

Echo of Mary Queen of Peace

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Message of January 25, 2009

“Dear children! Also today I call you to prayer. May prayer be for you like the seed that you will put in my heart, which I will give over to my Son Jesus for you, for the salvation of your souls. I desire, little children, for each of you to fall in love with eternal life which is your future, and for all worldly things to be a help for you to draw you closer to God the Creator. I am with you for this long because you are on the wrong path. Only with my help, little children, you will open your eyes. There are many of those who, by living my messages, comprehend that they are on the way of holiness towards eternity. Thank you for having responded to my call.”

Prayer: a seed in Mary's heart

God the Holy Spirit has informed Mary, his faithful Bride, of his ineffable gifts. He chose her as the dispenser of everything that he possesses: so that she might distribute all of his gifts and graces to whomever she chooses, whenever she chooses, as she chooses and when she chooses. No gift from Heaven is granted to men passing through her virginal hands. It is God's will in fact, that everything should be given as a gift through Mary (Treatise on True Devotion to Mary, thesis 25).

These words by Saint Louis Marie de Montfort are sufficient to comment today's message from Mary on their own, at least as far as Her role in the salvation of humanity is concerned. **Let prayer be like a seed for you that you shall plant in my heart, I will give it to my Son Jesus for the salvation of your souls.** Our prayer planted in Mary's heart is like a seed that will bear definite fruits, it will produce **the salvation of our souls**, because She will deliver it to Jesus and He does not refuse anything that He receives from Her. Our prayer, planted in the Immaculate Heart of Mary, shall bloom clear and pure and shall therefore be pleasing to God.

I desire, little children, for each of you to fall in love with eternal life which is your future, and for all worldly things to be a help for you to draw you closer to God the Creator. Eternal life is life in God, it is the gift of salvation conquered for us by Jesus, it is knowledge of God through Jesus and life in Him (ref John 17, 2-3). Already on this earth we can grasp something of life in Him, we can savour a foretaste, a firstling of that eternal life that we will experience in full in Heaven, and this will allow us to **fall in love with eternal life, which is our future** and it will make it easier for us to orientate everything that is part of our earthly experience in the order desired by God. And so, with Mary's help, **all**



“Fasting is the soul of prayer and mercy is the life of fasting, and so whoever prays should fast. Whoever fasts should be merciful. Who in asking wishes to be answered, should answer those who ask him some question. He who wishes to find God's heart open to him, should not close his heart to those who plead with him”

(From *Discourse* by Saint Peter Christologist)

things of this earth will constitute a **form of help to approach God the Creator** and no longer an occasion to wander far from Him or to be cause for sin; to touch, to use all things for the common good, and not to subject them to individual exploitation or make them an instrument of power or predominance over other men.

To promote life and to defend it from all forms of overpowering, violence, death; this is approaching **God the Creator**, that is, the God who creates and gives life and who does not want death. We must use **all earthly things** to grow close to God: joy and pain, health and illness, gratifications and trials, successes and failures, loving rapture and spiritual dryness, etc... **I am with you for this long because you are on the wrong path.** This is the answer that should quieten those who, even among religious and consecrated people, are so scandalised by this “prolonged presence of Mary” which is so “anomalous”, that it leads them to believe that it is not true. Far from fearing that, given its exceptional nature, this grace could indeed be the last possibility for reformation and salvation offered by God to the world, rather than remaining quiet and following the opinion of Gamaliel, they risk *finding themselves fighting against God!* (Acts 5, 38-39). **Only with my help, children, will you open your eyes.** And His help is also this Presence of His, which is already bearing fruit: **There are many of those who, by living my messages, comprehend that they are on the way of holiness towards eternity.** May Mary wish for those who are already on the right road to proceed safely and those who are on the wrong road to mend their ways as soon as possible, so that everyone might carry Her seal of salvation in their heads and in their hearts.

Nuccio Quattrocchi

Message of February 25, 2009

“Dear children! In this time of renunciation, prayer and penance, I call you anew: go and confess your sins so that grace may open your hearts, and permit it to change you. Convert little children, open yourselves to God and to His plan for each of you. Thank you for having responded to my call.”

A time of renunciation, prayer and penance to open up to God

Today's message, on *Ash Wednesday*, is fully in line with the Lenten period: forty days of **renunciation, prayer and penance** with which the *Church unites itself every year to the Mystery of Jesus in the desert* (Catechism of the Catholic Church, thesis 540). Time of Lent: a time for purification, discernment, return to the Father. A time for liberation from everything that is an obstacle to communion with God and with our brothers; a time for reconciliation, reciprocal pardon, a rediscovery of love in Love, immersion in the Will of the Father which is pure and merciful Love. A time for strong choices that require seriousness and effort but that enable that *birth from on high, which is necessary in order to see the kingdom of God, that birth from water and Spirit, which is necessary in order to enter into the kingdom of God* (John 3, 3-5). It is of no use to *outwardly appear righteous to men, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness* (Matthew 23, 28).

Today also, like then, we must be able to distinguish between fiction and reality, between appearing and being; we must choose between Truth and lies, between Life and death, between God and Satan; and today, in the era of the *civilisation of the image*, it is perhaps even more difficult than yesterday to implement the right choice. But You, Mother, are with us, you do not leave us alone: **Dear children, during this time of renunciation, prayer and penance, once again I invite you: go and confess your sins so that grace might open your hearts and allow it to change you.**

We should take this invitation seriously, it is not new, it is the same invitation as always and this is one more reason to take it very seriously: it is not an occasional exhortation but an existential urging; it is a choice that does not have to do with our life in a period of time, but for the whole of its time and beyond, for eternity. It is a choice that cannot be fulfilled with our forces alone; we must draw from the divine **grace** assured by the sacrament of Confession. But we must be careful: confession is not the list of sins that we present to the priest to collect the receipt for payment; we are not at the supermarket, we are before God! We must approach the confessor with the repentance, the love and the fear of

THE POPE'S INVITATION FOR LENT:

“May fasting make us God’s living tabernacle”

the son who decides to return to his Father (Luke 15, 18-19). We need to expose ourselves to the Love of the Father, open our hearts, our minds and our soul to Him, and enter His Heart in order to draw New Life from it.

Time for renunciation: renunciation of Satan, everything that comes from him, everything that is foolish, deceitful, inconsistent, and apparent, everything that wounds Love, that crucifies Love.

Time for prayer: to breathe in His Presence, to satisfy the thirst for living *water*, to renew hope, to love Love, to praise, give thanks, bless God and offer ourselves to Him in Jesus Christ.

Time for penance: to open ourselves up to God’s mercy, to recognise ourselves as the *dust of the earth* and wait for the *breath* that transforms it into a *living being* (Gen 2, 7) and *participant in the fullness of Christ, who is the head of all Principalities and all Power* (Col 2, 10).

