and do good towards those who hate you."

Come, my land is also your land! Our real citizenship is that of heaven. The wolf will graze with the lamb.

We find the same solutions announced in the Gospel. It is not possible for a man that has been converted to see any other way. And the world too will see that this is so. The time of peace, described in Isaiah 11, is already here - where the age-old enemies (the wolf and the lamb, the panther and the kid, the calf and the lion cub) will graze together; and all humanity, become like a child, will play over the cobra's hole, by now harmless. It is not possible that the words of God remain utopian, like it was not utopia during the encounter between St. Francis and the wolf at Gubbio.

In front of the new heavens and the new earth promised by the Lord, where justice will reign right from down here, the idea of possessing land (granted by God as extra) becomes secondary. The idea of "homeland" also becomes secondary, because our real homeland is in heaven, where there is a one and only Father, a one and only Saviour. Jesus cried over his homeland "that killed the prophets and stoned God's chosen ones," but His Father's Will came first.

Nationalism - enemy to peace. "The gods of nationalism have often replaced the real God. Everyone seems to forget that nations or peoples do not enter heaven, but singular people, one by one. Nationalism is a new religion. And just like the others, it has its symbols, its liturgies - coats of arms, ensigns, anthems. The blood and the land become absolute. What's happening in my land is really terrifying." (Ivica Mastruko, Yugoslav ambassador in the Vatican - from *Il Sabato*, 7 Sept. 1991)

The worse things get, the more we realize how impossible it is to live on this earth without God. A friend told me: "Times were never so bad, but never were they so wonderful, because it has never been so clear that man cannot live without God." A great purification will be needed, but this too will be works of the Father, and therefore it will be good just like all creation. God will manifest His Mercy when man will recognize his sin and the abyss of evil that he has fallen into caused by abandoning the Font of live water.

The Heart of Mary is a tangible sign of God's Love for us, and even if at the moment it emphasises the negativity of those who oppose It, It will be a like a door wide open for all after the great purification, because Jesus came to save that which was lost. This wonderful reconciliation - peace between the peoples and individuals - will be works of God, not of man: "this is what the zeal of the Lord of the ranks will do." *Fr. A.*

VICKA: Peace that disarms " Our secrets will arrive"

Fr. Livio of Radio Maria in Italy interviewed Vicka on the 2nd September, at the end of the Novena of renunciation which was asked for by Our Lady on the 25th August. The following is an extract of that interview.

Peace is a gift for those who pray and have clean hearts. It is the same thing for real joy, which is a taste of Heaven. (...) "Our Lady says many times that we must pray for the world's peace, but if we do not have peace in our hearts, then our prayer cannot be heard..."

Q. Well, if so many people are troubled, how can one have peace in one's heart?

A. We all have something in our hearts that disturbs us in one way or another. We must pray with a great will and say: Jesus I love you and I want You to take all of this away from my heart. I cannot say that I want peace in my heart, but then do nothing for it to come. That way you will never have it. There is no need to pray for this gift, but when you really desire praying, this gift comes by itself.

Q. On the first anniversary, someone asked what gift you would have given to Our Lady, and you replied: "I'm taking Her a clean heart." What relation is there between peace and a clean heart?

A. They are both alike - when you have a clean heart, you also have peace in your heart.

Q. Our Lady talked about Her: "plans for peace and joy, that Satan wants to destroy" (25 August). Tell us something about joy.

A. No, it is not possible to describe this word - one must live this word called joy, Our Lady says. She did not say: "Pray for this joy," without reason. Joy is an immense gift, like our faith, like peace - see, we can live this joy in our hearts. Joy isn't only outside our hearts, like joking about things like we were doing now, but which cannot be felt in our hearts. This joy that we feel outside is not important. It is much nicer if we feel joy in our hearts, because this is real joy that never passes, it grows day by day, and then it comes out (for the others to see).

Q. You have this joy, it seems to me.

A. Yes, certainly.

Q. Why do you have this joy?

A. I have never prayed or asked God to give me this joy because He and Our Lady do not say: "Pray to have this joy." I did not ask Our Lady: "Give me this joy because I am Vicka." No, not like that. Our Lady gave me a possibility: She said to search for God, and then I would find this joy...

Q. In a message, Our Lady said that there is joy in Heaven. What difference is there between the joy of this earth and the joy of Heaven?

A. Our Lady says that we can start living Heaven right here now on this earth. For me there is no difference between here and there (see message of 25 May).

Q. Heaven starts here on this earth...

A. It starts here on earth, and then it just continues.

Even sicknesses are gifts of God - I am ready to die, now (if God wants). Q. Listen, we all know that you have been sick of late.

A. Now I am well.

Q. It must have been an important trial period for you! Why do you think God sends you so many trials?

A. I have never asked why. I always say 'welcome' to these sicknesses. He knows why. I try to accept them with love and that keeps me happy. It makes me laugh when I hear someone say that they are waiting for a cross, a sickness - I always put God's will before everything, and my will after, do you understand? That way, whether God sends me something good or not so good, it's all the same for me and things don't become a problem. I always say: "God, I thank you for this gift; have You anything else to give me? I am always ready to take whatever You want, with Your help."

Q. I've heard say that you would be happy even if it meant packing your bags and going to Heaven right now. But are you really so indifferent about this?

