



Echo of Mary Queen of Peace

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Our Lady's Christmas message, 1994:

Dear children, Today I rejoice with you and I pray with you for peace: peace in your hearts, peace in your families, peace in your desires, peace in the whole world. May the King of peace bless you on this day and give you peace. I bless you and I carry each one of you in my heart. Thank you for having responded to my call.

Peace begins

from each one of us

The World Peace Day was due (1 Jan.) and thirteen and a half years have passed since Her first apparition when She called us to peace. Today, too, we are being called to peace. "I pray with you for peace ... peace in your hearts." It is clear, peace cannot be imposed on others. Peace cannot come from outside, it must come from within, from one's heart. When peace is in a person's heart, it is natural that there will be peace in the family, and then peace in the world is also made possible. Our Lady, as a Mother, intercedes on our behalf and Her intercession is powerful, She prays for us and with us and this undoubtedly gives rise to hope in our hearts ...

I believe She would like us to offer to the Lord the lack of peace, the conflicts and everything else in our hearts that isn't right. Often we lose our peace because of our pride and arrogance, or because we are still clinging to our old selves, or to other people, or to material things, and when something doesn't go the way we wanted it to we lose our peace.

Peace in our desires. She is inviting us to ask ourselves what our lack of peace depends on. Could it be that our desires are disorderly, that we yearn to possess, to achieve something, to be different to what we are, to make a name for ourselves? If so, it will be difficult for us to find peace. It is from a pure heart, a heart that loves, that orderly and lawful desires come. When hearts are at peace the families are naturally at peace.

We know how many problems and conflicts exist in our families. First between husband and wife, then between parents and children, between the old and the young. It is all from lack of love, respect and forgiveness. By praying for peace in our hearts, Our Lady prays above all for freedom in our hearts. The freer we are, the easier it will be for peace to enter our hearts...

Finding peace doesn't mean we'll have no more suffering, or tears, or even conflicts. Often conflicts do not depend on us, but in any case we can still be at peace. I dare to say that Jesus on the cross died with peace in his heart because he was able to forgive. This peace in our hearts is the inner strength with which we can overcome all our problems and be able to bear our crosses in peace, without losing hope, love and patience.

Our Lady prays for peace in the world, which is at risk, everywhere. In this message She repeats the word peace seven times, as

in Her message of 25 July 1990 - and one week later the Gulf war began and the troubles in Yugoslavia began which led to the war. We too must offer some sort of sacrifice for peace and if we are in discord with someone we must pray to receive the strength to forgive, so that every hand may become an open hand ready to help and not a closed fist ready to hit or reject.

Our Lady blesses us and tells us that She carries each of us in her Heart. Our task then is to allow Her to carry us, without running away, without being caught up by other persons or things. A child feels safe only in his mother's arms."

[From the thoughts of Fr. Slavko]

Open heart to Jesus in Confession to receive His peace and His joy

Message of 25 January 1995:

Dear children, I invite you to open the door of your hearts to Jesus, as a flower opens up to the sun. Jesus desires filling your hearts with peace and joy. My dear children, you cannot realize peace if you are not at peace with Jesus. For this reason I invite you to confess so that Jesus may be your truth and your peace. So pray, dear children, to have the strength to realize what I am telling you. I am with you and I love you. Thank you for having responded to my call.

Mary ardently desires for us to realize how much her Son loves us and how much He desires for us to take part in His divine peace and joy which are expressions of His love.

Peace, then, comes from God alone. It is His paschal gift: *I have told you this so that my own joy may be in you and your joy be complete* (Jn 15:11). St Peter confirms: *This is a cause of great joy for you, even though you may for a short time have to bear being plagued...* (1Pt 1:6-8); and St Paul: *I want you to be happy, always happy in the Lord; I repeat, what I want is your happiness... There is no need to worry...* (Ph 4:4-6).

So, this happiness can only be obtained through opening one's heart to Jesus, as a flower opens up to the sun for its life and growth. So open the door of your hearts to Jesus. In Revelation we read: *I am standing at the door, knocking. If one of you hears me calling and opens the door, I will come in to share his meal, side by side with him.*

For our hearts to open we need to say yes



In the bareness of Podbrdo Mary's voice is heard, offering an authentic sign so you may find Jesus' way and your real self. This solitude will blossom. Pray and keep watch so the signs you received here are not lost. These "signs of contradiction," lead you along the narrow way of the cross at the end of which is a great joy, similar to the star which led the wise men to Jesus' crib. Be faithful to these signs that bear open the dark wounds of your heart, being careful not to follow the easy, false optimism of those who are blind to Satan's snares. In this present time, pilgrims are aware of Mary's presence and of the power of grace.

to what He is offering us, so this means first of all accepting His forgiveness. This is why Our Lady is talking to us today about the means established by Jesus so that His peace and joy remains in us: **confession**. Yes, because real peace and joy is extinguished by sin.

If Our Lady is calling us to confession perhaps it is because we give it little consideration. Furthermore, for a person to confess one requires a confessor. We are pleased - and a little proud - that we had already prepared our article on page 5 (col. 2) regarding confession prior to Our Lady's message which we read as confirmation.

Confessing means trusting in God's mercy and acknowledging one's sins before Him and asking forgiveness. It's being careful to confess our sins in full, not partially, because **Jesus is the truth** and He searches our hearts. Sin is to be hated and fled from as the greatest of all evils because it removes us from God's presence. He who plays with sin allows Satan to enter his heart and the heart of he who does not confess hardens to the point that grace is unable to make itself heard. On the other hand, confession is the sacrament of liberation, healing and joy. It is letting the Lord embrace you. Through it God prepares us for His banquet, the Eucharist, as for the prodigal son.

Our Lady has always recommended monthly confession (weekly for the youth), but She has also said: *confess before the great feast days even if you have just confessed, so they may be felt in your hearts* (24 March 1985). With this message Our Lady seems to be preparing us for Lent. It takes prayer, though, to hear and to have the strength to realize what I am telling you. With the anxiety of a Mother She wants to let us know how much She cares about us: **I am with you**. Let us take advantage of the time given us.

Fr. Angelo

Pentecost in Manila Pope to youth: I send you!

Biggest assembly ever!

The 10th World Youth Day in Manila from 14-15 January was a triumph. The welcome of the Filipinos was overwhelming! Many travelled up to 2 and 3 days to get to the capital. What we saw was a joyful people with great inner freedom and gratitude despite their poverty. The enthusiasm of these people is strengthened by the awareness of their faith and by the way they take it seriously.

These were all elements which helped prepare a fertile land for the presence and the message of the Holy Father. All the Filipinos were expecting the Pope. President Ramos accompanied him in all the celebrations and the television transmitted the various meetings with the Pope 2-3 times a day, and thousands of people stood along the roadsides waiting for the Popemobile to pass by.

For some the Pope was too tired and sick for a voyage that took him also to P.N. Guinea, Australia and Sri Lanka, but the communion and extremely warm welcome that John Paul II found gave him the strength to communicate Jesus' love to the young people.

Over a million people from all over the world gathered in Manila's Rizal Park on Saturday evening, 14 January, for the Prayer Vigil. Songs, personal testimonies from the young people, traditional dances, a procession with the Cross and the enthronement of the image of Our Lady of Antipolo were some of the events that marked the various stages of the service. During the prayer service the Holy Father spoke the first time in answer to questions the young people had posed; the second in answer to questions they had for Jesus; and the third, on the theme: **"As the Father sent me, so am I sending you."**

"These words," the Pope said, "are addressed to all young people around the world. Today, though, they are being addressed especially to the young people of the Philippines, of Asia and of Australasia.... Dear young people, are you capable of giving of yourself, your time, your energies, your talents, for the good of others? Are you capable of love? If you are, the Church and society can expect great things from each one of you.... The vocation to love is the most basic of all vocations. That is what Jesus was looking for in the young man when he said: 'Keep the commandments,' or in other words: 'Serve God and your neighbour according to all the demands of a true and upright heart.'

