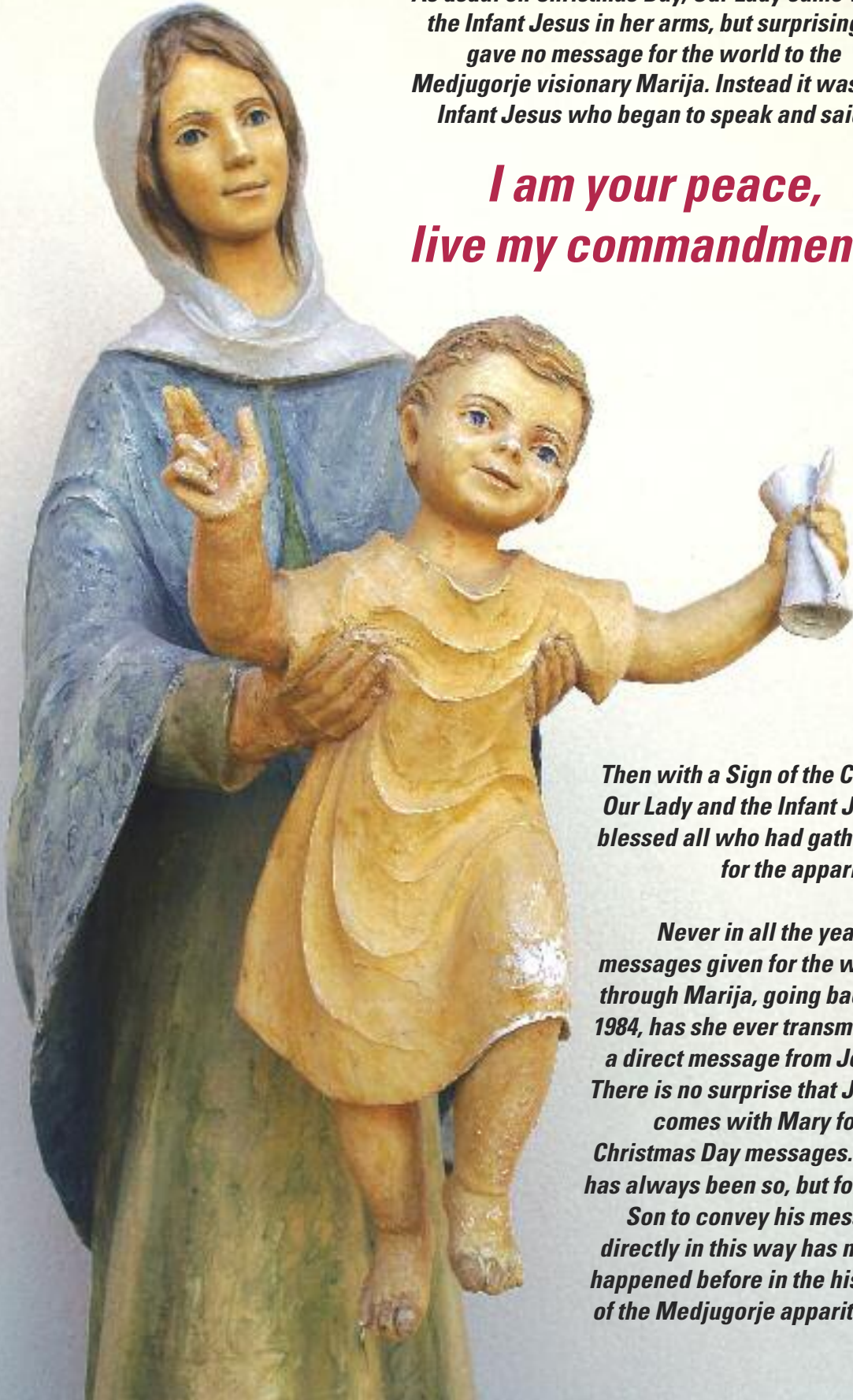


THE MEDJUGORJE MESSAGE

As usual on Christmas Day, Our Lady came with the Infant Jesus in her arms, but surprisingly gave no message for the world to the Medjugorje visionary Marija. Instead it was the Infant Jesus who began to speak and said:

***I am your peace,
live my commandments.***



Then with a Sign of the Cross, Our Lady and the Infant Jesus blessed all who had gathered for the apparition.

Never in all the years of messages given for the world through Marija, going back to 1984, has she ever transmitted a direct message from Jesus. There is no surprise that Jesus comes with Mary for the Christmas Day messages. This has always been so, but for her Son to convey his message directly in this way has never happened before in the history of the Medjugorje apparitions.