Converting, opening ourselves to God and to his plan for each of us, so that every only son of the Father in His Son Jesus and God *might be everything in everyone* (1 Cor 15, 28).

N.Q.

Conversion is...

Conversion is “re-becoming” Christians, by means of a constant process of inner change and advancement in our knowledge and love of Christ.

Conversion is never once and for all, it is a process, an inner journey lasting throughout our whole life.

Converting means seeking God, going with God, gently following the teachings of his Son, Jesus Christ.

Converting is not an effort by means of which to achieve a sense of self-accomplishment, because the human being is not the architect of his own eternal destiny. We are not the ones who created ourselves.

Conversion is synonymous with implementing the Master’s invitation: “Whoever desires to come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow me” (Mark 8, 34), because the Cross is the definitive revelation of divine love and mercy for us also, men and women of this era, who are all too often distracted by worries and earthly and momentary interests. God is love, and his love is the secret of our happiness. To enter into this mystery of love, there is no

pathway other than that of losing ourselves, giving ourselves, the way of the Cross.

Conversion is therefore synonymous with valuing penance and sacrifice more, rejecting sin and evil in order to conquer selfishness and indifference. Prayer, fasting and penance as well as works of charity towards our brothers thus become spiritual pathways to be taken in order to return to God.

Benedict XVI

(Little extracts from the General Audience
o Ash Wednesday)

Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterward He was hungry. (Mt 4, 1-2).

This is the main scene that we see during this holy time, the Lenten period that precedes the great central event of Easter; forty long days that are offered to us as a time of grace in order to train with Jesus in a sort of “retreat”, similar to that of athletes prior to an important sporting competition, who need to be in the right form in order to face the competition and win it. In our case, the challenge is that against death, which will be conquered during the days of the Passion, only to then crown the victory with the glorious resurrection of Jesus, which we will celebrate this year on the 12th of April.

As usual, the Holy Father gives Christians a message that might guide them through this “*intense spiritual training that is meant to celebrate Easter in the best possible manner and thus experience God’s power as he conquers evil, cleanses sins, gives innocence back to sinners and joy to the afflicted. He dissipates hate, bends the hardness of the powerful, promotes concordance and peace*”

THE MEANING OF FASTING

This year Benedict XVI lingers to reflect on the value and the meaning of fasting. Those of us **who have been at the school of the Queen of Peace in Medjugorje for years** have heard our Mother’s invitation on several occasions: “Dear children, today I invite you to begin fasting with the heart. There are many people who fast, but they do this because others do it... Dear children, fast and pray with the heart! (Message 20th September 1984).

Let us ask ourselves sincerely: can we answer her appeal? Many of us started out enthusiastically, but then among the thousands of daily temptations we grew tepid, justifying little concessions of superfluous things here and there and in the end they took root in our hearts, generating veritable “jungles” of desires and passions that are beyond our control.

But we are called to freedom. And then we can recommence with renewed energy. For this reason the Church creates favourable conditions for us to experience our renuncia-

tion in communion with all others: “There is strength in numbers” recites a well-known proverb, but in our case we can even say “There is strength in communion!”.

“We may well ask ourselves what value and what meaning it has for us Christians to deprive ourselves of something that in itself is good and useful for our sustenance”, writes the Holy Father in a Message, “Sacred Scripture and the whole Christian tradition teach us that fasting is of a great help in avoiding sin and everything that it leads to. For this reason, throughout the history of salvation, the invitation to fast recurs on several occasions”.

This then is the first form of assistance in our intention: we must not fast because food is harmful, but because sin is nesting within us, it is a poison for our whole being. The first fast was ordered by God to avoid the first great sin, original sin, when the Lord ordered man to abstain from eating the forbidden fruit: **Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.**” (Gn 2, 16-17).

“**In the New Testament**, Jesus sheds light on the profound reason for which true fasting which is aimed at eating the “true food”, is doing the Father’s will (cfr Gv 4,34). If therefore Adam disobeyed the Lord’s orders “to not eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil”, with fasting, the believer’s intention is to humbly subject himself to God, trusting in his goodness and mercy!”.

The force of fasting was known to the first Christian community, and following this, also to the Fathers of the Church, who believed it to be “capable of keeping a reign on sin, repressing the longings of the “old Adam”, and opening the pathway to God within the heart of the believer”.

And today? “In a culture that is marked by the search for material wellbeing”, writes the Pope, “the practice of fasting appears to have lost a little of its spiritual value and it seems to have acquired the value of a therapeutic measure for the care of our body. Fasting is certainly useful for physical wellbeing, but for believers in the first place it is a form of *therapy* to treat everything that prevents them from conforming to God’s will. With fasting and prayer, we allow Him to come and satisfy the deepest hunger that we experience within ourselves: hunger and thirst for God. When we look closely, we see that the ultimate aim of fasting is to help each of us, as the Servant of God Pope John Paul II wrote, to give himself totally to God”.

redaction

The Pope to the ill:

In Christ lies the answer to the enigma of pain and death

“Man’s life is not a disposable asset, it is a precious casket to be kept and cared for with all possible attention... Participation in the Holy Mass immerses us in the mystery of His death and His resurrection and every Eucharistic celebration is the perennial memorial of Christ crucified and risen, who conquered the power of evil with the omnipotence of His love. It is therefore at the “school” of Christ the Eucharist that we are given the possibility to learn and love life always and to accept our apparent impotence before illness, death and pain, which remain, in their meaning, unfathomable for our mind.

The Gospel shows Jesus crushing the spirits with his work and healing those who are ill” (Matthew 8, 16), pointing out the pathway of conversion and faith as conditions in order to obtain healing of the body and spirit. The light that comes “from Above” helps us to understand and give some meaning and value to the experience of suffering and dying. Let us ask Our Lady to turn her maternal gaze towards all ill people and towards our families, in order to help them to carry the weight of the Cross with Christ”.

(Summary of the Message to the ill 2009)



The impossible comes about in the desert

by Stefania Consoli

It is so exciting to come across a flower in the midst of the desert... A flower that is perfect in its structure and colour, and perhaps also with a beautiful scent. What's it doing there? How did it sprout up in the midst of that scorching heat? And before finding the answers to these questions, we are filled with pure wonder.

The sight of a garden brimming with splendid flowers would not be the same thing. Naturally their unquestionable beauty would win us over, yet seeing them is entirely normal. That subtle sense of wonder, capable of transfiguring our soul, is born of the only unique and unforeseeable pair of *desert* and *bud*. It astonishes us. In order to be born and to grow in fact, the flower certainly needed to conquer many contrary forces that in such a barren place would usually force the seed to remain closed within itself. Only a tenacious will enables that flower to bloom. It seems impossible, to the point that it leaves us open-minded.

