

THE MEDJUGORJE MESSAGE



Message of Our Lady given to Marija, January 25, 2014

Dear children! Pray, pray, pray for the radiance of your prayer to have an influence on those whom you meet. Put the Sacred Scripture in a visible place in your families and read it, so that the words of peace may begin to flow in your hearts. I am praying with you and for you, little children, that from day to day you may become still more open to God's will. Thank you for having responded to my call.

MEDJUGORJE COMMISSION WORK IS COMPLETED...

The director of the Holy See Press Office, Fr Federico Lombardi, SJ, has confirmed that on Friday 17 January, the final meeting was held of the International Investigative Commission on Medjugorje, instituted by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith under the presidency of Cardinal Camillo Ruini.

The Commission has completed its work and, as anticipated, the results of the study will be submitted to the competent jurisdiction of the aforementioned Congregation.

QUICK RESPONSE CODE

Scan the QR code below, or simply attach to a notice board or any other display facility for others to scan on their smartphone or tablet device and get the latest Medjugorje message on screen. A simple but effective way of spreading the message!



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

PILGRIMAGE DATES

● Planning to make a pilgrimage to Medjugorje in 2014? Here are some more dates received from group leaders.

Marguerite O'Kane is organising two groups, both leaving from **Belfast**. The first group leaves on Wednesday June 4, returning June 11. The second group departs on Wednesday October 8 and comes back on October 15. You can contact Marguerite on 02838 326326 or 07843 192431 for further details.

Reggie Donnelly and **Jean Reynolds** are also taking groups from **Belfast**. So far they have confirmed the following dates: May 4-11, May 28 - June 4, June 22-29, August 17-24, September 7-14, and October 1-8. Contact Reggie on 02890 300980, or Jean on 02844 830979.

Stephen Griffith has now taken over the responsibility of organising pilgrimages from his mum and dad, Teresa and Michael, and has two dates for anyone wishing to fly from **Birmingham**: May 15-22 and September 17-24. Contact Teresa or Stephen on 0121 604 4061.

Kath Gambin is taking two groups in 2014, both leaving from **Birmingham**: May 21-28 and September 10-17. Phone Kath on 0116 234 0103 for all the details.

Marie Bedingfield is another group leader organising two pilgrimages to Medjugorje and leaving from **Newcastle**: June 4-11, and September 3-10. More information from Marie on 01642 530739.

Anne Molloy is leading two pilgrimages from **Manchester**: May 11-18 and September 10-17. Telephone Anne on 0161 881 5129.

Judy Pellatt is travelling to Medjugorje departing from **Gatwick** on May 28 and returning June 4. Contact Judy on 02392 863585.

Places are filling fast for **Pat Oakshott's** group leaving from **Leeds/Bradford** on May 28, returning June 4. Only two places left at time of going to press. Contact Pat on 01482 802483.

Finally, **The Medjugorje Calling Foundation** has arranged for its annual pilgrimage to leave from **London Gatwick** on October 4, returning October 11. Email medjugorjecalling@gmail.com for details or go to the Foundation's website: <http://medjugorjecalling.com>

SPANISH POLITICIAN JOINED PILGRIMAGE TO MEDJUGORJE

● Spain's former Minister of Justice **José María Michavila** visited Medjugorje in December.

Recently-widowed, Michavila joined a group of 160 pilgrims that travelled



from Spain to arrive in Medjugorje for the Feast of the Immaculate Conception.

He shared his testimony with the group and said that his faith in God was helping him through the difficult time for himself and his family since his wife died from a brain haemorrhage, aged 40, after giving birth to their fifth child in November. Irene, his eldest child, is 19 years old and accompanied her father to Medjugorje.

THE TREE KEEPS GROWING

● The 2013 population census for Bosnia Herzegovina records the parish of Medjugorje (five districts, Medjugorje centre, Bijaković, Šurmanci, Miletin and Vionica) as having 5,228 inhabitants. In 1991 the total was 1,822.

Medjugorje centre has 2,306 inhabitants (939 in 1991) and Bijaković with 1,491 inhabitants (680 in 1991)



POPE FRANCIS INVITED TO BOSNIA HERZEGOVINA

● Pope Francis has received an official invitation to visit Bosnia Herzegovina from the BiH Presidency to proclaim a message of peace at Sarajevo on June 21 to mark the 100th anniversary of the outbreak of the First World War.

Cardinal Vinko Puljic, Archbishop of Sarajevo, has also extended an invitation to the Holy Father to visit the city.

With the recent completion of the Vatican Commission enquiry into the Medjugorje phenomenon, and unconfirmed reports that the Church is taking a positive view, many

will wonder if Pope Francis could be expected to journey further south and call in on Medjugorje as a pilgrim.

It is rumoured that his predecessor Pope Benedict XVI twice made private visits to Medjugorje as Cardinal Ratzinger and Prefect of the CDF.

John Paul II has also visited Bosnia Herzegovina (in April 1992) but although Medjugorje was not on the itinerary, he did meet and talk with Fr Tomislav Pervan, the Franciscan Provincial of Herzegovina at the time and a pastor at Medjugorje for many years.

JPII was once quoted as saying: "If I were not Pope, I would be in Medjugorje a long time ago."



MEDJUGORJE PILGRIM PRIEST GETS LIFT IN POPEMOBILE!

● A remarkable incident happened in Rome last month as Pope Francis was being driven around St Peter's Square in the popemobile after a General Audience.

When he spotted an old friend from his former Buenos Aires diocese, he ordered his driver to halt the vehicle and then proceeded to invite his friend, Fr Fabian Baez, to share his journey around the square.

Fr Fabian was in Rome after returning from a week's pilgrimage in Medjugorje!

FR MARIO VISITS LONDON

● A former pastor at Medjugorje, Fr Mario Knezovic, is scheduled to lead the annual retreat for the Medjugorje Apostolate of England & Wales, held in London in early February. A report will be published in the next edition of the newsletter.

NEWSLETTER FREQUENCY

● For various reasons I am only able to commit to publishing the newsletter on a quarterly basis from now on.

Testimonies and Medjugorje experiences (except stories about the spinning sun!) are always welcome, and also any news about prayer group meetings and days of prayer. Pilgrimage group leaders are welcome to submit travel dates and contact information.

Thank you for your continued support and prayers. bg

"If I were not Pope, I would be in Medjugorje a long time ago." John Paul II

FR FRED BECAME PRIEST AT 69... AFTER VISIT TO MEDJUGORJE

Fr Fred McDonnell RIP... by Mike Dwane reporting for the Limerick Leader

● Bishop of Limerick Brendan Leahy led the tributes to the late Fr Fred McDonnell, who spent the last 10 years of his life as curate in Parteen/Meelick.

It was on a visit to Medjugorje in 1998 – when he was aged 65 – that the retired bus inspector decided to become a priest. What makes his story even more extraordinary was that Fr McDonnell had been married and raised a family of five.

The pilgrimage to Medjugorje had been a promise Fred made to his dying wife Ann a few weeks earlier. Having received the blessing of his children to answer his vocation, Fred McDonnell (pictured) packed his bags for Rome to train for the priesthood when others of his age were kicking back with the pipe and slippers.

When he was ordained in St John's Cathedral, he was 69 years old and spoke of his wish to serve for at least 10 years as a priest - a wish that was realised when he passed away last month just shy of his 80th birthday.

"I visited Fred a number of times earlier this year when he was ill and he showed



immense courage through this time," said Bishop Leahy.

"He had immense faith and to become a priest he had to go to college to Rome and in the autumn of his life. This was a huge commitment as he had to uproot for three or four years and get used to a different culture. But he had his calling and I was so struck by the fact that he prayed that he would be granted 10 years as a priest and his prayers were answered.

"He was hugely popular and very much loved in the Meelick-Parteen parish where he served. He was a gentle and caring soul and a lot of people confided in him. His 10 years of priesthood remind us of the gift that priesthood is for the church and the importance of praying for vocations. In respect of Fred, so many people benefited

from his years as a priest. He will be dearly missed."

A native of Kilalee in the heart of Limerick city, Fr McDonnell worked with CIE for 40 years. After marrying Anne Connery, he settled in Clancy Strand and raised a family.