... And Jesus invited him to an even greater love: 'Leave all and follow me: leave everything that concerns only yourself and join me in the immense task of saving the world.' Along the path of each person's existence, the Lord has something for each one to do....

Your questions concern the person and the work of Jesus Christ our Redeemer. You want to be sure that if you follow him you will not be let down. How can we explain the extraordinary effect of his life and the effectiveness of his words? Where do his power and authority come from?

The Resurrection of Jesus Christ is the key to the history of the world, to the history of the whole of creation and to the history of man. Man, like the whole of creation, is subject to the law of death. But because of Christ's Resurrection, man no longer exists only for death, he exists for the life which is to be revealed in us. The risen Christ assures the men

and women of every age that they are called to a life beyond the frontier of death. How do we receive this 'life in God'? *Through the Holy Spirit!* When Jesus says: **'Receive the Holy Spirit'** he is saying: receive from me this divine life, the divine adoption which I brought into the world and which I grafted onto human history. Accept from me this inheritance of grace and truth, which makes you one spiritual and mystical body with me. It means: 'Become sharers in the kingdom of God.' Dear young people, when Jesus says to you: 'As the Father sent me, so am I sending you,' you can be certain that **he will not let you down; he will be with you always!**"

The enthronement of Our Lady of Antipolo invites us to look to Mary to see how to respond to Jesus' call. First, she kept all things, pondering them in her heart. She also went in haste to serve her cousin Elizabeth. **Both attitudes are essential** parts of our response to the Lord: **prayer and action.** That is what the Church expects of her young people. **That is what I have come here to ask of you.**

To each one of you, dear young people all over the world, Christ says: "I am sending you." Why is he sending you? Because men and women the world over long for true liberation and fulfilment. The poor seek justice and solidarity; the oppressed demand freedom and dignity; the blind cry out for light and truth. You are not being sent to proclaim some abstract truth. The Gospel is not a theory, it is **life!** Your task is to bear witness to this truth: the life of God's adopted sons and daughters. Modern man, whether he knows it or not, urgently needs that life.

The truth about man - which the modern world finds so hard to understand - is that we are made in the image and likeness of God himself. But what is even more difficult for contemporary culture to understand is that this dignity is raised immeasurably higher in the mystery of the Incarnation of the Son of God. **This is the message** which you have to proclaim to the modern world. You must say: *Look to Jesus Christ in order to see who you really are in the eyes of God!*

How does Jesus send you? He promises neither sword nor money nor power, nor any of the things which the means of social communications make attractive to people today. He gives you instead **grace and truth.** He sends you out with the powerful message of his Paschal Mystery, with the truth of his Cross and Resurrection. That is all he gives you, that is all you need.

This grace and truth will in turn give rise to courage. **Following Christ has always demanded courage.** The Apostles, the martyrs, entire generations of missionaries, saints and confessors - known and unknown - have had the strength to stand firm in the face of misunderstanding and adversity. This is also true here in Asia. Among all the peoples of this continent Christians have paid the price of their fidelity - and that is the sure source of the Church's confidence."

The high point of the Holy Father's pastoral visit was the **concluding Mass** on Sunday, 15 January, with an estimated four million faithful attending. The roads were all blocked and with them the Pope. The Mass was delayed precisely because he had decided to go by car to greet and bless the thousands of people waiting along the roadsides. They were there from the night before and unable to get into the park for Mass. In the end he had to accept the President's helicopter.

The Pope handed over a mandate to the young people, loaded with responsibility.

Like Jesus, we are called to respond to the Father's will.

"...When the Eternal Son came into the world he said: *I have come to do your will, oh God.* The Son declared his readiness to come into the world to achieve through his Passion and Death the redemption of mankind. Jesus' loyalty to the task he received from the Father can be seen already at the age of 12 when he replied to Mary: *Did you not know that I must be busy with my Father's affairs?* Jesus understood at the age of 12; you are older and you could understand that better!" the Pope remarked light-heartedly."

Build bridges of dialogue with your parents - "What is the role of young people in continuing the Messianic mission of Christ? ... Parents and older people sometimes feel they have lost contact with you, and they are upset, just as Mary and Joseph felt anguish when they realized Jesus had stayed behind in Jerusalem. Many elderly parents feel abandoned because of us. Is it true? It should not be, but sometimes it is. Sometimes you are very critical of the world of adults (and I was also like you) and sometimes they are very critical of you. This is not something new. But always remember that you owe your life and up-bringing to your parents. I suggest that you meditate on the Fourth Commandment....

I am asking you to build bridges of dialogue and communication with your parents. **Be a healthy influence on society** to help break down the barriers which have been raised between generations! No barriers, but communion between generations!

In this atmosphere Jesus can say: *I send you!* And to your parents he says, 'I send your son, your daughter.' I say to you, 'Follow me.' All this requires the right atmosphere."

The Third Millennium will depend on you - "...How many young people think they are free because they have thrown off every restraint and every principle of responsibility? How many of them think that because certain forms of behaviour are socially accepted they are therefore morally right? Objective moral norms are abandoned under peer pressure and under the pervasive influence of trends and fashions publicized by the media.

Beloved sisters and brothers: *build your lives on the one model that will not deceive you!* I invite you to open the Gospel and discover that Jesus Christ wants to be your friend (cf. Jn 15:14)... He wants to give you life, as he gave new life to the young man of Nain and to Zacchaeus who was dead in spirit through ambition and greed. Jesus is your resurrection, your victory over sin and death, the fulfilment of your desire to live forever. Because of this he will be your joy, the rock on which your weakness will be turned into strength and optimism. He is our salvation, our hope and happiness and peace.

When Christ becomes all of this for you, the world and the Church will have solid reasons for hope for the future. For on you will depend the third millennium... It is time to commit yourselves more fully to following Christ... I see that you applaud. It is a good sign that you are thinking, reflecting. I admire your reflection. I admire the grace of our Lord dwelling in your reflection, in your applauding... If you take up his cause and the mission which he gives you, then the whole human family can look to the third millennium with hope and trust. **Be a sign of hope!**"

"This has been an unforgettable day," commented Cardinal Pironio, "for the spiritual intensity and the fervour that has surrounded the Holy Father. It was surely an award by Mary for the suffering he has borne over the

past two years for the good of the Church. It has been a 'new Pentecost.' *Mark*

Nothing stops Pope - The heat, the different time zones and his sore leg didn't stop the Pope. "As long as God permits I shall keep on carrying out the ministry of Peter."

He was asked on his return: "How do you feel now?" and he replied: "Ready for another visit." Wednesday 25 January he appeared at the General Audience without his stick.

The Pope to Children and Women on world problems

Besides the family, the Pope has given a lot of attention to children, women and youth over these last few months. As universal Father he is untiring in caring about all God's people, with the help of the "Guardian" that does not doze or sleep, who shades you with his right hand... who does not let your footsteps slip, even though you may limp (cf. Ps 120).

To the children: "I entrust you with a great task." The Pope's Letter to Children surprised us all.

With reference to Christmas he said: "As I write to you I am thinking of many years ago when I was a child like you and I used to listen to the story of Jesus... Dear friends, in what happened to the Child of Bethlehem you can recognize what happens to children throughout the world who suffer from hunger, poverty, disease, war, abandonment..."

