

THE MEDJUGORJE MESSAGE

Whether one is convinced or skeptical, for or against, the years pass by at Medjugorje; the signs remain, the fruits remain, and Our Lady's invitation to peace is still valid.

Fr JOZO ZOVKO OFM



*31 years of the
Medjugorje phenomenon
1981 to 2012*

It is impossible for us to refrain from speaking of what we have seen and heard.



Is Medjugorje included in Vatican call to visit major Marian shrines?

● With the Church's declared *Year of Faith* starting in less than three months time does a notice of pastoral recommendations issued earlier this year by Cardinal William Levada signal that Medjugorje may be about to be recognised as a shrine by the Holy See?

The notice issued on January 6, 2012 (Feast of the Epiphany) by Cardinal Levada and retired prefect of the Congregation of the Doctrine of Faith, calls for "the faithful to turn with particular devotion to Mary, Model of the Church..." and for pilgrimages to be organised to "major Marian shrines."

Significantly, the current international commission investigating the Medjugorje phenomenon is under the auspices of the CDF.

Significantly, this particular recommendation is placed in the section of the notice titled "On the level of the

• *From the pastoral recommendations note issued by the Holy See, for the Year of Faith – October 11, 2012 to November 24, 2013*

3. During this Year, it will be helpful to invite the faithful to turn with particular devotion to Mary, model of the Church, who "shines forth to the whole community of the elect as the model of virtues." Therefore, every initiative that helps the faithful to recognise the special role of Mary in the mystery of salvation, love her and follow her as a model of faith and virtue is to be encouraged. To this end it would be proper to organize pilgrimages, celebrations and gatherings at the major Marian shrines.

Universal Church" and not in any of the other sections of recommendations that apply at Episcopal Conference, Diocesan and parish levels.

Significantly, a month after the notice was issued the Italian news agency ASCA reported Cardinal Vinko Puljic, Archbishop of Sarajevo and a member of the Vatican commission studying Medjugorje, as saying he expects the commission's work will be completed and a final report presented by the end of 2012.

The current position of the Holy See is that it allows pilgrimages to Medjugorje as long as they are not regarded as authentication of events still taking place and which are still under examination by the Church. Pilgrimages are not allowed to be organised at diocesan or parish level as this would give canonical status to the facts of Medjugorje. However, priests are allowed to travel with groups for pastoral reasons and assist with confessions. They are also allowed to make private pilgrimages to Medjugorje.

In August 1993, Cardinal Franjo Kuharic and head of an earlier commission investigating Medjugorje, said "We bishops, after a three-year-long commission study, accept Medjugorje as a holy place, as a shrine."

Will any forthcoming announcement from CDF in regard to the outcome of the current study on the Medjugorje phenomenon also declare Medjugorje as "a holy place, a shrine"?

When it comes to the question of approval of Medjugorje as a major Marian shrine will, in Cardinal Levada's own words, "every initiative be taken" by the Vatican to "help the faithful to recognise the special role of Mary in the mystery of salvation, love her and follow her as a model of faith and virtue...?"



PRAYER maintains the balance of the world,
reconciles with God,
begets holy tears,
is a bridge over temptations,
a wall between us and afflictions;
it banishes spiritual strife,
it is future bliss,
source of virtues,
light of the mind,
an axe against despair,
a sign of hope,
victory over sadness,
signpost of the way we should go,
revelation of good things to come
and pledge of glory.

• *St John Climacus*



FASTING makes for purity of prayer,
an enlightened soul,
a watchful mind,
a deliverance from blindness.
Fasting is the door of compunction,
humble sighing,
joyful contrition,
an end to chatter,
an occasion for silence,
a custodian of obedience,
a lightening of sleep,
health of the body,
an agent of dispassion,
a remission of sins,
the gate, indeed,
the delight of Paradise.

• *St John Climacus*

"...it would be proper to organise pilgrimages at the major Marian shrines."



