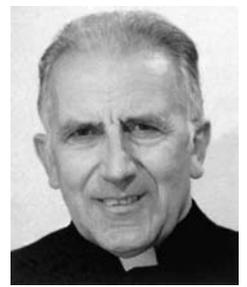




Echo of Medjugorje

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Fr. Angelo Mutti
founder Echo of Medjugorje

Message of 25 March 2014:

“Dear Children, I call you again: Begin the battle against sin as in the first days! Go to confession, and decide for holiness. Through you God's love will flow throughout the world, and peace will reign in your hearts, and God's blessing will fill you. I am with you, and I intercede before my Son for you all. Thank you for responding to my call.”

Bearing God's Love

Our Blessed Mother calls us to fight against sin as in the first days of Medjugorje. We are being offered a new call, a new beginning; for indeed, the decision for God must be complete, so that there can be a new beginning, a new birth into the new life: *“In truth I tell you, unless one is born from above, he cannot see the kingdom of God,”* the Lord Jesus says to Nicodemus (Jn 3:3).

The time of Lent is a suitable time to be born in the Spirit (Jn 3:6); the way is not the ones indicated by the mass media, but by and of the Sacraments which gushed forth from the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus Christ. And beware not to seek His Presence elsewhere. Beware of appearances! *“So if anyone tells you, ‘There he is, out in the wilderness,’ do not go out; or, ‘Here he is, in the inner rooms,’ do not believe it”* (Mt 24:26).

Let us pay heed to Mary: Go and confess, and decide for holiness! And even though Our Lady says, *“Through you God's love will flow throughout the world, and peace will reign in your hearts, and God's blessing will fill you,”* we need not think of grandiose things, or allow ourselves to be frightened, thinking that we are to convert the world.

What we are asked to do, instead, is to bear God's Love within ourselves and witness it to those around us. Do not think that you are expected to generate great streams! We are being asked to be a little vessel so that God's great river of Love can be poured out onto the world and into the hearts of others.

Deciding for holiness begins by surrendering ourselves up to God with trust! So, with trust, give ourselves over to the Heart of Jesus who loves us.

Peace and joy in Jesus and Mary!



Message to Mirjana, 2 APRIL 2014:

“Dear Children, with motherly love I desire helping you, that your life of prayer and penance be a sincere attempt of drawing closer to my Son and to his divine light; and that you know how to detach yourselves from sin. Every prayer, every Mass and every fast is an attempt at drawing closer to my Son, a return to his glory and a refuge from sin. They are the way of a new union between the good Father and his children. Therefore, my dear children, with hearts open and full of love, call upon the name of the Heavenly Father, that he may illuminate you with the Holy Spirit. Through the Holy Spirit you will become a wellspring of God's love. All those who do not know my Son, all those thirsting for the love and peace of my Son, will drink from this wellspring. Thank you.

Pray for your shepherds. I pray for them and I desire that they always feel the blessing of my motherly hands and the support of my motherly heart.”

No one should feel excluded from this message. The Father's arms are always open to those who desire returning to Him. He doesn't want anyone to be lost; and if it seems that he is late in keeping his promise it is so all have the chance to repent (cf. 2Pt 3:9). For the same reason, Mary comes to Medjugorje: to bring us closer to her Son and to his divine light, and remove us from sin. **But this cannot be done without our own consent,** because God respects our freedom even to the point of letting himself be crucified! This unthinkable, humanly absurd Sacrifice makes it possible for man to be reunited with his Creator. *Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God* (1 Jn 4:15). From sinners to apostles of Mary: this is what we are called to become.

Message, 25 April 2014:

“Dear Children, open your hearts up to the grace God grants you through me, as a flower would to the warm sunrays.

Be prayer and love for all those who are far from God and who are far from His love! I am with you and I intercede for you all before my Son Jesus, and I love you immensely.

Thank you for responding to my call.”

Be Prayer and Love!

As at other times in the past, Mary has compared the opening of the heart to divine grace, with the blossoming of nature in spring.

It is beautiful imagery which Our Lady uses to awaken our hearts to enable us to see how we need to invest also in the reality of life that transcends death, and not just in the material existence.