The Pope told the boys and girls about the 12-year-old Jesus and of how he was so enthused by the 'catechism lesson' in the Temple that he forgot about his own parents. "Are you as enthusiastic as Jesus about the religion lessons in your schools and parishes? Do you let yourselves get involved as Jesus did? Of this period of Jesus' life the Gospel notes only that he 'increased in wisdom and in stature, and in favour with God and man.' Once he is grown up, as Teacher of divine Truth, he will show an extraordinary love for children. He will say to the Apostles: 'Let the children come to me, do not hinder them.'

How important children are in the eyes of Jesus! Does not 'unless you become like children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven' mean that Jesus is pointing to children as models even for grown-ups?"

The Pope tells the children of the importance of the Sacraments, in particular Baptism and Holy Communion, which we are "encouraged to receive as often as possible in order to remain in close friendship with Jesus... For how many children in the history of the Church has the Eucharist been a source of spiritual strength, sometimes even heroic strength! There are many boys and girls who have been declared saints or blessed. St Agnes and St Agatha for example and St Tarcisius who preferred to die rather than give up Jesus whom he was carrying under the appearance of bread.

Just as Jesus shows special trust in children, his Mother Mary has also shown her motherly care for the little ones. Think of Bernadette of Lourdes, the children of La Salette and Lucia, Francisco and Jacinta of Fatima. Yes, Jesus and his Mother often choose children and give them important tasks for the life of the Church and of humanity.

Jesus eagerly awaits their prayers. What enormous power the prayer of children

has!

Dear young friends, it is to your prayers that I want to entrust the problems of your own families and of all the families in the world... I also have other intentions ... **the Pope counts very much on your prayers** ... we must pray together and pray hard that humanity may become more and more the family of God and able to live in peace... It is to you, young friends, without distinction of language, race or nationality, that I say: *Praise the name of the Lord! ... God loves you dear children!*"

The Pope concluded with telling them about Jesus' call for each person, each one according to their vocation. On another occasion, the Pope said of children: "They represent heaven smiling down on the earth. They are the real jewels of the family and society, the delight of the Church, the lilies of the field. When St Pius X brought forth the age of First Communion, he said: 'There will be saints among the children,' and this has been so. Today we add: **There will be apostles among the children.**"

The children replied to the Pope, opening their hearts to their 'granddad': "You did well to write to us. The adults don't understand you. We will help you... My parents don't listen to me ... they don't take me to church..."

A serious matter which has moved and 'converted' many adults. It is true that you hid these things from the intelligent and revealed them to the little ones.

Little are the children, little is the Pope.

To women: be instruments of peace!

The Pope is sensible to the woman's mission, which society though, often reduces to that of serving or being used. John Paul appeals to women on **World Peace Day** (1 Jan.), calling them to be *Teachers of Peace*.

"... What is motherhood but the start of a life with an inherent prospect of immortality? All mothers, beginning with Eve, share intimately in that aspiration to life which goes beyond time; they share the expectation of a being called to immortality. **The more they realize this the more spiritually rich will their motherhood become.**

In Christian tradition there are extraordinary figures of mothers who witness to this striving towards God's eternity... I have wished to stress the importance of the role and mission of women, called to be witnesses, messengers and teachers of peace. Woman has a specific vocation to promote peace...

I invite all women to become teachers of peace with their whole being and in all their actions. May they be witnesses, messengers and teachers of peace in relations between individuals and between generations, **in the family**, in the cultural, social and political life of nations, and particularly in situations of conflict and war...

May women believers, looking to Mary, be increasingly aware of their task in the Church and in the world, and make their decisive contribution to the realization of God's plan for all humanity.

Oh Mary, sustain women in their natural vocation as teachers of peace in the family, in society and in every social context." **

Blood of Martyrs will be seed of new Christians

The number of priests, religious and consecrated lay people killed because of their faith in missions over the last 20 years is 299. In 1993 they numbered 21, the last of whom

were the four "White Fathers" killed in Algeria. This, however, is without counting the 241 consecrated people who gave their lives in Rwanda, of whom 3 were bishops and 101 were priests. It also doesn't include 64 religious and 45 lay brothers of the Josephine order, nor the 20 Helpers of Mary. 17 Protestant ministers have also been killed. (From *Avvenire*, 30 Dec. 1994)

The visionaries of Kibeho in Rwanda: Marie Clare, the apostle of Mary's Sorrows, has been killed. Emmanuel Segatasha, a farmer who received instruction from Jesus, has also been killed. The others have taken refuge in Zaire. Valentina is the only one receiving some apparitions in public, while Anatholie and Josephe see Her privately. Alphonsine is in hiding. Marie Assunta, who was handicapped and lived the Lord's Passion every week for the past 15 years, was killed in Butare. (Sr. Martha Tillient, Rwanda)

Fr. Jozo seen with favour in Italy

During Fr. Jozo's recent visit to Italy, prayer meetings were organized in nine cities where people flocked to listen to him. The programme was that of Medj. with the Rosary, Holy Mass, meditation of the Word of God and prayers of liberation. Adoration concluded the meetings. Upon Fr. Jozo's request prayers were offered prior to and during this *Marian Pilgrimage* by 22 monasteries and just as many communities.

Approximately 15,000 faithful took part in the nine meetings. Many hearts were touched by the Good News proclaimed in the meetings and were freed of sin and many other forms of slavery. Tears of joy and gratitude were shed and the enthusiasm was great.

In nearly all the cities Fr. Jozo was greeted by the **local Bishops** who showed much interest in the Medjugorje message and in the actual situation of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

The Bishop of Latina, Msgr. Domenico Pecile, told the faithful about a conversation between the Pope and the Italian Bishops during a meeting in Loreto: "The Pope was saying: '... you think the wall of Berlin fell because of external events. Well, yes, they played their part, but in reality it fell because of many, many prayers. You think that peace is obtained through the intercession of politicians... yes, they are important too, but peace will come because of the many, many prayers...' [As Our Lady in Medj. has been saying.] When the Pope meets the Bishops he greets them one by one with great patience, even if they are many. When my turn came, I told him that on Wednesday in Latina we would have concluded the great prayer for Italy and that Fr. Jozo from Medj. would be guiding the meeting. He smiled and I asked him if I could say that we had his blessing. 'Yes, yes,' he replied with a big smile on his face. So the Pope ensures us that our actions are pleasing to God, and that He is with us."

Fr. Jozo also spoke about the sponsorship of the war orphans which he organizes from the convent of Siroki Brijeg. *For information contact: Angela and Matteo Rossi, Casella Postale 54, 54100 Massa, Italy.*

*** From Palermo** - "I began reading Echo and now I can't do without it. The bone cancer continues to spread, but I also intend growing spiritually, to accept the Lord's will. It's not easy with two small children, but the Queen of Peace has given me the strength to bear my cross and I have even been able to transmit this strength to other young mothers in hospital with me..." (Rita)

HOW GOES MEDJUGORJE

Mary's work in Medjugorje "I will change the desert into a fount of water"

Over the years the Queen of Peace has continued to silently work, with signs of Her presence, through people formed at Her "school" so they may become yeast of the new life and instruments of peace all over the world. Besides the Medj. groups all over the world, **many souls and communities** have blossomed in Medj. They live out the authentic message and it is here that pilgrims can find nourishment for their souls and an example to live by. Thus, Our Lady is preparing the Kingdom of love which will invade hearts until the time of the triumph of Her Immaculate Heart.

Besides the many unpretentious people who nourish the flame of prayer in the Shrine, we noted the many communities which have gushed forth from Mary's Heart and which live by Her spirit. We have listed various, but not in any particular order.