The homily at Fr McDonnell's funeral mass in St John's last week was delivered by his cousin Fr Pat Kelly, a Redemptorist priest and native of Ballinacurra. He recalled that his cousin had "just retired as an inspector with CIE when Ann died".

"Her death was a terrible blow. But Fred had a deep faith, a very traditional faith, and it was this faith that helped him through. Then one day, many months after Ann's death, after a trip to Medjugorje, he shocked us all when he told us that he was going to become a priest. Now that cannot have been an easy decision at his age – taking up a whole new way of life: the study, the Roman food, the separation from his family – but Fred was nothing if not determined and he got through to be ordained here in St John's Cathedral on February 16, 2003.

But he had taken to the priesthood "like a duck to water" and loved ministering to parishioners. With his life experience, he had been able to relate to his flock in a unique way. Fr McDonnell was also recalled as a man of action who shortly after his arrival in Meelick, took to repainting the church on his own until his parishioners pitched in.

Fr McDonnell is survived by his children Theresa, Shane, Helen, Lorna, Ada and Mary; relatives and many friends.

OUR LADY OF BROKENNESS

by Bernard Gallagher

● I can't remember who gave me the gift of the statue pictured alongside, but it stands on a sideboard close to my bed and near the window overlooking the street. It's a street lamp throwing light onto the statue in the picture.

Look closely and you will see the statue is chipped in places – the nose and the left hand. It's what happens to chalk statues when they are dropped or knocked over.

The statue represents Our Lady of the Immaculate Heart, but I prefer to call her Our Lady of Brokenness as, even with all her graces, she wasn't immune from the trials and knocks in life. Just like the statue.

The other picture shows Our Lady's 'smiling' statue. Over many years millions of pilgrims have trekked up Medjugorje's Apparition Hill to see and visit the marble statue. It was later vandalised and the nose broken. Sculptors came all the way from



Italy to repair the damage, but it never seemed quite the same after that. It still looks fractured.

Most of us try and cover up our brokenness in life, even after healing, but I know in my own situation some of the scars

are still visible and if I start to scratch at them then they begin to bleed again.

So I am happy to have this statue of Our Lady close to me in the morning and at night as a reminder of my fragility and weakness which I become more aware of as I age.*

I sometimes see it in others as well, not because I look for it, but because I recognise traits of myself. However, I am consoled by the truth that if I also witness love in others it can only be because love dwells in me also.

I sincerely believe that God is the good in every heart – and that the good can also be recognised in our brokenness, just as clearly as I am able to see each day the shattered statue of Our Lady of Brokenness standing beside my bed. She is also the Mother of Goodness.



"If I scratch at some of my scars, they begin to bleed again..."

LATEST MESSAGES OF OUR LADY

OCTOBER 2, 2013 message to Mirjana

Dear children, I love you with a motherly love and with a motherly patience I wait for your love and unity. I pray that you may be a community of God's children, of my children. I pray that as a community you may joyfully come back to life in the faith and in the love of my Son. My children, I am gathering you as my apostles and am teaching you how to bring others to come to know the love of my Son; how to bring to them the Good News, which is my Son. Give me your open, purified hearts and I will fill them with the love for my Son. His love will give meaning to your life and I will walk with you. I will be with you until the meeting with the Heavenly Father. My children, it is those who walk towards the Heavenly Father with love and faith who will be saved. Do not be afraid. I am with you. Put your trust in your shepherds as my Son trusted when he chose them, and pray that they may have the strength and the love to lead you. Thank you.

OCTOBER 25, 2013 message to Marija

Dear children! Today I call you to open yourselves to prayer. Prayer works miracles in you and through you. Therefore, little children, in the simplicity of heart seek of the Most High to give you the strength to be God's children and for Satan not to shake you like the wind shakes the branches. Little children, decide for God anew and seek only his will, and then you will find joy and peace in him. Thank you for having responded to my call.

NOVEMBER 2, 2013 message to Mirjana

Dear children, anew, in a motherly way, I am calling you to love, to continually pray for the gift of love, to love the Heavenly Father above everything. When you love him you will love yourself and your neighbour. This cannot be separated. The Heavenly Father is in each person. He loves each person and calls each person by name. Therefore, my children, through prayer hearken to the will of the Heavenly Father. Converse with him. Have a personal relationship with the Father, which will deepen even more your relationship as a community of my children – my apostles. As a mother I desire that, through the love for the Heavenly Father, you may be raised above earthly vanities and may help others to gradually come to know and come closer to the Heavenly Father. My children, pray, pray, pray for the gift of love because 'love' is my Son. Pray for your shepherds that they may always have love for you as my Son had, and showed by giving his life for your salvation. Thank you.

NOVEMBER 25, 2013 message to Marija

Dear children! Today I call all of you to prayer. Open the doors of your heart profoundly to prayer, little children, to prayer with the heart; and then the Most High will be able to act upon your freedom and conversion will begin. Your faith will become firm so that you will be able to say with all your heart: 'My God, my all.' You will comprehend, little children, that here on earth everything is passing. Thank you for having responded to my call.

DECEMBER 2, 2013 message to Mirjana

Dear children, with a motherly love and a motherly patience I

am looking at your ceaseless wandering and how lost you are. That is why I am with you. I desire to help you to first find and come to know yourself, so that, then, you would be able to recognize and to admit everything that does not permit you to get to know the love of the Heavenly Father, honestly and wholeheartedly. My children, the Father comes to be known through the cross. Therefore, do not reject the cross. Strive to comprehend and accept it with my help. When you will be able to accept the cross you will also understand the love of the Heavenly Father; you will walk with my Son and with me; you will differ from those who have not come to know the love of the Heavenly Father, those who listen to him but do not understand him, those who do not walk with him – who have not come to know him. I desire for you to come to know the truth of my Son and to be my apostles; that, as children of God, you may rise above the human way of thinking and always, and in everything, seek God's way of thinking, anew. My children, pray and fast that you may be able to recognize all of this which I am seeking of you. Pray for your shepherds and long to come to know the love of your Heavenly Father, in union with them. Thank you.

DECEMBER 25, 2013 message to Marija

Dear children! I am carrying to you the King of Peace that he may give you his peace. You, little children, pray, pray, pray. The fruit of prayer will be seen on the faces of the people who have decided for God and his Kingdom. I, with my Son Jesus, bless you all with a blessing of peace. Thank you for having responded to my call.

DECEMBER 25, 2013 Annual apparition to Jakov Colo

Little children, today in a special way, Jesus desires to come to dwell in each of your hearts and to share with you your every joy and pain. Therefore, little children, today in a special way, peer into your hearts and ask yourselves if the peace and joy of the birth of Jesus have truly taken hold of your hearts. Little children, do not live in darkness, aspire towards the light and towards God's salvation. Children, decide for Jesus and give him your life and your hearts, because only in this way will the Most High be able to work in you and through you.

JANUARY 2, 2014, message to Mirjana

Dear children, for you to be able to be my apostles and to be able to help all those who are in darkness, to come to know the light of the love of my Son, you must have pure and humble hearts. You cannot help for my Son to be born in, and to reign in, the hearts of those who do not know him, if he does not reign – if he is not the King – in your heart. I am with you. I am walking with you as a mother. I am knocking on your hearts. They can not open because they are not humble. I am praying, and you my beloved children also pray, that you may be able to open pure and humble hearts to my Son and to receive the gifts which He has promised you. Then you will be led by the love and strength of my Son. Then, you will be my apostles who everywhere around them spread the fruits of God's love. My Son will act from within you and through you, because you will be 'one'. My motherly heart yearns for this – for unity of all of my children – through my Son. With great love I bless, and pray for those who are chosen by my Son – for your shepherds. Thank you.

“Decide for Jesus and give him your life and your heart...”



Medjugorje? Can anything good come from that place?

● Medjugorje? Can anything good come from that place?

Apparently so, if we are to accept a recent statement presented by the noted Italian columnist Andrea Tornielli. Writing for *Vatican Insider* he reveals this pearl of 'inside' information on the positive view taken by the International Commission after completing its study on the Medjugorje phenomenon:

"The Commission and Cardinal Ruini himself, thanks to visits [to Medjugorje] by people close to him, have noticed that people really are converting to the faith or returning to the sacraments – what the Church refers to as spiritual fruits – in a significant way"

It was never a secret that Medjugorje bears much fruit, but what is important to note in Tornielli's comment is the

reference he makes to the Commission and Cardinal Ruini having had this confirmed "thanks to VISITS by people close to him".