MANCINI MAKES RETURN VISIT TO MEDJUGORJE

● Roberto Mancini, coach of football champions Manchester City, has made his second pilgrimage to Medjugorje just ten weeks after his three-day visit in March with his wife and daughter.

This time Mancini was part of a 40-strong group of pilgrims travelling under the auspices of the charity *Olympics Games of the Heart*. Also in the group was Antonio Percassi, president of the Italian football club Atalanta and the popular Italian singer Umberto Tozzi – close friends of Mancini.

During an arranged press conference, Mancini spoke warmly about his previous visit to Medjugorje and remembered with affection his meetings with the visionaries, praying the Way of the Cross on Mt Krizevac, Holy Mass – which he described as “special in Medjugorje”, and also the peace that could be found in prayer.



KEEPING THE PEACE

● Another football celebrity to make the journey to Medjugorje recently was the Italian goalkeeper Gianluigi Buffon, the national team captain who shut out England when the two teams met in the quarter finals of Euro 2012. Buffon arrived in Medjugorje just after the Italian team lost to Spain in the Final.

During his short visit he met with three of the visionaries, Ivanka, Mirjana and was present for Our Lady’s apparition to Ivan. He stressed his primary purpose was to confess and experience the peace of Medjugorje.

Buffon also met up with a former playing colleague, the Croatian Mario Stanić. They were team-mates at Parma for a while until Buffon was transferred to Juventus and

Stanić moved to Chelsea.

Another football star expected to visit the shrine is Benfica’s Lionel Messi, considered the best player in the world. He says that all his success in football is a gift from God.

OF BEDS AND TAXES

● Citluk Council official Dragan Vasilj has recently reported there are 17-18,000 designated beds available for pilgrims visiting Medjugorje and Bijakovici – considerably less than the number needed to accommodate a recent claim made by a local tourist representative of 100,000 pilgrims expected for the days around the Medjugorje anniversary.

However, the count made by the local Council is more in line with the published information by the parish information centre on distributed holy communions, the only other regularly counted source that provides information indicating the numbers visiting Medjugorje.

The bed count has been made by the Citluk council as it prepares to implement a “bed tax” on houses providing accommodation for pilgrims. The new tax is expected to collect 800,000 KM annually and is specified for “construction and maintenance of drainage and waste water systems, conservation and restoration of cultural and aesthetic assets, and maintenance of public areas”.

SHOOTING SHOCK

● A shopkeeper was shot and later died in a robbery attempt last month in Medjugorje. Father of six children, Miki Dedaj went to the assistance of his nephew whose jewellery store was being robbed by two armed men. Unfortunately, another gunman in a waiting car shot Miki three times in the abdomen. Although he was rushed to hospital and operated on Miki died five days later. The gunmen escaped in a stolen car.

NEW ROAD

● Good progress is being made on building a new road into Medjugorje. A first stage section stretching 850 metres is complete and work on the second stage is now underway to complete the full distance of 2,200 metres.

The seven-metre-wide road, has pedestrian and cycle paths. A waste pipe is also built into the road to ease the sewerage pressure in Medjugorje.

NEXT ISSUE

● Next issue of the Medjugorje Message newsletter (111) will be published in September.



Message of Our Lady given to Marija, June 25, 2012

Dear children! With great hope in the heart, also today I call you to prayer. If you pray, little children, you are with me and you are seeking the will of my Son and are living it. Be open and live prayer and, at every moment, may it be for you the savour and joy of your soul. I am with you and I intercede for all of you before my Son Jesus. Thank you for having responded to my call.



WALL ST JOURNAL PICTURE

● This image of a woman in prayer at the site of the Blue Cross in Medjugorje made the “Photos of the Day” section of the Wall Street Journal’s web site on the Medjugorje anniversary day, June 25. Amel Emric of *Associated Press* took the picture.

PRIEST NUMBERS DOWN

● The Parish website reports a drop of 52% on last year’s total of concelebrants for the Anniversary’s International Mass, down 148 priests, from 282 to 134.

