

# THE MEDJUGORJE MESSAGE



*Message of Our Lady given to Marija, November 25, 2012*

***Dear children! In this time of grace, I call all of you to renew prayer. Open yourselves to Holy Confession so that each of you may accept my call with the whole heart. I am with you and I protect you from the ruin of sin, but you must open yourselves to the way of conversion and holiness, that your heart may burn out of love for God. Give him time and he will give himself to you and thus, in the will of God, you will discover the love and the joy of living. Thank you for having responded to my call.***

## ***MESSAGES GIVEN TO MIRJANA***

Dear children, with motherly love and motherly patience anew I call you to live according to my Son – to spread his peace and his love – so that as my apostles you may accept God’s truth with all your heart and pray for the Holy Spirit to guide you. Then you will be able to faithfully serve my Son and show his love to others with your life. According to the love of my Son and my love, as a mother, I strive to bring all of my stray children into my motherly embrace and to show them the way of faith. My children, help me in my motherly battle and pray with me that sinners may become aware of their sins and repent sincerely. Pray also for those whom my Son has chosen and consecrated in his name. Thank you. *December 2, 2012*

Dear children; As a mother I implore you to persevere as my apostles. I am praying to my Son to give you Divine wisdom and strength. I am praying that you may discern everything around you according to God’s truth and to strongly resist everything that wants to distance you from my Son. I am praying that you may witness the love of the Heavenly Father according to my Son. My children, great graces have been given to you to be witnesses of God’s love. Do not take the given responsibility lightly. Do not sadden my motherly heart. As a mother I desire to rely on my children, on my apostles. Through fasting and prayer you are opening the way for me to pray to my Son for him to be beside you and for his name to be holy through you. Pray for the shepherds because none of this would be possible without them. Thank you. *November 2, 2012*



Be a joyful carrier and witness of peace...

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

## DEATH OF MEDJUGORJE PRIEST

● Fr Marinko Šakota is the new parish priest of Medjugorje following the death of Fr Petar Vlašić in the early hours of November 8.

The 44-year-old Franciscan was born in nearby Čitluk and ordained in July 1996. He has served as a chaplain in Medjugorje since 2010.

His appointment was proposed by Franciscan Provincial Ivan Sesar and



confirmed by Bishop Ratko Peric who also presided over the funeral of Fr Petar Vlašić.

Fr Petar served in Medjugorje since 1999 and was appointed parish priest in 2007. He was 75 years old.



## NEW PAPAL NUNCIO

● Luigi Pezzuto is the new papal nuncio appointed to serve in Bosnia Herzegovina. The sixty-six-year-old Titular Archbishop previously served in Belize, El Salvador, Tanzania, Gabon and the Congo. He replaces Archbishop Allesandro D'Errico.

## IVAN TO VISIT SCOTLAND

● The Medjugorje visionary Ivan Dragicevic is set to visit Scotland in January 2013 and will give his witness at St John the Baptist church in Uddingston, Glasgow.

## IVAN AND THE CARDINAL

● His Eminence Beshara Boutros El-Rahi, Patriarch of Antioch, who hosted Ivan Dragicevic when the Medjugorje seer visited

Lebanon recently, was one of six new Cardinals created by the Holy Father in Rome in November.

The See of the Maronite Catholic Patriarchate in Bkerké was the first of four venues attended by Ivan who gave testimony and received Our Lady's apparition in the church and in the presence of the Patriarch who was the celebrant for Holy Mass.

## CAESAR COMES CALLING

● Federal authorities in Bosnia Herzegovina have expressed concern over the number of organisations operating in and around Medjugorje under the guise of "humanitarian work" when in reality most are involved with tourism and hospitality as a main activity.

A recent inspection by Federal auditors discovered 27 such organisations operating this way in Medjugorje and potentially depriving BiH of taxes as well as providing unfair competition for legally registered, local businesses.

Claims of "millions" of euros being drained from the economy because of non-registered residents operating illegally under the pretence of humanitarian work has prompted the federal government to prepare new measures to prevent further manipulation of existing registration and trading laws.

## COMMISSION REPORT UPDATE

● The Vatican has denied reports that a Vatican commission studying the alleged apparitions at Medjugorje will release its findings by the end of this year. Vatican spokesman Fr Federico Lombardi said the speculation was "not true" and that the commission's findings will take longer.

An earlier report in the French magazine *La Vie* said the commission, established by Pope Benedict XVI in 2010 and chaired by Cardinal Camillo Ruini, was expected to present its report to the Holy Father by the end of December.

"I have spoken with Cardinal Ruini and I can assure you that it will take longer," Fr Lombardi said. "Among other things, the commission must first give its opinion to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith to discuss, so it'll be a long time yet."