A. There is no difference for me. If God calls me and says: "Vicka, it's time to go," then I go, I am ready.

Q. Even if you are so young?

A. No, no, for God there is no young or old. (...)

Do not blame the Communists, do not be afraid of the war.

Q. We have just seen the biggest Communist party in the world die of a heart attack in just a few days! Is there some sort of connection between the coming of the Queen of Peace and the conversion of Russia?

A. No, we cannot think certain things because someone dies of a heart attack, or whatever. Let's leave that to God and Our Lady. She is the Queen of Peace. She loves all Her children, She loves even those who had the attack... just that he was a long way from Our Lady and Jesus, but it is not for us to think bad of people.

Q. But there is a connection between Medjugorje and Fatima - that's for sure, because Our Lady said it in the last message. Our Lady of Fatima said: "Russia will convert and there will be a period of peace." We can see now that Russia is converting,

therefore we hope in a period of peace. What need is there of your secrets then?

A. OK, Russia of course will be converted, but we cannot look at the other people! Our situation too is very serious, and we always want to blame someone for not being a good guide and not being able to guarantee our peace. I am not interested in who commands. I pray for all. God knows when we will have this peace, and let us not talk too much, but pray and help Our Lady...

Q. God knows when this peace will come...

A. God knows, and our secrets will take place, when Our Lady says.

Q. ...But if Russia is converting and we will have a period of peace, so much for the secrets of Medjugorje(!), but you still have them!

A. Let's wait, let's wait a bit more.

Q. Are the secrets a little frightening?

A. No, not for me. For those who pray, there is no need to be afraid. You see, when the war came to our country, everyone was worried and everyone said: "Look, the war is coming here too." I say many times, "Don't talk like that. The war is in the hands of God! Don't let us stay here and talk about how close the war is and that maybe tomorrow it will be here too, and thus pray with this fear in our hearts, because the fear stays for ever. Let's be calm and this is also something sent by God to test our faith, our peace. We end up believing more in the fear than in God. For us, sons of God, there should be no fear. If there is fear, then there is something wrong inside of us. (...)

*** On the 2nd October Mirjana saw Our Lady looking very sad, and she received a message:** "Dear children, now more than ever, I need your help! I would like you to pray for your brothers that have not yet known the love of God. Pray for them, pray with all your heart. I would like them to see the dear Father in all your works. Help them and expect your Father to help you the way you help the others. Do not be impassive to my call for prayer. Help your Mother! I thank you!" (Our thanks to Alberto Bonifacio.)

*** What Cardinal Ratzinger said:** The Italian paper *il Sabato* (14 Sept. issue) reported on the private meeting between Fr. Slavko and Card. Ratzinger in Austria just recently. "The prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith has apparently confirmed that the Church will not suffocate anything that bears good fruit, that the supernatural character of the apparitions at Medjugorje cannot as yet be officially recognized, but neither can they be denied..."

MEDJUGORJE - AMIDST THE PEOPLES AT WAR A chain of prayers unites pilgrims all over the world

FR. JOZO: The Cross of the Croatian Church is a grace for all. The misfortunes of a nation creates unity of prayer for the whole world.

That's what Fr. Jozo said on Radio Maria (Como, Italy) on the 25th October. "Thank you for all your prayers during these months of trial, sufferance and persecution... You really do "sympathise with the Church" and the Queen of Peace has brought you to knowing the people chosen by Her for a great mission..."

Communism, which has melted like ice before the sun in Europe and Asia, is very strongly rooted in our country and the army supports this power and is decisive in wanting to destroy people's freedom, the democracy and other peoples and towns. Their weapons are modern weapons and we have seen them destroy or damage 207 churches: they come with their tanks in front of churches or convents and they do not go away until they have seen that everything has fallen...

Our soul cries.. our people pray and fast day and night, like Our Lady asked. All over the world prayer groups have started up - thousands of peace centres and prayer groups have told me how they have organized their meetings, some have organized non-stop adoration until peace returns to our country. We have felt the love that Our Lady has lit up in the hearts of the millions of pilgrims that have been here. Some still come, with flights that pass through Belgrade - from the USA and Canada. Yesterday we prayed together with 180 of them in the sanctuary of Siroki Brijeg. In this sanctuary 70 priests were killed on the 7th Feb. 1945, and the same is happening to the Churches today who are being struck by the same army...

I thank all you Italians, because you have not stopped praying - I thank you on behalf of all those poor people left without a house, without family, without sons, and on behalf of all those who are persecuted. You have helped these needy brothers through your collections of medicines, food, etc. Do not fear, for through our sufferance, Our Lady will show a great sign. Our Lady saw how salvation was born through Christ's destroyed Heart. When the Body of Christ is dead, salvation is born. Our Cross is not senseless sufferance, but it is a grace for all. Do not cry, don't think: why has the Lord permitted this? It is for us and for our salvation. Be brave and continue to follow Our Lady's messages. Our Rosary is a sign, a symbol of the victory of Mary's Immaculate Heart. Pray and offer your fasts for the conversion of the whole Church and you will see the

effects that these wounds will have on the world, as they will heal and purify everyone. The Queen of Peace opens Her arms and blesses all those who listen with an open heart.

Msrgr. Franic': "This is not war, but a massacre. They want to put an end to the Catholic Church. Danger for Europe too."