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

GOD SPEAKS... THAT'S THE TRUTH

● That God speaks should really come as no surprise. He always has and always will. The way he chooses to speak to any of us can be wide and varied.

Caution should be exercised as to the emphasis we place on the great surprise of the Christmas Day message given to Marija, that we are not distracted from the truth of the message itself and how it applies to each of us personally.

Our Lady implores us to do as Jesus says and tells us that our peace is found only in her Son. Jesus says: **I am your peace. Live my commandments.**

A VERY SPECIAL MESSAGE

● We recognise that this is a very special message, the first time that Jesus has spoken during one of the Medjugorje apparitions. This is a word addressed by the Saviour to all humanity. Rather than speculate why he has done this, we need to weigh his words. There is no other peace but Jesus, and we are to live, not merely obey his commandments. That is, we are to make them our life in a positive way, because that is the perfect way that our Creator intends that we should live. This constitutes a real challenge to each of us and to our secularised world.

Although it is of little value to speculate, we cannot help but reflect that with this wholly unprecedented intervention by Jesus we must expect some shift in the Medjugorje time-frame. This may mean moving towards the end of the messages, the unveiling of the secrets, or simply a new phase calling us to a new response. That is, adding the actual message of Jesus to the fact of its occurrence we can deduce that Medjugorje is assuming a new significance in contemporary prophetic events. We need to reflect on this because, while the messages of Medjugorje are of continuing relevance and actuality, this message suggests our need to be even readier with our response to them.

This urges us on to considering the actual message: 'I am your peace. Live my commandments.' This is a very short message that in some way summarises all the messages that Our Lady has given us. Jesus is truly the answer to all the essential problems of the world, but our response has to be to live the way the gospel has taught us, namely to live love for God and neighbour. The two parts of the message relate closely to each other. The way to peace is through our obedience. Living the commandments ensures that we will be at peace. Jesus is surely awaiting our sincere response to his words.

• *Monsignor George Tutto*

MARIJA SPEAKS WITH FR LIVIO FANZAGA

● Almost immediately after receiving her December apparition and the message from Jesus, the visionary Marija was interviewed by Fr Livio Fanzaga, director of *Radio Maria*. The Italian text was transcribed by Lindita for *MaryTV*.

Fr Livio: Hi Maria...

Marija: Hi Fr Livio and Merry Christmas to all listeners of Radio Maria with all my heart. Our Lady came with little Jesus in her arms and she did not give a message, but little Jesus began to speak and said: "I am your peace, live my commandments." With a sign of the cross, Our Lady and little Jesus blessed us together.

Fr Livio: Can you say it in Croatian.

Marija: Yes (and she spoke the message in Croatian)

Fr Livio: May I ask you a few questions?

Marija: Yes.

Fr Livio: Madonna has come always with her Baby in her arms and even with Jesus as he looked during his Passion, but this is the first time he spoke?

Marija: Yes, we are all surprised. It was a very strong emotion for me... after the apparition I started to cry. I am normally happy and this time I am even more so because it's something amazing, extraordinary! I was moved that he blessed us and spoke for the first time, absolutely!

Fr Livio: Listen, Madonna always comes with the Newborn Baby (at Christmas).

Marija: Of course like every other year she arrived with Baby Jesus.

Fr Livio: So Baby Jesus was newborn?

Marija: Yes, I recommended [petitions] to Madonna, like I normally do and at a certain point I was waiting for her to give the message. But the opposite occurred, she remained silent. Jesus addressed me as the King of Peace. He was a Child but these words were spoken with authority.

Fr Livio: So you were shocked from this new fact?

Marija: Yes, because it was the first time that Jesus spoke to me. Jesus never spoke in Medjugorje.

Fr Livio: Even though he was a child with the voice of a child, he spoke with authority?

Marija: Yes, he spoke with great authority and a strong feeling in his voice that remains strong. I heard the voice of Baby Jesus not like a child that is a few days old or a few hours old, but Jesus, only newborn. Once before [in 1981] an extraordinary moment occurred when Baby Jesus winked at us, and this is the second time something extraordinary has

occurred.

Fr Livio: So he looked like the icons in which we see Baby Jesus but with great Authority.

Marija: Exactly

Fr Livio: Maria, what do you think of this fact? As for me this is a new fact, but also beautiful and extremely positive.

Marija: I believe I never expected this event. I might have expected that Madonna would say: "I will not appear any longer," or something like that, but for 31 years she has appeared with Baby Jesus in her arms at Christmas and this is the first time he spoke.

