

THE MEDJUGORJE MESSAGE



Message of Our Lady given to Marija, June 25, 2013

Dear children, With joy in the heart I love you all and call you to draw closer to my Immaculate Heart so I can draw you still closer to my Son Jesus, and that he can give you his peace and love, which are nourishment for each one of you. Open yourselves, little children, to prayer – open yourselves to my love. I am your mother and cannot leave you alone in wandering and sin. You are called, little children, to be my children, my beloved children, so I can present you all to my Son. Thank you for having responded to my call.

July 2 message, to Mirjana

Dear children, with a motherly love I am imploring you to give me the gift of your hearts, so I can present them to my Son and free you – free you from all the evil enslaving and distancing you all the more from the only Good – my Son – from everything which is leading you on the wrong way and is taking peace away from you.

I desire to lead you to the freedom of the promise of my Son, because I desire for God's will to be fulfilled completely here; and that through reconciliation with the Heavenly Father, through fasting and prayer, apostles of God's love may be born – apostles who will freely, and with love, spread the love of God to all my children – apostles who will spread the love of the trust in the Heavenly Father and who will keep opening the gates of Heaven.

Dear children, extend the joy of love and support to your shepherds, just as my Son has asked them to extend it to you.

Thank you.

Newsletter delay

● Apologies for the delay in sending out this latest issue of the newsletter. I held back until I could gauge the number of copies needed to print after requesting readers to confirm if they wished to continue receiving the publication. Only 30% of names on the mailing list renewed their interest. Because of this I shall only publish the newsletter every two to three months instead of the monthly schedule I tried to keep to in past years.



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

PEACE TO THIS HOUSE!

● It is interesting to read in Our Lady's latest message to Mirjana her reference to "apostles who will spread the love of God..."

Our peace is God's love... and a week earlier, in her message to Marija on June 25, Our Lady reminds us to draw closer to Jesus so that he is able to give his peace and love...

In this way both messages alluded to the following Sunday Gospel (*Luke 10 :1-2, 17-20*), when Jesus appoints seventy-two and sends them out in pairs with the message of peace. An apostle is one who is sent forth, who will spread the message...

Jesus says to the seventy-two, "Whatever house you go into, let your first words be 'Peace to this house!' And if a man of peace lives there, your peace will go and rest on him; if not, it will come back to you."

Our Lady is the Queen of Apostles. She has been sent by God and brings a message of peace. She carries this peace in her Immaculate Heart. This peace is Jesus. If we are people of peace – desiring peace – then the peace of Jesus will rest on us. And we shall become apostles – messengers of God's peace.

CALLED TO HOLINESS...

CALLED TO BE APOSTLES...

An extract from Pope John Paul II's encyclical, *Redemptoris Missio* 1990

● The call to mission derives, of its nature, from the call to holiness. A missionary is really such only if he commits himself to the way of holiness: "Holiness must be called a fundamental presupposition and an



irreplaceable condition for everyone in fulfilling the mission of salvation in the Church..."

Today, as never before, the Church has the opportunity of bringing the Gospel, by witness and word, to all people and nations. I see the dawning of a new missionary age, which will become a radiant day bearing an abundant harvest, if all Christians, and missionaries and young churches in particular, respond with generosity and holiness to the calls and challenges of our time.

Like the apostles after Christ's Ascension, the Church must gather in the Upper Room "together with Mary, the Mother of Jesus" (Acts 1:14), in order to pray for the Spirit and to gain strength and courage to carry out the missionary mandate. We too, like the apostles, need to be transformed and guided by the Spirit.

On the eve of the third millennium the whole Church is invited to live more intensely the mystery of Christ by gratefully cooperating in the work of salvation. The Church does this together with Mary and following the example of Mary, the Church's Mother and model: Mary is the model of that maternal love which should inspire all who cooperate in the Church's apostolic

mission for the rebirth of humanity. Therefore, "strengthened by the presence of Christ, the Church journeys through time toward the consummation of the ages and goes to meet the Lord who comes. But on this journey... she proceeds along the path already trodden by the Virgin Mary."

To "Mary's mediation, wholly oriented toward Christ and tending to the revelation of his salvific power," I entrust the Church and, in particular, those who commit themselves to carrying out the missionary mandate in today's world. As Christ sent forth his apostles in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, so too, renewing that same mandate, I extend to all of you my apostolic blessing, in the name of the same Most Holy Trinity. Amen.