Our Lady's desire is that we allow our hearts to open up to the grace of God in the manner that a flower opens up in response to the warmth of the sun. Our Lady came to Medjugorje - and indeed is still coming - to tell us that the grace of God is eternal life; and to inspire us to BE prayer and love for all those who are far from God and his love. She doesn't say, *“Pray!”*, but ***“Be prayer!”***; She doesn't say *“to love!”* but to ***“Be love!”***

To do this we need to let ourselves be **transformed by divine grace** so as to attract others who are far from God and from his love. None of us, however, are able to know who is far from God and his love, therefore we must be prayer and love for all.

But are we capable of such a thing? We certainly wouldn't be if it depended on our own strength. We know, however, that Mary is with us, intercedes for us and loves us immensely. So it is up to us to surrender ourselves into her care. Then, what we cannot do, will be done by divine grace!

(Comments to messages by Nuccio Quattrocchi)

As children before a gift

A healthy Christian is a joyful Christian, even in times of sorrow and tribulation, said Pope Francis at Mass in Casa Santa Marta on 23 May 2014.

The Christian vocation is this: **to remain in the love of God**, i.e., to breathe, to live of that oxygen. Remain in the love of God. And what is His **LOVE** like? *'As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you'*. It is a **love that comes from the Father**. The loving relationship between Him and the Father is also a relationship of love between Him and us. He asks us to remain in this love, which comes from the Father. (And) the sign that we remain in the love of Jesus is keeping the commandments; for it is not enough to just follow them. When we remain in his love, the Commandments follow on their own, out of love.

Pope Francis turned his attention to **JOY**, saying: "Joy is a sign of the Christian. A Christian without joy is either not a Christian or he is sick. There's no other type! He is not doing well health-wise! **A healthy Christian is a joyful Christian.** I once said that there are sour-faced Christians; always with these long faces! Some souls are also like this, this is bad! These are not Christians. A Christian without joy is not Christian. Joy is like the seal of a Christian. Even in pain, tribulations, even in persecutions."

"Peace, love and joy: the three words that Jesus left us with. Who gives us this peace, this love? Who gives us joy? It is the Holy Spirit! [He is] the great forgotten one in our lives! I would like to ask you - but I will not, eh! - how many of you pray to the Holy Spirit? **He is the great forgotten one**, the great forgotten one! Yet He is the gift, the gift that gives us peace, that teaches us to love and fills us with joy. Let us pray for the grace that the Lord guard the Holy Spirit in us!"

PEACE I GIVE YOU

In his homily at Mass on 20th May, Pope Francis commented on the Lord's promise of **PEACE** (Jn 14:27-31), asking what type of peace it is the world gives.

One type of peace the world offers is "the peace of **wealth**" which leads one to think: "I'm at peace because I have everything organized, I have enough to live on for my entire life, I don't have to worry!". This idea of peace begins with the conviction: "Don't worry, you won't have problems because you have so much money!". However, Jesus himself reminds us "not to trust in this peace, for with great realism he tells us: look, there are thieves, eh! And the thieves can steal your riches!". This is why "the peace that

money gives you is not permanent". The Pope added: let us not forget that metal corrodes ... a crash in the market and all your money is gone." The peace which money gives, he said, is therefore "not a secure" but only "a superficial and temporal peace."

Another peace the world gives is power. It leads us to think: "I have power, I am secure, I command this, I command that, I am respected: I am

in peace". This was Herod's situation, but "when the Magi arrived and told him that the King of Israel had been born", at that very moment "his peace immediately vanished." It only confirms that "the peace of power does not work: A coup takes it away from you immediately!"

A third type of worldly peace is vanity, which leads us to tell ourselves: "I am esteemed. I am a person that all the world regards and when I go to receptions all greet me." However, the Pope said, this too is "not a definitive peace, for today you are esteemed and tomorrow you will be insulted! Think about what happened to Jesus," he said. "The same people who were saying one thing on Palm Sunday, on Good Friday were saying another," concluding that "the peace of vanity doesn't work either, because it is temporary, superficial and not secure."