We too are given the possibility to face the challenge and to bloom, by first destroying so many favourable and beneficial conditions. We are given sufficient time to experience a veritable desert, eliminating certain elements from within ourselves that enrich the garden of our existence but that are not always essential for a truly fertile life. It is only by reducing the external means to a minimum that we can experience the hidden power in the deeper layers of our being; that innate ability to bear fruit by using only the resources that God gave us within ourselves.

Lent is this lengthy period given to us as a special occasion during which to reduce the sphere of our needs to a minimum and to understand that we only need Him: a Father who wants to give us the seed of his Word,



the water of his Spirit and the nourishment of the Body of his Son to make us bear fruit. It will then be Mary's mantle that will shelter us when adversities would otherwise risk damaging the bud of our life.

One thing can help us to live this season of frugality. Sobriety. In everything. Whether it is then simplicity, littleness, poverty... Knowing how to make small or large sacrifices is an infallible means by which to regain possession of ourselves, to take back our dominion for ourselves and to remove power from the passions that often, despite ourselves, despotically govern our actions and make us into slaves. If they then become habits, it is very difficult to uproot them.

Forty days of patient and careful exercise, in which we must test our will to become spiritual men, weakening the arrogance of the carnal man, spoiled by the opulent and consumerist mentality within which we have grown up. Everything can be a good thing, but only in the right measure and in the most appropriate manners.

In illness I sing my *Magnificat*

"My "yes" to the Lord in suffering, which has accompanied me since the time of my birth, still surprises me today, I do not know how I said it. It is always new, and it always gives new things in which you are called to commit, to experience your union with Him, for his love and for the love of your brothers and sisters. It is something that invites you and attracts you, and you, even with your limits, but with total trust in God, reaffirm and live because after all, all you need do is have trust. It is a "yes" that invites you to no longer look at yourself but at everything that surrounds you and to look at it in that light with which you were able to have your "here I am" bloom.

Who am I? A person who will constantly remain unhappy until I find the true purpose of my life. I managed to find the meaning several years ago, when I discovered a Work in which my illness is almost a privilege, because through the offering, I can co-operate towards the salvation of many souls who do not need money, homes or terrestrial goods, but progress even in the midst of many diffi-

culties. I remember when I went to a course on Spiritual Exercises for the first time, it was held in the Community of the "Silent Workers of the Cross", everything around me seemed to be black, not because it was, but because I was unable to look beyond myself.

It was the week that broke my view in order to give me the gift of an ever more beautiful one, a clearer one that is more suitable for my expectations. It was the week of my discovery that there was a wealth within me that I had never appreciated: God was calling on me to offer up my illness. I remember that it was like being born again, finding myself in the world of joy even with my suffering.

Every year I renew my "yes" that the Lord always changes, renewing it with his love. Even when I have to carry the Cross with Him, my "yes" must be there also. What is the Cross after all? It is something painful, undoubtedly, but it detaches you from the world that is not yours and it unites you with He who attracted you one day because he is true Love, and through you he wants to get to those around you. And in this manner, when it is offered, life itself becomes an apostolate".

Sister Nazarena Cimarelli

* The Silent Workers of the Cross live

We tend to accumulate, occasionally cramming our homes full of many things that in the long run, actually risk *suffocating* environments. As psychologists affirm, the home is the symbol of our intimate space, and so the weight of this accumulation will sooner or later also be felt on an interior level.

Let's do a test. We start to empty out a drawer, to lighten a wardrobe, to clear out a utility cupboard and throw away that bundle of useless papers piled up here and there... We will feel a sense of lightness, as though it were easier to breathe. Then if we start to get at that forgotten dust behind furniture and *we get in deeper* with a duster, we feel as if more light has entered our homes and also our souls. Women of other generations know this, with "spring cleaning" they eliminate the winter *soot* in order to make space for the *breezes* of the new season.

The Churches are also cleared of all ornaments during Lent, perhaps some of them are even too austere; but this is a sign that indicates the pathway towards that "minimum amount" that is good for the soul, in contrast with the "maximum allowed" that the world continues to promote. It is therefore ancient wisdom to start from the outside in order to encourage things on the inside also: tidying up in order to free the heart that is choked up by feelings and desires; and then the mind that is burdened by memories, scruples, thoughts, but also noises, sounds, occupations... and lastly the soul, perhaps still tangled amidst the chains of recurring sin that is so difficult to uproot.

In our life, which has been dried out a little by fasting, which has been made more vigilant by sacrifice, freer from useless encumbrances, **a solitary flower will bloom**, unique in its beauty, because it has sprouted in a place that seems impossible. It will leave us feeling in awe and admiring because from the nothingness that we are, God will give rise to good, to beautiful... And it will make us into new creatures, ready to consume the Holy Easter with Him. □

their consecration through strong Marian spirituality, totally dedicated to the service of the suffering, in order to collaborate with their integral promotion, with the objective of putting the value of the person at the centre, activating all the person's potential and sustaining them in the search for the meaning of the mystery of human suffering.

Alongside this Community, the founder, Monsignor Luigi Novarese, also gave life to other communities, including the **Centre for Volunteers in Suffering**, which was initially established as a solid answer to the tragedy of human suffering, which often leads man to wander far from his Creator. The Centre sees the suffering offered by the ill person as a form of participation in the Easter mystery of Christ, which makes him an apostle and therefore the primate and prophecy for valuing all forms of suffering present in the life of man. All of this is done in a spirit of deep adhesion to the requests for prayer and penance, which are part of the Marian spirituality of Lourdes and Fatima.

At the foot of the cross, the apostolate of the CVS therefore recognises his identity, looking at the world of suffering as the "land" of his mission and giving each man a choice of life that is open to salvation. □

The Eucharist will pulsate in the heart of Jerusalem

To the land that saw Him being born, growing, preaching, and more precisely, to the city that participated in His priestly offering – culminating on Calvary, only to then lead to His glorious resurrection – **Jesus returns in Eucharistic clothing**, in a more stable and visible manner. He does so on the 24th of March, on the eve of the Annunciation, the day on which the **Perpetual Adoration of the Most Blessed Sacrament commences in a solemn manner**. The site destined for this purpose – a little chapel near the Fourth Station of the Cross, the point where, according to tradition, under the weight of His Cross, Christ met the affectionate gaze of His Mother – is particularly significant, as it was She, Mary, who inspired this initiative, She who has been repeating these words for years in Medjugorje: *“Adore my Son in the Most Blessed Sacrament, fall in love with the Most Blessed Sacrament on the altar, because when you adore my Son, you are united with the whole world”* (message of the 25th of September 1995).