“I am with you and intercede for all of you before my Son Jesus...”

● *Visionary Ivan Dragicevic speaks to pilgrims in Medjugorje, June 6, 2012.*

● Everyday I need to be changing myself and make progress. Everyday I need to leave sin and live in the light. I need to open myself to peace. I need to open myself to the Holy Spirit and I need to be open to grace, to be able to accept the Word of Christ and in that way to grow in holiness.

And over the past 31 years there is a question and it always arises within me and the question is: Mother, why me? Mother, why have you chosen me? Mother, there are others that were better than what I was. Mother, will I be able to fulfill everything that you are asking of me in the way that you want, in the way that You ask? Mother, are you pleased with me? There is not a single day when that question doesn't arise within me. And once I even asked Our Lady. I asked her, Mother why did you choose me? She smiled at me and she said, "Dear child, I'm not always looking for the best."

So, Our Lady has chosen me. She has chosen me to be her instrument, to be the instrument in her and in God's hands. For me and for my wife, for my family, this is a great gift. And surely, it is a great responsibility. I'm aware that God has given me a lot. And I know that he will ask for a lot in return from me.

It is not easy. It is not simple to be with Our Lady every single day, to talk with her every single day, and after every such encounter, to go back to this world and to live. To be with Our Lady means to be in Heaven with her because every time Our Lady comes a little piece of Heaven comes down with her. For me it takes a couple of hours after every encounter with Her to go back to the reality of this world.

What is most important that Our Lady has given to us? What are the messages that she has been sharing with us? You know, over these years Our Lady has given many messages to all of us. If we were to stop and pause, what are the most important?

In a special way I would like to emphasise the following messages: peace, conversion, prayer with the heart, penance and fasting, strong faith, love, forgiveness, the Holy Eucharist, confession, reading the Holy Scripture and the message of hope. Our Lady is inviting us through these messages, every one of the messages that I have just mentioned. Our Lady has been simplifying those messages in the last years. She is trying to bring those messages closer to us, that we can understand them and live them.

In the beginning of the apparitions, back in



1981, I was a child. I was only 16. I never in my life ever heard that it was possible Our Lady could appear, that this could ever happen.

In the beginning of the apparitions the first questions we asked Our Lady were, "Who are you, what is your name?" And she responded, "I am the Queen of Peace. I have come, dear children, because my Son is sending me to help you. Dear children, peace, peace, peace, only peace. Peace must reign in the whole world. Dear children, peace must reign between God and man and among all men. Dear children, this world, mankind, is in great danger. This

world is in danger of self-destruction." Those were the first words, those were the first messages that Our Lady, through us, has been giving to the whole world.

Out of these words we can see what the greatest desire of Our Lady is, and that is peace. Mother comes from the King of Peace. Who can know better than a mother how much peace is needed for this tired world today; how much peace is needed for this world that has lost hope; for this world that is full of restlessness?

There is unrest in the families. Young people

"If you are strong then the Church will be strong..."

are restless as well. There is restlessness within the Church. And Mother, she comes as the Mother of the Church, says, "Dear children, if you yourself are strong, the Church is going to be strong as well. If you yourself are weak, the Church is going to be weak as well. Dear children, you are my living Church. You are the lungs of my Church. That is why I am inviting you, restore prayer in your families, pray in your families. Let each one of your families be a chapel in which you will pray. Dear children, there is no living Church without living families."

That is why Our Lady has been wanting us to pray for so much, so that we can restore the prayer in our families. We need to restore prayer in our families. If we want to have more vocations in the Church we need to start praying in the families because God is inviting each one of us in our families. Priests are born within the families, within the family prayer. That is why we need to be praying. If we would like today for our society to be healed, if we would like this world to be healed, the world and the sick, spiritually sick, it is our families that need to be healed first.