The Archbishop Emeritus of Split was interviewed by Alberto Bonifacio over the telephone. Among other things, the Archbishop said: "The war here is a terrible one, more grave than the II World War which was atrocious here in our parts. Then there were Germans, Fascists and Communists that were fighting one another; but now the aged, the children and the women are being massacred. They want to destroy cities and towns. People that are not Serbians have to run away from their own land, they leave behind everything for fear of being killed. They want to make the great Serbia!

70 churches have been completely destroyed, and 130 damaged and out of use. They say: that's enough with the Catholic Church in the Balkans! All the cultural centres and monuments that have anything to do with the Catholic religion are also under target: no more Catholicism! It's like hell in Dubrovnik. All the villages in the east have been completely destroyed. The people have run away - there's nobody left in those beautiful towns. The homes are looted and everything is taken to Montenegro which wants to broaden its borders. In these last days 150,000 refugees from the Dubrovnik area have left for the northern coastal area. All the hotels are full; and the people have no work. The cost of living is enormous."

Upon being asked what he saw for the future, he replied: "God has permitted that our people be sacrificed as a warning for other peoples. Part of the prophecy of Fatima was the possibility of a 3rd world war if the peoples do not convert. Europe does not understand, it is letting us die: we hope that they will recognize us as an independant state now. Our army has no weapons, no planes, no navy. The soldiers are real heroes, and they wear Rosary beads around their necks (20,000 have been recently offered to them - thanks to an initiative started up by Fr. Lucas Cirimotic' from Zagabria - Ed.'s note). It really is wonderful to see how ready they are to sacrifice themselves!...

Satan mocks Our Lady and seems to say: You preached peace for 10 years, but see how the people want war! I am the master, not You. I see an apocalyptic scene: the dragon wants to kill the child (the Catholics) and make him disappear. Help us, and form the consciences of the West, because danger exists for the whole of Europe! I don't want to prophesy misfortune. Our sacrifice will bring about salvation. Let's trust in Mary."

FR. SLAVKO in Pompei: God uses this tormented people to give us all a lesson, to make us turn back to Him.

On the 14th October in the Sanctuary of Our Lady of Pompei a prayer meeting was held for peace in Yugoslavia, with the presence of Fr. Slavko (no-one knows how he managed to arrive in Italy). More than 2,500 people arrived from all over to fill the temple. The Archbishop of Pompei, Msrgr. F. Saverio Toppi, celebrated Mass together with more than 30 other concelebrants.

"There is no war here like in Croatia, but it could come... but it must not come..." After having spoken about this stupid war that the Communists are using to take revenge with the use of violence, Fr. Slavko says: "We know that wars can be won through prayer and fasts, that is why we are here to pray.

I look at this destruction in our Catholic country with the eyes of faith. The history of the elected people tells us that when the Lord permits a serious trial, He does not do it to destroy His people, but to educate them, correct them and even to use them as an example for others.. I am surprised to see that even those who did not come to church are now crying over the destruction of the churches. The Lord, however, prefers to see the churches full of people praying, rather than see them become empty monuments. This is an invitation to conversion, to reconciliation with God and each other. Many times, however, we are unable to see until we burn our own fingers. If God chose our country, and if out of love Her permits this sufferance, then it is not because we are better, or worse than the others. We are just an example for the others, it's like an invitation.. We are here to pray, not just for peace in Yugoslavia, but to stop all wars, those that depend on us: family conflicts, dishonesty, offensive behaviour - if we are ready to stop these personal wars, no matter how small they may be, then the Lord will be able to grant us peace also on higher levels. Through doing this we will also be able to remove all those things that destroy life, and that are also known here among your people: drugs, abortion, violence, fighting. Only the Lord can give us peace, and we are certain that He loves us as His children, and that He wants to grant us what we ask for, as long as we open our hearts.."

Holy Mass followed the Rosary, then there was adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, with everyone remaining in deep silence and inner thought. The Bishop of Pompei blessed the ambulance that was donated by the Neopolitan prayer groups to Fr. Slavko for the hospital at Citluk.

(Gennaro Caccavale, Nola)

"Just as a human body, though it is made up of many parts, is a single unit because all these parts, though many, make one body, so it is with Christ."

THE POPE: a new appeal - "The bloody war in Croatia and the serious tensions in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in Kosovo is a call upon all Christians, who cannot withdraw themselves from the duty of contributing, even actively, to finding solutions to this crisis, thus alleviating the consequences. May God bless all those who work for peace, and grant His consolation to the afflicted and the exiled, the hundreds of thousands of refugees."

An invitation to pray - The Pope to the mothers of the Croatian soldiers who went to see him in Rome (to express their grief and gratitude) on the 26th October: "Let us pray with greater insistence so that the Lord will move the hearts of those people who are responsible for these catastrophes, that He may make them attentive to the grieving cry of the many innocent victims. May He help them understand how useless this war is and persuade them to respect their commitment (undersigned more than once), to put a stop to armed violence."

A journalist in Medj, practically deserted - but with bands of Serbians and Montenegrins close by

Vicka, the only visionary left: "Our Lady has a worried look and only says to pray for peace in our hearts, then there will be peace in the world. It is already ten years now that She has been inviting us to pray for peace."

Vicka is doing the washing, but she leaves her job immediately and comes, smiling - her wet hand stretched out to greet us. I see a country girl, chubby, dressed in T-shirt and jeans, but with an unforgettable smile and such immediate friendliness towards strangers. "Tell me what you want to know," she says.