This is referred to us by **Piotr Ciolkiewicz**, the young lay Polish promoter of this important plan which is in the process of being fulfilled: “Approximately two years ago, I was in Medjugorje for a pilgrimage and while I was in prayer in the little adoration chapel, a thought came to me: bring this practice to the land of Jesus. Then, during a trip to Jerusalem, I met a conventual Franciscan Friar, Father **Kazimierz Frankiewicz**, who normally carries out his pastoral service in the Basilica of the Resurrection and with him the idea came about to organise a movement of perpetual adoration”.

The “Queen of Peace Community” was the fruit of that meeting, an association that is presided over by Piotr and the aim of which is to create a chain of hearts to embrace the whole world through prayers of adoration, **to bring peace back to the Holy Land** and to the rest of the world.

“Its essential aim is the **spread of Eucharistic worship**. The members are invited to promote every activity for peace and reconciliation between men”, says Piotr, and he then adds: “In particular, I wish to point out that the Association bears the name of the Queen of Peace because it contains an important message: **by trusting in Mary, with Her we want to adore Christ, the Prince of Peace**”.

It is therefore natural **to match Medjugorje**, where, from the beginning, Mary does nothing other than repeat this invitation, **and Jerusalem - Yerushalaim**, the “City of Peace” – continuously lacerated by a conflict spanning many years, set within the delicate fabric of peace.

But why is this initiative so surprising? Because, in a certain sense, it is a novelty for the Holy Land. In fact, the practice of Eucharistic Adoration initially came about in Europe, with Saint Basil of Caesarea The Great (IV century) and it was consolidated in a more stable manner in France at the beginning of the XIII century. In the United States this type of prayer also experienced enormous consensus, so much so that the Franciscan Sisters of the Perpetual Adoration

have continued to pray it ceaselessly since 1 August 1878. And yet, right where the Son of God was made man, Eucharistic adoration is not common because the presence of the Lord is venerated above all through the worship of holy sites.

But a **monstrance** was needed in order to make the project really complete, to give the initiative the importance that it deserves. It was the exarch of the Catholic Church of the Armenians, **Monsignor Raphael Minassian** who came up with the idea to make an altar-piece in a triptych shape to contain the monstrance and exactly one year ago, the whole project obtained the full approval of the patriarchs.

CELESTIAL JERUSALEM

This is the name of the work of art created by the Polish artist **Mariusz Drapikowski**, who is known above all for having executed the bright amber dress for the Miraculous Image of the Mother of God in the Shrine of Czestochowa in Jasna Góra – which was created as a vow of thanksgiving for the life and pontificate of John Paul II.

The passage...

It is worth lingering for a moment on the description of this work of art, which leads us through a large doorway to a symbolic passage from the Old to the New Alliance. Seen from the outside, in fact, the triptych seems to be a large bronze wardrobe, with figures in relief that illustrate the Terrestrial Jerusalem. In the centre, there is the Christ Crucified and John Paul II at his side in the act of celebrating the Eucharist –



the Sacrifice that is also the promise of eternal life. Above, the parousia of Christ, the Supreme Priest, his second coming.

“I am the doorway: anyone who enters through me, shall be saved”. It is by fulfilling this passage that we access the Sacrificed Lamb, positioned in the centre on the book with the seven seals that have now been opened, in the midst of a series of crystal icicles. “The Angel showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb” (Ap 22,1).

The light and the witnesses

Upon opening the triptych we fulfil our passage through *Christ-Door* and we enter into the *Celestial Jerusalem*. The atmosphere of the New Land, of the New Heavens, is immediately revealed, illuminated internally by a source of light – an important element in St. John’s vision.

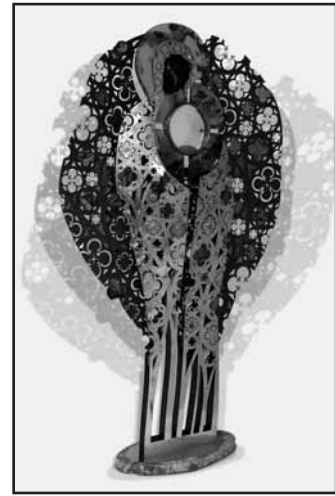
On the wings of the triptych the *Two Witnesses* symbolised by *two olive trees and two lamps* recall the vocation and duty of all Christians to provide a legible and truthful testimony of their belief, that is, to firmly confess their faith in Christ before the world. The refusal of such a testimony shall become one of the reasons for the last judgement over the world. The fate of the witnesses is similar to the destiny of their Lord, because *they are*

the sign of contradiction and they fulfil the sacrifice of life, but from God they receive a new life and participation in His glory.

The Woman dressed in...amber

In the central part of the triptych there is the monstrance. Its shape recalls the look of the Woman holding the Eucharistic Christ in her arms. The Woman – Mary, is the Mother of the Redeemer and of the People of God of all times; but it is also the symbol of the Church, which in the space of history, amidst great pains, always gives birth to Christ.

The suffering Woman – the persecuted Church – appears as a magnificent Bride in the midst of the warm reflection of the amber surrounding her.



Mary is the annunciation of the New Jerusalem where there are no longer either tears or crying, the Jerusalem that forms the vision of the new world, transfigured and illuminated by the glory of God: “The city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God illuminated it. The lamb is its light” (Ap 21, 23).

At the end of his book, Saint John expressed his last desire and his expectation: *Come, Lord Jesus!* (Ap 22, 20). We too want to take up the prayer of the “Patmos visionary” who, along with dawning Christianity, shouted out: *Come, Lord Jesus! Come and transform the world! Come today and win with peace!*

Blessed by the Pope

By now everything is ready for the departure, we are almost at the eve of the inauguration of this new “holy place” in Jerusalem, a point that we hope shall attract all the pilgrims who, travelling along the painful pathway, want to meet the face of the king of Peace, who shall be exposed day and night. But during its journey towards the Land of the Saint, the triptych **stopped off in Rome**, to be blessed by the Holy Father. All the members of the Association accompanied it, along with the organisers and the bishops of their cities. This is a moment of grace that we of Echo were able to experience, in the name of the “Queen of Peace”.

redaction



Learning to fast in Medjugorje

It's happening in Medjugorje...

Our Lady is appearing in private!

Mary's school in Medjugorje is an infallible school for those who wish to put the most recurrent invitations of her messages into practice: **prayer and fasting**. Seminars are currently being organised in various languages for this purpose, in order to experience these requests of the Queen of peace in a deeper and more conscious manner (the *Domus Pacis* home – for the date destined for various nationalities please consult the official website of the Parish <http://medjugorje.hr.nt4.ims.hr/>).