Mother, she comes to us; she would like to help us; she would like to encourage us; she would like to console us; she would like to emphasise and point out things in our lives that are not good for us; she would like to lead us on the path of goodness; she is bringing us divine medicine. It is a medicine for us and for our pains. She would like to heal our pains; she would like to dress our wounds with so much tenderness, motherly warmth; she would like to guide us in the way of peace; and she would like to lead us to her Son. Our Lady and her Son is our peace.

Our Lady said in one of her messages, "Dear children, today more than ever before, the world is going through severe crisis and the greatest crisis is the crisis of faith in God because you are so far away from God. You are so far away from prayer. Dear children, the world today, mankind today, is going to the future without God. Dear children, there is no more prayer in the family."

Parents no longer have time for their children, children no longer have time to help their parents. There's no more love in the family, no more fidelity in the marriage. Breakdown in morality is taking place. So many broken, tired families surround us. And the Mother, she is calling us and she says to us, "Dear children, put God and your families in the first place." Together with him go into the future. That is when you will have peace. That is when harmony will be around us.

Mother comes to us. She would like to lead us out of this darkness. And she would like to lead us in the way of life and the way of hope. Mother comes as a Mother of hope and she

would like to bring hope to this world.

Our Lady said, "Little children, unless there is peace in men's heart, unless man is at peace with himself, unless there is peace in the family, dear children, no, peace cannot prevail in this world. Dear children, it is why I am calling you. Dear children, do not speak about peace, instead, live peace. Do not speak about prayer. Instead, live prayer. Dear children, only when peace and prayer starts in the family, that is when your families will be able to be spiritually healed."

This world today, mankind today, needs spiritual healing. The world today is not in an economic recession. This world today is in a spiritual recession because every spiritual recession produces all other recessions, recessions in the family and recessions of our souls. Mother, she comes to us. She would like to raise up this sinful mankind. She's worried for our salvation and so she says, "Dear children, I am with you. I'm coming to you because I want to help you, help you to restore peace in your families. Dear children that is why I need you. I need you. Only with you will I be able to achieve that peace. That is why, dear children, you need to decide for good. You need to fight this evil, against sin."

Mother speaks in a simple way. She repeats on so many occasions – and she never gets tired. And to the many mothers who are present here this morning. How many times have you said to your children, "Behave, study, work, obey, and do not do that – that's not good?" You have probably said that on thousands of occasions. I hope that you're not tired yet.

Is there any mother here that can say, "I am happy; I only had to say that to my child once and my child immediately obeyed and I didn't have to repeat"? There is no such child because every mother must repeat. Mother needs to repeat in order for her children not to forget. Mother repeats to us so that we don't forget. She did not come here to bring us fear, to punish us, to criticise us, to speak to us about the end of the world, or to speak to us about the second coming of Jesus. No. Mother comes as a mother of hope...

In a special way I would like to emphasise the message about forgiveness. We need to learn how to forgive. We need to be able to forgive ourselves. We need to forgive others. And in that way we need to open the doors of our hearts so that we become open to the Holy Spirit, because without forgiveness we cannot be healed – not in the physical way, not in the spiritual way, not in the emotional way. We need to know how to forgive. That is why Our Lady has been inviting us to prayer, to pray with the heart – not to pray with our lips; not to pray out of observance. Our Lady is teaching us how to pray with the heart, and not to pray

while at the same time looking at the watch asking when will the prayer finally be finished. Our Lady is asking of us, inviting us, to put aside the 'doing' for God. To pray with the heart is something Mother has been inviting us to do. And that means first of all to pray out of love, to pray with our whole being so that our prayer can be a conversation with Jesus.

When we pray with the heart we come out of that prayer filled with joy and with peace. Our Lady said, "Dear children, let prayer be a joy for you. Dear children, if you would like to attend this school of prayer, you need to know in this school of prayer there are no weekends, no time off. Every single day you need to attend the school of prayer. Dear children, if you would like to pray better, then you always need to pray more. Because to pray more is always a personal decision, and to pray better, that is a grace. It is a grace given to those who pray more."