1. To the left of the old cemetery is the youthful **Beatitudes community** made up of about ten French-speaking people (men and women) who dedicate their time to prayer and offering hospitality to French-speaking pilgrims. Fr. René Luc is the spiritual guide of the community and Sr. Emmanuel (who transmitted information from Medj. during the war when access was difficult) has been one of its members for about 6 years.

2. Close by is located the house of prayer called **Domus Pacis**, commonly called "Fr. Slavko's" because he organizes retreats and seminars in this house which was once a three-storey hotel, the interior of which was made to look a little like a ship. It was built years ago by a Serb who sold it to the friars just before the war broke out. The house is open to groups who desire passing a few prayerful days in silence and meditation, accompanied by fasts, according to Our Lady's desires.

3. Behind St James church is a white, well-isolated house which hosts the **Kraljica Mira** community of Fr. Tomislav Vlasic. Though one is aware of the spiritual depth and calm in the dozen or so members, they also enlighten the environment with their gaiety. They nearly all aspire to priesthood or religious life and come from Italy, Germany and Croatia. Together with the sister communities in Lama and Penne in Italy, the total number of members is about 40.

4. Rumours say that the area between Podbrdo and Krizevac has been set aside solely for further **houses of prayer**. There are already some here.

Along the narrow path towards the end of Bijakovici there is a charming white building commonly known as "the one belonging to the Belgian." It is still closed. Its bell tower has a picture of the Miraculous Medal on it and we find it hard to believe the rumours that say it belongs to the New Age Movement (which started up in the US). It mixes up Our Lady, Mohammed, Christ, Buddha, etc., into the one pot: an impossible mixture. They are creating a lot of confusion among Christians. Could it be true that this building belongs to them?

5. Further up the same path, the **Oasis of Peace** (Marian) Community is present with 8 members (out of the more than 100 members in various parts of the world). They have a wooden hut for use during the day and caravans to sleep in at night. For the Lord, though, they have made a stone house where

they pray before the Blessed Sacrament (adoration continues 24 hours a day). A window in the house looks out onto the place of apparitions on Podbrdo.

6. Then there is the "**Comunità Cenacolo**" (Sr. Elvira's "Upper Room" community) but we will talk about this after.

A little further up is large building called the **Casa di San Giuseppe** (St Joseph's House). This belongs to Marisa (an Italian woman) who has worked so hard at taking pilgrims (6000 to date) and aid to Medj. After many signs she overcame (with her obedience, faith and strength) trials of all kinds. Now she has a house for the Italian pilgrims. Prayer, retreats and spiritual exercises can be organized for more than one group at a time.

We're not going to mention the many initiatives springing up for housing the refugees and poor pilgrims, but we do want to mention the "**Boys Town**" for war orphans and the House for **priests/ministers of all denominations** (Catholic, Anglican, Protestant, Orthodox). In fact, Our Lady came to **unite all Christians** and sooner or later Her plans will be realized.

The place which Our Lady seems to prefer is that of the 50 ex-drug addicts in Sr. Elvira's **Comunità Cenacolo** ("Upper Room" Community).

Miraculous therapy for ailment of century

Youth from Comunità Cenacolo says: "Holy Mass heals. The sickness is fought with prayer"

Just past the Oasis of Peace community, a road sign points to the **Campo della Vita** (Field of Life) of the **Comunità Cenacolo** ("Upper Room" Community). Three buildings are visible in front and other smaller ones further behind, amid rocks and green fields of a virgin landscape. One immediately notices the beehive of activity. Some are expertly veneering the houses with rocks, others are building a stone wall to close off a "citadel" and some are digging into the side of a mountain with picks and pneumatic drills to create both building material and a place for storage. Others are painting or hammering, and washing, cooking or cleaning. It is all being done with order and the inner joy of these young men shines brightly on their faces.

One of them, Paul, greeted me with: "We'd be happy if you'd celebrate Mass for us tomorrow." "Gladly," I replied, "but there's no obligation for everyone to come." Paul looked surprised and said: "But we *will* all come! For us daily Mass is a necessity, it is a healing therapy... Prayer and the truth are the weapons we use for fighting off evil. Sr. Elvira tells us to go down on our knees even if we don't comprehend, that she'll do the rest."

Our life isn't just working or building pretty houses to make us look like 'nice guys.' It's building up our inner selves in truth, humility, sacrifice and in donating ourselves to others. Sr. Elvira says being skilful doesn't count if we don't change within."

"Do you live here permanently?" I asked him. "The cure used to be a three year stay, but now we leave only when we have chosen prayer as a form of life. You see, that's when we're really healed and **able to resist the evil in the world**. Seven couples have chosen to remain [in the various communities] to form families on a foundation of solid Christian

values. Not only does the Community have to heal us from our drug addiction, but it has to be a place of training."

"Are there only men in *this* community?" I asked. "Well yes, 40 Italians, 10 Croatians and 1 couple." "And how do you manage without girls?" I asked Paul. "For the moment we need to grow to be able to offer them the real values of life, not like before when we went after them to use them. Here we learn about the real worth of a woman. Prayer teaches us to look at a woman in a clean way, without dirty desires. A woman is important, but for now we need to become real men able to offer a woman real love. Meeting one before this would not be good. And that's what Our Lady said to the first prayer group; i.e. to wait 4 years before making a decision."

Paul continues: "**No one is boss here. We learn from the brothers who were redeemed first.** The experience of the 'elders' is our guide, and we all do our part to make the community work. Those who enter see the love and the spirit of sacrifice and understand. Sr. Elvira doesn't sit back either; when she proposes adoration at night, she is the first one to get up at 2 o'clock in the morning."

This is the only therapeutic community in all of Italy. It doesn't receive any form of government grant. Providence makes sure we get all that we need and we make do with what we receive. For example, if there's no milk for breakfast then we have tea. All the things that happen here are never by chance, but are signs of God's Providence and they teach us to appreciate and make good use of His gifts."

Sr. Elvira comments: "*Our 'boys' are here and resist the impact with a community which has the courage to make them examine themselves deep down in their hearts where the seed of immortality is found. They have neither TV, nor cigarettes, nor girlfriends, nor family; they have no money, no cars and no rock music and this is what's so wonderful about what God is doing in the lives of these young people.*"

They do as Mary says and are being healed - "He who honours his Mother is like someone amassing a fortune"

These young men were drug addicts, but by the grace of God they found a community which takes God's love seriously and has helped them revive. They expressed this revival in a large and very beautiful icon of the Risen Christ placed behind the altar of their church. Jesus' eyes are flaming as he raises Adam and Eve from the tomb. The Prophets and the Just of the Old Testament stand beside Him and beneath Him are chains broken by his love. It was painted by some of the communities' members while the others prayed and fasted - according to a tradition of the ancient iconographers - so it wouldn't have been just a human piece of work.

In their desperation, these young men entrusted their lives to the Queen of Peace and simply tried to live according to Her messages - and everything changed. In the community there are no doctors or psychologists, neither are there drugs or television. The only therapy is the one taught by Mary, the core of which is Jesus: prayer, Eucharist, the Word of God, confession and fasts. This is the power of the messages which reflects a Christian programme.

A typical day - All fifteen mysteries are recited daily. At 6.30 a.m. they are on their knees in the church reciting the first 5 mysteries. Between each decade they either sing a song (accompanied by a guitar) or recite

a brief invocation such as: *Oh Mary Immaculate, Bride of the Holy Spirit, by the power the Eternal Father granted you over the Angels and the Archanges, send to us hosts of Angels, led by St Michael Archangel, to free us from all evil and to heal us. Amen.* **Holy Mass** is at 7.00 with the explanation of the **Word of God and Communion**. When there is no priest, the Gospel is read and commented.