Anna Fasano, the organiser of the Seminar for Italians says: "Every year we have the opportunity of experiencing a retreat in Medjugorje which is characterised by a powerful action of grace that washes and purifies untidy feelings, which are hidden in the most intimate folds of our heart. These feelings often veil our soul: spiritual jealousy, the desire to be at the centre of attention, conceit...killing the love in us and in the heart of our brothers. If we can succeed in leaving all of this behind us and if we are able to enter the retreat with a sense of openness and willingness, pure love will fall like a dew into our hearts: Jesus will pour it out abundantly over us, so much so that we will also inevitably give it to others. We can embark on many pilgrimages, meetings, gatherings, but they often remain merely beautiful and moving experiences, they do not produce love! Jesus in the Eucharist is the only one who reveals himself within us; he reveals his Face and Truth irradiates from the power of his Love.

He wants to make our hearts into altars where the incense of prayer and the adoring silence of the love offered burns. This love is offered like snow that whitens and covers everything and reflects light alone. This light of hearts rises up to God.

This is the Medjugorje of Mary the Queen of Peace. We must be witnesses of love, we must experience charity in order to give joy to others...we must be joy where there is sadness, we must be truth and justice. The pollution of love is criticism; we are all ready to criticise and we are less willing to love and to teach to love. Love is the strength of the human heart, it is the Face of God in us and through us, it shines on earth. If we allow love to be quenched in us, then what will happen?

Words are no longer convincing, we must experience the messages that our Mother recommends to us. Silence is often more illuminating than words and true words originate in the midst of lengthy silence, silence leads us to contemplate the Word of God and to be free from idols. If the heart is bombarded by idols then the tongue talks and talks and talks, but if the love of Jesus is in our hearts, then silence prevails as well as the stupor of the wonders of God. It is in silence that the Holy Spirit gives us the flutter of His song! If there is too much exultance we do not have Christian prayer. God fulfils great things in simplicity, in smallness.

Silence is the renunciation of the word to become a cry in the desert, a song, a poem, liturgy, ecstasy; it is the custodian of the Word of God and the preferred place of

The Bishop of Mostar asked that the apparitions of the 2nd of the month **should no longer occur in public**. We know that up to now the Comunità del Cenacolo housed the visionary and a very large number of people gathered from the first light of dawn to accompany her with prayer during that moment of grace. Let us unite ourselves spiritually with Mirjana who will receive the apparition of the Virgin in her home with her family every 2nd of the month.

Message of the Queen of Peace through Mirjana:

2nd February 2009

"Dear children, today with a maternal heart I want to remind you of or draw your attention to God's immense love and the patience that flows forth from it. Your Father sends me and is waiting. He is waiting for your hearts to be open and ready for his works. He is waiting for your hearts to be united in Christian love and in mercy in the spirit of my Son. Do not waste time, children, because you are not the masters. Thank you".

2nd March 2009

"Dear children! I am here among you. I am looking into your wounded and restless hearts. You have become lost, my children. Your wounds from sin are becoming greater and greater and are distancing you all the more from the real truth. You are seeking hope and consolation in the wrong places, while I am offering to you sincere devotion which is nurtured by love, sacrifice and truth. I am giving you my Son."

A sabbatical year for Father Jozo Zovko

Siroki Brijeg, 9 February 2009

"I am writing to you to inform you that,

the divine wedding. Those who experience Jesus-Eucharist want to allow themselves to be evangelised by Him in silence, they want to allow themselves to be dragged by his trail of light so as not to be corrupted by the habit of daily evil.

In this retreat we are called "face to face" with the great Eucharistic Mystery: Jesus is veiled in a Piece of Bread and He urges us to develop this great Mystery and to consolidate our union with Him, to see him and love Him more clearly. This is a need for our soul.

If we fast in silence and listen to the Word, Eucharistic prayer becomes very powerful and it strengthens us in faith, because near Him we become strength, rock... "If they tell you that I am here or there, do not go, because your love will attract me and I will come to you". Jesus invites us to come out of our prison, to put our hands in His so that He can lead us to where He is going.

Let us prepare for the dawn of His coming with fasting, so that the offering of our nullity might be a purifying incense for us and for others and so that it might make us witnesses of truth and the light of the Risen Christ.

for reasons to do with health, rest and convalescence and the commencement of the building works on the island of Badija (Croatia), Father Jozo Zovko has asked his superiors if he can live outside of his Province, his request has been approved by the administration of the Province. For the reasons outlined above, the plans foreseen for the current year are hereby cancelled. We would kindly request all of our co-ordinators and collaborators, organisers of pilgrimages to Medjugorje, organisers of prayer meetings and also all the centres in Medjugorje and pilgrims to take this into consideration and not to plan or request meetings with Father Jozo during this period. Thank you for your understanding.

(On behalf of Father Jozo) Vesna Cuzic-International God-Parenthood for the Herceg-Bosnian Child"

Sister Emmanuel writes

on this subject:

"When the Lord allows a void, a hole, a painful absence to be created, He knows the reason for it and he has His plan. Abraham's request to give up his son Isaac was in order to become more fertile, but he had to pass through this apparent destruction of God's promise. When Saint Joseph believed that he had to give up on marrying Mary, it was to find her even more, but he had to experience this agony in order to enlarge his heart. When...

If Father Jozo's absence is a painful renunciation for pilgrims and for each one of us here, nevertheless, we must welcome this fact in a positive manner, not as a disaster but as a gift that God will use for a greater good. It may be the case that this change of rhythm might enable him to grasp other aspects of Mary's plan for Medjugorje, only to then transmit them to us at a later stage. We are sure that we are not mistaken in welcoming this trial with faith and recognition, because this will allow God to benefit from it over time and in eternity".

("Enfants de Medjugorje" - www.enfantsdemedjugorje.com)

Thank you Mother who intercedes constantly for us, so that we might love Jesus in the Eucharist. You who are the *living tabernacle*, transform us into altars where an incense of love burns for the coming of Jesus.

Make haste Lord to install your kingdom in all hearts. For always.

Anna

For **ITALIANS** the Seminary of **silence, prayer and fasting** will be guided by Father Danko Perutina from the **19th to the 26th of April 2009** at Domus Pacis

Information: Anna Fasano
mobile 335 5780090
email liveloveuniversal@libero.it

"The Eucharist truly is a shred of heaven that opens up on earth. It is a ray of glory of the celestial Jerusalem, that penetrates the clouds of our history and sheds light on our pathway".

(JOHN PAUL II *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, 19)

Poetry of the soul:

A JOURNEY INTO THE WORLD OF THE PSALMS IN SEARCH OF GOD

They resound in the heart of the Church in all languages, sung in Gregorian, recited with alternate choirs or murmured, to give praise to God every day. It is a wonderful experience to be able to venture a little into the world of the Psalms in order to come to some understanding of their origin and to follow their traces throughout history and above all in the souls of those who pray them.