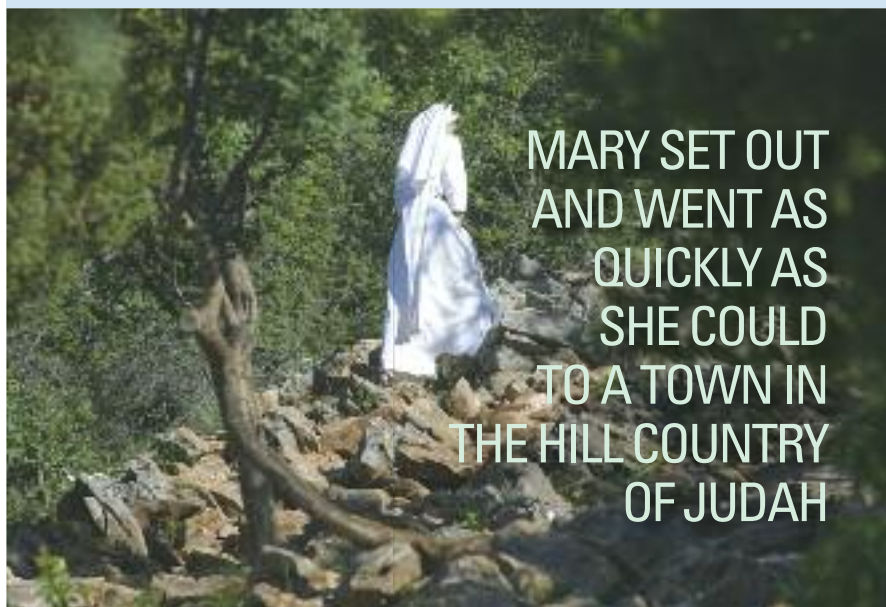


Why should I be honoured with a visit from the Mother of my Lord? *Luke 1 : 43*

I am with you because God, in his mercy, sends me. *November 2, 2009*

We need to pray to Our Lady, so that bringing Jesus gives us the grace of joy, the joy of freedom. That it gives us the grace to praise, to praise with a prayer of gratuitous praise, because He is worthy of praise, always. Pray to Our Lady and say to her what the Church says: Veni, Precelsa Domina, Maria, tu nos visita, Lady – thou who art so great, visit us and give us joy.

• Pope Francis, Feast of The Visitation



MARY SET OUT
AND WENT AS
QUICKLY AS
SHE COULD
TO A TOWN IN
THE HILL COUNTRY
OF JUDAH

"Lady, you are so great... visit us and give us joy..."



SEEING THE SEERS

by Martha Shepherd

● We were taken to talks with two of the visionaries, Ivan and Vicka. When we arrived, the yard and street in front of Vicka's house were jammed with about two hundred Italians.

About three hundred English-speakers were gathered nearby. When their hour was up, the Italians filed out to the right as we filed in from the left.

Then when our hour was up, and we filed out, about three hundred Germans filed in. And so it goes for the visionaries, day in and day out.

The visionaries gave me a new meaning to the phrase, "being eaten alive by people."

At one point, Marija actually went to Our Lady and said they couldn't take it any more. The pressure of the pilgrims was too much. Mary did not chastise her for complaining. Instead she gave her a vision of the face of the suffering Christ.

Before my encounter with the visionaries, if I'd heard that story, I might have groaned and felt that Mary was putting a guilt trip on Marija. (After all, Marija is not Jesus. And neither am I.)

But after meeting them, I understood with my heart, for the visionaries did something similar with me. Seeing them reassured me somehow that when I feel, as I do on occasion, that people are "eating me alive," it doesn't mean that something is wrong. It is not chaos breaking in. It is the normal Christian life.

Jesus died on the cross. Nothing was wrong. His doing so was the way to life.

I hadn't really wanted to meet the visionaries. I hadn't liked the movie-star fuss made about them. But when I did, I was very glad.

I was so struck by both of them. They had seen what I had not seen, heard what I had not heard, touched what I had not touched. They were just human beings in front of me, and they had encountered the kingdom of heaven.

I found that meeting someone who spoke daily with the Mother of God in front of a cement bungalow brought the world of God much nearer, made salvation a human reality somehow.

And it occurred to me that what they are is what every Christian is called to be: just a witness. An ordinary person who has nonetheless been in contact with that which is not ordinary, someone who has heard what the non-Christian has not heard, seen what the non-believer has not seen, and who is therefore able to give hope, encourage faith, deepen confidence.