Fr Livio: But he spoke extraordinary words "I am Your Peace." Marija, you are not a theologian, but the theologians know very well that Jesus says in the Gospel: I am justified by the Divine Authority. I am the expression of great Authority. Those who study theology know that this expression indicates he is God: "I am your peace, live my Commandments." So a Baby who speaks with Divine Authority... in this message we see the dimensions of the Divinity of Jesus, even in this Child, Newborn, his Divinity...and this is what strikes me more in this message.

Marija: It did strike me very strongly. I cried two or three times and this has touched me very much in my heart, and right now I am trying to comprehend what I saw.

Fr Livio: These are things with great spiritual depth... and infinitely so great to us.

Marija: Today, since the moment of apparition [usually] feels ordinary to me, I observed today it was extraordinary and I am so grateful in my heart.

Fr Livio: The truth is that God always surprises us!

Marija: True!

Fr Livio: Can we say a prayer?

Marija: Yes, with all my heart.

Fr Livio and Marija said the Magnificat together, then Glory Be...

Then Fr Livio gave the blessing: In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

UPDATE... Marija is quoted in the Croatian newspaper *Vercenji list*: "It took us all by surprise. It has never happened until now. It's a new moment for Medjugorje and the messages. But it is not worrying. Jesus said, 'I am your peace, live my commandments.' God gives us peace, gives us an opportunity for a new start. It's a new call; God works in a new way."

"I am your peace... live my commandments..."



HE SPOKE WITH AUTHORITY...

by Bernard Gallagher

● **“He spoke with authority... I am still trying to understand...”** words of the Medjugorje visionary Marija Pavlovic Lunetti after receiving the apparition of the Blessed Mother and her Son Jesus in which the Infant Child spoke and gave the message: “I am your peace, live my commandments.”

While the words of Jesus point to those spoken by him in the farewell discourses in John’s gospel (13 : 34, 14 : 27). Marija’s reaction expressed in an interview with Radio Maria director Fr Livio Fanzaga also lead us to the words expressed in the gospels of Luke (4 : 31-37) and Mark (1 : 21-28) when Jesus taught in the synagogue at Capernaum.

And his teaching made a deep impression on them because he spoke with authority.
(Luke 4 : 32)

Astonishment seized them and they were all saying to one another, “What teaching!”
(Luke 4 : 36)

And in Matthew’s gospel (the mission to the world) there is another link to the message received by Marija and her reaction:

Meanwhile the eleven disciples set out for

Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had arranged to meet them. When they saw him they fell down before him, though some hesitated. Jesus came up and spoke to them. He said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations; baptise them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teach them to observe all the commands I gave you. And know that I am with you always; yes, to the end of time.” (Matthew 27 : 16-20)

Should we be surprised that the Child Jesus speaks with authority when Scripture reminds us of the time he astounded the doctors of law (the theologians and teachers) in the temple with his intelligence and replies (Luke 2 : 41-52)? He was 12 years old at the time.

Jesus speaking as a babe in his mother’s arms is a sign, a sign of peace, just as the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes was a sign of peace given to the shepherds by an angel, a messenger of the Lord.

Marija is a messenger, (sometimes Our Lady refers to the visionaries as “my angels”). On Christmas Day she brought a message to the world given to her by the Lord. The message is not new, neither is “the sign”, for Jesus has been the “sign of the times” ever since his birth at Bethlehem over 2,000 years ago.

We celebrate and proclaim this sign every Christmas. We also reach out to our

THE COMING OF THE VIRTUOUS KING...

*The wolf lives with the lamb,
the panther lies down with
the kid, calf and lion cub feed
together with a little boy to
lead them...*

Isaiah 11 : 6

neighbour during Mass as a “sign of peace”. Making the sign of peace is not difficult. Living the sign of peace (I am your peace), living the commandments Jesus gave us, is more challenging – and that’s why Our Lady is with us, constantly calling us to reconciliation and peace with God and each other.

“I am trying to understand what I saw” or “I am trying to understand what has happened” are words often expressed and heard at Medjugorje when someone has experienced God in a significant but unexpected way.

My wife found it difficult to understand her surprising experience when she first went to Medjugorje. I went through the same process on my first visit some years later. A friend of mine, and a skeptic, was shaken when he saw Our Lady one night, standing beside the wooden crucifix on Apparition Hill. There is always uncertainty in life, even in our most joyful moments.

“There is always uncertainty in life, even in our most joyful moments...”

WHY (NOT) MEDJUGORJE?

by Tanya Popec

● Coming to Medjugorje for many is a chance to search for a miracle, apparitions or some special message. Even theologians question about religious curiosity and wonder whether something special indeed happens there. Theologians, perhaps, even more than the others, always have a certain personal struggle since they have heritage of personal knowledge, discipline, obedience to hierarchy and their personal life with God, who even when He is silent, speaks a lot.