They are veritable poems. As well as in the so-called Book of Psalms, the Psalms also feature in various biblical books. This enables us to understand that prayers of praise, supplication and proclamation occupied an important position among the heroes of history, in the words of the prophets and in the reflections of the wise. Nevertheless, true psalm praying mostly expresses the welcoming of the marvellous presence of God who saves his people, who wants to save them, and who can save them if the faithful pray to him. The Psalms are therefore an appeal to God fulfilled by various men, in various historical situations, but they are also God's answer to man, or better, his revelation through prayer. The old Israelite marked out his life with prayer, which occupied his time three times a day: "In the evening, at dawn and at midday, I cry and sigh; He listens to my voice" (Psalm 55, 18). The God of Israel was a God who was far away in his holiness but near in his mercy, a God who was always present, every day.

The secret moans delivered at the Temple

The psalms recollected the supplications of individuals and offered each of them a common form of language and profound theology. At that time, personal prayers were brought to the Temple and delivered to the priest, who examined them and kept them. But some were used in the liturgy alongside others. In this manner, over time, the liturgical text of Israel took shape.

The Book of Psalms forms a vast continent of 150 poetic compositions, the Psalms. It is currently divided up into five books, like the five books of the Pentateuch. We can say therefore, that the praying Pentateuch of the Book of Psalms was juxtaposed with the historical Pentateuch (the *Torah*), man's blessing and blessed answer to God the liberator.

Towards an explosion of joy

It is worth taking a look at the themes that diversify these five groups. The first book (1-41) is dedicated to the Psalms that narrate the comparison between the righteous believer and the godless. In the second book (42-72) the Psalms describe the desire for God, which lies in the heart of the exiled Israelite. The third (73-89) is a so-called *cushion* book: it insists on faith and meditates on the past and at the same time, it expresses the expectation of the last times. The fourth book (90-106) is the celebration of the power of the Lord, Pastor of his people. And lastly, the fifth book (107-150) is the book of praise that the believer expresses after having reached the summit of God's mountain; definitively it is the book of the explosion of joy as regards the Lord, as a

conclusion to the entire Book of Psalms that reveals how all things must praise and recognise God.

Prophets, priests, kings, simple believers...

The book of psalms gathers together the pieces written over a period of at least six centuries, which can be classified into very different literary genres. All the areas of Judaism contributed to its formation - consisting of prophets, priests, kings, learned, simple believers, poets and writers of Israel, and so it is not a composition that was formed around a table and fixed in an immobile form. In Jewish liturgy, the Book of Psalms was in fact used, copied and repeated endlessly and it arrived at us as an ancient work, rich with human emotions and authentic faith. Despite this, the Book of Psalms finds its unity in determining key points, that is, in certain themes that help us to read it according to the Jewish mentality.

Without a doubt, the main theme is that of God's love, which also includes faithfulness, mercy and grace. The second one is the *torah*, the law, which is God's teaching, the truth revealed to Israel. But above all, the *torah* is God's gift to his people, it is His presence, it is the creating Word. Then there is the theme of the enemy, the antagonist, a character who is present on the scene from the beginning, as a negative and chaotic force that resists God's ordering word.

Only if we bear in mind these three realities that emerge in the Psalms, can we understand the whole dynamic of the prayer and faith of the Psalmists, and discover the unity of the Book of Psalms, which would not be seen with a superficial reading of the text.

Christian prayer par excellence

Having taken a look at the variety and the wealth of the Psalms, it would be a good idea to also look at them in their relationship with and in Christianity. From the beginning, the Church made the Book of Psalms its book of prayer, it gave it to the communities of every language and people. The Psalms therefore constitute Christian prayer par excellence, although they remain a patrimony that is shared with our Jewish brothers.

But what makes this prayer so authentically "Christian"? The simple fact that the **Psalms were the prayer of Jesus Christ!** Jesus let the "cry" towards his Father come out of the depths of his status as a believer, using the Psalms with great freedom, while they illuminated his mission.

But we must be tread cautiously however, the Psalms were not Jesus' prayer as he was a pious Jew, but because He was Christ, the Messiah, appointed to give us access to the Father through prayer.

Jesus gives the expectation expressed in the Psalms its purpose, its culmination. If the psalmist were to ask God to send him the light and the truth, in Christ we have He who is this Light and this Truth, He who walks and guides towards the Father's house. The Psalms therefore pass from the synagogue to the church, thus becoming the daily "Prayer of the hours" and given that in baptism we became "one thing with Christ", Christ's prayer also becomes ours.

Reading and praying the psalms today?

The Psalms must be adapted to time, to culture. It is not a good idea to remove them because the Psalms always have a novelty wi-

thin them that surprises and nourishes man. We must only avoid formalism and a mechanical reading of the Psalms, so as to experience God's search each time, which is part of this type of prayer. "Given that they are a form of theology of prayer, the Psalms are above all an implicit reflection on the meeting with God", therefore they are a living dialogue with the Lord. In conclusion, in the Psalms, we meet a God in whom love, faithfulness, trust and intimacy are experienced. Through the emphatic experience enabled by the Psalms, God reveals himself, in a conjugal manner, to his People, to the Church and to every single worshipper:

*O God, You are my God;
Early will I seek You;
My soul thirsts for You;
My flesh longs for You
In a dry and thirsty land
Where there is no water.
So I have looked for You in the sanctuary,
To see Your power and Your glory.
Because Your loving kindness is better than life,
My lips shall praise You.
Thus I will bless You while I live;
I will lift up my hands in Your name.
My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow
and fatness,
And my mouth shall praise You
with joyful lips. (psalm 63).*

Seeking God does not mean possessing him, for us life has meaning if we seek God. And the best manner in which to do this is to pray.

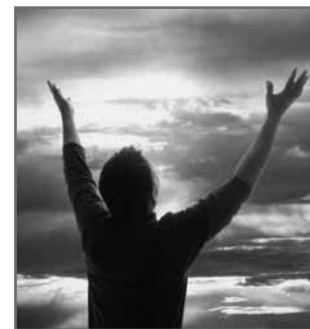
Pietro Di Mattia

LEARN PRAYER

With hands outstretched: ask

"Ask and it shall be given to you; seek and you shall find; knock and the door shall be opened onto you" (Mt 7,7).

"Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them and you will have them" (Mk 11,24).