When our guide was telling us about the visionaries, she said in an offhand way, "Of course, they all have their own personalities. You can touch Vicka, take pictures; she doesn't mind. Ivan is more quiet. Marija is more strict. She says, "No pictures."

Seeing them fleshed out in this way was significant for me.

When we were with Vicka, she never stopped smiling, her eyes moving intimately from face to face. Afterwards I heard several people say, "Did you see her smile at me?" She can love a crowd and give each one in it hope and joy.

Ivan, on the other hand, hardly looked up the whole time he spoke with the crowd. As he said in answer to a question, he's been seeing Our Lady daily for ten years, and after all that time, he's much more comfortable with her than he is with us.

Yet he has a kind of authority. Years ago,

the Blessed Mother put him in charge of the prayer group she wanted started. And though I could see he was shy, I could feel that he would have no trouble being a leader.

Or rather, he would do it, trouble or not, just as he continues to talk with pilgrims despite the fact that he does not like being with crowds. Temperament and personality are not like sin.

Somehow I guess I always thought that someone able to fast as they do, pray as they do, someone touched as they all have been by God, would lose such personality traits as shyness or strictness.

This touched on my "only one right way" mentality in regard to personality and holiness. Through my encounter with the visionaries, I learned to my great relief, that I was wrong. I really do not have to grow another personality to become holy — though I may have to do things which are hard on mine.

Our Lady asked a great deal of the visionaries, but she has never asked them to become like each other, to have a standard way of greeting pilgrims, or a uniform set of manners.

Many people ask why Our Lady is so hard on the visionaries. For instance, she often invites them to meet her on one of the hills late at night in the cold, rain, and wind. Why? Why not just come to them in their warm bedrooms? She can. Sometimes she does.



Before I encountered them, I might have thought along those lines. But now I'd say: if Mary asks them to make their way up a hillside which is slippery when wet to meet her in the wind and rain on the hilltop at 11pm, it's probably because there's something she wants to give them

which she cannot give them anywhere else or at any other time.

I have learned something about the conditions of receptivity, about learning with the heart. We have to do what we're told, go where we're called, because receiving grace is not a matter of words and intellect. It is a matter of our being in a certain state to accept, to hear, to understand, to receive the gift offered and needed.

Besides, when I met these visionaries and the reality of their meeting Our Lady deepened in me, I understood something: You just don't ask. If Our Lady says, "I'll meet you in the sewer," I'll be there. You don't care. You go wherever, simply because she'll be there.

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"I really do not have to grow another personality to become holy..."

NEWNESS, HARMONY, MISSION

Feast of Pentecost homily of Pope Francis

If we let ourselves be guided by the Spirit, richness, variety and diverseness never become a source of conflict...

● This is the official English language translation of Pope Francis' homily at Mass for the Feast of Pentecost with New Movements.

Dear Brothers and Sisters, today we contemplate and re-live in the liturgy the outpouring of the Holy Spirit sent by the risen Christ upon his Church; an event of grace which filled the Upper Room in Jerusalem and then spread throughout the world.

But what happened on that day, so distant from us and yet so close as to touch the very depths of our hearts? Luke gives us the answer in the passage of the Acts of the Apostles which we have heard (2 : 1-11). The evangelist brings us back to Jerusalem, to the Upper Room where the apostles were gathered.

The first element which draws our attention is the sound which suddenly came from heaven "like the rush of a violent wind", and filled the house; then the "tongues as of fire" which divided and came to rest on each of the apostles. Sound and tongues of fire: these are clear, concrete signs which touch the apostles not only from without but also within; deep in their minds and hearts. As a result, "all of them were filled with the Holy Spirit", who unleashed his irresistible power with amazing consequences: they all "began to speak in different languages, as the Spirit gave them ability".

A completely unexpected scene opens up before our eyes: a great crowd gathers, astonished because each one heard the apostles speaking in his own language. They all experience something new, something which had never happened before: "We hear them, each of us, speaking our own language". And what is it that they are speaking about? "God's deeds of power".

In the light of this passage from Acts, I would like to reflect on three words linked to the working of the Holy Spirit: newness, harmony and mission.



NEWNESS...