After the last 5 mysteries in the evening, with the reading of the Gospel, there is a moment of **soul opening** during which they say how their day went and accuse themselves for their failings which might have destroyed the peace and love. Absolute necessities are sincerity and clarity according to the principal: "Do not hide what you are, do not want to appear differently, say what you have inside so you can be helped."

Confession is standard practice and should be weekly for young people according to Our Lady's wishes. The members of the community look forward to this moment and turns are organized for the day the priest is present. Turns are also organized for **Adoration** in their lovely little chapel and many also get up at night for this. *The man who is forgiven much shows much love* (cf. Lk 7:47).

On Fridays they fast on bread and water but this can vary. In any case, nothing is eaten between meals. One would say that *God has kept them hidden in the shadow of his wings* to work His wonders in them away from the eyes of the world. And with their limits and human weaknesses, the last become the first.

Committing self to inner purity, fruit of grace

It is quite a thing to be healed of the sickness of the century - not thanks to scientific progress - but to the cure of **Jesus the Physician and Lord!**

Is not proposing oneself to remain pure and fighting for it, fruit of grace and faith? And surely the fact that we don't ask this of our young people anymore is a sign that we lack faith. Thanks be to God for the recent manifestations by thousands of young people (in America and Milan if not elsewhere) who have publicly committed themselves to premarital continence.

Some would say that it is all a psychological effect of asceticism and Sr. Elvira's personality. (Sr. Elvira has more than 20 communities of this type in Italy plus one in Florida, one in Lourdes and one in Split.)

But perhaps it's more the power of conviction that makes up her charisma. Nonetheless, healing is an effect of grace. Jesus said: *God can raise children for Abraham from these stones* (Mt 3:9) and: *If you have faith you can move the mountains*. The will to heal, plus the help of the community and God's grace produce just the right effect.

My conclusion is that it's **worth being demanding. No half measures!** *The amount you measure out is the amount you will be given back* (Lk 6:38) Fr.A.

Workers needed for rich harvest

Pilgrims visit more willingly if priest of same language is available

We have noted that an increase in the number of foreign pilgrims goes together with the constant presence of a priest of their same language - a priest who has been formed under the guidance of Our Lady's messages. We see this for the **French-language pilgrims** whose

numbers increase constantly and for the **English-language pilgrims** who were followed by **Fr. Philip**. Also the **Italians** were fortunate enough to have Fr. Luciano, but he has left and now the Italian pilgrims do not always have a priest for assistance and information.

Many also complain about not finding confessors on hand. How unfortunate this is, right when Mary provokes in them a great need to confess. **We appeal to the priests that go to Medjugorje to make themselves available for confession during their stay.**

Fr. Slavko is not enough on his own to sufficiently nourish with the Word of God the pilgrims that come from all parts of the world in search of spiritual food and guidance to begin their journey of conversion. There is also need for meeting places for large groups of pilgrims who are often forced to sit through lengthy liturgies in Croatian whilst waiting for the speaker. So, **let us present this problem to Our Lady** in the trust that She will provide for Her children.

*** Fr. Philip's departure** - Unfortunately Fr. Philip is leaving definitely for Chicago. Upon my request he blessed me and said: "May the Lord who said, *When I shall be raised above the ground I shall draw everyone to me*, help us to love and accept the cross which is God's power for our salvation." **

Milona: "Youth find answer in Medjugorje"

"In Medjugorje the veils fell from my eyes and I saw the poor state of my soul, but God removed my ragged clothes and dressed me in new ones. Christ and Mary were present in my life before, but in an ordinary way. Now my whole life turns around Jesus and His Mother. God's will is what motivates me in everything. Thanks to Our Lady, I know how to recognize God's will and it truly is wonderful how He works in me.

Here in Medjugorje, the Mother of God is offering to mankind the reply to all those questions that young people ask themselves, about love, peace and reconciliation. Young people have always been on the look-out for these values and it is here that they can be found. Here, they find all the answers about the sense of life." *Milona von Habsburg* (from *Nasa Ognjista*, Nov. 1994)

News from the Blessed Land

*** Visit by Cardinal Puljic** - The Archbishop of Sarajevo, made a Cardinal on November 26, recently visited Medj. and remained to talk with the monks for about one hour in the presbytery. Italian friends and pilgrims donated to his diocese an ambulance loaded with medicines. Since flights from Split to Sarajevo had been interrupted, he and his secretary, Fr. Tomasevic returned home aboard the ambulance.

*** Bishops in Medjugorje** - In October Medj. also received a visit by the **archbishop of Nigeria**, Msgr. Gabriel Gonsu Ganaka, who said: "I believe in Medjugorje because I have seen its fruits." On the 25th Archbishop Menichelli of Chiatia also paid a visit.

*** During the Christmas novena** the Rosary was recited every day on the hill of apparitions at 2 pm. Many spiritual retreats were also held in *Domus Maria*.

*** On Christmas Eve** Fr. Rupcic celebrated Mass at 6 pm with 13 other priests before 1500 faithful. At the conclusion of the Mass the parish children sang carols for the pilgrims.

The Christmas prayer vigil began at 10 pm with adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. Midnight Mass followed. The Spanish soldiers of the UN forces took part in the Mass on Christmas morning, together with the locals.

*** Many young people** made their way to Medjugorje for a **prayer vigil** to see the new year in. The majority were Italian, but there were youth from many different countries. The two-hour vigil was a festive event with songs, prayers and meditations. Midnight was greeted by profound silence. Mass was then celebrated in honour of the Mother of God.

*** Aid deliverers** often complain about not having time for prayer. To help them find that time, we suggest they unload at the depot near the Parish office which will take care of its distribution.

(From the Press Bulletin of the Mir Information Centre, Medj., ph/fax: 088-642709)

*** Fr. Jozo** says that aid delivers must remember they represent the 'bread,' not the 'baker.' The only way to effectively take love to others is through being similar to Jesus. Then things will multiply, and the people who receive from you will be truly satiated.

*** Our Lady's desire for families** is that parents take the Bible or the Missal to read and comment the readings from the Mass with their children and to pray and rejoice together - with the TV off. Our Lady has told us what we need to do to be pleasing to God. Medj. is a school; those who follow it will have no regrets and their families will be protected, much more than by all the insurance policies one could possibly buy.

*** Fr. Petar Ljubicic**, the priest chosen by Mirjana to reveal the secrets, will be transferred to Lugano (Switzerland). The transfer, which was to take place in December, has been postponed to April. *** Ivan** returned from the US with his wife Laureen on 7 December to settle in their new home. *** Jakov and Anna-lisa** are the proud parents of Arianna Maria - born 6 January in Italy. They will return to their home in Medjugorje for her Baptism (12 February). God bless them.

*** Mother Theresa's nuns** have a fourth vow: to be always joyful. Mary often invites us to rejoice with her, and to take care of the poor, the unloved and the desperate, so that through us they may find help and consolation. In the war alcohol, drugs and insanity have reaped many victims among the youth.

Pope said, "Do all you can to protect Medjugorje"

A 37 year-old nurse from Michigan, Mary-Jo, spends her summers in Medj. One day she felt she had to see the Holy Father, but how? An unexpected invitation to Rome from a Polish priest was the answer, except that once there, the private audience had to be cancelled. Mary-Jo did not despair.