In other words, the judgement has not been made merely from a distance, or from the outside looking in. The Commission accepted the invitation to: "Come and see"

In John's gospel (1 : 40-51), we read how Philip, having met with Jesus, reported his encounter to Nathaniel and said to him: "We have found the one who Moses wrote about in the Law, the one whom the prophets wrote: he is Jesus, son of Joseph, from Nazareth".

Nathaniel retorted, "From Nazareth? Can anything good come from that place?"

Philip replied: "COME AND SEE!"

Millions of people have encountered Jesus in a life-changing way at Medjugorje, their faith and lives renewed, because they have listened to the witness of others and responded to the call: "Come and see".

The Commission has also responded to the call. It came, it saw, and now also gives witness to the truth that "people really are converting to the faith and returning to the sacraments".

The invitation expressed by Philip to meet with Jesus is still as fresh and valid as it was over two thousand years ago: COME AND SEE.

Lives of dedication

● Meditating one night on the fourth Joyful Mystery of the Rosary – *Jesus is presented in the Temple* – I became aware that the Mystery focuses on lives dedicated to God.

The infant Jesus is brought to the Temple by Mary and Joseph to fulfil the Law of consecrating every first-born male to the Lord.

Then we meet Simeon, a devout and upright man dedicated to God and waiting with expectant faith for the promise made to him by the Holy Spirit to be fulfilled.

There is also mention of the prophetess Anna, 84 years old and, like Simeon, reaching the end of her life. She never leaves the Temple, serving God night and day with fasting and prayer.

Anna's dedication is a beautiful witness of remaining in God's heart, the Temple, through prayer and fasting.

All the people mentioned in this passage are examples of faithful dedication to the Lord as they journey through life. Even the Temple building is testimony of the people's dedication to God – so also the sacrifice of the two turtle doves.

In a recent Angelus address Pope Francis spoke about the need to "pray always, without growing weary", that we must "cry out to the Lord day and night" because the daily struggle against evil requires "patience and resistance".

It's never too early or too late to pray, to dedicate our lives to



Pilgrims pray at the fourth station of the Joyful Mysteries on Apparition Hill.

God and serve him through prayer.

Our Lady invites us to dedicate our time to the Rosary (*June 25, 1985*) and in the message below she teaches that through prayer Jesus will reveal himself to us in fullness.

Simeon and Anna know the truth of that promise.

Dear children! Today also I want to call you all to prayer. Let prayer be your life. Dear children, dedicate your time only to Jesus and he will give you everything that you are seeking. He will reveal himself to you in fullness... *September 25, 1987*

"He will reveal himself to you in fullness..."



Kick-boxing champion Ursula found peace at Medjugorje...

by Sarah Kelly reporting for *The Irish Catholic*

● "It's only when you try to do things without God that you realise you can't," says Ursula Agnew, European Kickboxing Champion. Born and raised in Belfast, a member of the Prokick Kickboxing team, Ursula always had the desire to be a fighter. "Watching it on television inspired me a lot, the desire inside me, and I just took it up then, and after eight months I had my first fight," she says. But it was back in 2005 that she realised that something was missing. "I was in with a bad crowd, and I thought I can't live like this," Ursula says.

Coming from a family of great faith, Ursula's mother prayed tirelessly for her daughter to find her own faith. "My mummy was praying for my conversion, she prayed so hard for me. She prays for me every night, and wakes up at 3am every morning to pray the Mercy Chaplet. Her prayers were answered." It was at this point that Ursula made the decision to turn back to God. "I just prayed to God, get me out of this trouble, and I made a deal with him I'd be better," Ursula says.

At this time, Ursula went on pilgrimage to Medjugorje and says she experienced an incredible peace in her heart - something she would later be thankful for. Following her return to Ireland, she was the victim of a terrible assault. "I was stabbed in the face by a girl. I needed 27 stitches, so Medjugorje prepared me for that," Ursula explains. She also reveals that if it had not been for the pilgrimage and the inner peace within her, she would have probably retaliated, but instead she gave it all to God. "I learned how to forgive," she says. "I learned to let go and just pray to God. I couldn't achieve this on my own, but through him. He has given me the grace."

The saying, 'never judge a book by its cover' relates in particular to Ursula. She encapsulates elegance and poise. Gently spoken, you would be forgiven for assuming Ursula was not a kickboxing champion. She is just a happy, normal and well rounded young woman, and a great role model for young girls. Her career is blossoming, she exudes an inner strength and she couldn't be happier.

Her fighting technique possesses a rare confidence that you won't find in any other contact sport competitors. So, is it any coincidence then that before her fights, Ursula completely surrenders everything

over to God and He takes it from there.

But, it wasn't always so easy for Ursula. When she first started off, she would apply positive thinking and believing in herself before a fight, but after a while, she felt as if something was weighing on her. "Then I began losing fights which I should have won. I was beginning to worry," Ursula says, so she prayed to Jesus and "after a year I had enough. I then said to Jesus, if you want to take me away from fighting, then I will." Then, she walked into the ring and walked out victorious. "I entered a fight, and I walked out European Champion," Ursula says. This she reveals is all down to God. "I put every fight in His hands," she says and recently Ursula won three gold medals and one silver in Geneva, Switzerland.

Ursula's formula for success, along with her training regime, is her prayer. This is vital to her performance. Not just in the ring, but also out of it. "If I went a few days without praying I'd feel spiritually dead," she says, also highlighting how much she needs it for peace in her heart and her mind. She further reveals that she can see a difference when she doesn't pray, but then when she returns she realises just how necessary it is.

For Ursula, the Novena to St Joseph is her prayer of choice. The prayer itself highlights that the petitioner "shall never die a sudden death or be drowned, nor shall poison take effect on them; neither shall they fall into the hands of the enemy, or shall be burned in any fire or shall be overpowered in battle." The last five words resonate personally with Ursula. She finds that this prayer works for her but she also wears her brown scapular.

Her passion for prayer, is equal to her passion for the fight and asked does she ever get scared, she simply responds "no, not at all." "It's hard to describe it. I love what I do. I have a real passion. You just have to fulfil your dreams, but I love it. You don't think about it. It's your desire and love for it that drives you," Ursula says.

Her family is extremely supportive of her, but she admits that at the start they weren't so sure. "They're really supportive," she says, "they are only realising the sacrifice involved. It's brilliant to have their support, to know they're behind me, it makes all the difference." She also has a young son, Shane, who is over the moon and so proud of his mother's achievements. "He was crying when I won the world champion title. He does be telling all his friends and teachers," she says. A few years ago, Shane was in a terrible accident.

Whilst Ursula was doing her blue-belt grading, he was knocked down by a passing car whilst crossing the road. His leg was badly broken and Ursula had to take time off to care for him. "It could have been a lot worse, so thank God," she confides. Luckily, Shane's had a great recovery and he's back to normal supporting his mum.

Ursula, not content with just being a World Champion Kickboxer, hopes to set up a prayer meeting in her local area.

She has been involved with groups like *Youth 2000* and *Pure in Heart* in the past, but she would love to be with like-minded people who share her love for the faith.



Ursula's prayer of choice is the Novena to St Joseph

IT IS CERTAIN: THE CHILDREN ARE NOT LYING.

*Bishop Pavao Zanic, Mostar-Duvno
Medjugorje, July 25, 1981*



Will bishop's Medjugorje statement prove to be prophetic?

● According to the Italian columnist Andrea Tornielli in a recent article for Vatican Insider, the International Commission studying the Medjugorje phenomenon these past four years has found no evidence of any hoax, scam or any deception.

We still await official confirmation from the Holy See on this but Tornielli is not a journalist to jeopardise his professional reputation and very close relationship with the Vatican with any wild claim in an attempt to get a flying start ahead of anyone reporting on the outcome of the Commission's enquiry.

Should we be surprised that no deception has been discovered, that no proof of fraud against the six visionaries has resulted from the investigation? Not according to the prophetic words of the late bishop of the Mostar-Duvno diocese, Pavao Žanic, who proclaimed from the altar of St James church just a month after the apparitions began in June 1981: "IT IS CERTAIN: THE CHILDREN ARE NOT LYING."

So after 32 years of claims and counter claims against Medjugorje we arrive full circle to the prophetic words uttered by the local ordinary: "It is certain: the children are not lying."