## PILGRIMAGES TO MEDJUGORJE

● Travel company Joe Walsh Tours is offering 7-night pilgrimage packages from selected UK airports to Medjugorje for 2013. All departures are on Wednesdays, leaving from London, East Midlands, Edinburgh, Leeds/Bradford, Newcastle and Manchester.

Basic price is £475 per person sharing but there is £100 discount for full payment

before January 15th, 2013.

Former Medjugorje guide Marijana Herceg-Millington now lives in the UK and is working with Joe Walsh Tours promoting Medjugorje and co-ordinating pilgrimage groups. Marijana can be contacted at [marijanaherceg77@hotmail.com](mailto:marijanaherceg77@hotmail.com) or by telephone: 0161 903 8765

## PILGRIMAGES FROM GATWICK

● John Hoskins is leading a pilgrimage group from Gatwick to Medjugorje for the week **October 5-12, 2013**. Cost is £529 per person (half-board). There is an additional supplement of £120 for single room occupancy (limited availability). The price includes transfers from and to Dubrovnik airport. For further information please email John Hoskins [wey.medj@gmail.com](mailto:wey.medj@gmail.com)

Ian Walker is also leading pilgrimage groups to Medjugorje for the weeks: **June 22 to 29, 2013** and **13 to 20 August, 2013**. Cost £529 per person (half-board). Single room supplement £120. Contact Ian for further details on 020 8863 3635, or email [ian.j.e.walker@btinternet.com](mailto:ian.j.e.walker@btinternet.com)

## CHILD 31

● From award-winning, Brooklyn-based *Grassroots Films* comes CHILD 31, the uplifting and compelling movie about the work of *Mary's Meals*, the international charity which feeds more than 700,000 hungry children every day.

This CHILD31 DVD is being offered as an alternative gift, in exchange for a suggested donation of £10.70. This is how much it costs to feed a child with *Mary's Meals* for a whole school year.

Further details on how to order can be found at [www.child31film.com](http://www.child31film.com)

For information about *Mary's Meals*, a fruit of Medjugorje, visit the website [www.marysmeals.org](http://www.marysmeals.org)

To make a telephone donation to *Mary's Meals* call 01838 200605 or 0800 698 1212

## SUPPORTING CENACOLO UK

● The Cenacolo Community in the UK, based in Dodding Green, Kendal, relies entirely on Providence.

Donations can be made in favour of "Friends for a UK Cenacolo Community" and sent to: The Treasurer, Friends for a UK Cenacolo Community, 109 Bellingham Road, Kendal, Cumbria LA9 5JU. For further information about the community contact 01995 602577 or 01995 604808, or visit the website: [www.cenacolouk.org](http://www.cenacolouk.org)



## MEDJUGORJE APOSTOLATE RETREAT

19th and 20th January 2013

Parish Centre, St Augustine's Priory

55 Fulham Palace Road, Hammersmith, London, W6 8AU

Retreat Leader: Fr Danko Perutina OFM

The non-residential retreat starts each day at 9am and ends at approximately 7pm on Saturday and 4pm on Sunday. The programme includes Rosary, talks by Fr Danko, Holy Mass and Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament with the opportunity for the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

Cost: £15 both days, £10 Saturday only, £6 Sunday only.

Contact Paul Spencer for further information. telephone: 0116 2128175 email: [pilgrimsofmary@hotmail.com](mailto:pilgrimsofmary@hotmail.com)

**"Open your hearts, little children, let your hands be extended and generous..."**

## QUEEN OF PEACE

a review by Daniel Klimek

● There is a new film out about Medjugorje. Wayne Weible calls it “a must see documentary.” He is not alone in the sentiment. I spoke to a tour guide recently who plans many trips to Medjugorje, and he explained to me that people are having very powerful reactions to this movie, audiences are touched (often to the point of tears) and deeper conversions to a life of faith where Our Lady’s messages are lived appear to follow. The film is called “Queen of Peace,” the very title with which the Madonna of Medjugorje introduced herself to the visionaries in 1981.

“Queen of Peace” is the work of Christina Georgotas. Georgotas, who has a background in mainstream television as a producer, is a gifted filmmaker. You’ll notice it immediately. Her documentary is a stylish work that uses creative cinematography and a solemn, elegant soundtrack to recreate (nay, to bring to life) the story of Medjugorje. It is easily the most professional documentary that has been made about the popular apparition site, using archival footage of the visionaries from the early years that have not been seen anywhere else while combining it with modern testimonies and exclusive interviews with some of the major figures surrounding Medjugorje.