1. Newness always makes us a bit fearful, because we feel more secure if we have everything under control, if we are the ones who build, programme and plan our lives in accordance with our own ideas, our own comfort, our own preferences. This is also the case when it comes to God. Often we follow him, we accept him, but only up to a certain point. It is hard to abandon ourselves to him with complete trust, allowing the Holy Spirit to be the soul and guide of our lives in our every decision. We fear that God may force us to strike out on new paths and leave behind our all too narrow, closed and selfish horizons in order to become open to his own. Yet throughout the history of salvation, whenever God reveals himself, he brings newness and change, and demands our complete trust: Noah, mocked by all, builds an ark and is saved; Abram leaves his land with only a promise in hand; Moses stands up to the might of Pharaoh and leads his people to freedom; the apostles, huddled fearfully in the Upper Room, go forth with courage to proclaim the Gospel. This is not a question of novelty for novelty's sake, the search for something new to relieve our boredom, as is so often the case in our own day. The newness which God brings into our life is something that actually brings fulfilment, that gives true joy, true serenity, because God loves us and desires only our good. Let us ask ourselves: Are we open to "God's surprises"?

Or are we closed and fearful before the newness of the Holy Spirit? Do we have the courage to strike out along the new paths which God's newness sets before us, or do we resist, barricaded in transient structures which have lost their capacity for openness to what is new?

HARMONY...

2. A second thought: the Holy Spirit would appear to create disorder in the Church, since he brings the diversity of charisms and gifts; yet all this, by his working, is a great source of wealth, for the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of unity, which does not mean uniformity, but which leads everything back to harmony. In the Church, it is the Holy Spirit who creates harmony. One of Fathers of the Church has an expression which I love: the Holy Spirit himself is harmony – "*Ipse harmonia est*". Only the Spirit can awaken diversity, plurality and multiplicity, while at the same time building unity. Here too, when we are the ones who try to create diversity and close ourselves up in what makes us different and other, we bring division. When we are the ones who want to build unity in accordance with our human plans, we end up creating uniformity, standardization. But if instead we let ourselves be guided by the Spirit, richness, variety and diversity never become a source of conflict, because he impels us to experience variety within the communion of the Church. Journeying together in the Church, under the

"Newness always makes us a bit fearful..."

guidance of her pastors who possess a special charism and ministry, is a sign of the working of the Holy Spirit. Having a sense of the Church is something fundamental for every Christian, every community and every movement. It is the Church which brings Christ to me, and me to Christ; parallel journeys are dangerous! When we venture beyond (proagon) the Church's teaching and community, and do not remain in them, we are not one with the God of Jesus Christ (cf. 2 Jn 9). So let us ask ourselves: Am I open to the harmony of the Holy Spirit, overcoming every form of exclusivity? Do I let myself be guided by him, living in the Church and with the Church?

MISSION...

3. A final point. The older theologians used to say that the soul is a kind of sailboat, the Holy Spirit is the wind which fills its sails and drives it forward, and the gusts of wind are the gifts of the Spirit. Lacking his impulse and his grace, we do not go forward. The Holy Spirit draws us into the mystery of the living God and saves us from the threat of a Church which is gnostic and self-referential, closed in on herself; he impels us to open the doors and go forth to proclaim and bear witness to the good news of the Gospel, to communicate the joy of faith, the encounter with Christ. The Holy Spirit is the soul of mission. The events that took place in Jerusalem almost two thousand years ago are not something far removed from us; they are events which affect us and become a lived experience in each of us. The Pentecost of the Upper Room in Jerusalem is the beginning, a beginning which endures. The Holy Spirit is the supreme gift of the risen Christ to his apostles, yet he wants that gift to reach everyone. As we heard in the Gospel, Jesus says: "I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate to remain with you forever" (Jn 14 : 16). It is the Paraclete Spirit, the "Comforter", who grants us the courage to take to the streets of the world, bringing the Gospel! The Holy Spirit makes us look to the horizon and drive us to the very outskirts of existence in order to proclaim life in Jesus Christ. Let us ask ourselves: do we tend to stay closed in on ourselves, on our group, or do we let the Holy Spirit open us to mission?

Today's liturgy is a great prayer which the Church, in union with Jesus, raises up to the Father, asking him to renew the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. May each of us, and every group and movement, in the harmony of the Church, cry out to the Father and implore this gift. Today too, as at her origins, the Church, in union with Mary, cries out: "*Veni, Sancte Spiritus!* Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful, and kindle in them the fire of your love!" Amen.