To keep this prophetic utterance in context, this is the related passage from the sermon given by bishop Pavao Žanic at Medjugorje on the feast of St James, the patron saint of the parish, on July 25, 1981.

"I am deeply convinced that no child who says that they have seen Our Lady, has been talked into doing so. If we were speaking about one child only, one might say he could be stubborn and that not even the police could make the child renounce what he said. But six innocent, simple children in the space of half an hour, would, if they were pushed, admit all. None of the priests, I

guarantee, had any idea of putting the children up to something... I am also convinced that the children are not lying. The children are only speaking out what's in their hearts... It is certain: the children are not lying."

Now, it seems, the bishop's prophetic words may soon be confirmed as truth.

Tornielli wrote on January 19, 1994:

"Vatican Insider has learnt that the Commission has focused mainly on the first phase of apparitions. There is apparently no proof of any tricks, hoaxes or abuse of popular credulity."

This approach of focusing on the first phase of the apparitions makes sense, because if all that happened at the beginning were a lie, then everything that follows stems from the lie. But if there is no deception, if the children were not lying when the apparitions began, then the wisdom of Gamaliel can be applied:

"What I suggest, therefore, is that you leave these men alone and let them go. If this enterprise of theirs, this movement of theirs, is of human origin it will break up of its own accord; but if in fact comes from God you will not only be unable to destroy them, but you might find yourselves fighting against God. (Acts 5 : 38-39)

Bishop Žanic later changed his opinion about the Medjugorje phenomenon. His successor bishop Ratko Perić is also opposed to claims by the six Medjugorje visionaries of apparitions.

• *May God grant me to speak as he would wish and express thoughts worthy of his gifts, since he himself is the guide of Wisdom, since he directs the sages. We are indeed in his hand, we ourselves and our words, with all our understanding, too, and technical knowledge. Wisdom 7 : 15-16*

SENT BY GOD...

● Here's a helpful reading when understanding the messages Our Lady has given to the Medjugorje seers these past 32 years; messages which have never been deemed by the Church as a danger to the faith and morals of the people.

Jesus said: "My teaching does not come from myself: it comes from the one who sent me; and if anyone is prepared to do his will, he will know whether my teaching is from God or whether my doctrine is my own. When a man's doctrine is his own he is hoping to get honour for himself; but when he is working for the honour of the one who sent him, then he is sincere and by no means an impostor. John 7 : 16-18

Dear children, it is a grace that I am with you. That is why you should accept and live my messages for your own good. I love you and that is why I am with you, in order to teach you and to lead you to a new life of conversion and renunciation.

November 25, 1992

God sends me to help you and to guide you towards paradise, which is your goal. *September 25, 1994*

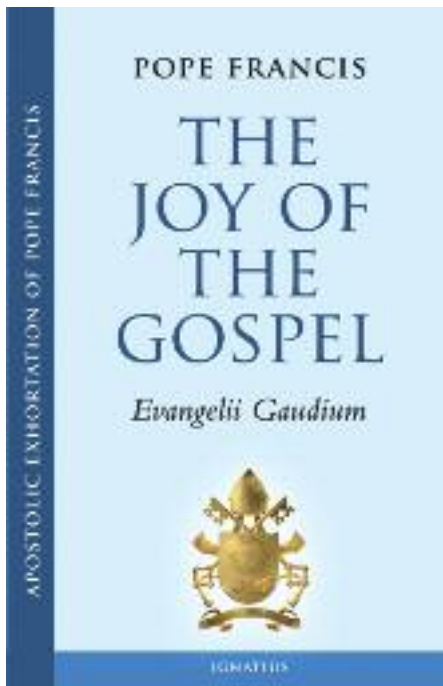
Dear children! I am with you and I rejoice today because the Most High has granted me to be with you and to teach you and to guide you on the path of perfection. *October 25, 1994*

God sends me to you out of love, that I may help you to comprehend that without him there is no future or joy and, above all, there is no eternal salvation. *April 25, 1997*

The great love of God sends me to lead you to salvation. *Sept 2, 2007*



"The great God of love sends me to lead you to salvation..."



Synthesis of the Apostolic Exhortation of Pope Francis

● “The joy of the Gospel fills the hearts and lives of all who encounter Jesus”; thus begins the Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, by which Pope Francis develops the theme of the proclamation of the Gospel in the contemporary world, drawn from, among other sources, the contribution of the work of the Synod held in the Vatican from 7 to 28 October 2012 on the theme “The new evangelization for the transmission of the faith”. The text, which the Holy Father assigned to a group of thirty-six faithful following the closing Mass of the Year of Faith last Sunday is the first official document of his pontificate, since the Encyclical *Lumen fidei* was written in collaboration with his predecessor, Benedict XVI. “I wish to encourage the Christian faithful to embark upon a new chapter of evangelization marked by this joy, while pointing out new paths for the Church’s journey in years to come”, he continues. It is a heartfelt appeal to all baptized persons to bring Christ’s love to others, “permanently in a state of mission”, conquering “the great danger in today’s world”, that of an individualist “desolation and anguish”.

New paths to conversion...

The Pope invites the reader to “recover the original freshness of the Gospel”, finding “new avenues” and “new paths of creativity”, without enclosing Jesus in our “dull categories”. There is a need for a “pastoral and missionary conversion, which cannot leave things as they presently are” and a “renewal” of ecclesiastical structures to

enable them to become “more mission-oriented”. The Pontiff also considers “a conversion of the papacy”, to help make this ministry “more faithful to the meaning which Jesus Christ wished to give it and to the present needs of evangelization”. The hope that the Episcopal Conferences might contribute to “the concrete realization of the collegial spirit”, he states, “has not been fully realized”. A “sound decentralization” is necessary. In this renewal, the Church should not be afraid to re-examine “certain customs not directly connected to the heart of the Gospel, even some of which have deep historical roots”.

Doors always open...

A sign of God’s openness is “that our church doors should always be open” so that those who seek God “will not find a closed door”; “nor should the doors of the sacraments be closed for simply any reason”. The Eucharist “is not a prize for the perfect but a powerful medicine and nourishment for the weak”. These convictions have pastoral consequences that we are called to consider with prudence and boldness”. He repeats that he prefers “a Church which is bruised, hurting and dirty because it has been out on the streets, rather than a Church ... concerned with being at the centre and then ends by being caught up in a web of obsessions and procedures. If something should rightly disturb us ... it is the fact that many of our brothers and sisters are living without ... the friendship of Jesus Christ”.

Temptations...

The Pope indicates the “temptations which affect pastoral workers”: “individualism, a crisis of identity and a cooling of fervour”. The greatest threat of all is “the grey pragmatism of the daily life of the Church, in which all appears to proceed normally, which in reality faith is wearing down”. He warns against “defeatism”, urging Christians to be signs of hope, bringing about a “revolution of tenderness”. It is necessary to seek refuge from the “spirituality of well-being ... detached from responsibility for our brothers and sisters” and to vanquish the “spiritual worldliness” that consists of “seeking not the Lord’s glory but human glory and well-being”. The Pope speaks of the many who “feel superior to others” because “they remain intransigently faithful to a particular Catholic style from the past” whereby “instead of evangelizing, one analyses and classifies others” and those who have “an ostentatious preoccupation for the liturgy, for doctrine and for the Church’s prestige, but without any concern that the Gospels have a real impact” on the needs of the people. This is “a tremendous corruption

disguised as a good ... God save us from a worldly Church with superficial spiritual and pastoral trappings!”.

Need for broader opportunities...

He appeals to ecclesial communities not to fall prey to envy and jealousy: “How many wars take place within the people of God and in our different communities!”. “Whom are we going to evangelize if this is the way we act?”. He highlights the need to promote the growth of the responsibility of the laity, often kept “away from decision-making” by “an excessive clericalism”. He adds that there is a need for “still broader opportunities for a more incisive female presence in the Church”, in particular “in the various settings where important decisions are made”. “Demands that the legitimate rights of women be respected ... cannot be lightly evaded”. The young should “exercise greater leadership”. With regard to the scarcity of vocations in many places, he emphasizes that “seminaries cannot accept candidates on the basis of any motivation whatsoever”.

Face of Church is varied...