Many have asked me how I feel about apparitions in Medjugorje? But, I do not think that it is up to me to decide whether those apparitions are for real and where do they come from. Actually, my faith is not bigger because of the apparitions nor it is smaller. I am waiting for the opinion of the Holy Father who will give the final judgment when the time for that comes. Here, I would like to give the answer on how I feel about witnessing for Christ who is present in Medjugorje, as well as in all Holy Masses throughout the world, really present, so strongly that without saying a word, He moves both soul and our thoughts.

Medjugorje has attracted me as a place, in a country dear to me – Bosnia and Herzegovina, as a reality that is completely different than everyday routine in Zagreb, where I live. Sometimes, it is necessary to go somewhere else, to step away from our everyday life, so our thoughts could calm down a little bit and our soul could find a little rest.

A LITTLE ABOUT THE ATMOSPHERE

If I ignore the fact that I arrived to celebrate New Year in Medjugorje at the last moment,

an afternoon of prayer and MEDJUGORJE fellowship...

Saturday, 26 January, 2013

ST OSWALD'S CHURCH, LIVERPOOL

St Oswald's Street, L13 5SB

2:00 pm Rosary and January message
3:00 pm Holy Mass
4:00 pm Fellowship and Refreshments
5:00 pm Closing prayer

**Contact Marija Herceg-Millington
for further details.
marijanaherceg77@hotmail.com
telephone 0161 903 8765**



and the whole day was very distracting ever since I departed my town, I can really be happy that journey from Zagreb through Zadar to Medjugorje was comfortable and without any difficulties.

Even though I was asking people about New Year's celebration in Medjugorje and I got a response that there is nothing special but Eucharistic Adoration and Holy Mass, I was able to experience that it was that "nothing special" that attracts thousands of pilgrims from all over the world and faithful from the surrounding area to come into this special spiritual oasis in Herzegovina.

Those who came in largest numbers were Italians, many of faithful arrived to the church in a real winter gear, all wearing winter and skiing suits and jackets, coats, wrapped up in blankets and scarves. At first, I could not understand why they were dressed like that; especially I could not understand those who came with blankets, the evening was not too cold (comparing to the temperatures in Zagreb that are below zero). Those who were early came into the church, and the area around the church was packed with people in winter clothes. The Eucharistic Adoration began at 10pm and all those who were around the church could watch it via the video wall. Yet, even those who could not see the live transmission were praying in peace, silence, deep humility and dignity, and they

were filled with the presence of living Jesus Christ. (Having in mind that more than three hours were spent outdoors, all described winter gear makes more sense now!)

EXCLUSIVE EVENT IN MEDJUGORJE OR ORDINARY JESUS?

When I come to adore Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, I am always drawn by yearning for God's face, and that was the case in that night as well. During the period of more than one hour, I did not see or hear anything spectacular or exclusive, even though it was just couple of days before that message about Our Lady carrying a baby Jesus in her hands, who spoke and said how He was our peace and that we should obey his commandments. But, it was the content that we know already from the Gospel, so there was nothing new in those words. Yet, what was so strong and powerful in Medjugorje that evening was the silence that came and embraced the church in Medjugorje with moonlight. It came by looking into the Blessed Sacrament. Meditations were simple, translated in many languages. They were about thanksgiving for the previous year, prayers for New Year, for conversion of hearts and for fulfilling God's commandments. There were only few words, but lives of all those who adored Jesus, who prayed and sought for God's face could be recognised in those words.

"It was 'nothing special' that attracts thousands of pilgrims from all over the world..."

URBI ET ORBI SPEAKING TO THE WORLD and ROME?

● On Christmas Day thousands of pilgrims gathered in Rome at St Peter's Square to receive the *Urbi et Orbi* papal address and Apostolic Blessing given to the City of Rome and to the entire world.

Pope Benedict XVI addressed Rome and the world in 65 languages from his Vatican balcony. He said... *"May the birth of the Prince of Peace remind the world where its true happiness lies, and may your heart be filled with hope and joy, for the Saviour has been born to us..."*

Later that day, the Infant Saviour spoke directly to the visionary Marija Pavlovic-Lunneti at Medjugorje and reminded the world where its true happiness lies: *"I am your peace, live my commandments."*

Coincidence? Then here's another:

A few hours earlier the Holy Father spoke about the Infant Jesus during his Midnight Mass homily. He said, *"Again and again it astonishes us that God makes Himself a child so that we may love Him, so that we may dare to love Him, and as a child trustingly lets Himself be taken into our arms. It is as if God were saying: I know that my glory frightens you, and that you are trying to assert yourself in the face of my grandeur. So now I am coming to you as a child, so that you can accept me and love me."*