After some time she managed to join up with a group of Poles who were received by the Pope. John Paul stopped right in front of her, blessed her and uttered some words to her in Polish, but all Mary-Jo could say was, "my God, my God," in English. When the Pope had moved on Mary-Jo remembered the Rosary beads that had been blessed by the Gospa and called out to him that they were from Medj. When she said that, the Pope turned around and smiled. He went back towards Mary-Jo, took the beads and told her in English: "**Do all you can to protect Medjugorje**," to which she replied: "But I'm not anyone." He insisted: "Pray that Medjugorje be protected." (From Sr. Emmanuel's diary)

French Bishop's Testimony

Msgr. Jean Chabbert, **Archbishop of Perpignan**, accompanied a group of his diocesans to Medj. and Siroki Brijeg. In an interview he said of the apparitions: *"It is comprehensible that the Church is cautious about making judgements on their authenticity when these have still not ended. The Church has already manifested a positive attitude towards them by not impeding the pilgrimages... Personally, I believe, but I cannot say that officially as a Bishop..."*

Have you noticed any promising changes in the faithful from your diocese that come here? *"I have noticed that here they discover the importance of prayer in every-day life... and many French people have discovered Our Lady here. These encounters between the Mother and Her children bring about a profound change in their lives."*

What is Medj. in regards to Lourdes and Fatima? *"Medj. is the actual answer to the serious problems of today's world... In God's love, the Mother wishes to unite her divided children so they will look upon one another as brothers. This will help us sew back together the torn dress of mankind... Mary's presence on the earth will re-establish the omnipresence of Jesus. Living according to the messages means ensuring peace in the world. With her apparitions Our Lady is preparing the faithful for the Lord's return to this valley of tears. Medj. teaches how to overcome and defeat all that Satan has done in the world."*

When will the Pope acknowledge Medj.? *"I am not close enough to the Holy See to know this. But I do know that the Pope is truly convinced of the authenticity of the apparitions. I do not know what his decisions are with regards to them."*

Certainly the **French pilgrims** have been the most numerous. They put aside their fear and continued visiting Medj. during the war... *"In France there is a lot of material available on Medj. (here he mentions Laurentin's and Sr. Emmanuel's books - and we add the French-language Echo, 40,000 copies of which are distributed each edition). There are new Christian communities in France which are spreading fast thanks to Medj. Please do not believe that all Frenchmen think the way their politicians do."* (In reference to the support given by the French and British to the Serbs in their ethnic cleansing).

(from Nasa Ognjista, Nov. 1994)

Young soccer player lost leg at front but found life in Medj.

My name is **Djani Jercic**. I'm 24 years old and I live in a small village called Selca in the island of Brac in Dalmatia. 4 years ago I led a very active life. Soccer was my passion, it's what I lived for, and I loved going out with the girls. I went to Mass but more out of habit than anything else.

In 1991 the war began and I had to join the army. While I was on the front an accident caused the death of two of my companions, another was seriously injured and my leg, from the knee down, was blown off. The doctors managed to save my life, but I fell into a deep depression. My dream was to become a professional player, and travel, and be popular with the girls, but now all that was impossible.

My first reaction was wanting to go back to the front and taking revenge by killing the enemy. When that idea was put aside and I

started thinking about suicide. I couldn't accept that all this had to happen to me, that I had to live without a leg. My only comfort during my stay in hospital came from my family and friends who came to visit me. With time I got used to the idea of being handicapped.

One day my mother brought me a book on Medjugorje and I read it. I was very impressed and wanted to go there as soon as possible. Once there I met Marija and Vicka who tried to comfort me. They told me about their experiences as visionaries, but I refused to believe. They invited me to be present during the apparition that same evening. The church was crowded. Marija and Vicka helped me up to the choir loft. They started praying and I kept my eyes on them all the time. All of a sudden, as I was looking at Marija, a very bright light impeded my vision. I stretched out my arm to feel if Marija was still there and then I felt a strange power rising from my legs that went to my heart. I felt immense joy and love.

It was then that I broke up and cried for more than an hour. Marija tried to console me and said: "Don't be sad Djani, Our Lady has blessed you." From that moment everything was different and my new life began. I wanted to know all I could about God. I wanted to be His friend. The change in me was so great that if someone gave me my leg and my old life back I wouldn't accept them because in doing so I'd be losing a lot more. There is no comparison between my old life and the one I live now.

All I can do now is thank God for having given so much value to my life and I thank Mary for what She has done for me. God bless you and protect you. *Djani*

In the hell of Sarajevo

Alberto Bonifacio writes about his recent trip to Sarajevo.

"This was the first time I had gone into Sarajevo to deliver aid. On **Saturday 10 December**, after Mass, we departed from Siroki Brijeg. We distributed supplies to 95 families in East and West Mostar, and small parcels to the homeless children and the elderly in the new Hospital. Soon after we crossed the ruins of Mostar, on our way to Sarajevo.

Our 5 vans and 1 automobile were held up at the various road blocks and check-out stations. At 5.00 pm in the dark we began the 32 km stretch of road on Mount Igman. At the turn that looks out onto Sarajevo we had to turn our lights off because the Serbs shoot at anything they see. We were later told that at least one person a day dies and many are injured on that stretch of road. The descent was slow and a bomb whistled close by, but we finally reached Hrasnica which is the last of the towns under Bosnian control.

Under police escort we reached the opening of the tunnel that leads into town. The soldiers were nervous. Some of us were allowed to pass, others were held up in a type of shed where underfoot was very muddy. During the wait we were searched. We were not allowed to take our photographic equipment with us.



Card. Puljic and aid deliverers together with Frs. Ivan and Leonard and A. Bonifacio - Sarajevo, 12 Dec. 1994

Finally, after three hours, we were allowed to leave. The tunnel is low - at some points no higher than 1.35 metres, at other points it reaches a height of 1.65 metres - and some of us came out with bruised and bleeding heads. It is no wider than 1 metre and about 860 metres long. The ground beneath is muddy with puddles of water. A rail track runs along its length because when the airport is closed the supplies for the 350,000 survivors pass through here. This tunnel is the umbilical cord of the city. It lets Sarajevo breathe.

What a terrible experience! If someone stops on the way through they hold up everyone and a nervous person held up behind is likely to start cursing (and even shooting, we were told). It doesn't surprise me. The degree of human degradation is worrying. We walked fairly quickly and got through in about 20 minutes, but it seemed it would never end!

It was nearly mid-night and there were some young men waiting at the other end offering to taxi us to the centre. The fare was higher than normal because of the risk they run in taking us up the infamous "sniper street." 12 km later we were in the house where two Franciscan nuns put us up for the night.

The day after: no water and electricity only sometimes from a battery - certainly not possible to heat any of the rooms. Shooting can be heard outside - yes, we're in Sarajevo, a town under siege, at the mercy of the Serbs who do with it as they wish, a hostage town which once counted 600,000 inhabitants. Now there are little more than half this number.

We went by foot to the Cathedral. It was overflowing with faithful. Mass was celebrated at 10.30 am to celebrate its 750 years and above all to celebrate their Archbishop who had just been made a Cardinal. The solemn and beautiful celebration was moving. Many priests concelebrated, of whom 4 were bishops: the auxiliary bishops of Sarajevo and Split and the bishops of Sebenico and Dubrovnik.

We met Fr. Vitomir Slugic, professor of theology in Sarajevo. He was moved by our presence and in his broken Italian he told us: "We are living the part of the Creed that says *descended down into the dead*. You can see for yourself. We hoped the Pope would have come down into this hell too to help us."

He told us of the good relations that still exist between the three peoples. Before the war in Sarajevo the Catholics were a little more than 10%, the Orthodox over 30% and the Muslims nearly 60% of the population. Now there are only 15,000 Catholics and 60,000 Orthodox. Their priests have fled, except for one.

Fr. Vitomir says he is ready to die for the Church and for his country, Bosnia, a country made up of different peoples and religions that

lived and can continue to live together and help one another. "Today I wasn't able to eat," he told us, "thinking of all the people in Sarajevo who had nothing." He bade us farewell with: "Many thanks. I ask for nothing, but I hope to see you again."