With regard to the theme of inculturation, he remarks that “Christianity does not have simply one cultural expression” and that the face of the Church is “varied”. “We cannot demand that peoples of every continent, in expressing their Christian faith, imitate modes of expression which European nations developed at a particular moment of their history”. The Pope reiterates that “underlying popular piety ... is an active evangelizing power” and encourages the research of theologians, reminding them however that “the Church and theology exist to evangelize” and urging them not to be “content with a desk-bound theology”.

Homily should be brief...

He focuses “somewhat meticulously, on the homily”, since “many concerns have been expressed about this important ministry and we cannot simply ignore them”. The homily “should be brief and avoid taking on the semblance of a speech or a lecture”, should be a “heart-to-heart communication” and avoid “purely moralistic or doctrinaire” preaching. He highlights the importance of preparation: “a preacher who does not prepare is not ‘spiritual’; he is dishonest and irresponsible”. Preaching should always be positive in order always to “offer hope” and “does not leave us trapped in negativity”. The approach to the proclamation of the Gospel should have positive characteristics: “approachability, readiness for dialogue, patience, a warmth and welcome which is non-judgemental”.

“I encourage the Christian faithful to embark upon a new chapter of evangelisation...”

In relation to the challenges of the contemporary world, the Pope denounces the current economic system as “unjust at its root”. “Such an economy kills” because the law of “the survival of the fittest” prevails. The current culture of the “disposable” has created “something new”: “the excluded are not the ‘exploited’ but the outcast, the ‘leftovers’”. “A new tyranny is thus born, invisible and often virtual”, of an “autonomy of the market” in which “financial speculation” and “widespread corruption” and “self-serving tax-evasion reign”. He also denounces “attacks on religious freedom” and the “new persecutions directed against Christians. ... In many places the problem is more that of widespread indifference and relativism”. The family, the Pope continues, “is experiencing a profound cultural crisis”. Reiterating the indispensable contribution of marriage to society”, he underlines that “the individualism of our postmodern and globalized era favours a lifestyle which ... distorts family bonds”.

A poor Church for the poor...

He re-emphasizes “the profound connection between evangelization and human advancement” and the right of Pastors “to offer opinions on all that affects people’s lives”. “No one can demand that religion should be relegated to the inner sanctum of personal life, without a right to offer an opinion on events affecting society”. He quotes John Paul II, who said that the Church “cannot and must not remain on the sidelines in the fight for justice”. “For the Church, the option for the poor is primarily a theological category” rather than a sociological one. “This is why I want a Church that is poor and for the poor. They have much to teach us”. “As long as the problems of the poor are not radically resolved ... no solution will be found for this world’s problems”. “Politics, although often denigrated”, he affirms, “remains a lofty vocation and one of the highest forms of charity”. I beg the Lord to grant us more politicians who are genuinely disturbed by ... the lives of the poor!”. He adds an admonition: “Any Church community”, if it believes it can forget about the poor, runs the risk of “breaking down”.

Caring for the weakest...

The Pope urges care for the weakest members of society: “the homeless, the addicted, refugees, indigenous peoples, the elderly who are increasingly isolated and abandoned” and migrants, for whom the Pope exhorts “a generous openness”. He speaks about the victims of trafficking and new forms of slavery: “This infamous network of crime is now well established in

our cities, and many people have blood on their hands as a result of their comfortable and silent complicity”. “Doubly poor are those women who endure situations of exclusion, mistreatment and violence”. “Among the vulnerable for whom the Church wishes to care with particular love and concern are unborn children, the most defenceless and innocent among us. Nowadays efforts are made to deny them their human dignity”. “The Church cannot be expected to change her position on this question ... it is not ‘progressive’ to try to resolve problems by eliminating a human life”. The Pope makes an appeal for respect for all creation: we “are called to watch over and protect the fragile world in which we live”.

Four principles...

With regard to the theme of peace, the Pope affirms that “a prophetic voice must be raised” against attempts at false reconciliation to “silence or appease” the poor, while others “refuse to renounce their privileges”. For the construction of a society “in peace, justice and fraternity” he indicates four principles: “Time is greater than space” means working “slowly but surely, without being obsessed with immediate results”. “Unity prevails over conflict” means “a diversified and life-giving unity”. “Realities are more important than ideas means avoiding “reducing politics or faith to rhetoric”. “The whole is greater than the part” means bringing together “globalization and localization”.

Learning from one another...

“Evangelization also involves the path of dialogue”, the Pope continues, which opens the Church to collaboration with all political, social, religious and cultural spheres. Ecumenism is “an indispensable path to evangelization”. Mutual enrichment is important: “we can learn so much from one another!”, for example “in the dialogue with our Orthodox brothers and sisters, we Catholics have the opportunity to learn more about the meaning of Episcopal collegiality and their experience of synodality”; “dialogue and friendship with the children of Israel are part of the life of Jesus’ disciples”; “interreligious dialogue”, which must be conducted “clear and joyful in one’s own identity”, is “a necessary condition for peace in the world” and does not obscure evangelization; in our times, “our relationship with the followers of Islam has taken on great importance”: the Pope “humbly” entreats those countries of Islamic tradition to guarantee religious freedom to Christians, also “in light of the freedom which followers of Islam enjoy in Western

countries!”. “Faced with disconcerting episodes of violent fundamentalism” he urges us to “avoid hateful generalisations, for authentic Islam and the proper reading of the Koran are opposed to every form of violence”. And against the attempt to private religions in some contexts, he affirms that “the respect due to the agnostic or non-believing minority should not be arbitrarily imposed in a way that silences the convictions of the believing majority or ignores the wealth of religious traditions”. He then repeats the importance of dialogue and alliance between believers and non-believers.

Spirit-filled evangelizers...

The final chapter is dedicated to “spirit-filled evangelizers”, who are those who are “fearlessly open to the working of the Holy Spirit” and who have “the courage to proclaim the newness of the Gospel with boldness (parrhesía) in every time and place, even when it meets with opposition”. These are “evangelizers who pray and work”, in the knowledge that “mission is at once a passion for Jesus and a passion for his people”: “Jesus wants us to touch human misery, to touch the suffering flesh of others”. He explains, “In our dealings with the world, we are told to give reasons for our hope, but not as an enemy who critiques and condemns”. “Only the person who feels happiness in seeking the good of others, in desiring their happiness, can be a missionary”; “if I can help at least one person to have a better life, that already justifies the offering of my life”. The Pope urges us not to be discouraged before failure or scarce results, since “fruitfulness is often invisible, elusive and unquantifiable”; we must know “only that our commitment is necessary”. The Exhortation concludes with a prayer to Mary, “Mother of Evangelization”. “There is a Marian ‘style’ to the Church’s work of evangelization. Whenever we look to Mary, we come to believe once again in the revolutionary nature of love and tenderness”.

• *Vatican Information Service*
http://www.vatican.va/phome_en.htm



“There is a Marian ‘style’ to the Church’s work...”



Unfiltered Message from Medjugorje

● Those who benefit most from the unfiltered and non-stop access to the Pope's words are the "holy People of God" as Francis calls them. Not those who form part of that Church which Benedict XVI called self-centred, who waste their time with intra-ecclesial controversies. But the individual and myriads of a faithful and "hypo-faithful" who go to mass (not regularly necessarily), fill shrines and perform bodily and spiritual gestures of mercy without shouting about it. The *sensus fidei* of these faithful – however weak it may be – can immediately relate to Pope Francis' words and gestures.

• *Francis Unfiltered... Vatican Insider*, October 21, 2013

So now we can see why Our Lady at Medjugorje also prefers the "direct" approach to evangelising and calling her children to be at peace.

She chose six people to bring her messages to the world, six young children – now adults – who report it as it is, but a message too simple and direct for some minds and hearts to want to consider and even "waste time" with.

Not so the millions of people who have responded to the Medjugorje message these past 32 years. They recognise the Pope's voice, the words, because it is the same Spirit who speaks within Pope Francis who speaks within Mary; the Spirit that awakens hearts and fills them with fire.

I have come to bring fire to the earth and how I wish it were already kindled! Luke 12 : 49

It is reassuring to know that of the hundreds of messages given by Our Lady to the six Medjugorje visionaries there has never been a time the Church has decreed the Medjugorje message unsound or a danger to the faith and morals of the faithful.