Later that day, Jesus came with his Mother as a babe in her arms to Marija Pavlovic-Lunneti, and gave the Medjugorje visionary this message: *"I am your peace, live my commandments."*

Coincidence? Then here's another:

In the same homily the Holy Father said, *"So Christ is our peace, and he proclaimed peace to those far away and to those near at hand (cf. Eph 2:14, 17). How could we now do other than pray to him: Yes, Lord, proclaim peace today to us too, whether we are far away or near at hand."*

Later that day, the Holy Father's prayer was answered when Jesus proclaimed to Marija this message for those far and near throughout the world: *"I am your peace, live my commandments."*

Could this message for the world given by Jesus to Marija also be a one for Rome, *Urbi et Orbi*, a sign for the International Commission studying the Medjugorje phenomenon?

There were many who were celebrated the sacrament of reconciliation in that evening. It is a wonderful feeling to reconcile with God and to end one year and start the New Year in that spirit of reconciliation. Priests from various countries were available to believers of various ages. Celebration of repentance, desire for change, celebration of newness of life! The Holy Eucharist that began at 11.20pm was ordinary, parts of Christmas celebration were present, and yet it was so special. While we were surrounded with different firework creations, the attention of faithful was still focused on the altar, not on the sky. The centre was breaking of the Word and Bread! The act of transfiguration that took place exactly at midnight was so impressive. While the whole world experiences that moment as an explosion of fireworks, shootings, champagne, kisses and hugging, we who participated in that Holy Mass were far from that. The surrounding streets were in noisy celebration, and yet the area around the church was so peaceful and all were focused on Christ who is our beginning and the end. Each one of us has brought our lives, our loved ones, our prayers, longings and hopes to that altar. Christ has received that gift from our hearts and he has turned a new page to a New Year, 2013, with his real presence. In Him, we have our genuine reason of joy and He was the main Star in that night, a Star that brings news to us.

WHAT IS A MIRACLE OF MEDJUGORJE?

Thousands of pilgrims who have arrived here without any special invitation to celebrate New Year in that way, who have not sought for any spectacle, hundreds of those who have confessed in that night, some even after many years of not confessing – isn't that the real miracle?

Recently, I read a testimony of one married couple who have arrived to Medjugorje with their sick children and they came to pray for a miracle of healing. They have not experienced anything from Our Lady, nothing happened even after they climbed Apparition Hill and Cross Mountain. When the father complained to the priest and told him that they have been praying for a miracle, the priest only said to him: "Go and confess!" The father was evidently confused. He was looking a sign for his child and that priest was sending him to confess. But, life of that family has changed after that confession. The father had not confessed for years and he carried many wounds in his soul and lived with mortal sins. Only after the confession, a miracle took place. Their children were better, yet for the father it was just the outer sign of miraculous

encounter with Christ that he experienced in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. That was his real miracle! Let us never forget that Christ is next to us in the Sacrament of Reconciliation as the one who opens our hearts and heals us with His Mercy, lifts our hearts with His Love from the Cross.

On the way to Medjugorje I was listening to the testimony of one young married couple who met on their way to Medjugorje. Even though they both lived in Italy not far from each other, they never met in Italy, but on their way to Medjugorje where they travelled with two different groups. Their meeting took place on the ferry, while Holy Mass was celebrated. They met and married after couple of years. Encounters with God in sacraments and people who meet together, those are the strongest messages of Medjugorje.

Many will ask how come that such changes and special events do not happen to us in the parish where we live all the time? The reason is very simple. When we leave our parishes and go somewhere for a pilgrimage, either to Medjugorje or somewhere else, we immediately become different, our mood changes, we focus on that destination and we step out of our ordinary routine. Simply when we do that we already create prerequisites for spiritual experience. It is a psychological impact that opens doors to something new.

AND WHERE IS OUR LADY?

Mary is Mother that brings us to her Son. He is most present in the Holy Eucharist. Even when she escorts us to celebration of Holy Mass, she surrenders us into his hands, because He is her and our centre. I do not think that it is Our Lady's desire to look for herself, just because of her alone; she is fully devoted to her Son.

Private revelations do not oblige until the moment when Holy Father brings his decision about the whole matter. But, something that obliges us religious and faithful is known for centuries and it is written in the Scripture and in teaching of the Church. Personally, one of the greatest challenges, in religious and theological terms for me is a miracle of God's Mercy and Mary's open heart when she said to God: "Here is a servant of the Lord, may it be to me according to Thy word!" (Luke 1 : 38) Every single time I am moved by her words at the wedding feast in Cana of Galilee: "Do as He tells you to do!" (John 2 : 5). We can study those two lines throughout our whole life, it is in those lines that we will either pass or fail our exam of faith. It will be those two lines that I will bring with me in this New Year!