The filmmaker stayed at the home of Mirjana Soldo and managed to get a new, and very intimate, interview with the visionary. At one point, invoking all the pressures that the visionaries were under during the first years of the apparitions, especially from the Communist government, Mirjana is asked whether she ever felt like giving up. Mirjana’s reply, “Never,”—spoken with solemn dignity, unwavering confidence, and a strength coming from a deeper place within the soul—explained that when you know you are living for the truth you are willing to give your life for it. It corroborated recent reports which testified that the Medjugorje visionaries were ready to become martyrs for the cause of Our Lady’s apparitions when their lives were threatened by the Communist state. In listening to Mirjana’s powerful interview you sense a defiant serenity that is sustainable only through the power of supernatural intervention in one’s life; the power of being close to God, of knowing where one comes from and knowing where one is going.

The documentary captures a rare testimony as well – one recently given by Ivanka Ivankovic-Elez in Medjugorje. Ivanka, the first visionary to see Our Lady, is the one

visionary who has, since the apparitions began, led the most private (at times, reclusive) life. Seeing her witness to the first days of the apparitions was both rare and intriguing. Creatively, by using split-screen, her testimony is juxtaposed in the documentary with that of Mirjana, who was there that first day with her friend Ivanka as the Madonna appeared to the two girls.

Allowing us to see both Ivanka and Mirjana—the first two visionaries to encounter Our Lady—retell the story side by side, through split-screen cinematography that also incorporates footage from the earliest days of the apparitions, captures a powerful, reminiscent nostalgia as we witness these two women, young visionaries then, and now mothers in their maturity, older and spiritually developed, testifying to the moment that not only changed their lives forever but the lives of millions of people around the world who have been affected by the Madonna’s apparitions in Medjugorje.

The film is not only filled with spiritual prowess but also intellectual depth. It’s sophisticated, very smart and sharp – something that would appeal not only to the longtime devotee but also the skeptical (perhaps even secular) mind that has yet to hear of Medjugorje or Marian apparitions. Thus thorough time is given in the documentary to presenting the meticulous ways that the visionaries have been tested by science throughout the years by various, international medical teams – not being able to discredit the apparitions despite more than three decades of attempts.

Additionally, the documentary presents information on the more than 600 medical healings that have been copiously documented in Medjugorje in the archives of St James parish. Many of the diseases which people have been miraculously cured of in Medjugorje are highlighted. The range of these ailments is startling; to give a very small sample, they have included numerous cancers, multiple sclerosis, and even blindness – in this diversity of diseases what becomes reminiscent are the remarkable healing miracles that Jesus Himself performed in first century Palestine, as documented in the New Testament. An ancient, miraculous power is reawakened when one realizes what is happening in the Bosnia-Herzegovina village.

In this regard, a very powerful testimony is filmed – an exclusive interview with Arthur Boyle, an American who – much like Colleen Willard or Rita Klaus – has one of the more famous stories of healing and conversion associated with Medjugorje. Boyle, who was diagnosed with kidney cancer that spread to his lungs, eventually

having three tumors in his right lung, was predicted by his doctors to be on his way toward a speedy death. All hope seemed lost. Then he and his family traveled to Medjugorje, encountered the visionary Vicka, prayed with her for the gift of healing... what happened next was scientifically inexplicable, something that defied the purview of medical science completely and baffled his doctors. Arthur Boyle, to put it simply, had an encounter with the supernatural.

Perhaps the most impressive thing about “Queen of Peace” is a very tricky balance that Christina Georgotas captures, one that a lesser filmmaker may not have accomplished so gracefully. She is able to present to us the seriousness of the Madonna’s messages in Medjugorje, especially the call to return to God—after all, the visionaries have alluded to severe chastisements that await the world after this time of grace—while simultaneously being able to capture the joy and peace that permeates and radiates from the visionaries and those associated with Medjugorje, from the Franciscan priests of the parish, to the countless pilgrims that visit the sacred site each year and have their lives transformed. This is not only a delicate, but moreover an important, balance to strike in portraying Medjugorje accurately: presenting the seriousness of Our Lady’s call, on the one hand, and the life-transforming tranquility and joy that has accompanied those who have responded to that call, on the other hand. Here the film attains a difficult but admirable task in conveying the nature behind this sacred reality.

I was fortunate to be asked to provide an interview for this documentary last year, to speak about the immense medical and scientific studies that have been performed on the Medjugorje visionaries throughout the last three decades – a topic which I have written articles on and which my doctoral dissertation is based on. When I saw the final product – the beauty, the sublimity, the elegance and spiritual power that encapsulated the movie – I was honored to have been a part of such a noble work. “Queen of Peace” is an appropriate title for this documentary, for one feels the touch of the Queen of Peace all over this project. It is a very special work. It is a film of great depth, beauty, spiritual and intellectual prowess. See this film, and allow it to inspire you and uplift your soul; allow it to change you.