So widely are the messages distributed and received around the world that if they did represent any danger the Church would be failing in its duty not to pronounce on the matter.

But the fruit of the unfiltered Medjugorje message is there for all to see. Millions returning to God, the Church and the Sacraments.

Communicating the message

● Last month, the Pope's first Message for *World Communications Day* was presented at a press conference in the Vatican by Mgr Claudio Maria Celli, President of the Pontifical Council for Social Communications. Mgr Celli described it as a "Franciscan" text and urged against a clichéd reading of Francis' messages.

Director of the Holy See's press office, Fr Federico Lombardi, agreed, highlighting the link between "communication style" and the general direction in which Pope Francis is steering his pontificate.

This is interesting, as the communication style and delivery of Our Lady's messages are seen by some people as bland, clichéd and repetitive, and not as a Mother steering or teaching her children.

In his message, Pope Francis speaks about connectivity leading to true encounter with our neighbours and that "Christian witness, thanks to the internet, can thereby reach the peripheries of human existence."

He also said: "The internet, in particular, offers immense possibilities for encounter and solidarity. This is something truly good, a gift from God."

Another gift from God that brings us to true encounter and solidarity is the presence of Our Lady in our lives. Her messages from Medjugorje these past 32 years have opened up a super-highway of communication for millions of people to encounter and share the love of God.

Where connections have broken or failed, it is Our Lady who reaches out with her messages, to reconnect – reconcile – the hearts of her children to the love of God and each other. Her frequent messages are like "heavenly emails" which, echoing the sentiment of Pope Francis, "can help us to feel closer to one another, creating a sense of the unity of the human family which can in turn inspire solidarity and serious efforts to ensure a more dignified life for all."

Pope Francis also said: "If we are genuinely attentive in listening to others, we will learn to look at the world with different eyes and come to appreciate the richness of human experience as manifested in different cultures and traditions."

The Holy Father is not alone in expressing and communicating this truth. Our Lady gave this message to the Medjugorje seer Mirjana on May 2, 2007.

Dear children! Today I come to you with a motherly desire for you to give me your hearts. My children, do this with complete trust and without fear. In your hearts, I will put my Son and his mercy. Then, my children, you will look at the world around you with different eyes. You will see your neighbour. You will feel his pain and suffering. You will not turn your head away from those who suffer, because my Son turns his head away from those who do so. Children, do not hesitate.

"The internet is something truly good, a gift from God..."

Where the Mother is, the children are safe... all of them!

Pope Francis, July 6, 2013



MEDJUGORJE PHENOMENON: NO EVIDENCE OF DECEPTION OR HOAX

Vatican Insider columnist Andrea Tornielli recently reported that the Medjugorje Commission has found no evidence of deception or hoax in its study of the Medjugorje phenomenon, and that partial approval is the likely outcome of the three-year study.



Full approval may only be considered when all the apparitions have ceased, and as three of the visionaries claim to have been promised annual apparitions for the rest of their lives, it is unlikely that the Church will return to examine the phenomenon in the foreseeable future.

Partial approval may come in the form of protecting and recognising the tree that has produced so much good fruit during the 32 years of apparitions, and removing any perceived restrictions on the faithful from making pilgrimage to Medjugorje.

From Vatican Insider's Andrea Tornielli...

● A verdict on the Medjugorje apparitions is not far off. The Medjugorje inquiry commission which was set up in March 2010 and is chaired by Cardinal Camillo Ruini has concluded its work. Fr. Federico Lombardi confirmed that the commission held its last meeting on Friday and the results of the inquiry will now be examined by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith headed by the Prefect Gerhard Müller.

All the material gathered, the interviews with the seers and many other witnesses, the stories told by the various people involved, expert reports and theological reflections on the messages, has been summarised in one final report and passed on to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith for a careful evaluation. The report will be studied alongside other documentation which the Congregation has gathered over the course of the years.

Vatican Insider has learnt that the Commission has focused mainly on the first phase of apparitions. There is apparently no proof of any tricks, hoaxes or abuse of popular credulity. However, it is proving difficult for the Church to form a definitive verdict on the supernatural nature of a

phenomenon that is ongoing.

Of the six seers who reported apparitions in June 1981, when they were still children or in their teens, three claim that they still see daily apparitions of the "Queen of Peace" at the same time every afternoon, wherever they happen to be at the time. These seers are: Vicka (who lives in Medjugorje), Marija (who lives in Monza) and Ivan (who lives in the US but returns to his homeland often). A fourth seer, Mirjana, sees an apparition on the second day of each month.

The large volume of messages going round poses a problem for the Commission. As does the forecasting of supernatural signs and secrets which the seers have refused to share, even with Church authorities.

Some of the Commission's members have highlighted the need for a change of pace in the provision of pastoral care to millions of faithful who come to Medjugorje from all over the world. The Commission and Cardinal Ruini himself thanks to visits by people close to him have noticed that people really are converting to the faith or returning to the sacraments – what the Church refers to as spiritual fruits – in a significant way.

"Full approval may only be considered when apparitions have ceased..."



GOD ALSO WEEPS LIKE A FATHER...

Domenico Agasso Jr, reporting for Vatican Insider on a recent homily preached by Pope Francis.

● The Lord weeps as well, like a father who loves his children and doesn't disown them even when they rebel. A father always waits for his children, Pope Francis said in a recent homily.

The Pope commented on "the day's reading (*Samuel 18 : 9-10, 14, 24-25, 30, 19 : 3*) which portrays the figure of two fathers, King David who mourns the death of his rebel son Absalom and Jairus, the head of the Synagogue, who implores Jesus to heal his daughter"

"David's army had won but he wasn't interested in the victory, he was waiting for his son. He was only interested in his son! David was a king, the head of a nation but he was also a father. And therefore, when he heard the news about the death of his son, he shuddered, and went to an upper room and wept," the Pope explained.

"As he walked away, he said: *'My son,*

Absalom. My son! My son, Absalom! If only I had died instead of you! Absalom, my son! My son!' This is the heart of a father, who never disowns his own son. *'He's a bandit, he's an enemy. But he is my son!'* and David does not disown his fatherhood: he weeps... David weeps twice for his children: On this occasion and another time when the son from his adultery was about to die. On that occasion too, he fasted and did penance in order to save the life of the son. He was a father!"

"Jairus is an important person but faced with the illness of his daughter, he is not ashamed to throw himself at Jesus' feet: *'My little daughter is dying, please come and lay your hands on her so she can be saved and live.'* He is not ashamed and doesn't care what the others may say, because he is a father," Francis said.

David and Jairus are two fathers: "For them, the most important thing is their son, their daughter! There is nothing else. This is the only important thing! This makes us think about the first thing that we say to God in the Creed: *'I believe in God the Father...'* This makes us think about the fatherhood of God. But God is like this. God is like this with us!"

"*'But, Father, God doesn't weep!'* But yes, he does! Remember Jesus how he wept when looking at Jerusalem. *'Jerusalem, Jerusalem! How many times have I wished to gather your children, like the hen who gathers her chicks under her wings?'* God weeps! Jesus has wept for us! And that weeping of Jesus is exactly that of a Father who weeps, who wants everybody with him."

Pope Francis stressed how in moments of difficulty, "Our Father responds. Jesus, in the Garden of Olives, said with that anguish in his heart: *'My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass me by!'* And the angels came to give him strength. That's how our Father is: He is a Father and a Father like this! A Father like the one who was waiting for the prodigal son who left with all his money, all his inheritance. But the father was waiting for him every day and he *'saw him from far away!'* This is our God!"

"Our 'fatherhood' – that of fathers of families as well as the spiritual fatherhood of bishops and priests – must be like this. The Father has, like, an anointing that comes from the son: he can't understand himself without his child! And for this reason he needs his child, he is waiting for him, he loves him, he looks for him, he forgives him, he wants him close to him, just as close as the hen who wants her chicks."



In light of God's word

In the light of God's word, I would like to ask you, dear families: Do you pray together from time to time as a family? Some of you do, I know. But so many people say to me: How can we? Prayer is something personal, and besides there is never a good time, a moment of peace... Yes, all that is true enough, but it is also a matter of humility, of realising that we need God, like the tax collector! And we need simplicity! Praying the Our Father together, around the table, is something all of you can do. And praying the Rosary together, as a family, is very beautiful and a source of great strength! And praying for one another!