SAINTLY SON...

● The news that Pope John Paul II is to be declared a saint by the Church will not come as any surprise for the Medjugorje visionary Ivan Dragicovic.

All the Medjugorje visionaries were blessed with the opportunity to meet with Pope John Paul II while he was alive – except Ivan.

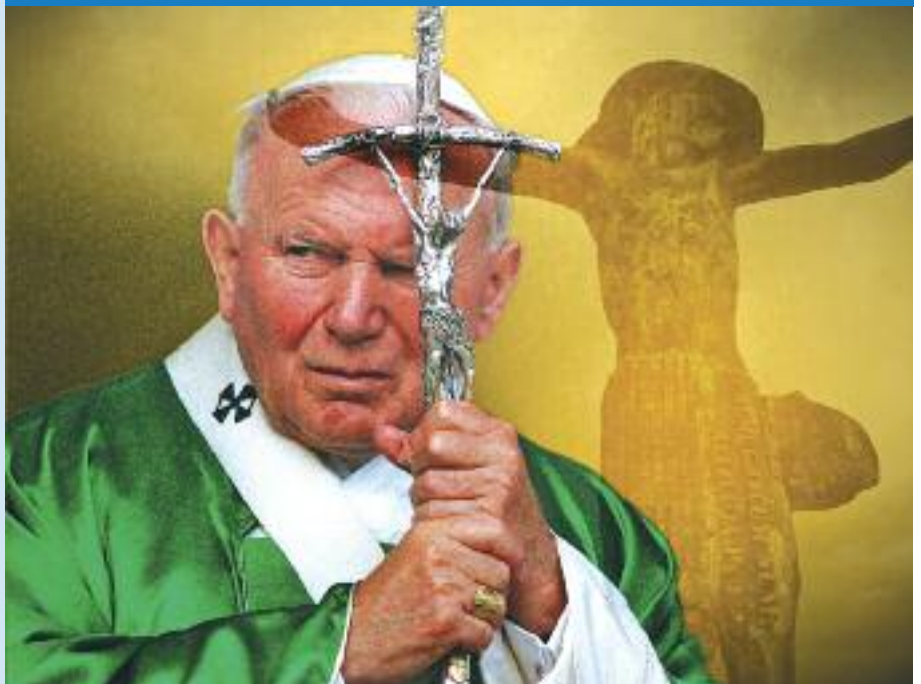
In a talk he gave on April 2, the day Pope John Paul II died, Ivan expressed his disappointment at not having met the pope before his death.

Following the talk, Our Lady came to Ivan in an apparition, as is her daily custom, and alongside her appeared John Paul II, smiling, looking young, and

very happy. After turning to John Paul at her right side, who was dressed in white and wearing a gold cape, she smiled and then said to Ivan: "This is my son; he is with me."

There are many accounts of John Paul II's personal belief and support for Medjugorje. Perhaps he still has a role to fulfil in any final declaration the Church may make in the future on the Medjugorje phenomenon.

The Risen Saviour was always strongly proclaimed by the Polish pontiff. It is more that conceivable it will be the Risen Christ who becomes the significant and recognisable sign of approval for the Medjugorje phenomenon.



THE RISEN ONE...

● Those who believe, see; they see with a light that illumines their entire journey, for it comes from the risen Christ, the morning star which never sets [...]

Sow in our faith the joy of the Risen One.

*Pope Francis,
Encyclical Letter, Lumen Fidei, June 2013*

Dear children! I am looking at you and in your hearts I do not see joy. **Today I desire to give you the joy of the Risen One, that he may lead you and embrace you with his love and tenderness.** I love you and I am praying for your conversion without ceasing before my Son Jesus. **Thank you for responding to my call.**

Medjugorje message, October 25, 2011



"Sow in our faith the joy of the Risen One."

RECENT MESSAGES

MAY 25, to Marija

Dear children! Today I call you to be strong and resolute in faith and prayer, until your prayers are so strong so as to open the Heart of my beloved Son Jesus.

Pray little children, pray without ceasing until your heart opens to God's love.

I am with you and I intercede for all of you and I pray for your conversion.

Thank you for having responded to my call.

JUNE 2, to Mirjana

Dear children! In this restless time, anew I am calling you to set out after my Son – to follow him.

I know of the pain, suffering and difficulties, but in my Son you will find rest; in him you will find peace and salvation.