For the film’s official website please visit [www.medjugorjefilms.com](http://www.medjugorjefilms.com)

***“A must see documentary... a film of great depth and beauty...”***

● Huge crowds, including people from neighbouring countries, attended the prayer gatherings organised by *The Friends of Mary Queen of Peace* for the four-day visit of Ivan Dragicevic to Lebanon last week. Ivan is one of the Medjugorje visionaries who still has daily apparitions of Our Lady. The event was broadcast live on *Tele Lumiere*, a local Christian TV station, and throughout the world by satellite station *Noursat*, including transmission via the internet.

Sana Nassar, one of the founders of *The Friends of Mary Queen of Peace*, a group that promotes pilgrimages to Medjugorje, revealed that more than 55,000 people from Lebanon have travelled to Medjugorje, including nine bishops and more than 400 priests. She added that Ivan's visit signifies that Our Lady wants to spread her message of hope and peace even more widely in "the land of the cedars" which has experienced so much turmoil and violence over the years.

On the first day of his visit, Ivan attended Mass celebrated by his Eminence Patriarch Cardinal Beshara Boutros El-Rahi, at the seat of the Maronite Patriarchate of Antioch and the East, in Bkerke, north of Beirut. The following day he travelled to the shrine of Our Lady of Zahleh (a Christian town in the Bekaa valley) where Mass was celebrated in the Melkite Greek Catholic rite by his Excellency Archbishop Issam Youhanna Darwish. The Basilica of Our Lady of Mantara, in Maghdousheh, south Lebanon was the venue for the third prayer event; it is said that Our Lady used to wait for her Son near the basilica when he was preaching in the territories of Tyre and Sidon. His Excellency Bishop Elie Beshara Haddad presided the Mass in the Greek Catholic or Byzantine rite. The final day of the visit took place in Emar, north Lebanon, in the church of St John the Baptist where Mass was celebrated by his Excellency Bishop Georges Abu Jaoudeh in the Maronite rite.

Looking at this itinerary one can say that Our Lady wanted to bless the four corners of Lebanon by her presence. The programme for each prayer meeting was:

6:00 pm Prayer of the Rosary

6:40 pm Our Lady's Apparition to Ivan,

followed by the prayer of the Magnificat

7:00 pm Mass followed by the procession of the Blessed Sacrament

8:30 pm Ivan's testimony

This is an outline of the main themes Ivan focused on during his visit.

"Praise be Jesus and Mary. Your Excellency, your Eminence, dear priests and friends in Christ, I am very happy to be here with you tonight, happy that I can share with you the most important messages Our Lady has given me. At the beginning of the apparitions, Our Lady said: Dear Children, I want to tell you that God exists. I want you to decide for God. I

## IVAN IN LEBANON



by Renée Namih



want you to put God in the first place in your life.

"We're here tonight to praise our Mother. We are here to find safety, consolation and to surrender our problems and families to her. Mother, pray for us, intercede for each one of us. Mother, carry us all in your heart.

"Please don't look at me as if I was a saint. I'm trying to be better. My conversion didn't happen overnight because I see our Lady. My conversion will last all my life. I need to leave sin behind me every day. I need to open myself to grace, to the Holy Spirit, to accept God's word and live it.

"For the last 31 years, I keep asking myself: Why me? Is there no one else better? Will I be able to accomplish what Our Lady is asking of me? Then one day I asked her these questions. She answered: 'My dear child, I don't always choose the best.' She chose me to be an instrument in her hands and in God's hands. This is a great gift but also a great responsibility.

"In one of her messages, Our Lady said: Dear Children, if you knew how much I love you, you would cry with joy. Such is her love as a Mother; it's a tender and motherly love. She comes to us as the Mother of hope. She holds each one of us in her heart. For the last 31 years, the first words she says are: Dear Children because she is our Mother, she loves us all. No one is rejected by her. There is no message given to a particular country or people; she doesn't say: 'Dear Americans' or 'dear Lebanese' but my dear children.

"She invites all of us to return to God. She invites us to the source, in the same way that Jesus calls us: 'Come to me, you who are overburdened, and I will give you rest'. We have come here to find rest in Jesus, because he is our rest, our peace. We have come to pray for peace in the world, for peace in your country where there is restlessness, so that God give us peace. Our Lady said, Peace,

peace, and only peace. Peace must reign between God and man and between men. Today it is so necessary, in this time we're living. Mother is coming on behalf of the Prince of Peace. She says: Dear Children, if there is no peace in man's heart, if there is no peace in the families, peace cannot reign in the world. That's why I invite you to open yourselves to the gift of peace.

"Today's world cannot give you peace. Presidents of the world cannot give you peace. Peace is only in our God. That's why you need to leave sin behind, you need to pray for peace.