Vicka, 26 years old, is one of the visionaries of Medj. The one, they say, that receives messages from Our Lady regarding the future. I ask about the future of her country, at war. To get here I had to take a back road, through the woods and the rocks, where Croatian machine gunners are keeping watch. The main road goes through Capljina and in Capljina there are hundreds of Serbian and Monte- negrin "reservists" sent by the Communist Army, and who plunder the town, drink and threaten the inhabitants and the foreigners.

"**But Our Lady doesn't talk about war,**" says Vicka with her open smile and stunted Italian. "She only says that She prays for peace, and She wants us to pray too." Doesn't the Queen of Peace say anything else? "She says that Her first message, ten years ago, was about peace; and we didn't believe then, because we couldn't see any danger. Now, instead, we are worried, and She says to leave our worries, and to pray for peace in the hearts and in the families, and then peace will arrive for the whole world." But is Our Lady's message really so simple? "She says that if we pray for peace in the world, but we do not have peace in our hearts, then our prayers are useless," Vicka says while smiling. But don't you ask anything else, don't you want to know how this war will end up? Vicka shakes her head, smiling: "No questions, She talks, and we only listen."

She says "we," but in fact she is the only one left of the visionaries. Ivan is in the U.S. on invitation, to talk about the Blessed Virgin; Jakov is in Italy; Marija is in Germany. Even the huge stream of pilgrims and faithful that once came here from all parts of the world has now become a little brook - in the big church at Medjugorje we saw only about 20 Americans, some of whom were originally from the Philippines, with rosary beads around their necks - and who with great courage made it all the way here. The fall in the presence of the religious tourists is a worry for the many who became rich through the apparitions - with too many ugly new houses that pop up like mushrooms and the souvenir shops, the restaurants. Not Vicka however, who still lives with her parents in a house made of stones, a shepherd's home, near Podbrdo, which means "at the foot of the hill."

The roads in Dalmatia are not safe. Just 90 kilometers away from here, Dubrovnik - the pearl of the coast - is besieged by the Yugoslav Army, like when, for many centuries, it was under Turkish siege. The 60 million inhabitants have no water - they use sea water for washing - and the food is rationed. The other day the ferry "Marina" was sent back by the Army - it was not the first time. It had arrived from Curzola, loaded with food supplies and medicines, and 60 mothers from Bosnia. They wanted to see their children who were in the hospital at Dubrovnik, as they knew nothing else about them since the time of their recovery. The generals say they have lifted the naval blockade, but when the "Marina" was sighted from Dubrovnik, it was stopped by two patrol vessels. The captain was ordered to wait offshore because "the next day" they would have come to control. It was just an excuse. At 2.00 o'clock that night, the captain, Robert Marosic, preferred to turn back to Curzola - a storm was brewing.

Isn't Our Lady worried about the war? "Her face looks worried," Vicka replies, "but She only says to pray for peace in people's hearts." Vicka wants me to read the message of 25.12.1990: "Dear children, today I am inviting you to pray for

peace in a special way... Pray to the Lord of the Peace, that He may protect you under His mantle. Pray, as Satan wishes to destroy my plans for peace. Reconcile yourselves with your brothers and offer your lives so that peace may reign in the whole world..."

Vicka tells me about how Our Lady appeared to her on that Christmas day of the premonitory message: "She was dressed in gold, like She always is on the big feast days, but usually She wears a grey dress and a white veil. Her hair is black." Aldo (who accompanied me here) is next to me, listening intently. He is an ex soccer champion from Pola, Yugoslavia, but now, because of the war, he acts as interpreter and guides the journalists to the most dangerous places. He also smuggles and is able to obtain anything for you. Now, however, he is worried, and asks Vicka to pray for him. As we get into the car, he says, completely convinced: "She really did see Her. She has a grey dress and dark hair. She really did see Her." I don't feel so sure as Aldo, but for the first time, I envy him. (M. Blondet - *Avvenire*, 17 October 1991)

WITHOUT GOING TO MEDJUGORJE...

A young priest: just the sight of that picture changed my life - Two years ago I was going through a bad period, both as a man and as a priest. After a number of mistakes and delusions, I was practically "lying back," struggling through my tired and routine filled life. I had given up my priestly clothes, and looking very civilian. I had bought all the latest commodities: a nice new car, TV with video, computer, stereo, etc. I did not live my consecration properly and my spirituality had reached an extremely low level: very little prayer, said in a rush, and practically no confession. That was till I met Angelo, a young man from my parish, who is very devoted to Our Lady and also tends to be left out by the community, but I suppose due to his own excess in discreetness. Or is it because he is "too Catholic?" I'm not sure. One day he brought me a picture, depicting the face of Our Lady as she is in the statue at Medjugorje. He told me that if I hung it up I would have received great graces. I smiled at his words (the words of a simple, straightforward man), but then I hung it up.

I don't really know if it was because of that, or for whatever other reason. I don't even know whether Mary appears or not in Medjugorje! I remember well, however, that since then something incredible "appeared" in my soul and in my whole life... I started gradually feeling the inner need to confess, to "change life," to commit myself with all my heart and all my strength to know and make known God, His Love, the joy that comes from Him, His chosen instruments: Mary in particular, and the Saints.