Very often we say today that we do not have time for prayer, that we work a lot, that we are busy all the time. We always say that we do not have time, but Our Lady says, "Dear children, no, do not say that you do not have time for prayer. Dear children, time is not the problem. The problem is love because, dear children, when you love and like something you will always find time for that, but when you don't love or like something, you will never find time for that. If there is love, everything is possible, you will always find time."

In these years, Our Lady is waking us up from spiritual coma that this world is in, and she would like to strengthen us in our faith and in our prayer. I pray that each one of us will answer Our Lady's invitation, that we will accept her messages, and that all together we will become co-creators of a better and more beautiful world, a world that is worthy of the children of God.

These days when you are here I pray that you will plant a good seed and I hope that seed will fall on the fertile soil and it will bear a good fruit, a beautiful flower. The time we live in is the time of responsibility. We need to be responsible. Our Lady is inviting us to responsibility, that we may accept the word of Christ in a responsible way, that we may accept her message, the Good News, and to carry that Good News into the world so that we will actively participate in prayer, in the evangelization of this world, in families.

Let us decide for peace. Let us decide for God. Only in God do we have our true and genuine peace. Dear friends, may it be so. Thank you and God Bless.

• *Transcribed by Tim Haley*

"In a special way I would like to emphasise the message of forgiveness..."

● It can be a good thing sometimes to step back and reflect on past events and where we have journeyed from. "Back to basics" is a call we often have to heed to help to keep our lives in check and perspective. So over the next months the newsletter will be looking back on some of the early years of the Medjugorje phenomenon, the experiences and testimonies of pilgrims, including priests, starting this issue with this witness by Fr George Tüttö, who still distributes a monthly commentary on Our Lady's messages.

● ***This article dates back to the very early years of the Medjugorje phenomenon and was published in the Catholic Herald twenty-eight years ago on June 22, 1984, a few days before the third anniversary of the apparitions.***

LIVING GOSPEL OF PEACE ON EARTH

Fr George Tutto, parish priest of St Patrick's, Leicester continues his search for a deeper understanding of the message of Medjugorje.

A YEAR AGO, Medjugorje, the small Croatian village in the heart of the Yugoslavian province Herzegovina, near Mostar, was for me and. I expect, for most people, an unknown geographical entity. I was very much interested to see and hear things at first hand, not so much about the apparitions or the six teenage visionaries, but rather about the effects on the local population.

The arrangement for our accommodation for our visit last month came by chance. Sr Janja, one of the Franciscan Sisters, happened to meet a man, called Jozo, who was digging up the stony roadside, helped by friends and neighbours, for laying the water pipe for the houses there, and a word from her was enough for Jozo to stop work and in the next moment, he was smilingly taking us into his house, offering two rooms to four of us, while his family, wife, four lovely little children and mother-in-law shared the other rooms.

Luckily, Jozo spoke fluent German and so do I, so communication was established.

Our first question to Jozo was about the change in attitude and life of the people of Medjugorje since the apparitions of Our Lady began there nearly three years ago.

He summed up in a simple way: whereas before people used to go to church as part of tradition, now it is part of their lives. In spite of church-going in former days, people argued a lot, quarrelled and went to court over tiny pieces of disputed land, or for any trivial reason, now nothing like that any more.



A white statue marks the spot where Our Lady was first seen at Medjugorje on June 24, 1981

People help each other. While we were there, for instance, ten neighbours have offered to help him to do the seasonal work in his small vineyard. No family feels isolated any more. The whole village is now one big family.

We asked him how family life is affected by the apparitions. Jozo said: on average, a family has one child more than before. Divorce or marital breakdown is unknown in this part of the world, unless for very serious grounds where there is no chance for a happy married life. There are very few such cases.

The families now pray together a lot. In the morning, besides the family prayer, they say five Pater, five Ave and five Gloria in veneration to the Five Sacred Wounds of Jesus.