"There is so much restlessness in our families, among the young people. Mother is calling us to pray together for peace. She comes to us as the Mother of the Church, to strengthen the living Church, that's us. We are the living Church, the lungs of the Church."

Dear Children, if you are strong, the Church is going to be strong. I invite you to restore prayer in your families. May each family be a Church. Renew prayer in your family. Put God in the first place in your family.

"She knows that today's families are in crisis, they're wounded, really ill, spiritually ill. The families will be healed if we put God in the centre of our family. Only then we'll have happiness. He is our special friend .

"Mother desires to console us. She brings a divine cure. She comes to give healing to us, to our pains.

"Today more than ever before, the world is in great danger, the danger of self-destruction; the main crisis is the lack of faith, the lack of a prayer. Today's world desires to go to the future without God. There is no longer time in the family for each other, no longer time for parents to spend with their children, for husbands to spend with their wives and wives with their husbands. So many families do not sit together around the table. Through prayer in the family, love and union grow. Through family prayer, we may be spiritually renewed. Our Lady is inviting families, in a special way, to be holy. How many families are experiencing the breakdown of morality. Mother comes to us to lead us out of this darkness. She wants to show us the way of hope. She wants to bring hope to this tired world which has lost hope: Dear Children, I invite you to pray. Do not speak of prayer, but start living prayer. Do not speak of peace, start living peace. There are so many words in this world. I invite you to speak less and work more.

"The world today more than ever before needs to be spiritually healed. Mother comes to us because she's concerned about our salvation: Dear Children I am with you. I come to you because I want you to have peace. I need you. Only with you can I achieve peace. That's why decide for good and fight against evil.

***Fountain of the garden, well of living water, streams flowing down from Lebanon!***

"Mother speaks to us in a simple way. She repeats the same words and doesn't get tired. You mothers, how many times do you have to repeat the same things to your children? Our Mother is doing the same with us for the last 31 years. She hasn't come to punish us, to speak to us about the end of the world or about Jesus' second coming. She comes to give us hope, in the world, in the family.

"She calls us to Holy Mass. Mass should be the centre of our life. In one of her apparitions, we were kneeling before her. She said: Dear children, if one day you have to choose whether to come to me or to holy Mass, always go to holy Mass, where Jesus is giving himself to us. Surrender to him, receive him.

"Our Lady is inviting us to monthly confession, to adore Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament; she's asking priests to renew the adoration of the Blessed Sacrament.

"Our Lady is asking us to pray, especially the Rosary. She invites us to read the Bible, to put the Bible in a visible place. If you read it, Jesus is reborn in your heart.

"Forgive, love one another. In a special way, I invite you to forgive, first to forgive ourselves and then forgive others. When we forgive, we open the way to the Holy Spirit. Without forgiveness we cannot be spiritually healed. Forgiveness is a great gift.

"Pray with the heart, not with the lips, not looking at our watches to see when prayer is finished. Pray out of love and with love, with our whole being. Our prayer is an encounter with Jesus, a conversation with Jesus. Our Lady says, Dear children, let prayer be joy for you. If you want to attend the school of prayer, there are no weekends, no holidays. Dear children, if you want to pray better, you have to pray more. To pray more is a personal decision. To pray better is a grace given to those who pray more. We say there is no time for prayer, no time for family prayer. We don't pray because we think there is no time. Time is not a problem. The problem is love. When

we love something or someone we'll always find time. That's why our Lady invites us a lot to pray. Our Lady wants to wake us all up from this spiritual coma, she wants to strengthen us in faith, in prayer."

There was a pause in Ivan's talk; he closed his eyes and seemed to recollect himself before he spoke again:

"I want to describe to you what happened this evening. The encounter with our Lady cannot be described with my poor words. There are no words to describe her beauty. The most difficult for me is to describe her motherly love. After each encounter, it takes me at least two hours to return to the reality of this world. If you could only see Our Lady, only for one second, I doubt you'll enjoy life on this earth anymore.

"I always prepare with the prayer of the Rosary, which we prayed together tonight. As the time of the apparition grows near I can feel her presence in my heart. When I knelt, that was the time of the apparition. There is always light before she comes, not the light of this world but the light of heaven. I can see this light behind our Lady. I can see a piece of heaven, I can see flowers and hear music. I don't feel time or space.

"When our Lady came to us, she was really happy and joyful. She greeted us with, Praise be Jesus. She laid her hands and prayed over the bishops and priests. Then she prayed for all of you present here, especially the sick. She blessed us all with her motherly blessing and blessed the religious objects you brought. I offered all your intentions and presented to her the sick in a special way.