All things, we would say, that are normal for a priest, but that's not true!! To my regret, I, a priest, can tell you that it is not always true. As I was saying, since then I no longer feel the need to possess "things" or desire human satisfactions, and I got rid of my "possessions" nearly immediately, and gave the proceeds to the needy. The rest of my story is this: that now I am here praising and thanking the Lord with all my heart." (*A young priest from Mantua*)

For a young couple from Venezuela, all that was needed was a title in a paper... - Praise and thanks be to the Lord and the Blessed Virgin, and to you for the Spanish Echo which we receive then photocopy for others here in Venezuela, and backed up by our priest Fr. Klaus Wolfermann... My husband and I are the fruit of God's Mercy through the blessed hands of His Mother. After 17 years away from the Church, I read by chance a title in a magazine: the Virgin appears in Medjugorje. We were profoundly shaken and started revising our past way of living, we started reciting the Rosary and frequenting the Sacrament of Confession after 17 years! God opened His arms for us like for the prodigal son and we felt His joy and peace be reborn in our hearts and in our family.

Three years have gone since then, and the Queen of Peace has transformed our lives under the influence of the Grace, that we can touch with our own hands, through the works that God permits for His greater glory. We help in the Don Bosco house and distribute the Eucharist. We live in Him Who gives us life in such abundance. Blessed be God and His and our Mother. We would like to distribute Echo in the entire country, if the Virgin will permit it. We are at Her service, to get Her messages of conversion and peace to our brothers. May She especially bless Fr. Angelo, and the whole team involved in translating and spreading Mary's messages. Let us remain united in the Hearts of Jesus and Mary. (*Sandra and Omar Velez* - Valencia)

Four young men from the New World leave the land of milk and honey to clothe the cowl

The Franciscan basilica at Tomislavgrad in Herzegovina, where the Croatian king, Tomislav, was crowned 900 years ago, saw a particularly solemn ceremony this year when a group of young men took their vows. Apart from the eight seminarians from Herzegovina, who were surrounded by the whole Franciscan family and a swarm of family members and friends, there were four brothers from abroad: three Americans and one Australian.

1. Goodbye to worldly living - We spoke to one of them, **John Ringelstein**, in Croatian. We noticed his laughing eyes, full of life; his penetrating and honest glance - almost that of a saint. He was born in 1965 in Chicago. He had been baptised, but he did not

practise the Christian faith. He only prayed to God in moments of need. He says that he had always tried to follow the right way, but that he always ended up on the wrong way.

Once he finished his technical training as a mechanic, he found a job in a private business. He had money, he went to night clubs, drank beer, watched TV and had girlfriends. In this world that was so ready to satisfy his every need, he went into crisis more than once, and went through some very negative experiences...

"Once I went to Mass early in the morning. I was looking for God. The parish priest had just returned from Medjugorje, and he spoke to me about Our Lady. I watched a film and read a book about Medjugorje. After a few weeks, on the 10th May, 1988, I was in Medjugorje, and I remained 7 days. That was the first time I had experienced God. Back in America, I was given a promotion and a pay rise. But I said to myself: things can't go on like this; and I went back to Medjugorje, staying this time for 7 weeks with the prayer group, in search of my vocation. After a brief stay back home, I came back to Medjugorje in May of 1989 to stay. I felt that God was looking for me, to entrust me with some sort of work. I asked Fra Slavko Barbaric if I could become a monk. He said: why not? I stayed in Slano for three months, studying Croatian in Zagabria and working in Medjugorje, doing whatever I could. On the 15th July this year, I dressed the cowl and spent my novitiate at Humac near Ljubuski. Now, after one year, I'm going to take my vows. Here, I've discovered myself.

2. The story of young Anthony Burnside from Melbourne is similar to John's. Anthony speaks more slowly and appears more serious, more reserved, but he is more than positive that what he is doing is the right thing. "I was born in 1962 at Melbourne. I took a degree in Geography, and I came to Europe on 6 month's vacation - and I came to Medjugorje. Up to then I had never been interested in God. After only 3 days in Medjugorje my whole life was changed." (...) Anthony too, joined Fra Luciano's group and took the same steps as John's.

"In Australia I was very busy; with studying, working on my parent's horse farm and riding. I never thought much about God. (...) My plan was to stay in Yugoslavia only one day, but everything went differently to what I planned. At first my family didn't understand my decision, but then they came here and now they understand. The Croatians are Christians, the faith here is something very strong, and the people are good. In Australia we have too much material wealth, but here there is another type of wealth - here the people are spiritually very rich."

3. Preferred Medjugorje to Wall Street - John Sweeney is a pleasant young man, full of spirit. His story sounds like it comes from a film. He was born in New York and is 26 years old. He is the youngest of 8 children, he was baptised. For the sake of faith, he abandoned the famous Wall Street, the sanctuary of material well-being. Here Our Lady triumphed over the powerful god of money.

"I graduated in Economics and Finance in Virginia and started working straight away in Wall Street, in New York. After 3 years I already had my own business, lots of clients and money... I wanted even more clients and so I called a fellow businessman to help me plan a meeting with a new customer. He refused my invitation, saying that he was Christian. I asked what he was doing in Wall Street if he was Christian. "Because I love my customers," he replied. His reply surprised me, but I told him it was all rubbish, because we were all there for the money. Then he started telling me about Medjugorje and he gave me some books to read. I took them for the sake of taking them, but then I read them. It all seemed like these people were believing in a lot of rubbish, but now I know that it was a sign from the Holy Spirit.