Prayers in which we ask for things, although often used and abused, are still legitimate, personally authorised by the Master of Nazareth with the guarantee of welcoming

and consent if every request made to God the Father is accompanied by the meditation of the Son. Any request for material and spiritual things may be presented, as long as it is in harmony with Trinitarian plans, in line with the fundamental principle codified in the Our Father: "thy will be done". My request is good if I am not intent on, or if I do not presume that I can mould God to my way of viewing things (which is impossible!) but if I feel that I must do it as what I am asking for seems necessary or very important to me.

"Asking" seems easy...in actual fact no prayer is easy, because it is not sufficient to open our mouths and believe a series of re-

quests to be “prayer”. In fact, every prayer is an act that goes beyond natural abilities. It presupposes faith, it is born of hope, it manifests the love of trust in God. It is a theological act supported by the Holy Spirit, the animator of all Christian initiatives.

We should never lose sight of this, especially in the type of prayer in which we hold out our hands to ask for something. It may easily be distorted and isolated from the general context of relations with God. If I interview a man on the street, ninety-nine times out of one hundred he will answer me saying that “praying” means “asking” for something that only God – if he exists – can give us. The risk of transforming the request into a claim is therefore easy.

A claim, not a prayer! This often occurs with the aggravating circumstance according to which, in cases where there is no answer, no fulfilment, the man on the street confirms his false conviction that there is no point wasting time in prayer, because “nothing changes anyway!”. What a sad conclusion!

The tenaciousness of the votive candle comes to mind. When lighting it, there are those who believe that they are stipulating a bilateral contract with God (or with Our Lady or some Saint): I will pay but you must give me back the equivalent. Seen in this manner, the ancient devotional tradition of the lighting candle overturns the original perception of the gesture. The flame is gradually and silently quenched, it is the alternate sign of my presence, of my praying invocation, of my willingness to accept the divine answer. But the man on the street does not know this. In the majority of cases it is like a hurried delegation (I have many things to do...I don't have time to linger”). And so people hope that that lighting candle might exercise continuous pressure to lead God to answer our request. Perhaps on the other hand we should say before leaving: “Lord, I can't stay long but I am leaving my heart here....welcome this flame as my symbolic presence here, as an act of trust in you, then do whatever you believe to be most appropriate!”

The definite invitation to seek, to knock, to ask, also resounds within the framework of prayer in which we ask for things. Jesus even puts the reputation of the Celestial Father into play. He lets us know that infallible divine hope has established a true relationship between the demand and the granting of the benefit. When I ask for what I believe with an upright conscience to be necessary or very useful for the purposes of my eternal survival, then it is certain that it will be granted.

(From: “Tirelessly” by Lorenzo Netto)

3. To be continued

The gift of freedom

Jesus came to this earth, not to bring us obligations and impositions, but to offer us freedom. If we were able to fully understand the importance of this gift, then perhaps we would constantly and joyfully give thanks to our Lord.

And when Jesus said: “I give you a new commandment: love one another as I have loved you” he did not give a new prescription to be added to the many others that the Jewish people were to respect, but rather, he offered a gift of freedom, which was by now completely lost. The gift of being able to love *our enemies and those who hate us*, rather than being forced, like before, to hate them. The gift of *turning the other cheek to those who strike us, rather than giving eye for eye and tooth for tooth*. Therefore with this commandment we are not being given an obligation, but rather, a possibility: to love everyone, like He did.

What a great gift, that must not be underestimated! The price paid is proof of the greatness of the gift of freedom that is offered to us: the life of Jesus, the life of a God. Let us welcome this gift then, and constantly give thanks, without ever complaining, because He made us his friends, and no longer friends of the devil, incapable of loving because they are forced to hate.

With the gift of freedom, Jesus did not abolish any ancient law, He made it new, and with it, He made us all new along with the whole of creation. He gave us new eyes with which to freely contemplate creation with God's eyes. And so man was given the ability to see the “Heavens” from this earth. Mary is the new creature who saw and who sees all things in a new way because she contemplates them and loves them with the heart of God. Let us learn then, from Her, let us trust in Her because these seem to be the times in which She is leading her children by the hand in a special way, to teach them to see with new eyes. Perhaps these are times in which Mary wants to take all fear away from us and make us understand how beautiful it is to love everyone, everyone, with God's love. Perhaps these are the times in which Mary wants to make us see the marvels that the Father fulfilled and continues to fulfil in us and in others, for the joy of many.

Lights...of mercy

Only with feelings of mercy can evil be distanced from our lives and from that of others. Only with feelings of mercy can sin be conquered within the world. For this we cannot fight hatred with hatred, violence with violence, pride with pride, because this manner of doing things is not accompanied by mercy, it does not contain mercy.

Jesus gave us the example: He conquered sin and all forms of evil with mercy, nothing else. We know that mercy is a single thing with Love. Mary too always operates with mercy. This is the only manner in which she works for our good.

In the wonderful prayer, “Hail Holy Queen”, the church invokes Mary as “Mother of Mercy” from whom “our life, our sweetness and our hope” derives, that is, all other gifts originate from her mercy. Even our way of acting, speaking, writing, only if it is an expression of mercy, is a form of good that lasts forever, because it becomes eternal, like mercy, like Love. Our life is always a loss: the elderly know this because they have lost their health, their strength, the physical beauty that they once had, but young people can also experience this because, every day, they all experience situations of pain, be they great or small, that always constitute a loss. Even a cold or a simple flu are sources of pain and therefore of loss. Even a little lack of love is a loss. But every loss of ours, if accompanied by mercy, becomes a lamp that illuminates our pathway and that of others. This light is important for life because it is always presented as a nighttime walk, in which light is essential for progress.

When He died, Jesus lit a great light in the world because He welcomed the loss of “life” with much mercy. The bright light of the Resurrection certainly derived from the light of that loss, which was welcomed with immense mercy. Men were illuminated and saved by this light of mercy, not by anything else. And so we too always feel comfortable with feelings of mercy to illuminate life by means of many lights...of mercy.

Let us invoke the Mother of Mercy and we will be given a merciful heart. In this way, perhaps, nothing will harm us because we will have the light to distinguish good from evil. Even our little journal called Echo may be a light for our pathway and perhaps, for that of many others, if it is accompanied by the mercy of those who write it, print it, distribute it and read it. □

Father Tonino Bello wrote:

Holy Mary, ferial woman,
*help us to understand
 that the most fertile chapter of theology
 is not that which positions you inside
 the Bible or patristics,
 spirituality or liturgy,
 dogma or art.
 But that which places you
 inside the house of Nazareth,
 where amidst pots and looms,
 amidst tears and prayers,
 amidst balls of wool*

*and rolls of Scripture,
 in the utmost of your
 natural femininity,
 you experienced joys
 without malice,
 bitterness without desperation,
 departures without returns.*

Holy Mary, ferial woman,
*Free us from the nostalgia of epic poems,
 and teach us to consider daily life
 as the construction site in which
 we are building*

*the history of salvation.
 Loosen the anchors of our fears,
 so that like you, we might experience
 abandonment to God's will
 in the prosaic turns of time
 and in the slow agonies of the hours.*

*And return to walk discreetly with us,
 oh extraordinary creature,
 in love with normality,
 who, before being crowned Queen
 of the Heavens
 swallowed the dust of our poor earth.*

Everything has been fulfilled!