"She spoke in Aramaic: **Today I want to show you how much I love you. I am sorry I cannot help each one of you understand my love. That's why I ask you, dear children, to pray and totally surrender to God because Satan wants to lead you astray through the problems of daily life and he wants to take the first place in your life. Therefore, dear children, pray**



**without ceasing. Thank you for having responded to my call.**

"After that she prayed again over all the priests present and then she left, in a cross of light saying: **Go in peace, my dear children.**

"I can see our Lady just as I see you, I talk to her just as I talk to you. It's a great gift but also a great responsibility. God has given me a lot. I am aware of this responsibility. To be with her every day is to look to heaven. Our Lady is so beautiful. She wears a grey dress and a white veil. Her eyes are blue, her hair is dark and she has rosy cheeks. She is always floating on a cloud. I am so impressed by her beauty. I asked her once: 'Mother why are you so beautiful?' She answered: My dear child, I am beautiful because I love.

"I hope that you will respond to Our Lady's invitation to accept this responsibility. I hope the good seeds that have been planted have fallen on fertile ground and will bear fruit. I hope that when you go back to your home, you may continue the spiritual renewal. It is a time of responsibility. Let us pray for the evangelisation of the world, let us decide for peace, let us pray with our Mother for peace in the world. Jesus has repeated so many times in the Gospel 'Do not be afraid'. Our Lady also repeats the same words. Only in God we have our peace, our joy and our life. May God bring peace to this country and to your families. God bless you."

On the final day of Ivan's visit, the following message was given: **Dear children, pray for vocations to the priesthood. Pray for the shepherds of the Church. Persevere in your prayers. I, your Mother intercede for you with my Son. Thank you for having responded to my call.**



**Dear children Pray that from your heart would flow a fountain of love to every person...**



## THE LIVING PRESENCE OF LOVE

● This testimony by Anne-Marie Fletcher is in response to the call: “tell us of your journey”. Have you a “Medjugorje encounter” to share with readers of the newsletter, and so bring faith, hope and love to others on their pilgrimage journey? Please consider this opportunity during this ‘Year of Faith’ when we are invited to proclaim and share our faith with “the people of our time”. It can be a sentence, a paragraph or much more, it doesn’t matter about the length. What is important is your witness. Send your witness to [medjugorjeuk@gmail.com](mailto:medjugorjeuk@gmail.com) or to the address shown at the foot of the back page of the newsletter.

● In May 2011, I visited Medjugorje with my cousin for the first time. We travelled independently, booking a Thomson holiday to Dubrovnik and then arranging a two day stay-over via the lovely Zana & Alan at Medjugorje Tours and Travel. I had read about Medjugorje many years before and a member of my parish had given a powerful testimony of his visit in 2006.

While we were visiting, the second of the month apparition to Mirjana occurred. Crowds of pilgrims, vying for a vantage point, reminded me of the crowds following Jesus in biblical times – an unusual sight. I witnessed no outward signs of miracles; the testimony that I have to share is one of profound inner-transformation experienced via the Sacraments.

The most extraordinary occurrence was at the 10am English Mass in St James’ Church, on our first morning after the 8am apparition. We were fortunate enough to have a visiting priest preside over the Mass, who exuded deep faith. He told us that the

first time he had visited Medjugorje his rosary beads had turned gold. He couldn’t see this for himself because he is blind. He joked that the ‘scent of roses’ would have been a better ‘gift’ for him. However, I remember immediately thinking that the rosary beads turning gold was a gift for others, who would see their faith more clearly through him (he had given an illuminating and memorable sermon on suffering).

Although there were other priests offering Communion that day, I felt a strong urge to receive Holy Communion from this blind priest. After receiving the Eucharist, I had planned to pray for a long list of people, but my mind seemed to be completely wiped blank – like a memory stick being swiped clean and replaced. All I could think and say was “thank you”, over and over in my head, with tears streaming down my face.

It is so difficult to explain this experience but at that moment it felt like there was just me standing there – a child of God with no worries or responsibilities at all, no-one’s wife, mother, daughter, sister, friend, co-worker, neighbour; just me in the blissful presence of my Maker.

It was not until I returned home and accompanied my husband to some classes in my parish for non-catholic spouses that I fully realised what had happened to me. In these classes, the priest was trying to explain ‘transubstantiation’ and, to be quite honest, the non-catholic spouses looked liked they’d glazed over. It all sounded too theoretical, even to my ears, too ‘out there’. It was then it struck me – full force – that I had experienced in the Eucharist the living reality of this Catholic doctrine in full measure; in short, I had felt the awesome and overpowering loving presence of Our Lord. I

felt compelled to give testimony to this although my heart was pounding so violently I thought it my rip out of my chest.