My children, do not forget that my Son redeemed you by his Cross and enabled you, anew, to be children of God; to be able to, anew, call the Heavenly Father: 'Father'.

To be worthy of the Father, love and forgive, because your Father is love and forgiveness.

Pray and fast, because that is the way to your purification, it is the way of coming to know and becoming cognizant of the Heavenly Father.

When you become cognizant of the Father, you will comprehend that he is all you need.

I, as a mother, desire my children to be in a community of one single people where the Word of God is listened to and carried out.

Therefore, my children, set out after my Son.

Be one with him.

Be God's children.

Love your shepherds as my Son loved them when he called them to serve you.

Thank you.

• Mirjana said Our Lady was resolute when she emphasised the words: "I, as a mother, desire my children to be in a community of one single people where the Word of God is listened to and carried out."

PILGRIMAGE DATES

● Angela Callan still has places available for her group leaving from London Gatwick on August 31 and returning September 7. You can contact Angela on 0208 4607789 to make your booking.

Reggie Donnelly and Jean Reynolds have added an extra date in their busy programme of arranging pilgrimages to Medjugorje from Northern Ireland. They leave from Belfast on September 8 and return on September 15.

Contact Reggie on 02890300980 or Jean on 07729402311

More pilgrimage dates are published at: crownofstars.blogspot.co.uk/p/medjugorje-uk-notice-board.html



VICKA'S CONTINUED ABSENCE

● Sr Emmanuel is reporting in her latest newsletter that the Medjugorje visionary Vicka is unlikely to be meeting with pilgrims for quite a while yet because of an injury sustained after being pushed by a pilgrim last month. She was taken to Rome for an examination of her spine and then treated in Zagreb. Sr Emmanuel explains, "for the moment the doctors do not plan on another operation, but Vicka must undergo some very delicate back therapy that might last some time. She will not be able to continue her marvellous welcoming of pilgrims in Medjugorje during the coming months, and we do not know how long her absence will last."

Pilgrims returning from Medjugorje recently are confirming that the visionary Mirjana is also in much pain with a back problem. This was noticeable during a video of one of her meetings with Our Lady at the Blue Cross a couple of months ago, and the discomfort is still with her.

UPDATE... On Saturday, June 30, Vicka made a welcome return to witnessing before pilgrims when she honoured a long-term commitment to attend a prayer meeting in Sestola, Italy.

She had been absent for some months from giving testimony to the apparitions, and because of her serious health issues it was feared the seer would not be able to participate in the arranged meeting in Italy.

Vicka received an apparition from Our Lady during the prayer gathering and

explained afterwards that Our Lady came joyful.

"Before she arrives I am given a signal; a light flashes three times. She always comes with the greeting 'Praised be Jesus'. But when Our Lady leaves she disappears in the sign of the cross, the sign of the sun, and the sign of the heart," explained the eldest of the six Medjugorje visionaries.

Vicka went on to explain that she recommended everyone present in a special way, especially the sick and had asked Our Lady to give strength to all who are sick so they can support and carry their cross.

As Our Lady prayed over all who were present and gave her motherly blessing, she said: "I want you to be my outstretched hands. Go in the Peace of God."

IVAN AND FR SVET VISIT UK...

● The Medjugorje visionary Ivan Dragicovic was accompanied by the Franciscan priest Fr Svetozar Kraljevic in a surprise visit to Cookham and Maidenhead last month.

Fr Svet celebrated Holy Mass and also translated for Ivan when the visionary gave his witness to Our Lady's apparitions and messages in the small church of St Elizabeth in the village of Cookham.

After receiving the apparition of the Blessed Mother, Ivan relayed that Our Lady had come joyful, extended her hands and prayed for some time in Aramaic. She asked the people to pray for the realisation of her plans through her Son and then blessed everyone present and all religious articles.

'SECRETS' PRIEST IN UK

● Fr Petar Ljubic, the Franciscan priest chosen by the Medjugorje seer Mirjana to reveal the 10 secrets given to her by Our Lady, was in the UK recently and gave talks at three venues in the London area.

NEW MEDJUGORJE STAMP

● Croatian Post Ltd has issued its latest offering in a series of postage stamps designed to commemorate the Medjugorje phenomenon. The 2013 issue with a nominal value of 1km is available in a sheet of eight stamps, as well as a maximum card, postmark and a first day cover dated June 1, 2013.