Instead the peace that Jesus gives is a Person; it is the **Holy Spirit**," the Pope said. "On the day of the Resurrection," in the Upper Room, Jesus' greeting to his disciples was: "*Peace be with you, receive the Holy Spirit.*" Therefore, Jesus' peace "is a Person, it is a great gift", because "when the Holy Spirit is in our heart, no one can take away our peace. No one! **It is lasting peace!**"

In the face of so great a gift, "**our task is to guard this peace**," he said. It is "a great peace, a peace that is not mine: it belongs to another Person who gives it to me as a gift, another Person who is in my heart, who accompanies me throughout my life."

"How do we receive the Holy Spirit's peace?" First "we receive it in Baptism, for the Holy Spirit comes, and also in Confirmation, for the Holy Spirit comes". **And then "we are to receive it as a child received a gift"**. In fact, "Jesus said: unless you receive the kingdom of God like a little child, you will not enter into the kingdom of heaven". Thus, "**one receives the peace of Jesus without conditions** and with an open heart: as a great gift". And "this is the peace of the Holy Spirit."

To possible **objections** that "there are so many problems about," the Pontiff replied with Jesus' words: "*Do not let your hearts be troubled, neither let them*



Let us propose to invoke the Holy Spirit every day! Will you do it? ... I can't hear you! Every day! ... And so the Holy Spirit will bring us closer to Jesus." Pope Francis 15-05-2013

be afraid." In fact, it is the Lord who comforts us: "If you have this peace of the Spirit, you have the Spirit within you and be aware of this, do not let your hearts be troubled, be secure!"

St Paul also "told us that in order to enter into the Kingdom of heaven it is necessary to pass through much **tribulation**." Experience confirms that "we all have many of them, both great and small. All of us!". But Jesus' peace assures us: "Let not your hearts be troubled". In fact, "the presence of the Spirit enables our hearts to be at peace, aware but not anaesthetized, with that peace that only the presence of God can give."

If we want to know where we find our peace, the Pope suggested that "we ask ourselves **several questions**: Do I believe that the Holy Spirit is within me? Do I believe that the Lord has given him to me? Do I receive him as a gift, as a child receives a gift, with an open heart? Do I guard the Holy Spirit's presence within me so as not to sadden him?"

However, the Pope said, there is also a question that signals the **opposite**: "Do I prefer the peace that the world gives me, the peace offered by money, power, vanity?" He added: "These forms of peace are always **accompanied by fear**: the fear that they will end. **Instead, "Jesus' peace** is definitive: we only need to receive it as children and guard it." The Pope concluded with a simple prayer: "May the Lord help us to understand these things."

www.vaticannews

NOVENA to the HOLY SPIRIT

Breathe in me, o Holy Spirit,
that I may think what is holy.

Guide me, o Holy Spirit,
that I may realise what is holy.
Attract me to you, o Holy Spirit,
that I may love what is holy.

Strengthen me, o Holy Spirit,
that I may defend what is holy.

Defend me, o Holy Spirit,
that I may never lose what is holy.

Before the great figures of John Paul II and John XXIII, recently proclaimed saints by the Church, we are called to reflect on the meaning of **holiness**.



Pope Francis, in his homily of the Canonization Mass, said that **the Church is carried forth by the saints**. In the life of the saints, in their battles, examples and virtues (beginning with their fidelity to Christ) it is clearly seen how holiness is not a principle or an idea for a reference point and not even a distant and limited aspiration.

Even in the teachings of the messages of Medjugorje we see how holiness is a process which is both serious and profound, which in the messages is referred to as a "way" or a "journey" (25.6.2002; 25.3.2003; 25.6.2005), and thus is a way of living.

In the messages following the great Jubilee Year of 2000, this aspect became even more evident. Also John Paul II had placed the prospect of holiness as the foundation of the pastoral planning at the start of the new millennium. This choice, he explained, was filled with consequences: "It implies the conviction that, since Baptism is a true entry into the holiness of God through incorporation into Christ and the indwelling of his Spirit, it would be a **contradiction to settle for a life of mediocrity**, marked by a minimalist ethic and a shallow religiosity." (*Novo Millennio Ineunte* 31).

The **ecclesial dimension** of the message of Medjugorje has always helped us comprehend that **on this way we do not walk alone**, but that there are models and teachers for us to follow: "Imitate the lives of the saints" (25.10.2004), for they are a great stimulus to our own faith, helping us to be resolute and to undertake the way of holiness. The Church knows this only too well; she knows that the saints act as her intercessors: they are men and women who have translated the wealth of divine life into human existence, and for this reason they were given to work miracles with the power of God.