I had also gone to confession (outside on a bench!) that evening in Medjugorje. I had not been for many years and I was quite uncomfortable at the prospect, feeling exposed in every way. This was quite a disturbing experience for me in that, after confession, I felt very odd for some minutes – like I was on a boat in a storm with no hand rail to grab on to, or like I was one of those ‘snow-shaker toys’, all shaken up in a flurry and waiting for everything to settle back. I actually felt like jumping under a duvet and hiding from the world! The deep sense of peace came later as we went to Apparition Hill and the Blue Cross, lit by candlelight, and prayed the rosary. I wonder now if what I experienced was the transforming power of the Holy Spirit. Certainly, when I returned home I spent many months feeling ‘out of place’ trying to fit the new me into my old life and yearning for that sense of deep peace again. Prayer, the Rosary, Confession, Mass, Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament became my routes to finding the peace I’d tasted in Medjugorje.

A most unusual after-effect of my pilgrimage on my return was, initially, I found that I could not ‘take in’ any reading material related to work or even reading for pleasure. This was somewhat worrying, and yet I simply devoured any reading material related to prayer, Scripture, Our Lady, the Saints, the Pope. Amazingly, my brain simply drank it all in! I felt like I had been enrolled in ‘The School of Mary’.

After a few weeks I confided this new, inner-world to my husband with some trepidation, fearful that he might reject me in some way. Instead he accepted it all and is ever-loving and supportive even though he does not fully understand. Fortunately, I am now able to read widely again and have rediscovered my place. However, I now make time to use my experience to compile and edit articles for my parish magazine, exploring traditional Catholic themes and their relevance to the busy, modern person. I find that I love Mass deeply and find great comfort in prayer.

I have received many graces and blessings along the way, which I am humbly grateful for, but it has also been difficult (the daily conversion). Many pilgrims crave to see an apparition, yet I realise how difficult it must be for the visionaries each day, to return to the duties and responsibilities of this world when they have experienced a piece of paradise. They need our prayers to strengthen them.

• Anne-Marie Fletcher

*“I felt I had been enrolled in the ‘School of Mary’...”*

## 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](mailto:medjugorjeuk@gmail.com) or telephone 0121 429 8349

● Information and help on starting a prayer group can be found at: [www.medjugorjecalling.com](http://www.medjugorjecalling.com)



## WHY SO MANY?

by Bernard Gallagher

● One of the questions most asked about the Medjugorje phenomenon is: "Why so many messages?"

The question is best directed to Our Lady herself who, on March 21st 1985, said: "Dear children, I wish to keep on giving messages and therefore I call you today to accept and live my messages..."

So why then does Our Lady wish to keep on giving messages?

In the same message she provides the answer: God grants to every person the ability to recognise good and evil. I am calling you to the light which you should carry to all people who are in darkness. People who are in darkness daily come into your homes. Dear children, give them the light! Thank you for having responded to my call.

Our Lady bears the Word of God, the word that brings light to the world in its darkness. Our Lady is faithful, she lives in faith and through grace imparts the light of faith to her children. She says: "Only through faith will the Word of God be light in this darkness which desires to envelop us." (October 2, 2007)

The Holy Father spoke about faith and light among darkness during a recent homily at the concluding Mass of the Synod of Bishops. He talked of the blindness and dark world of Bartimaeus and how Jesus brought healing light to the blind beggar.

*"Bartimaeus [...] His is the last miraculous healing that Jesus performs before his passion, and it is no accident that it should be that of a blind person, someone whose eyes have lost the light. We know from other texts too that the state of blindness has great significance in the Gospels. It represents man who needs God's light, the light of faith, if he is to know reality truly and to walk the path of life. It is essential to acknowledge one's blindness, one's need for this light, otherwise*

*one could remain blind for ever."* (cf. Jn 9 : 39-41)

[...] This biblical passage has something particular to say to us as we grapple with the urgent need to proclaim Christ anew in places where the light of faith has been weakened, in places where the fire of God is more like smouldering cinders, crying out to be stirred up, so that they can become a living flame that gives light and heat to the whole house.

As the Church sets out on its Year of Faith promoting the New Evangelisation, we can be certain that Our Lady walks with us in this shared mission. She spoke of this mission to the visionary Mirjana on October 2, 2007 and said:

*"Dear children, I call you to accompany me in my mission of God with an open heart and complete trust. The path on which I lead you towards God is difficult but persistent, and in the end we will all rejoice in God. Therefore, my children, do not stop praying for the gift of faith. Only faith in God's word will be the light in this darkness which desires to envelop us. Do not be afraid, I am with you. Thank you."*

After conveying Our Lady's message to the people, Mirjana added that at the end of the apparition she saw an intense, strong light as Heaven was opening, and Our Lady entering into Heaven through that light.