The stamp is designed by Vijeko Lučić and depicts Our Lady with a crown of 12 stars on a background showing St James church and Mt Krizevac.



"In my Son you will find rest, peace and salvation..."



SOON A TIME WILL COME WHEN YOU WILL LAMENT FOR THESE MESSAGES...

● Has anyone else noticed that Our Lady's messages to Mirjana on the second of each month have been gradually increasing in length these past five years?

The nine messages given to Mirjana in 2009 averaged at 85 words, and since then the average length of the messages has steadily increased, year on year. Mirjana has received seven monthly messages since the start of 2013 and the average number of words for each message over the period is 200. That's an increase of 132% on 2009.

2013... 7 messages averaging 200 words
2012... 11 messages averaging 162 words
2011... 12 messages averaging 144 words
2010... 11 messages averaging 90 words
2009... 9 messages averaging 85 words

So what can be the reason for this development? Does Our Lady have a specific motive for wanting us to take in more of what she is saying and teaching? Does she consider our hearts are opening in a way so as to be able to receive more?

And should we be surprised, anyway? After all, Our Lady has been speaking through the Medjugorje visionaries continually for 32 years and we have grown accustomed to receiving and being nourished by her many messages.

The pattern is peculiar to the messages received by Mirjana and not Marija, the visionary designated by Our Lady to transmit her message to the world on the 25th of each month. The messages given to Mirjana are generally addressed to the **"who do not know the love of God in their hearts and do not seek God"** – and I suppose that can apply to all hearts at

times. Since April 2007 there has been an added postscript to the messages given to Mirjana, a reference to our "shepherds", our priests. So does that indicate the messages are targeted more towards the so-called "non-believers" within the Church?

For sure, the messages are a blessed treasure for the Church. Every word, every increasing message is a precious gift and encourage countless hearts to reconcile and return to the Sacraments.

There is often a sense of urgency in the messages to Mirjana, urging us to action; to confess, to pray, to fast, to convert, to love, to allow God's peace into our lives and so the world. Perhaps the extended messages can be viewed as an expression of this urgency, Our Lady's desire to bring as many people to Jesus before the time she will begin – through Mirjana – to reveal her "secrets" to the world. Increased activity, exhortations and appeals can be seen as signs of preparation for what is to come, and perhaps this may explain the reason for Our Lady extending her messages to Mirjana these past five years.

We also know for sure that one day the messages will come to a halt, just as the daily apparitions did for the Mirjana, Ivanka and Jakov. Our Lady made this very clear in earlier messages. On Christmas Day, 1989, she said: **"Little children, I ask you to accept and live the messages with all seriousness, so that your soul will not be sad when I will no longer be with you..."** On another occasion Our Lady said a time would soon come when we will lament for the messages. She also spoke about a time when she would no longer leads us **"like insecure children in their first steps."**

But until that time does come we can be thankful for the extended messages and also view this development as added nourishment for our conversion and "growing in holiness". Pope Francis spoke on this theme recently.

"A mother helps her children grow up and wants them to grow strong... A mother then thinks of the health of her children, teaching them also to face the difficulties of life... A good mother also helps them to make definitive decisions with freedom... The mother teaches us how to be fruitful, to be open to life and to always bear good fruit, joyful fruit, hopeful fruit, and never to lose hope, to give life to others, physical and spiritual life..."

Each of us has expectations of our Blessed Mother. Likewise she has expectations of us, especially when it comes to accepting and living her messages. While the world would want us to consume and find room in our hearts for all the "new" delights it has to offer, Our Lady would prefer that we open our hearts instead to the grace she desires to present to us; her Son Jesus.

She says: **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.** (part message, August 25, 1997)