And for some centuries, this was the criteria for the Church which determined the process for canonization, later substituted with the consideration of personal virtues lived heroically. **Holiness is a gift from God**; but it is also a **task**, and therefore, it must be developed; it requires fidelity, self-donation, love of God and of neighbour. It can be hidden, or perhaps is expressed with the

eloquence of witness of the martyrs, and is animated by the power of the Spirit and by one's own awareness of his or her faith and Christian vocation.

Our Lady's teaching on this matter (on holiness; on the need to be holy) is also one of the strong points in the Magisterium of the Popes who have often reminded us how **the witness of the saints is what produces the most fruit** and gives fertility to the history of the Church. Benedict XVI said: "The saints and the blessed did not doggedly seek their own happiness; they simply wanted to give themselves because the light of Christ had shone upon them. Only from the saints, only from God does true revolution come, the definitive way to change the world." [Youth Vigil, Cologne 2005]

The life of the saints is therefore the greatest missionary strength that the Church possesses, according to the definition of Mission given by John Paul II in the document *Redemptoris Missio*: "We are missionaries above all because of what we are as a Church whose innermost life is unity in love, even before we become missionaries in word or deed." [RM 23]

It is clear that holiness is not only for the great men and women of faith who have been canonized and beatified and are thus more easily contemplated by all the Church who prays for their intercession and follows their example. The messages define the journey to personal holiness as the high degree of ordinary Christian life, where this "ordinariness" might be little in the eyes of the world, but when lived out with holiness, it can generate the greatest positive revolutions in history.

Indeed, **holiness implies a "decision"** (25.5.2006) which is **fruit of the Holy Spirit in us** (25.6.2005) and which leads one to "not delay" (25.10.2003) and to "work on one's personal conversion. Dear Children, only this way can you become witnesses of peace and of Jesus' love in the world!" (25.2.2002). Moreover, Pope John Paul II points out that this transformation - or "training" - for saintliness, is a: "[...] holiness [which] calls for a Christian life distinguished above all in the art of prayer." [NMI 32]

This connection between prayer and holiness is one of the main elements in the message of Medjugorje. Central to it is the experience of the saints, i.e. their union with Christ, their closeness to his Sacred Heart and the Immaculate Heart of Mary, which is possible only through prayer: In prayer it is possible to develop the dialogue with Christ who makes us his intimate friends: "Remain in me and I in you" (Jn 15:4).

This reciprocity is the very essence, the soul of the Christian life.

Marco Vignati, Comunità Casa di Maria, Roma

After the apparition at the Blue Cross area of Podbrdo, Ivan referred the following to those present: "Our Lady was joyful and happy, and as usual, she greeted us with: **"Praised be Jesus, my dear children!"**. She then prayed with her hands outstretched for a time over all those present, especially the sick.



Our Lady then said: **"Dear Children, Also today I especially call you to pray for my intentions, for my plans which I desire fulfilling with the world. Pray, dear children, and be perseverant in prayer! Your Mother prays with you and always intercedes for all of you before her Son. Thank you, dear children, also today for responding to my call."**

Our Lady then gave her motherly blessing to all those present, and to the holy objects brought with them for that purpose. Ivan said that he commended to her intercession all those present, their needs, their families and in particular, the sick who were present. Our Lady continued to pray for a time over all those present. Then, as usual, she left in the sign of the Cross, saying: **"Go in peace, my dear children!"**

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"Conversion, Conversion, Conversion!"

The thing that Our Lady insists on the most is **conversion**. She tells us: **Turn away from sin!** I must say that this is what I find most striking. Jesus for first had said that he came into the world to ask us to turn away from sin: I can imagine him with a powerful voice saying: **"Turn away from sin! The kingdom of God has come unto you!"** On that day Jesus gave start to the Gospel, and he told us that God was asking for our "conversion" and he wanted conversion so that God could reign, and that we were to make it possible for him to reign by changing our lives, and living according to God's commandments; by doing not our will, but his will. Mary, who speaks to us, speaks earnestly and with immense affection, and she basically says for us to trust in God!