• Adapted from the Medjugorje parish website www.medjugorje.hr

Christ was the main Star that night, a Star that brings news to us..."

MESSAGE TO MIRJANA

January 2, 2013

Dear children, with much love and patience I strive to make your hearts like unto mine.

I strive, by my example, to teach you humility, wisdom and love because I need you; I cannot do without you my children.

According to God's will I am choosing you, by his strength I am strengthening you.

Therefore, my children, do not be afraid to open your hearts to me.

I will give them to my Son and in return, he will give you the gift of divine peace.

You will carry it to all those whom you meet, you will witness God's love with your life and you will give the gift of my Son through yourselves.

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

Immeasurable is my love.

Do not be afraid.

My children, pray for the shepherds.

May your lips be shut to every judgment, because do not forget that my Son has chosen them and only he has the right to judge.

Thank you.



MARIJA TO VISIT IRELAND

● The Medjugorje visionary Marija Pavlovic-Lunetti is to visit Ireland in February and will give witness in Dublin, Cork and Kerry.

The Dublin event is scheduled for the RDS on February 21. Doors open at 4:00pm. The evening will conclude at 8:00pm. Admission is by ticket only. Tickets are available from Frank Holohan +353 877827982

Marija will visit Tralee and the church of St Brendan & Our Lady on February 22, and on the following day, February 23, the Holy Trinity church in Cork City. The prayer programme for both these days begins at 5:00pm

Two years ago, over 2,000 people packed the RDS in Dublin to see the Medjugorje seer Vicka Ivankovic. She also appeared on Irish national television during her visit. There are no plans for Marija to appear on television during her stay which is arranged and hosted by Finbar O'Leary.

PADDY THE BUILDER

● Paddy Travel, the well-known bus operator based in Medjugorje is set to expand its business by providing accommodation for pilgrims.

The company which began its bus travel and tourism business in 1993 started construction of a four-storey building early last year. It is expected to be completed and open for pilgrim business by the summer of 2013.

The new hotel (still to be named) is located alongside the Santa Maria guest house, which has also doubled in size and accommodation this past year.

PILGRIMAGES...

● Teresa Griffith is organising two pilgrimages from Birmingham to Medjugorje, May 21-28 and September 21-28. Contact Teresa on 0121 604 4061 for further details. Kath Gambin is also leading two pilgrimage groups to Medjugorje, departing from Birmingham: 18-25 May and September 10-17 September. Contact Kath on 01162 340103.

ASK A BUSY BODY

● Once upon a time, there were four people named Everybody, Somebody, Nobody and Anybody. When there was an important job to be done, Everybody was sure that Somebody would do it. Anybody could have done it, but Nobody did it. When Nobody did it, Everybody got angry because it was Everybody's job. Everybody thought that Somebody would do it, but Nobody realised that Nobody would do it. So it ended up that Everybody blamed Somebody when Nobody did what Anybody could have done in the first place.

ROLAND ORDAINED DEACON

● The man who wrote one of the most famous songs associated with Medjugorje has been ordained a Deacon of the Church.

With a past history of drug abuse Roland Patzeiner went to Medjugorje and prayed at the top of Apparition Hill for peace. From this prayer came the inspiration to write and compose "Give Us Your Peace", a song very familiar to Medjugorje pilgrims when played at Adoration.

The style and presentation of the music ministry at Medjugorje is used for prayer meetings throughout the world as Roland and the group continue to inspire and perform at Medjugorje and other venues in Europe under the community name of Figli del Divino Amore.

The ordination was performed on December 7 by Bishop Domenico Sigalini, bishop of Palestrina, and was a double celebration for the Figli del Divino Community as another member, Luigi Basile, was also ordained a Deacon alongside Roland.

VICKA TO MAKE PILGRIMAGE TO THE HOLY LAND

● The Medjugorje seer Vicka Ivankovic is to make a pilgrimage to the Holy Land in August and visit Bethlehem and other biblical sites as part of a group of pilgrims from all over the world representing *Maranatha*, an international ecumenical movement of prayer for healing mankind.

Can it be coincidence that the three Medjugorje visionaries who still receive daily apparitions from Our Lady will all have travelled to the Middle East in the space of 18 months as missionaries of peace?

Marija Pavlovic Lunetti visited Lebanon in March 2012, Ivan Dragicevic went to Lebanon in November 2012, and now Vicka is set to travel to the Holy Land in August later this year.