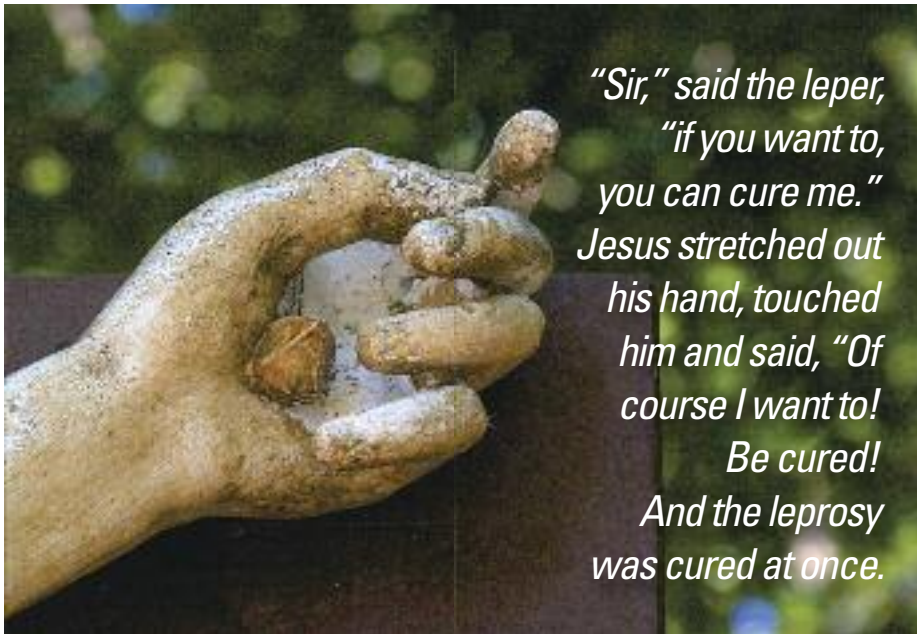
Parting company with a loved one can be a time when much is said: last minute instructions, reminders, words of endearment, promises and maybe expressions of hope and even sorrowful regret.

Jesus also spoke at length to his disciples before his passion and death, gracing them with teaching and understanding, preparing them for the time he would return to be with his Father in heaven. But he also promised he would not leave them orphans, a promise that is clearly fulfilled at Medjugorje, with so many apparent signs and good fruits.

When the visionaries Mirjana, Ivanka and Jakov received their last daily apparition, Our Lady spoke at length, reassuring them as a mother would, but Mirjana described the parting as "pain beyond description" and Jakov wept for a very long time. However, Our Lady indicated they would not be abandoned, promising to appear to them once a year for the rest of their lives.

Bernard Gallagher

"He promised his disciples he would not leave them orphans..."



*“Sir,” said the leper,
“if you want to,
you can cure me.”
Jesus stretched out
his hand, touched
him and said, “Of
course I want to!
Be cured!
And the leprosy
was cured at once.”*

JESUS THE LEPER

by Bernard Gallagher

● Two weeks ago in his Mass homily given at the Casa Santa Martha, Pope Francis underlined what defines the “pillar” of Christian life, namely, that “Christ became sin for me! And my sins are there in his body, in his soul! It’s crazy, but it’s beautiful, it’s true! This is the scandal of the Cross!”

“What is reconciliation? Taking one from this side, taking another one from that side and uniting them? No, that’s part of it but it’s not all of it... True reconciliation means that God in Christ took on our sins and He became the sinner for us. When we go to confession, for example, it isn’t that we say our sin and God forgives us. No, not that! We look for Jesus Christ and say: ‘This is your sin, and I will sin again’. And Jesus likes that, because it was his mission – to become the sinner for us, to liberate us.”

We read today in Matthew’s gospel (8 :1-4) of the leper going to Jesus with absolute conviction that he could cure him if he wanted to. Jesus confirms that he wants to and then liberates the leper.

Here we see how Jesus desires to take possession of our sin, our sickness and our weakness. We lay our burden on Jesus the Lamb of God, the Redeemer who removes all sin when we give them to him.



I’m reminded of this transference of sin when I see people touch the hands of a statue of Jesus. If you take a close inspection of the Sacred Heart statue in most churches you will see the hand of Jesus is usually stained and smeared with the sweat and bodily fluids transferred by people who grip the hand. I always envisage this as a visible sign of our sins. Likewise in the picture above, the pollution of the world has tainted the hand of Christ on the Cross. It appears to be diseased, having absorbed the “leprosy” of mankind.

A similar example manifested in the early days of the apparitions at Medjugorje. On the evening of August 2, 1981, a small group of people gathered in a field close to the house where the visionary Vicka lived. They were there to be present at an apparition of Our Lady. The people were encouraged to come close and touch the apparition, even though they could not see her. And then Vicka became distressed because Our Lady’s dress appeared to be stained where the people had touched it. They were all encouraged to go and make their confession.

I desire to take you by the hand and to walk with you in the battle against the impure spirit. My children, consecrate yourselves to me completely. I will take your lives into my motherly hands and I will teach them peace and love, and then I will give them over to my Son.

part Medjugorje message, May 18, 2012

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