During the day some time, or before the Mass in the parish church, they pray for the peace of the world the Creed, seven Pater, seven Ave and seven Gloria, and the Rosary. At night, family prayer and the Rosary again.

We, too, have joined in with the family in their evening prayer. In addition, people fast every Friday on bread and water, or tea.

Monthly Confession is now a standard practice for most people in Medjugorje. The daily attendance at the evening parish Mass on average is 500 to 600; on weekend and feast days the church is overflowing.

If vocations can be regarded as indicative of God's visitation to Medjugorje, then the villagers are justified in thanking God for the many favours: five girls have entered convents and three young men are studying for the priesthood. since the apparitions began. Finally, we asked him about Our Lady's promise to leave a permanent visible sign in Medjugorje. Jozo surprised us with his answer which is very much different from what most English readers of the events are talking about.

Jozo is convinced, and so are about 80 per cent of the villagers he says, that the promised sign has nothing to do with physical, external sign or phenomenon. The

sign he believes will be of a spiritual nature, it will be the living faith of the people, the real sign to unbelievers, and this is more in tune with what Our Lord has promised.

Jozo is quite convinced that only the living faith of people can be the real evidence for the truth of the Medjugorje message. That means, he and all the people have still to grow in the faith; Jozo adds, and not just here but everywhere where people believe in the message of Our Lady to work for peace by prayer, fasting, repentance and deep trust in the power of God.

Apart from the six teenagers, there are two other children at Medjugorje, 12 years of age, who have experienced and are still experiencing a mystical vision of Our Lady, not so much visually as the other children but seeing with the heart as they say.

The girls, Jelena and Marianna, are related to the family we were staying with, and they lived nearby, so we had the opportunity to meet them and to talk to them.

Jelena, while praying, heard a voice, but saw nobody. That was in December 1982. Two weeks later she experienced a spiritual vision of Our Lady and these inner visions continue to the present day, although not every day.

First her family did not believe her, but when they saw the change in her and her growth in the spiritual life and the knowledge of the Bible, they believed.

A few months later, her cousin Marianna started to have similar experiences. They could not explain to me what it means to "see with the heart", but they insisted that Our Lady is teaching them about prayer and spiritual life which also includes fasting on bread and water.

With reference to Scriptures, I have asked them whether Our Lady has helped them to understand the Scriptures better, they answered: Yes.

Later on, the parents told me that the children spend every day after school two hours in reading the Bible and praying, then

"Monthly confession is now a standard practice for most people in Medjugorje..."

they go to the evening Parish Mass with additional prayers and long sermons.

I ventured to ask the girls whether Our Lady had any message for priests. Their answer surprised us indeed. Jelena spoke with unusual firmness.

First, the people must pray for their bishop, priests and for all who work for the Church. As for priests, both in Medjugorje and everywhere, priests should visit the families, especially those who have lapsed, who have forgotten about God.

Priests should not be satisfied with rejection, they should try harder, and make every effort to pray with the families, and to bring the Word of God to them. This is in fact the main thing: bring God's words to the people. Priests themselves should pray more, fast as well, and help the poor.

During my six days in Medjugorje. I had the privilege three times to be present in the small chapel, formerly store-room, adjoining the sanctuary in the church, during the short apparition of Our Lady to the visionaries.

On the first occasion I was next to the seer Ivan, now a 19-year-old Franciscan seminarian, in such a way that I could see the

faces of all the five young people; second time behind them, and the third time sideways again. What I could observe in those short moments, has convinced me that I was witnessing something which goes beyond the natural order.

The suddenness of their kneeling down together in a split second tells me it is not due to their own volition alone. Teenagers just don't kneel down in a group that way. Then the sudden and intense concentration on their faces and eyes, totally oblivious of their surroundings, totally absorbed in a personal encounter with someone whom nobody else can see, the movement of their lips, speaking without sound, nodding or smiling, then the final deep sighing when the apparition has ceased, were experiences I shall never forget.