More information can be found at: www.maranatha-conversion.com

FREED FROM JUDGING

by Henri Nouwen

● We spend an enormous amount of energy making up our minds about other people. Not a day goes by without somebody doing or saying something that evokes in us the need to form an opinion about him or her. We hear a lot, see a lot and know a lot. The feeling that we have to sort it all out in our minds and make judgements about it can be quite oppressive.

The desert fathers said that judging others is a heavy burden, while being judged by others is a light one. Once we can let go of our need to judge others, we will experience an immense inner freedom. Once we are free from judging, we will also be free for mercy.

Let's remember Jesus' words: "Do not judge, and you will not be judged."
Matthew 7 : 1

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



WHY DID YOU COME?

by Angela Callan

● On the third day of our late September pilgrimage during the talk given by Fr Danko Perutina (pictured above), he asked the questions, "Why did you come to Medjugorje? What is the purpose of your visit?" Various answers were offered: "to grown in holiness... to receive graces... because Our Lady is here..." Fr Danko was very definite in his response: "We come to Medjugorje to meet the living God. Receiving graces and growing in holiness are consequences of that meeting. Our Lady invites us but, as always, she directs us to her Son who is the fulness of life." Fr Danko reminded us that millions of conversions are happening through Medjugorje and he believes no one leaves Medjugorje without changing.

From the very first week of her apparitions in June 1981 Our Lady asked everyone to "believe firmly" and to have a "solid faith". As we begin this Year of Faith we were challenged by another Franciscan priest, Fr Svetozar Kraljevic, with a "scary" thought. "We call ourselves Christians, Catholics... we are listening and fearing Our Lord – at least we say we do. There is a real danger in our time, and that is: where do we learn the mysteries and secrets and commandments of our faith today? Who is our teacher? We say, 'I'm a believer', we are decisive and we have no second thoughts, but the question that scares me is: who is teaching me in my faith?"

"I believe we have lost sight of our belief in God as taught by the magisterium of our Church, by tradition as we have it, and by the Gospel. The Church has become in our mind, our own culture, what secular society says about her, about priests, about dogmas, about our obligations, about morality, about relationships, about social issues. We learn things of faith from secular society and we

live accordingly – so we had better watch out!

"What are the sources of my belief today? Where do I learn to be a Christian? It scares me! Secular society is really making every effort to influence in so many sophisticated ways: the things we learn at school; the way we discuss issues of faith in our families and at work. The sources are questionable. I leave this scary thought with each of you: is the Holy Spirit your God, your inspiration, or has the popular mentality imposed itself in society just about everywhere? In this pilgrimage, try to listen to the Holy Spirit and ask, 'What direction do I need to go to learn more about my faith?'"

"We need to realise the power we have today. I'm irreplaceable, I'm important and it truly counts what I say. The main way to be recognised as a believer is by your neighbour. If your neighbour doesn't know then there is nothing. Secular society takes over when your faith becomes private, and then the young people have no one to show them the faith."

"In pilgrimage this profound change can take place and you become a new person. The objective is not to go to Medjugorje but to go public with your faith!"

Fr Danko asked us: "Where are the Catholics who have met Jesus?"

I first went to Medjugorje 25 years ago, just for two and a half days, but that was enough to completely change my life. Fr Svet gave us a talk then in 1987, which put everything in perspective for me. He said, "Whatever happens to you in Medjugorje is what is right for you. Don't think you must climb this hill or see that visionary, just allow the Holy Spirit and Our Lady to work in your life."

Since then those words have been an immense help to me, and not only in relation to Medjugorje. At the end of his beautiful book *Pilgrimage*, Fr Svet says: "If you are coming to Medjugorje be happy, for your pilgrimage will be a living, unfolding prayer. But remember... the purpose of this place is not for you to fall in love with it, Medjugorje does not want to control you or possess you for itself in any way. But God does want you for himself. Fall in love with God!"

During our pilgrimage God did speak to us individually through the beautiful hymns of Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament; through the Sacrament of Reconciliation, through the hymns, homilies and readings at Mass; through Vicka's talk and prayer; through the testimony of a young woman at Cenacolo; through reaching the summit of Krizevac; through a conversation with a complete stranger in Colombo's; through the sight of a butterfly. We really do meet the living God and we thank him for this great grace!

PRAYER GROUPS

● MIDDLESBROUGH

Medjugorje prayer evening every second Friday of the month (except August) at the John Paul Centre, 55 Grange Road, Middlesbrough, TS1 5AU. Evening starts at 7:30pm with Rosary, followed by Holy Mass, talk and witness.