Something started moving within me. The messages were so clear and so strong that I couldn't remain the same. A battle had started inside of me, and logic made me think: I can't say that Jesus Christ and I are both here, but there is the possibility that it may be true. I decided that if I could find the time I would go to Medj. and find out for myself what it was all about. And I did go, with that same client.

I was in Medj. for just 24 hours, and God had changed my whole existence. We had arrived at night, whilst Ivan was receiving the evening apparition on the hill. I arrived in Medj. as an atheist, but in search of and open to new experiences. There were 500 people on the hill, they were singing and praying the Rosary. All of a sudden, Ivan fell to his knees, in ecstasy. Our Lady appeared to him... I felt very close to the Virgin, closer than many others. I was fascinated by the Croatians and their faith. I was attracted by the Franciscan cowl. I was not alone. I was in communion with many others..."

After his beautiful experience at Medj, John returned to New York, to the stock exchange. He read a passage in the Gospel where Jesus says that one cannot serve both God and Mammon... and he asked himself: do you want money, night clubs, discos, or God?

He gave everything to the needy - "It was an easy decision," he says. "I sold everything and gave it to the poor. With two shirts and a pair of pants I went to Medjugorje. I slept wherever I found myself and I told the friars that I would work for bread. I went to

Fatima for four months. I had already understood there that I wanted to become a priest. Everything seemed contrary to this decision: the language, the culture... but God took my sterile life and made me His, through the joy of consecration.

4. Pether, who cured alcoholics in America, lived a similar story, but we were not able to speak to him. I asked **Fra Mate Dragicjevic**, who was in charge of the novitiates, his opinion. "It was interesting working with them. I put the foreign candidates together with ours right from the beginning, even though it was not an easy thing to do, due to fundamental differences in life style, and try to form a family.. I must say, however, that the past year was a success." On the most solemn day that they took their vows, the people in the church sang the English hymn "This is the day" together with the 4 new priests, and the bells of the Basilica of Tomislavgrad rang out loud and long and they could be heard all over the countryside of Duvno. (Denis Derk - from *Vecernji List* - Zagabria evening paper)

Things that the devil likes and things he doesn't like. How to weigh his words.

Believers and non have become very interested in the devil just lately and thus much attention is given to his words said during exorcisms. The August 1991 issue of an Italian monthly ran an article written by an exorcist who listed the things that the devil revealed he likes and dislikes.

The following things please Lucifer: (his words) Communion on the hand, priests dressed like dustmen in disguise, priests and bishops in the Freemasonry and my sects, mini skirts, the TV, discos, divorce and separation, abortion, drugs, but especially those bishops and priests that deny my existence and my activity in the world.

The following things do not please Lucifer: Confession - a stupid invention, the meal where you eat the flesh and blood of the Crucified one, adoration of that piece of Bread, the Rosary, the apparitions all over the world of that wretched woman, the stupid obedience to that man dressed in white.

The author concludes: the list is terrible, but it should help us to reflect and search our consciences. Above all, it should make us see the need to pray and do penance. It should help us see the importance of making frequent use of confession, where the Blood of Jesus purifies us and shields us, so that we may win against our enemy. The victorious, it says in Revelation, are those who have purified their souls in the Blood of the Lamb .. and were thus able to defeat the dragon.

I cannot present the above article without also stressing that the words of the devil must always be treated very cautiously, if not mistrusted. When the devil says something in the Gospel, even though it may be true, it is certainly always said for the sake of his own evil interests; and Jesus nearly always replies: "Silence," which means: put a muzzle on (like a dog so that it can't hurt anyone), even when Satan tells Him: "I know that you are the Son of God." It is certain that the devil had something in mind when he said this: was it to flatter Jesus? To appear truthful? To tempt? To reveal before time? Out of desperation?

The expressions said by the devil during exorcisms, if really said by him, are masterpieces of his astuteness, directed at generating mistrust, divisions, confusion, desperation, or, in one word, damage the Church and the faithful; and that is, when they are not cries of triumph (in reference to the ruins caused by his activity in the world) to humiliate and discourage the Church and the faithful. We, therefore, will take note of what is objectively true, for the sake of reflecting or correcting. There are some, however, who seem to give more importance to the devil's words, than to Jesus'...! By doing this, we end up playing Satan's game - let's not give him this satisfaction!

A Word on Communion in the hand

The devil says that when people take Communion in the hand, he can "trample on your God and celebrate my black masses," and with regards to this I would like to make two observations. Even though similar abuses are possible when Holy Communion is given in the hand, the reasons behind the Church's decision are still valid. It is obvious that the devil wants to blame the Church of similar abuses to make people distrust the Church and her decisions. Let's not play at the devil's game, who is always accused of lying by the Word of God which tells us that those who take Communion in the hand are in the right: "Take it and eat ... take it and drink."

Some condemn Communion taken in the hand because it shows lack of respect for the Holy Sacrament, but if we think carefully, we will see that it takes us to a greater awareness and responsibility towards the Eucharist. Then again, some say: like this Jesus is handed over to so many impure hands! But wouldn't the profanation be just as great if Jesus is given to the lips of the same unworthy people? And then, how many profanations has Eucharistic Jesus exposed Himself to, whilst always remaining silent! How can we judge who is worthy or not to receive the

Body of Christ? We are not to worry ourselves so much for the rite, but for our personal communion with Jesus Who is Alive in the Eucharist, that it may have full effect.

Fr.A.