A LETTER TO THE HERALD...

16th September 1983

GOD OF INFINITE LOVE

I HEARD recently reports of apparitions of Our Lady in Medjugorje, Yugoslavia. It seems Our Lady has been appearing to a group of children in Medjugorje on a hillside near the Catholic Church. The apparitions have continued in the church because the children have been forbidden to visit the site by the authorities. Very simply, peace can be achieved by prayer, fasting and penance.

This is not the first time Mary has told us this and it seems we tend to dismiss these statements as fairy stories. We convince ourselves we are beyond the pale and are not applicable to us. But Mary has such love and desires nothing more than to bring all children to her Son.

Shafts of light shine on a darkening world but we avoid them, preferring our own blindness. Time and again Mary gives the answer to our global problems; time and again we ignore them.

Revelations are not the utterances of a bored and arrogant god, but a God of infinite love. We are so blind and deaf, wanting to "go it alone" like wilful children, the results being those of chaos and bloodshed, bitterness and strife.

We must not listen when the powers of darkness try to tell us that Mary's promises are all "hot-air" and "pious sentiments". They are sincere and meant for all.

M D Heath Swansea Glamorgan

CHURCH'S TEACHING ON MEDJUGORJE IS VERY CLEAR...

Cardinal Christoph Schönborn

● In an interview with *Our Sunday Visitor* July 15, Cardinal Christoph Schönborn has again confirmed the Church's teaching on the Medjugorje phenomenon which is still being studied by a Vatican Commission.



Questioned as to how the faithful should respond to the phenomenon in view that the authenticity of the apparitions is still under question, the Cardinal responded:

"I think that the Church's teaching on Medjugorje is very clear. The bishops of the countries of the former Yugoslavia took a clear position in 1991. This is still valid and has been confirmed by the Vatican twice.

"There are three important points in this statement. First, that it is not confirmed that the events are of supernatural origin. That means it is neither confirmed nor denied. The Church left it open.

"The second point is that as the so-called apparition question and message question has not been decided it is not permissible to make official pilgrimages to Medjugorje. So, for example, I cannot organize a formal diocesan pilgrimage to Medjugorje as we can to Rome or Fatima or Lourdes.

"The third point, however, is that the people who choose to go to Medjugorje on their own are entitled to spiritual care. So, we priests or bishops are invited to provide spiritual company to pilgrims. That's what my predecessors in Vienna did from the very beginning regarding Medjugorje, and that's what I continue to do.

"I think these three points are sufficient for a good understanding of how to approach Medjugorje.

"The most important for me are the overwhelming good spiritual fruits of Medjugorje."

• Cardinal Schönborn is one of several cardinals who have made private pilgrimages to Medjugorje. He was there for Christmas 2009.

JULY MESSAGE TO MIRJANA

My children; again, in a motherly way, I implore you to stop for a moment and to reflect on yourselves and on the transience of this your earthly life. Then reflect on eternity and the eternal beatitude. What do you want? Which way do you want to set out on? The Father's love sends me to be a mediatrix for you, to show you with motherly love the way which leads to the purity of soul; a soul unburdened by sin; a soul that will come to know eternity. I am praying that the light of the love of my Son may illuminate you, so that you may triumph over weaknesses and come out of misery. You are my children and I desire for all of you to be on the way of salvation. Therefore, my children, gather around me that I may have you come to know the love of my Son and thus open the door of eternal beatitude. Pray as I do for your shepherds. Again I caution you: do not judge them, because my Son chose them. Thank you.

"Reflect on the transience of your earthly life... then reflect on eternity..."



Man can never be sure or objective, because his thinking, his opinion, never leaves him. If one doesn't allow oneself to be convinced, if one clings to one's naturally limited judgement, events will continue to occur without us. This is what happened at Medjugorje. Whether one is convinced or skeptical, for or against, the years pass by at Medjugorje; the signs remain, the fruits remain. And Our Lady's invitation to peace is still valid. I do everything I can for people to hear this message, so that they may begin to renew their spiritual lives, their family lives.