● HULL East Yorkshire

Medjugorje prayer group meets every last Friday of the month at The Endsleigh Centre, Beverley Road, at 7:00pm except for December 2012 and Easter 2013. All very welcome.

● UDDINGSTON, Glasgow

An evening of prayer, meditation, reflection and the celebration of the Eucharist in the style of Medjugorje, held last Monday of the month at St John the Baptist church, Uddingston. Evening starts at 7:15pm with Rosary.

● GLENBOIG Scotland

Our Lady and St Joseph prayer group meets every Tuesday at Our Lady & St Joseph church, Glenboig, N. Lanarkshire. Evening begins at 6:00pm and ends around 7:30pm.

● PORTSMOUTH

Medjugorje group meets on Mondays at 11:30am to 12 noon in the Jubilee Room of the Discovery Centre attached to St John's Cathedral, Bishop Crispian Way. Mass follows at 12:15.

● WEYBRIDGE Surrey

Medjugorje prayer group meets every Thursday night at 8:00pm for an hour at Christ the Prince of Peace, Portmore Way, Weybridge.

● ACTON, London

The Acton Prayer Group meets every Friday after 7pm Holy Mass at Our Lady of Lourdes Church, Acton, London. The Blessed Sacrament is exposed and the Rosary and Chaplet of Divine Mercy is recited.

● If you would like your prayer group advertised in this newsletter email Bernard at medjugorjeuk@gmail.com or telephone 0121 429 8349

● Information and help on starting a prayer group can be found at: www.medjugorjecalling.com

"The objective is not to go to Medjugorje but to go public with your faith..."



THE MOTHER OF ALL

by Frederick King

● Although I had been to three Marian shrines in Europe I never felt a desire to go to Medjugorje until a German friend of mine went there in 2010.

He stayed there for a month and didn't want to leave. He found the peace overwhelming. Like me, he was living here in the south of Spain. He would say to me, "Fred, you have to go there. It's incredible!" But each time I thought about it seriously, something would come up to block my way.

I told my friend that if the Blessed Mother wanted me to go, she would have to arrange it after a trip to Poland had left me with very little money.

Another Spanish friend of mine said that when she went in April 2010 she flew to Milan and from there took a bus direct to Medjugorje. So I checked on the internet for a cheap fare and found a flight that went from Alicante to Milan at the end of May in 2010. My German friend offered to loan me enough money for the trip, and I considered that kindness as an invitation I had been waiting for.

I took the flight to Milan with no expectations but discovered the direct bus service from there didn't run anymore. This meant me staying overnight in a hotel and catching a train to Ancona the next morning for an overnight sailing to Split in Croatia. From there I travelled for three and a half hours by bus to Medjugorje.

For the first couple of days I found Medjugorje to be a bit of a disappointment. I stayed in a Pansion where a group of Italians from Naples invited me to join them. When I spoke very slowly in Spanish they could understand me and so took me under their wing.

As the week progressed I realised I was running out of money. I had no idea how I

was going to get back to Spain. So I prayed to the Blessed Mother "You got me here for some reason, now please get me back home." That night I spoke with the Italian group about a personal experience I had with the Holy Eucharist when I was in Germany. One of the group later mentioned to me that my witness was for the benefit of her husband.

The night before my departure another lady from the Italian group came to me after dinner and said: "This is a gift from our Blessed Mother," and she handed me a big, red apple and a small envelope which I assumed contained a medal from Medjugorje. I was in a rush, so I thanked her and went to my room to pack and get a good night's sleep. I still had no idea how I was going to get back to Spain.

Just before retiring to bed I opened the envelope I had been given earlier and out tumbled four 50 euro notes, about £170. I couldn't believe it! I actually broke down and cried. This indeed was a gift from the Gospa. I had more than enough to get back to Spain!



Annual apparition to Jakov Colo

● At the last daily apparition to Jakov Colo on September 12th, 1998, Our Lady told him that henceforth he would have one apparition a year, every December 25th, on Christmas Day. This is also how it was this year. The apparition began at 2:15 pm and lasted 10 minutes. Afterwards Jakov transmitted the message:

Dear children, give the gift of your life to me and completely surrender to me so that I may help you to comprehend my motherly love and the love of my Son for you. My children, I love you immeasurably and today, in a special way, on the day of the birth of my Son, I desire to receive each of you into my heart and to give a gift of your lives to my Son. My children, Jesus loves you and gives you the grace to live in his mercy, but sin has overtaken many of your hearts and you live in darkness. Therefore, my children, do not wait, say 'no' to sin and surrender your hearts to my Son, because only in this way will you be able to live God's mercy and, with Jesus in your hearts, set out on the way of salvation.

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