Pope Francis, World Family Day, Sunday, October 27, 2013

Dear children! This is a time of grace for the family and, therefore, I call you to renew prayer. May Jesus be in the heart of your family. In prayer, learn to love everything that is holy. Imitate the lives of saints so that they may be an incentive and teachers on the way of holiness. May every family become a witness of love in this world without prayer and peace. Thank you for having responded to my call.

Medjugorje message, October 25, 2004

Dear children ! Also today, I call you to renew prayer in your families. By prayer and the reading of Sacred Scripture, may the Holy Spirit, who will renew you, enter into your families. In this way, you will become teachers of the faith in your family. By prayer and your love, the world will set out on a better way and love will begin to rule in the world. Thank you for having responded to my call.

Medjugorje message, April 25, 2005

MEDJUGORJE 25th JUBILEE YOUTH FESTIVAL starts a day earlier than previous years. July 31 to August 6, 2014. Book early for places!

"He's a bandit, he's an enemy... but he is my son!"



Conversion: growing in love for life



by Fr Slavko Barbaric OFM

To open oneself is an expression that Mary uses repeatedly in many of her messages over these years. What does this really mean?

In order to understand it, we should really think of a mother and her child.

When the mother tells the child something, then the child is hearing what the mother is saying. When the child also does what the mother is telling it, then we can say that the child is open to the mother. But we know how often the words of the mother, of the parents are heard but are not put into practice.

About all those who hear the words "pray, fast and convert, celebrate Mass with the heart, go to confession" and who then put these into practice in their lives, we can say that they are open to her words.

How often Mary invited us to conversion, no-one really knows. It is certain that her call to conversion is among the most important of her messages. The others are peace as the goal and conversion as the path to peace, and prayer, fasting and faith as the conditions toward the goal.

Conversion is the call to leave behind all that is bad, that we free ourselves from evil, that we acquire inner freedom from all that is evil, and then to become capable and free enough to accept everything that God is telling us through Mary.

The criterion for conversion in Mary's School is growing in love for life. So if we want to know if we are converting, we ought

to ask ourselves whether the love for those people, especially toward those around us, toward the suffering, toward the small ones and toward the poor is growing.

And so it is good when someone says, "I converted in Medjugorje.", but to be certain that we have experienced and are living a conversion, we should ask those around us whether they believe in our conversion. When those around us, when our families and when those with whom we work confirm this, then we can really say that we have satisfied the last criterion.

We may not merely stay with prayer and with fasting, but rather prayer and fasting must show itself clearly in small and specific ways. And gratitude also belongs here. Those who truly convert become increasingly grateful toward God and toward people every day.

The process of conversion keeps going throughout all of one's life because here it also concerns the positive growth of virtues. Therefore we should become aware that we may not become tired of the conversion process, but rather to begin each day with renewed courage.

The failures or the slow growth in us may not become hindrances for our starting anew, but rather the impulses to try again.

It is God's love and mercy that are the foundation and that give us the repeated chance for us to convert. If God did not love us, if he was not merciful toward us, then our conversion would be absolutely impossible. Therefore we must also be grateful for the many chances that we get to convert.



THE POPE SAYS...

Following God presupposes a continuous purification because we are sinners... we purify ourselves by prayer, penance, the sacrament of reconciliation and the Eucharist.

Pope Francis, November 22, 2013

OUR LADY SAYS...

You cannot say that you are converted, because your life must become a daily conversion.

February 25, 1993

Little children, I will watch your daily conversion with love.

March 25, 2005

Purify your hearts through fasting and prayer. January 2, 2006

Dear children! Today also I wish to call you to persistent prayer and penance. July 26, 1984

Through reconciliation, fasting and prayer, I will lead you.

January 2, 2013

Today I wish to call you all to confession, even if you have confessed a few days ago.

March 24, 1986

Pray, fast and confess regularly. If receiving my Son in the Eucharist is the centre of your life, then do not be afraid, you can do everything.

June 2, 2012

THE FIVE STONES OF MEDJUGORJE

1. Unceasing PRAYER
2. FASTING is also asked for.
3. Daily reading of HOLY SCRIPTURE.
4. CONFESSION, monthly at least.
5. Frequent celebration of the EUCHARIST, Sunday at least.

"The process of conversion keeps going throughout all one's life..."



When Mary warns against Satan

● Our Lady makes mention of Satan in 66 messages given to the visionary Marija, warning of his strength, his plans for disruption to peace, attacks against the Catholic Church and how he wishes to take control of hearts. She says that beside every oasis stands the desert where Satan lurks to tempt and seduce each one of us, and that through prayer we are able to overcome his every influence.

But is the seriousness of Our Lady's warnings always taken to heart? It seems not. Ten years after she first appeared at Medjugorje, and as a result of the breakup of former Yugoslavia, an international armed conflict started in Bosnia Herzegovina that lasted four years.

Looking back at Our Lady's messages since she first started transmitting weekly messages in 1984 through the visionary Marija Pavlovic, we can clearly see that there is a proliferation of warnings building up to the start of the Bosnian War in April 1992. There are 44 messages in that period that warn against Satan, and a further 11 messages during the period of war from April 1992 to December 1995.

Since then, over a span of 18 years, only nine messages mention Satan by name. In hindsight it seems so clear that Our Lady's warnings at the time were not heeded as she would have wanted.

At Fatima, Our Lady gave the world a specific warning that if people did not cease offending God, a worse war (than WWI) would break out during the pontificate of Pope Pius XI. World War II began in 1939 and lasted for six years until 1945. It is estimated that some 75 million people died in the conflict.

At Medjugorje, Our Lady gave no such direct reference to a region or date, only persistent warnings of Satan's strength which could be overcome through prayer and fasting.

And to remind us all of the constant danger of war, she gave two messages at the start of the new millennium, in 2001 and 2003, which said: **"I repeat to you: only through prayer and fasting can wars be stopped."**

She also gave this same message in April 1992, the month war broke out in Bosnia Herzegovina.

Our Lady says that Medjugorje is a sign to all and a call to pray and live the days of grace that God is giving us, and that we should accept this call to prayer with seriousness.

The messages of Medjugorje have also given a sign to the world that when we do not heed the call to peace through prayer, then Satan will achieve his desire to create war in hearts with often disastrous consequences.

Dear children! Today like never I call you to pray for peace, for peace in your hearts, peace in your families and peace in the whole world, because Satan wants war, wants lack of peace, wants to destroy all which is good. Therefore, dear children, pray, pray, pray. Thank you for having responded to my call.

March 25, 1993

Charted below are the months when Our Lady has specifically mentioned Satan in her messages (in red). The frequency of these messages in the build-up to the period of war (grey) are like no other period during all the years Our Lady has been giving messages through the visionary Marija. In hindsight, all becomes clear.

From this we can also get a better understanding of the seriousness of the rest of her messages and, perhaps, a greater appreciation of just why Our Lady has chosen to remain with us so long. One of the visionaries, Mirjana, has said that Our Lady will not appear on earth in this way again, and by that she understands to appear to so many visionaries over such a long period of time.

So this period of grace which Our Lady often refers to in her messages is surely of great importance to the world. She is not with us for this long because of her own health or because she is on vacation. She is with us in this way to urge and encourage us to respond to her call of great importance – a call to salvation.

Never at any time in history has Our Lady appeared for so long a time in apparition and giving so many messages. Like her constant warnings about Satan prior to the Bosnian War, she has her reasons. She has sight of God's complete plan and is fully aware of the power of Satan in people's lives.

Dear children! God gives me this time as a gift to you, so that I may instruct and lead you on the path of salvation. Dear children, now you do not comprehend this grace, but soon a time will come when you will lament for these messages. That is why, little children, live all of the words which I have given you through this time of grace and renew prayer, until prayer becomes a joy for you. Especially, I call all those who have consecrated themselves to my Immaculate Heart to become an example to others. I call all priests and religious brothers and sisters to pray the rosary and to teach others to pray. The rosary, little children, is especially dear to me. Through the rosary open your heart to me and I am able to help you. Thank you for having responded to my call. August 25, 1997

WHEN MARY WARNS AGAINST SATAN

	Message mention of Satan			Weekly messages			Bosnian War – April 92 to December 95					
2014												
2013										1		
2012										1		
2011							1					
2010				1								
2009												
2008												
2007												
2006							1					
2005												
2004												
2003												
2002												
2001									1			
2000							1					
1999	1											
1998												
1997			1									
1996			1		1							
1995	1	1						1				
1994			1			1	1					
1993		1	1	1				1	1			
1992	1							1	1			
1991	1	1	1						1	1	1	
1990												
1989												
1988		1			1		1		1	1		
1987					1		1	1	1	1		
1986	2						1	1	3	1		
1985	3	1			1	1	1	3	1			
1984							3	1			1	
	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC

"Only through prayer and fasting can wars be stopped..."