Monday 12 December: We went to visit the main depot of Caritas. We were surprised to see a French lorry there. We asked how they managed to get in and they told us that the French and the British have permission because of good political relations. They can enter whenever they like, but they are taxed 33% of their supplies. I knew that. What I didn't know was that the 33% - the best part of the load - is taken by the Serbian troops. Thus, the lorry arrived with nearly nothing but clothing! The person in charge of the depot told us that they need everything, especially milk, and that the eight Caritas store houses in the city distribute to all those citizens in need, without distinction of race or religion.

At lunch time we went to the Seminary which houses a school for 600 students: Catholic, Orthodox and Muslim. Fr. Francesco spoke to us about the tragic situation: the cold and the scarcity of food is forcing them to close. The last supplies they received had to last for 15 days: 1 kg flour, 1/2 kg pasta, 1 tin tomatoes, 1 cruet of oil.

Thanks to a special permit (the Italian delegation for the celebration) we were allowed to pass through the tunnel, but one of our men had to remain. When will he get through? It took one month for one of the journalists of the National TV to get back through.

While we were there we learnt of the existence of agencies that help people escape from Sarajevo - but at what price I wonder. They advertise on the television.

Tuesday 13 December - back in Italy. Our journey back cost us 80 DM. Departure was at 4 pm. We waited in Hrasnica till 3.30 am and had to walk over Mt Igman for about 1 hour. There we caught a bus for Split. It was all a very dangerous experience!

We got back home safe and sound, thanking the Lord and the Queen of Peace and invoking their help and their peace over that martyred land." **

Be bread, like Jesus, to feed love-starved world

"Dear Brothers and Sisters, Rejoice! When Our Lady and Lord invite us to rejoice they are not joking. Happiness is found only in the author of life and happiness. If we cannot find God within us, if we do not allow Him to live in us, we will not find happiness. The happiness of heaven and eternal life is present in us. We can live it, touch it and feel it in our normal day-to-day living.

Jesus asked the Apostles: *Who do the people say I am?* In the name of Jesus, I ask you: *who do you say He is?* I know you would all say: He is the Lord, the Chosen One! But this isn't enough.

Do you remember that in the Gospel St Peter replied: *You are Christ*, and shortly after Jesus reproached him: *away from me Satan!* Peter's heart too, was divided. An open door permitted Satan to enter. Peter was not ready to follow Jesus in that moment.

Saying *I believe* is not enough. St James tells us: *without works of faith [believing] is worthless*. Upon his conversion St Peter embraced the Lord's cross, he embraced Christ dead and risen. Only then did he become a free man and full of strength to make miracles.

His fear was gone and he became alive.

Dear brothers and sisters, often we reproach God in our hearts by saying: 'I prayed but you didn't answer.' This means we didn't pray, or we prayed the wrong way. We wanted our way and not God's. If we do not look for God we will find neither life, nor joy, nor fulfilment. We may be wealthy, but not fulfilled. Furthermore, if we say we didn't hear the Lord's reply, it is because we didn't look for it, or discover it. When our prayers include the intent of finding God, His manifestation and glory is felt.

Close the door to Satan by offering our lives - Often our prayers are dead-end prayers because we pray the wrong way. God reminds us that we *cannot serve two masters*. Serving God with all one's self makes us free and beautiful, for the Lord is glorified in giving us everything. It can happen that we call God with our mouths, while our hearts are open to Satan. There is a way to close our hearts and also the doors of hell. Our Lady is conducting the battle against Satan. Did you not understand the message of 25 August '94? Who were the shots against Sarajevo meant for? They were to stop the Pope going there, to hit out at Our Lady and God. The war, which is between men, is in reality a war between spirits. It is a war of men but conducted by Satan because men have opened the doors to him. How does one open a door to him? Through egotism, which leads to materialism, hedonism, power and pleasure-hunting.

This evening the Lord is calling us to look for Him. He will give us all we need. Tell me, what is the fruit of Christian living? It is the bread of eternal life, that Bread that we have [just] adored. If we Christians do not become that bread, if we do not nourish ourselves on Him, then the world dies. Remember, the world dies without the Bread of eternal life.

In a book on WWI I read about a doctor. Upon his death his three children decided to share his belongings between them. At the bottom of a wardrobe they were surprised to find a petrified half bread bun. The maidservant explained to them that once during the depression when the doctor was sick someone brought him that half a bun. The doctor sent it to a sick girl, her parents sent it to an old woman who was very poor and that woman sent it to the doctor so he could get better and continue helping people. When the doctor saw it he exclaimed: "Now I fear nothing for I know that love reigns in this town. Let us keep this bread as a remembrance of our love."

Brothers and sisters, this is the image of the Bread of eternal life. In adoration we understand how He is living love, for He gives life. When the eucharistic Bread becomes alive in us and we become living love then our hunger is satisfied and a Christian who bears divine life in himself will nourish the world.

Few saints nourished whole nations with the love in their hearts. We are called to become the bread. If we do not become this bread we are not mature Christians; the fruit in us is not being used for the world's salvation. The bread of eternal life is prepared through trials, on the cross, where all else dies and pure love grows."

13 members of family killed. Survivor forgives and offers to God! "You have seen many episodes in TV about the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina, but you do not know about the many martyrs and saints there. When I was there I saw on the TV an elderly woman who saw thirteen members of her family massacred. She had been left alive to suffer. In her was

a profound calmness. The journalist asked: "How can you be so calm?" She replied, "I believe those victims were needed by the Lord for the world's salvation."

The wickedness of the world could not destroy the bread of eternal life inside her. She forgave, she loved her enemy, she donated for the world. In union with Jesus she became the bread of eternal life that nourishes the world. Wars cannot end unless Christians become the bread of life. You married couples must understand that unless you donate God's love to one another you cannot realize peace, you cannot be truly happy. None of us can be happy, none of us can close the door to Satan until we become the mature eternal bread.

St John Bosco had a prophetic vision about the end of this century in which the Church was in difficulty. What he saw was a ship (the Church) in a storm and the Pope at her helm, trying to tie her up to two columns. On one of these columns was written *Mary*, on the other: *Eucharist*. I tell you this time has come! Our Lady wants to prepare us for this, i.e. be anchored to Her and to the Eucharist. Not Eucharist the rite, but live participation in the Mass.

How and where can we love Love? In our trials, in deciding for that love more than anything or anyone else. If love for Eucharistic Jesus reigns in us then Satan cannot enter. If we become the bread of eternal life, of eternal love, we can close the doors of hell."

Discover God's love in trials and leap with joy - "This is where our happiness begins. Not even the death of loved ones can harm us. Christians can be either tragic cases or very happy people. If we do not give all to the Lord so His love can penetrate our sorrows and losses, we will remain tragic cases. In discovering God's love during trials and remaining open to his living love, we find true happiness! This is not a theory, it is a reality contained within each Christian, the same way it is a reality for a flower to blossom and donate fragrance.

We can achieve this if we do as St Peter did after he was reproached by Jesus. He loved the Lord more than his own life. St Paul cries out: *Who can separate us from the love of God?* No one and no thing! Oh, if only we could understand what the Lord is offering to each of us!

We still think praying is 'losing time.' The truth is that if you do not pray you will never find your real life. The Curé of Ars used to say: 'If someone wants to lose his material possessions let him work on Sundays. If someone wants very much, let him rest and pray.' When our order of things is back to front, all the rest is back to front. Look for the Lord and may your prayer be a journey towards the eternal life inside of you." Fr. Tomislav

Copies of **Echo of Mary Queen of Peace** in the principal languages can be found in the souvenir shop outside St James' church in Medj. and in the MIR Inform. Centre (after the bridge to the left going to the church).