OUR READERS WRITE

*** Fr. Cona: "I offer my life for Echo and Radio Maria"** - My Dear Father Angelo, (...) Last year, when Our Lord made me understand that I had to die, I did not realize then that the death that He wanted from me was silence and insignificance for the sake of Love. I am starting to understand it now and I am trying to realize this death in the spirit of faith. Perhaps He wants to prepare me for the other death, the physical one, that I dearly long for, so that I may be with Him and our Mother. During the second Holter test I had a heart attack which lasted a few minutes. The doctors were frightened, but I started hoping with all my might. They also found that the circulation in my left leg had worsened - thanks be given to God also for this.

Tomorrow, which is dedicated to Saint Theresa, I will renew my offering of my life which I first made at Pescara, for the triumph of Mary's Immaculate Heart, and in particular for the two means that spread Her messages: Echo of Medjugorje and Radio Maria. I consider these to be God's gifts for Italy and the world... I cannot give you any material help, but with all my heart I am helping you with my prayers and sufferances, which at times are so great that I can't stop myself from crying - I offer them to Our Lady of Sorrows at the foot of the Cross.

Those who see me cannot see my sufferance.. The sufferance is within me, hidden. If only I could resist till the end, it would be better still. These lines are for Echo and for Radio Maria, and especially for you, because I am certain that Jesus wants Echo - Mary had wanted to need you and Echo. Echo is not yours, it is God's. Let God work the way He wants: "Forget your desires and pray, dear children, for what God wants and not for what you want." I send you these words the way they came from my heart, as a sign of my affection and my prayers. I wait on your blessing, and I send mine to you and to all your helpers. (Fr. Robert Cona, Verona) We are proud to have Fr. Robert as our friend. Let us be united with him through our prayers.

*** Nostalgia for Mejd.**, so far away - (...) I think back on those unforgettable moments spent in Medjugorje - it really is a blessed land, and the sight of that Italian who knelt down in the direction of Krizevac and kissed the ground as he got off the bus, does not surprise me. I went back with my thoughts to the most profound presence of God and Our Lady: the Church, Krizevac, Podbrdo. I can't express the faith, and penance that I saw on that mass of stones. I really did feel a nothing before the many giants of penance, prayer and love of God and Our Lady... Today I am enraptured by Medj. more than when I was there... (I.J.)

*** Physical and Spiritual diet of priest from Colombia** in obedience to Mary's call - "(...) Mary asked for a Novena of prayer and special fasts: I have been doing this for the last eight and a half years. Every day I say six Rosaries, plus weekly confession, meditation, Holy Mass with very little wine.. My diet is severe: one egg with every meal, no meat, no salt, no sugar, no fats, no alcohol, no TV. I receive a periodical to read the most important headings, etc. In effect, the last decade of the 90's, like what the Blessed Virgin says, will be the most dramatic of all history, but the Immaculate Heart of the Blessed Virgin will triumph... I greatly appreciate receiving the messages of Echo of Medj. (Fr. Rupert Steibl,)

*** At Besancon (France)** we attended a festival in honour of Mary. There were more than 3000 people praying to Our Lady. After Communion, the Lord gave everyone the joy to see Him manifest His Power: the hands of Myrna (visionary of Soufanich in Syria) oozed so much oil that everyone was able to take home a cotton ball soaked in this miraculous substance. Laurentin and Vassula Ryden were also present.. (Her letter follows to tell how the Freemasonry in France dominate the government and even some ecclesiastic fields.) Happy are we, the little people of the Father, who know Who will defeat the devil, but in the meantime, we grasp hold of the Rosary to respond to the SOS of Our Mother. (Colette and Jean-Marie Evrat)

*** The prayer groups in Cameroun** - (...) If you could only see how assiduously they attend the Cenacle, and how their example teaches and attracts their families! The Holy Spirit really is working in their souls; just pray and with great trust place everything in the hands of God. Some group leaders had wanted to continue the Cenacle once back in their villages, with their families and friends, and then, when they came back here and told me what had happened, it was like listening to the Apostles. Everyone was so pleased with the Holy pictures, the medals, the periodicals, etc that were sent by the French people! For those who would like to

The sight of the exploited and persecuted poor in front of the barbarous capitalism, that earns for the sake of earning and degrades human work as wicked exploitation, cries out revenge before God. (The Pope in Brasil)

A downpour of misfortune and cynicism has fallen upon men and things, but God will avenge the poor and the persecuted.

*Spectacle unworthy of mankind!
Swarms of abandoned Brazilian children who cry at the Pope's words.*

send something, write to Sr. Giuseppina Moroldo, Mission Catholic, B.P. 876, Ebolowa, Nko'odos (Cameroun).

* **A church dedicated to the Queen of Peace for the soldiers of Brasil** - Dom Geraldo do Espirito, Archbishop in ordinary to the forces in Brasil writes: "I am happy that the Servos da Rainha have decided to spread the messages of the Queen of Peace, by translating Echo into Portuguese. I have been twice to Medjugorje, and I too have spread the messages in Brasilia where I was auxiliary Bishop - now I am here among the soldiers.

I have decided to build the Church/Cathedral for the armed forces with the title "Queen of Peace" and I would like it to be a centre for the divulgation of the messages. For now I will have a hall built where we can start a spiritual movement in the line of Medjugorje - with the Rosary, Holy Mass, prayers and confession every day...