What's the plan for today?

● Do you sometimes get questioned about Medjugorje, on the lines of: "Why has Our Lady been appearing for so long? Why does she give so many messages? Why are the messages repetitive? Why does she have secrets? Why hasn't the Church officially approved Medjugorje?"

There is really a simple answer to all these and the many other questions we get asked about Medjugorje from time to time – and found in one of Our Lady's messages.

She says: **Dear children, I want you to comprehend that God has chosen each one of you, in order to use you in his great plan for the salvation of mankind.**

January 25, 1987

That, in a nutshell, is the answer to any question about Medjugorje. We are being called to be part of God's saving plan.

But like all plans, even God's plan can get waylaid at times. Something or someone gets in the way of fulfilment. Our Blessed Mother points the finger at satan, saying he also has a plan, a plan to disrupt God's plan of salvation. satan produces a counter plan, even a plan that sometimes may resemble the plan that God has, an imitation, a copy with all the lights and trimmings to attract us to want to be part of this plan.

In her messages from Medjugorje Our Lady warns her children about satan's plan of disruption and asks us to pray that his plan will not be realised.

God shares his plan with the Blessed Mother and each of us, but never with Satan. His plan is not designed for satan's glory, only for the glory of God and for us to share in that glory. But satan seeks glory as well and because he is a thief he sets out to steal God's plan for himself. That's why satan's work can end up for the glory of God anyway. It wasn't his plan in the first place.

He just hijacked it. We are the fabric of God's plan. We belong to God's plan and not satan's. God created us as part of his plan. satan didn't. satan may be powerful but he cannot "create" anything, only destroy. He is not the Creator.

Our Lady says that we are all important in God's great plan which he leads through Medjugorje. He desires to convert the entire world and to call it to salvation and to the way towards himself, the beginning and end of every being. *June 25, 2007*

How can we thwart satan in his plan to draw people away from God? The Blessed Mother says that this is achieved through prayer. She asks that we arm ourselves with prayer and fasting in this daily battle. This is the way she wants us to respond to her call.

And in God's great plan he also has an individual plan for each of us. We all have a role. Sometimes we ask: What is it you want of me, Lord? What is your plan for me? The plan unfurls with prayer. It is not possible to fulfil a role in God's plan without prayer.

So the plan for today and every other day, among all the dozens of calls life and the world make on us daily, has to be to allocate a time and a place for prayer.

Our Lady makes it very clear how important it is for God's plan to be realised through prayer.

Dear children! Today again I am calling you to pray. You, dear children, are not able to understand how great the value of prayer is as long as you yourselves do not say: 'now is the time for prayer, now nothing else is important to me, now not one person is important to me but God.' Dear children, consecrate yourselves to prayer with a special love so that God will be able to render graces back to you.

Thank you for having responded to my call. *October 2, 1986*

As to how and where to pray, we can take our lead from Jesus... **One of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us how to pray." Jesus responded: "When you pray, go into your private room and, when you shut your door, pray to your Father who in that secret place, and your Father who sees all that is done in secret will reward you."** *Matthew 6 : 6*

Our Lady also teaches that all answers can be found in prayer. Nothing is hidden in heaven; everything is brought to light. That's the plan.

My Son has a special plan for this parish. *April 12, 1984*

These days satan wants to frustrate my plans. Pray that his plan not be realised. *July 12, 1984*

The cross was also in God's plan when you built it. These days, especially, go on the mountain and pray before the cross. I need your prayers. *August 30, 1984*

Especially live the fast, because by fasting you will achieve and cause me the joy of the whole plan, which God is planning here in Medjugorje, being fulfilled. *September 26, 1985*

Dear children, I want you to comprehend that God has chosen each one of you, in order to use you in his great plan for the salvation of mankind. You are not able to comprehend how great your role is in God's design. Therefore, dear children, pray so that in prayer you may be able to comprehend what God's plan is in your regard. *January 25, 1987*

May your heart be prepared to listen to, and live, everything which the Holy Spirit has in his plan for each of you. Allow the Holy Spirit to lead you on the way of truth and salvation towards eternal life. *May 25, 1998*

Pray, and in prayer you are open to God's will; in this way, in everything you do, you realise God's plan in you and through you. *March 25, 2003*

Convert little children, open yourselves to God and to his plan for each of you. *February 25, 2009*

According to God's plan I am with you to help you to have my Son, his Cross and Resurrection, triumph in your hearts. *June 2, 2011*

"Open yourselves to God and to his plan for each of you..."

A GREAT SIGN
APPEARED
IN HEAVEN:
A WOMAN,
ADORNED WITH
THE SUN.

Revelation 12:1



ALMIGHTY APPROVED!

● Not in any of her message these past 32 years has Our Lady ever said she needs or desires the Catholic Church to 'endorse' her apparitions at Medjugorje. She has never asked for the Church to 'approve' her visitations to the six Medjugorje seers, but she has expressed some of her needs and desires in many of her messages. Her greatest desire and need is for us, her children, to be united with her Son Jesus.

She has no need or desire to be "approved" in any official sense of the word. She knows that the Almighty has done great things for her – and continues to do so. She knows that all generations call her 'blessed' in this way. But her heart's desire, her need, is for all her children to be one in heart with her own Immaculate Heart and the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Our Lady knows that our need, our desire, to love and be loved can only be fulfilled through the peace her Son offers to the world.

The Blessed Mother sought no approval from the Catholic Church to make her first appearance at Medjugorje on June 24, 1981, or at any place approved or not approved by the Church, before or since. Does the Mother of the Church require approval in any sense of the word? The kind of approval Our Lady seeks from any of us is simply 'yes'; the same consent of her own will she gave to the Angel Gabriel when chosen to bear the Son of God.

A call, a visitation, seeks a response... a prayer seeks an answer. The mother of Jesus called on her Son at Cana. Jesus responded when the servants responded to his call. And so also does the Blessed Mother when she calls us to action in

her messages. She always says "Thank you", a sure sign that her children are responding to her call, her needs, her desires.

Here are some of the needs and desires expressed by Our Lady in her Medjugorje messages

I need your prayers.... I need you! I am calling you! I need your help... I am calling you because I need you... I need hearts ready for immeasurable love... I need you; I cannot do without you my children... I need humble apostles...

Our Lady also expresses her desires more so than her needs. Her desires are expressed as both a mother and a teacher to her children.

I am your Mother and I desire to help you... I desire to teach you and help you to walk the way of holiness. ... I am your Mother and I desire to reveal to you the God of love and the God of peace...

I desire to take you into my heart and protect you... I desire to tell you that I love you... I desire to help you so that each one of you might be under my motherly mantle... I desire to lead you more and more in prayer... I desire that you cooperate with me in everything, even in the smallest things... I desire that your cross also would be a joy for you... I desire sacrifices from you so I can help you and drive Satan away from you... I desire to lead you on the way of holiness... what I desire of each individual is to become holy... I desire that through you the whole world may get to know the God of joy... I desire to bring you closer to God... I desire to bring you all to Heaven unto God... I desire that you love all men with my love... I desire that through each one of you God's plan may be fulfilled...

TO WHOM DOES THE SUN BELONG?

● A Slovak writer wrote a novel – *To Whom Belongs the Sun?* – which tells the story of a boy from a very poor family.

However, he did not know that they were poor, because they lived happily. He discovered his poverty at school, when the others started to call him poor.

So the boy asked his mother: "Why do people say that we are poor?"

He received this explanation: "Because this house does not belong to us, because these things here and these things there are not ours..."

The boy remained stunned. He did not know it.

He asked another, but decisive question: "And the sun, to whom does it belong?"

His mother's answer delighted him deeply: "The sun belongs to the good God."

This was the revelation of the fatherhood of God which, thereafter, carried him during his whole life.

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