BECOME MY EXTENDED HANDS...

● A mother told me that her son, about fifteen years ago, was hospitalised in Germany. He was in a coma for six months. Initially she and her husband were not allowed to see their son because the doctors thought that the boy would be traumatised if he saw his parents. The young boy had fallen from a tall building and had fractured all of his bones. When the physicians felt they could not do anything more for the boy they told the parents, "We do not expect your son to live. Now you may visit him."

His mother had prepared herself for that visit through prayer and fasting. She, her husband, and their other children went to the hospital. The doctors accompanied them to the boy's room. There they saw what appeared to

be a long white stone upon the bed; he was completely covered in a cast except for his forehead. His mother laid her hand on her son's forehead and began praying. During the prayer her son awoke from the coma and said, "Mama."

The doctors were taken aback. They tried to explain this phenomenon. They said that when the mother touched her son's body she transmitted her heartbeat to him through her pulse, and the boy recognised it and was awakened. When the mother heard this explanation she said, "No, it is not true. What does pulse mean? I prayed for my son, and Our Lady awoke him."

Today this man is in good health and comes often to Medjugorje. His mother was right. Our Lady for the past years has been holding her hands upon the body of the Church, as she held her hand upon the body of the young man in a coma, and watched and prayed for him every day. Now she is watching over you every day.

Our Lady has given us the Son, whom one does not lose. Our Lady holds your hands. Will she succeed in awaking you? It depends on you. Medjugorje is more than a clinic; it is a large candle always burning brightly for prayer, love and peace. People pray everywhere in Medjugorje. They pray together in church, on the mountain and in their homes. They pray throughout the day.

• Adapted from Fr Jojo book: *Medjugorje, A Testimony*

The child is not dead, but asleep...

● When Jesus had crossed in the boat to the other side, a large crowd gathered round him and he stayed by the lakeside. Then of the synagogue officials came up, Jairus by name, and seeing him, fell at his feet and pleaded with him earnestly, saying, "My little daughter is desperately sick. Do come and lay your hands on her to make her better and save her life." Jesus went with him and a large crowd followed him; they were pressing all round him...

While he was still speaking some people arrived from the house of the synagogue official to say, "Your daughter is dead: why put the Master to any further trouble?" But Jesus had overheard this remark of theirs and he said to the official, "Do not be afraid; only have faith." And he allowed no one to go with him except Peter and James and John the brother of James. So they came to the official's house and Jesus noticed all the commotion, with people weeping and wailing unrestrainedly. He went in and said to them, "Why all this commotion and crying? The child is not dead, but asleep." But they laughed at him. So he turned them all out and, taking with him the child's father and mother and his own companions, he went into the place where the child lay. And taking the child by the hand he said to her, "Talitha, kum!" which means, "Little girl, I tell you to get up." The little girl got up at once and began to walk about, for she was twelve years old. At this they were overcome with astonishment, and he ordered them strictly not to let anyone know about it, and told them to give her something to eat.

Mark 5 : 21-24, 35-43

PRAYER REQUESTS

for Fr Ciaran McDonnell (RIP), Paula Upton (RIP), Miki Dedaj (RIP), Philip Illsley, Colm O'Donnell, Rosina Conlin, Mifter, Nicky Carroll, Harkin family, Claire and Marie Gallagher, Vince Neal and family, Stuart, Lisa & Murray, Anthony Jones, Fr Petar Vlašić, Maureen, Sylvia Wright, Siobhan H., Fr Jacob, Mary Cullen, Katherine Deery, Grace, Teresa Soho, Rose Tang, Pam Woods, Peter Harrison, Justina Orton, Sue & Nathan Purcell, Bridie Duggan & family, Pat McCarthy, Margaret Fallon & family, Maggie Dillon & family, Eugene, Harry Hendricks, Paul Burch Becky Delhi.

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