THE STORY OF A PRISONER WHO REFUSED TO ALLOW HIS FREEDOM TO BE ROBBED

According to the Christian concept, up to the time of their death, men are called to fulfil the Father's will, and death is the last act, the definitive and final one, of the fulfilment of this will. Jesus teaches it from the cross. He is a work concluded by the Father. He is the most beautiful work! He has not been left half undone! **We often risk being "unfinished"** each time that we turn our backs on God and on his calling. He calls us to life and we prefer to contemplate our deaths. He calls us to joy, but we prefer to feel sorry for ourselves. He calls us to holiness and we prefer to remain swamped in the mud of our sins and our inconsistencies.

When the creature allows itself to be modelled by God, when it allows this artist to fulfil his splendid work of art, we participate in a true marvel, the marvel of holiness that can even reach extreme testimony: the gift of life...martyrdom.

Perhaps many people are not aware of this, but there is a man who has a lot to teach us about this. A Dutch Carmelite priest, **Tito Brandsma**, a professor of philosophy and "history of mysticism" at the Catholic university of Nijmegen. It was during the Nazi era and professor Brandsma openly accused Nazis...He was obviously arrested by the *Gestapo*, he went on trial and he was imprisoned. In a page of his diary he wrote: "My vocation for the Church and for the priesthood enriched me with so much sweetness and so much joy that I now voluntarily accept everything that may seem unpleasant to me...I certainly miss Mass and Communion, but God is near to me all the same, in me and with me...".

On Good Friday of 1942 the guards in the camp went crazy. They put a crown of thorns, made of copper wire, on a priest's head and they forced the prisoners to sing the hymn: "*Oh head crowned with prickly thorns*". During the evening of that terrible day, Father Tito secretly meditated on the mystery of suffering. A witness states the following: "Around him, the prisoners were in camp beds arranged in three rows. The whole hut smelt of rotten sewer rats, filthy clothes and sweat. Those men with shaved heads looked at him with dead and somewhat sinister eyes...right before me, standing up on top of an empty potato box, professor Tito spoke to us about the Passion...the words he uttered came directly from his heart, they came up from the deepest depths. And the whole shack remained in silence. The silence was almost oppressive. Each of them was struggling with his own problems (...) and his own misery, but father Tito gave everyone a solution: *our love for God*...And then he added: *on this day there must be an atmosphere of happy recognition within us, so that we might see the passion of Christ combined with our suffering*". Another one of his listeners says: "We returned in silence to our huts; nobody was speaking: the spirit of God had just skimmed over us". The guards sensed something of this strange meeting and the day after, the Carmelite father was punished.

On the 19th of June of the same year he was interned in the Dachau concentration camp, **there his own true Calvary began**. The first meeting was with the head of the block who harboured a particular hatred for ecclesiastics. He started to strike him with a plank of wood and as he was walking he took enjoyment in kicking him in the heels, to the extent that he caused them to bleed. This treatment was then reserved systematically for him every day. Upon seeing him in such a bad state, one of the SS guards told him not to worry because he could soon celebrate his Ascension, passing through the fire of the crematory oven. The work was extremely difficult, so many humiliations, so much beating, for him they seemed to have been doubled, to the extent that the others were saying that he was being treated like the **flagellated Christ**. But in no manner would he criticise his jailors. He trusted his loves: Our Lady of Mount Carmel and the Eucharist. The **support of the Eucharist** was precious above all, he managed to have it almost every day from the German priests who were prisoners in the camp, seen as they were allowed a little more freedom. He would keep a little piece of it until the day after, in his glasses case; even up to ten people received communion with the remainder, risking the cruellest punishments each time. During the night when he was unable to sleep for many hours, Tito would adore that little piece of holy host, entrusting everyone's suffering to it.

Then the faithful day came in which father Tito, like Jesus, said: *Everything has been fulfilled!* He was so exhausted that his fellow prisoners thought it was a good idea to recommend to the head of that division that he be sent to the hospital section. The doctor was also almost too inclined to help them. Tito was taken away and they never saw him again.

We know everything that happened next from an exceptional witness...She was the one who killed Tito and she converted because the recollection of this priest never again abandoned her. At the time that girl was a nurse, but out of obedience she carried out the inhuman orders given by the official doctor...This woman told the story of how the words of father Tito became sculpted inside her as she was incurring terrible mistreatment: "**Father, let not my but your will be done**". All the ill people insulted and hated her, on the other hand, with the gentleness and the respect of a father, that priest said to her: "*What a poor girl you are, I will pray for you!*" He even gave her a gift of his Rosary beads. She told him that she did not know how to pray. He answered: "You don't need to even say all the Hail Mary, simply say: *Pray for us sinners!*"

On the 26th of July 1942, she was the one who injected him with phenic acid. As that woman injected that mortal serum into the veins of the Holy martyr, he transmitted the tenderness of God's love and faith to her with his beautiful testimony.

Still today, Christ continues to suffer in his body which is the Church! What fruits of redemption his passion still carries! Before Jesus' "*everything is fulfilled*" and the words of the blessed Tito, let us seriously ask ourselves: *where am I? What am I doing with my life? Is the seed dying in me in order to bear fruit?*

Fr. Gabriele Pedicino o.s.a.

Easter is the celebration of the rolled boulders

It is the celebration of the earthquake...

*On Easter morning,
having gone to the orchard,
the women saw that the boulder had been removed from the tomb.*

*Each of us has his own boulder.
An enormous stone
Positioned at the mouth of the soul,
that does not allow oxygen to be filtered,
that oppresses us in a bite of frost;
that blocks every blade of light,
that prevents communication with others.*

*It is the boulder of solitude,
of misery, of illness,
of hatred, of despair, of sin.
We are alienated tombs.
Each of us with his own seal of death.*

*May Easter then be for all of us
The rolling of the boulder,
the end of nightmares, the beginning of the light,
the spring of new relations.*

*And if each of us, having come out of his tomb,
Works to remove the
Boulder of the tomb alongside us,
the miracle that gave us the resurrection of Christ,
will finally be repeated.*

Father Tonino Bello

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ECHO on line: www.ecodimaria.net
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Convert us to you, oh Father, our salvation and train us for the school of your knowledge, so that the Lenten commitment might leave a deep trace in our lives.

Villanova M., 25 march 2009