Returning to the question, "Why so many messages?", we can begin to understand that the messages are given to bring light to those in darkness. In a world where darkness is so prevalent we are in need of much light – even everlasting light. Each message from Our Lady brings new light.

*"A Church bathed in light, in peace and joy is the gift which the Madonna wishes to give to this world, so that it may find once again the ways of the Lord. We are really living in an extraordinary time of grace." • Fr Livio Fanzaga, director of Radio Maria*

**Each message from Our Lady brings new light...**



## NO STOPPING MAEBH

● A booking cancellation turned into a blessing and joy for Maebh Carlin when she was invited at a week's notice as a replacement to join a pilgrimage group from Lurgan travelling to Medjugorje for the 31st anniversary of the apparitions last summer.

For the 20-year-old from Co Armagh it was yet another step on her faith journey and recovery from a road traffic accident a year earlier.

In August 2011 Maebh and some friends

had travelled to Spain to attend the World Youth Festival. Tragically she was badly injured on the third day when she was knocked down by a car while crossing the road. Maebh spent the next two months in bed and was not able to move. Nevertheless she was still hopeful she could make a good recovery and continue with her ambition to be a ballet dancer. That was until the doctors told her she would never dance again. After receiving this shattering news Maebh was unable to speak for the next four days. And then she started writing...

"I felt the presence of the Holy Spirit within me," said Maebh "and wrote 200 pages of meditations and on the blessings I had received through my condition. I started to receive strength through prayer."

It has been over a year since Maebh's accident and she is starting to walk again. "I feel that every step I make is a step closer to God. I know this is God's plan," said Maebh.

One of the fruits of Maebh's recovery is that she has started a prayer group that now has more than 80 members. She has also formed *Esperanza Ministries*, a group of 30 young people committed to spreading the Gospel through music and song.

The group has recently made a CD of songs and hymns and the proceeds from this will go towards funding its visit to the Medjugorje Youth Festival in August 2013.

The group gather and provide the music ministry for people of all ages every Monday in the Lurgan Adoration Chapel from 8 to 9pm.

For further information about *Esperanza Ministries* and the CD, contact Maebh on 07709 805349.

## A CHRISTMAS POEM

● This Christmas verse was composed by John Astbury from Penkridge in Staffordshire, who first went on pilgrimage to Medjugorje in 1989.

*May all your hopes and dreams come true  
This great and glorious day.  
This Christmas story we renew  
To drive all cares away.*

*God's promise came to all mankind  
Through a simple Jewish maid.  
Child Jesus in her arms entwined  
And in a stable laid*

*This hope to all became the truth  
With a choice of life sublime.  
Our Saviour's life and death the proof  
Until the end of time.*

*His resurrection saved us all,  
Our sins by God forgiven.  
So all who answer to this call  
May share the joys of Heaven.*

## CHRISTMAS GREETINGS

*Wishing all readers  
and benefactors  
a peaceful Christmas,  
and good health for 2013.*



### Happy pilgrims in Medjugorje...

Bernadette Losasso's Norwich prayer group on the steps of St James' church and, below, Ann Molloy's group from Manchester, joined by visionary Vicka at a local orphanage near to Medjugorje.

Have a photo you would like to share with readers? send to: [medjugorjeuk@gmail.com](mailto:medjugorjeuk@gmail.com)

High resolution files are best.



**PRAYERS REQUESTS...** Maura Rego RIP, Maureen Cowell, Lucy Mannion, Barbara Webster, Fr Seamus Hetherington, Paul Byrne (RIP), Irene Byrne, Maureen Forrest & family, Nicky & John Carroll, Mifter, Harkin family, Colm O'Donnell, Reggie Donnelly, Anne & Peter Ashworth, Faloon family, M. Madden, Frances Murnaghan, Lydia, Katherine Wall

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS...** Marguerite O'Kane and St Martin's Prayer Group, Tony & Anne Penman, Renée Namih, North West London Medjugorje Centre, MCF, Greg & Pat Kelly, Janet Jones, Mary Gallagher, BR, M Ryan, Michael Webster, Mick O'Donoghue, Betty Luke, Margaret Evans, A, Pier Luigi Baffoni, Margaret Hodgson, Jan Emerson, Pauline Thaha, Anne Reilly, Madeline Scott, M Lynch, Kath Wittaker, Electa Almeida, Michael Dalton, Gerry McParlane, Reggie Donnelly, Helen Hursthouse, Patrick Holloway, David & Myrna Harwar, Decan Walsh, Eileen Kilminster, Angela Callon, Bryan & Maureen Ingleby, Eileen Tiene, Maureen Cowell, Daniel Klimek, Anne-Marie Fletcher, Marguerite O'Kane, Medjugorje Information Centre.

visit... [www.crownofstars.blogspot.com](http://www.crownofstars.blogspot.com)