God will not take away what is ours, but God definitely wants to give us what is his, which is so much more: it is greater, more beautiful, richer, more

consistent, more durable.

Our Lady says that we cannot live of earthly and ephemeral things alone. She came to remind us that eternity is real; that God is real. Our Lady can see the wonderful things of God, and she wants us to be part of them. God wants this too! This is very important for us to know! It is so important for our own final destiny, on us being aware of God's infinite goodness and of his plan for mankind. So how can we allow ourselves to ignore these things? Our Lady has warned us. She, the Queen of Peace, has come to bring us the gift which God himself offers us.

Excerpt from "Diario del Pellegrino" by Fr. Massimo Rastrelli S.J.

Echo fully relies on donations.

Our prayers and heartfelt thanks to all who are instruments of providence for Echo, enabling us to continue to help our blessed Mother reach out to her children.

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Millennio").

We of the Echo **are especially grateful to the Queen of Peace** for the unexpected gift of this precious spiritual paternity.

Editorial Team



HOW GREAT IS THE LOVE OF OUR MOTHER!

Fr. Massimo Rastrelli S.J.

I am happy to extend my warm greetings to the **splendid people of Medjugorje** through this paper, Echo of Medjugorje. I fondly remember Fr. Angelo Mutti. Together we believed and we gave thanks. I give thanks to God for the immense gift of the Queen of Peace.

To all I say: how great is the love of our heavenly mother! How great is her love for us! We absolutely must believe in this love, which she says is of God, of our wonderful Father!

The Queen of Peace tells us: God is Father. God is good. God wants us saved. And she has told us something incredible; Our Lady says to us: **"... you are important."** Each of you is personally important for me and for God - she says.

Will we give her and to God our Father the joy of believing in these words, or will we continue to live sad and moanful lives, not believing in God's greatness, but absorbed by our own inner darkness, by our own day-to-day problems?

Several times the Queen of Peace has told us, with sadness: **"...You do not understand, you do not do what I ask of you."**

I greet you and bless you all!

*Fr. Massimo Rastrelli S.J.
Naples, 13 May 2014*

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Mantua, May 2014

Resp. Ing. Lanzani - Tip. DIPRO (Roncade TV)

UNEXPECTED GIFT FOR ECHO

With this edition of Echo, we begin a special collaboration with Fr. Massimo Rastrelli S.J.

Fr. Rastrelli has been visiting Medjugorje since its early years, and thus is an authoritative witness of the grace of Medjugorje, even for high ranking persons in the Catholic Church, making him a valid reference point since he has exercised discernment of the facts and of the meaning of the messages for the Church for the last few decades.

Fr. Rastrelli is also **actively involved in missionary work** in the outer suburban area of the city of Naples which he began when he was parish priest at the Chiesa dell'Immacolata at Gesù Nuovo in Naples. His anti-usury project has been adopted nation-wide to **fight the phenomenon of usury**. He also founded the Anti-Usuary Foundation named after Saint Giuseppe Moscati, in Naples, the model of which has been used by 26 other Anti-Usuary foundations within the Italian territory.

Fr. Massimo Rastrelli **has also written many successful publications**, and he is highly appreciated not only for his theological writings, but also for his books in which he describes the experience of being a pilgrim of Medjugorje (such as: "Medjugorje, speranza del Terzo

Message to MIRJANA

2 MAY 2014

"Dear Children, I, your mother, am with you for your own good, for your needs and your personal awareness. The Heavenly Father has given you the freedom to decide for yourselves and to become aware for yourselves. I desire helping you. I desire being a mother to you, a teacher of the truth, so that in the simplicity of an open heart, you might know the immeasurable purity and the light which comes from it and which dispels the darkness, the light which brings hope.

I, my children, comprehend your pain and suffering. Who more than a mother is able to comprehend you! And you, my children? Few are those who comprehend and follow me. Great is the number of those who get lost, of those who have not known the truth in my Son. Therefore, my apostles, pray and act! Carry forth the light and do not lose hope! I am with you. In a special way I am with your pastors; with a motherly heart I love them and protect them, because they lead you to Heaven which my Son has promised. Thank you."