(Dom Geraldo, Bishop)

**ECHO IS AVAILABLE IN OTHER LANGUAGES.
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German: Pierantonio Gottardi, Viale Trieste 9, 39100 Bolzano, Italy.

Spanish: In Spain: José L.Lopez do S. Roman, Ap.246 Palencia, Spain. Tel. 088-725616 - Other countries: Roger Watson, Via Fulda 2, 22100 Como, Italy

Catalan: Àmics de Medj, c.Carme 11 baixos, 08700 Igualada, Spain

Portuguese: Servos da Rainha SQS 411, Bloco "U", Ap.311, 70277 Brasilia DF, BRASIL / Helena Carvalho, C.Post. 02-0181 - c.70001 Brasilia DF.

Polish: Czeslawa Mirkiewicz, ul. Krasickiego 21/3, 30-515, Krakow-Podgorze, Poland.

Russian, Ukrainian: Zi T. Strzaika, ul. Wesola 34, PL-87100 Torun, POLAND

Romanian: Anca Dragos, str N.Pamfil 53, BI 29, Ap 49, 72125 Bucharest, Romania

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Philippines: Raquel D. De Leon, POB 789, 1099 Manila.

"If you in your turn had only understood on this day the message of peace! But alas, it is hidden from your eyes! Yes a time is coming when your enemies will raise fortifications all round you, when they will encircle you and hem you in on every side; they will dash you and the children inside your walls to the ground; they will leave not one stone standing on another within you - and all because you did not recognise your

* **A continual Act of Love** which is sure to save and renew - revelations to a German mystic. "Jesus, Mary, I love You! Save priestly souls, save souls. We beseech You, and concede us to be able to repeat this Act of Love one thousand times, with our every breath, our every heartbeat." This prayer was granted to us by Our Lady Who promised to save thousands of souls.

* **HELP FOR CROATIA** - Donations may be sent to: Pro Deo et Fratribus, Via Monte Santo 14, 00195 Rome. (Indicate for Croatia.)

In the UK: C/- Bernard Ellis, Anglo World Steel Exports Ltd, Unit J Lambs Brickworks, Tilburstow Hill Rd, Sth Godstone, Surrey, RH9 8JZ.

Donations for the hospital in Grude may be sent to Fr. Slavko through the Banco di Roma, Ag.21, Staz. Termini, Rome, Italy. Acc. no. 12498 - indicate *Pro Croatia Grude Hospital*.

*Spectacle unworthy of men and of Europe!
A group of Croatian refugees on a gangway, with their household goods.*

LATEST NEWS. Here in Medjugorje everything is calm, but with a certain tension always present. (Medjugorje is in Bosnia and Herzegovina, but the whole population is Croatian.) We hope that peace will remain.

There are still some pilgrims from the United States and Canada. We have experienced something new, with so many pilgrims and prayer groups who remain united to us through prayer - and organize prayers, Novenas, material help. A war has never been accompanied by so much prayer, and this is a sign for us too. Many prayer groups, through Medjugorje, are united to one another, to better organize material help such as medicinals, food, clothing, etc.

Our thanks goes to the groups from Naples who donated an ambulance to us. (Fr. Slavko on Radio Maria - 25 October 1991)

IN THE FAMILY

We have to fit lots of material into very little space. Because Echo is free, we do not have the possibility of increasing the number of pages. Therefore, we are forced to use small print. We make appeal to you dear readers, to produce enlarged copies of Echo for your aged friends, or for those who have sight problems. It is impossible for us to do so, but we feel that it will not be a problem for you to make a single enlarged copy, and besides we are certain that such an act of charity would be very pleasing to Our Lady.

Echo is free, it lives on your donations. Bank cheques or international postal orders may be posted to : Echo of Medjugorje, Casella Postale 149, 46100 Mantova, Italy; or if you wish, transfer your donations to Fr. Angelo Mutti, c/o our **bank account** at the Banca Agricola Mantovana Ag. 4, Mantova, Italy - Acc.no.26641-1.

For those who receive bulk orders, we ask that at least the costly air mail service be covered. To keep the mailing costs down, please try to organize groups where we can send Echo in bulk and then you distribute it. When writing for requests, **PLEASE PRINT YOUR NAME AND ADDRESS**, better if TYPEWRITTEN. If you do manage to organize bulk mailing, please also advise for who they are so that we can cancel the names from our mailing list.

Our 8th anniversary falls on the 21st November - it will be an occasion to say thank you to the Lord and Our Lady for the so many blessings (just look at how much Echo has grown) received in these years. We started with 30 duplicated copies on the 21st November 1984 and have now reached 530,000 copies with this issue (360,000 for the Italian edition, the rest for the 9 foreign editions, 4 of which are mailed from Italy (French, English, German, Spanish) and the others are mailed from their individual centres: Polish, Russian, Romanian, Catalan and Portuguese).

Apart from the Portuguese edition edited by Helena Carvalho, the Servos da Rainha started printing a good edition a few months ago, with 20,000 copies already distributed all over Brasilia. The Spanish edition is also growing tremendously, and the French edition takes giant steps each month. The English edition reaches all the corners of the earth, and just lately the German and Russian editions have gone as far as Omsk and Novo Sibirsk in Siberia!

We thank the Lord for the generosity of our readers who continue to support Mary's works. It seems that a permanent help is on the arrival..!

May the Lord protect you from all evil, now and always, with His Blessing and that of the Saints.

Legalresponsibility:Dr.PierantonioGottardi,

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