The road to Medj. along the coast is free and safe. * **Daily bus service:** from Trieste at 6 pm, next to train station. Arrival in Medj., 8 am. Departure from Medj. 6 pm daily. Cost Lit. 86,000 return fare.

By ferry: inexpensive and more relaxing, from Ancona Mondays and Wednesdays 9 pm, Fridays 8 pm. Arrival in Split 7 am. Bus service to Medj. on arrival. Return from Split to Ancona: Sundays 9.30 pm, Tuesdays and Thursdays 9 pm. Phone Italy: 071-202033 or 071-55218.

My Immaculate Heart will Triumph

... (will triumph) over this ailing and materialistic humanity tending exasperatingly towards pleasure and material well-being; over this humanity that has built up a new Godless civilization and has become pagan after nearly two thousand years since the Gospel was first announced.

Go and preach the need for penance and conversion, for the need to return to the Lord through prayer and penance, for renouncement of Satan and his seducing ways and of evil and the need to dominate one's passions.

Return, like the prodigal son, to the embrace of your Heavenly Father who lovingly awaits you, so that a new, profound and universal reconciliation may be established between God and mankind. Be the instruments of this general return. Be the apostles of this second evangelization, so wanted by my Pope, so that through you my Immaculate Heart will triumph.

My Immaculate Heart will triumph over this suffering and divided Church of mine torn apart by the spirits of evil and possessed, ever more, by the dark power of the Freemasonry. That is why errors are spreading throughout the Church, often being taught and accepted among the general apathy and indifference. The lack of faith is growing: people sin and are justified, the ministers of the Sanctuary languish in tepidity and indifference, thereby wasting the treasures the Lord placed in their hands. How much my beloved daughter suffers!

How few listen to the voice of your Heavenly Mother and follow Her. Those that do, often have to face difficulties, misunderstandings and persecution by their own kind. Be the instruments of the inner revival of the entire Church you who are called to be the new heart of the new Church: purified, illumined and sanctified. For this I am inviting you today to be the brave apostles of faith and unity, of holiness and love. Bend over with me to comfort her many open wounds that continue to bleed. In doing so you will be for her the expression of my motherly tenderness, and through you, my Immaculate Heart will triumph.

My Immaculate Heart will triumph over all my poor children who bear the Cross of the inexpressible sufferance of these last times of purification and great tribulation. Oh how many are still far from God! Oh how many are the victims of my adversary who has put the vertex of his diabolic power into the world of today! Take the children who have been led onto the way of evil by the hand; support the youth who have been deceived and seduced by false values and who succumb beneath the weight of sins, impurity and drugs; help the Christian families to live as small communities of grace, prayer, communion and love and remove them from the grave danger of division and divorce, from the use of means that impede life and from the abortions that continue to increase all over the world.

Go and search for the lost sheep on all the roads of the world. Convert the sinners, support the uncertain, lead the lost, heal the sick, comfort the dying. To all, give the grace, the love, the salvation and the life that my Son Jesus gave to you with His Passion and Death on the Cross. Thus you will become instruments of salvation for all in these last times during which all that I have foretold you will be realized. Then in the end, through you, my Immaculate Heart will triumph ...

(To the Marian Movement of Priests - 20.06.94)

***The monthly message** in German, Italian, Croatian, French and Spanish is available through the Medjugorje Message Service in Germany. Fax: 060-294448. For other news, MIR Info Centre in Medjugorje, fax: 088-642709



New Year vigil in Medj. The joy of the young people who filled the church

A warning to visionaries

All the devil needs is a weak point. That weak point is their self-satisfaction: making God's gift their own, acting as if they deserved it, instead of feeling indebted to God for it. Who among the angels received more gifts from God than Lucifer? Who among men was more privileged than Judas? Yet, it would have been better for him to have never been born.

From the biography of the blessed Angela di Foligno we read that apart from her there were other 39 visionaries. When the father confessor tested their obedience, all of them, except Angela, disobeyed and the devil set up house in them. [What can be said of the visionaries who don't want a spiritual director, saying that Our Lady directs them? Our Lady does not substitute the Church. To Bernadette (and other visionaries) She said: "Do as the priest tells you," even if he says differently to Our Lady. Editor's note.]

Padre Pio said about people who have the stigmata: "They are in great danger," and to avoid the risk of becoming fanatic himself he was often short tempered with the faithful, so much so that this behaviour of his was an obstacle in the cause of his beatification. Thankfully, this has now been overcome.

To the apostles who returned self-satisfied after a mission, Jesus said: *I watched Satan fall like lightning from heaven... Yet do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you; rejoice rather that your names are written in heaven* (Lk 10). At times he was very severe, like with the charismatics in Matthew who prophesied in His name: "away from me, you evil men!" God's gift had become a work of iniquity.

When a well-known confessor insisted with a great charismatic that she preserve her gift through obedience, he could feel the devil's anger rise: "You closed the only opening I had to destroy that woman."

Angela di Foligno would often say of herself: "I am the ass of Balaam, the most ignorant and unworthy of all persons chosen by God to confound the wise." One should not destroy the gifts given to the visionaries, but protect them. They must be used, not possessed, for they belong to God. *Fr.L.I.* (See previous articles on the subject in *Echo* nos. 75, 103 and 104.)

ECHO IS FREE - It lives on your donations. We would be grateful if readers would consider covering at least the postal charges which are very expensive. Thank you for all you can do.

For distributors and helpers:

No one is authorized to ask for donations or set prices. At the most, for those who mail copies of *Echo* to others, you may request donations to help cover the postal costs.

The Mail - From Rottenburg in Germany:

A young Medjugorje-inspired woman studying for her degree in theology wrote: "I am so grateful for the Echo of Mary which I receive regularly. It is clearly the fruit of a spirit of vigilance and prayer. It offers me a supernatural vision of Christianity which supports me in the terrible trials of everyday living."

From Japan: "I pray that your hearts may be filled with the profound peace and the true love that Jesus gave to the world... The worst tragedy is that people do not know God loves them... In this technological era our hearts experience the union with God's Spirit and His all-forgiving love. I have been invited to Manila for the special meeting with the Catholic Church of Asia and our beloved prophet and father, John Paul, during the World Youth Meeting." (Fr. Sean Ryle)

From Chicago: "The Echo truly is bread for our souls. In it we find just the right words to help us continue with our life of faith." (Onorina)

FAMILY NEWS

Due to the abundance of material that Mary makes available for the nourishment of Her children with varying needs, *Echo* uses a smallish print and crams in as much as possible. We're sure you've noticed! To date we have had signs that Mary likes *Echo* the way it is: humble and simple, but substantial.

If Our Lady provides the means we will do things differently, as some readers request. For the moment, though, we do not think we should reduce the number of articles or add other pages. We are a "family business" made up of volunteers and similar changes would involve extra work and extra postal costs that we aren't in a position to bear. People with poor vision could have enlarged copies made.

Echo may be small and humble, but it reaches the four ends of the earth with more than 700,000 copies per edition in the various languages. Is not this a sign from God who "chooses what is weak by human reckoning to shame what is strong"? (1Co 1).

We thank Mary for continually providing for us through you, dear readers, and for the many words of encouragement we receive. It pleases and consoles us to hear that *Echo* provides so much spiritual nourishment to our readers. We thank the many readers for their prayers and Christmas greetings. A special thank you to Mary for Annemarie from Como who will help with the German translations.

May we, who by the grace of God "have replied to Her call," accept the gift of Her messages with open hearts to live always under the guidance of the Spirit. May God bless us in our Lenten journey of conversion, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

In Angelo