

ECHO OF MARY #76

Our Lady's message of 25 July 1990:

Dear Children, Today I invite you to peace. I have come here as the Queen of Peace and I desire to endow you with my motherly peace. Dear Children, I love you and I desire to bring all of you to the peace which only God gives and which enriches every heart. I invite you to become bearers and witnesses of my peace to this peaceless world. May peace rule in the whole world which is without peace and which longs for peace. I bless you with my motherly blessing. Thank you for responding to my call.

APPEAL FOR PEACE JUST FEW DAYS BEFORE WAR THREAT

The main theme of the message is peace. Peace is on the lips of all men, but on Our Lady's lips its meaning is deepened. She comes as the mother of peace, and at the same time, She underlines that the entire world is without peace and that peace is ardently desired by the world. When we received this message we immediately thought of our own country (Yugoslavia) because of the agitation and tension within it. Then, confessing and speaking with the people, we discovered that truly the world is without peace and that it ardently desires peace.

To grasp at what peace means, we must take the steps indicated by Our Lady. First of all, Our Lady presents Herself as a servant, as the Mother who brings the peace of God and who takes us to God. It is very important to understand that Our Lady does not substitute God, but with Her maternal peace She takes us to God, Who alone can give peace.

It is very important to understand this. While there are changes in Europe on a political and economic level, we believers, in particular, we, the followers of Our Lady who has appeared, have to be convinced in our souls that God is peace and that only God can give peace; furthermore, in this Europe that tends towards changes, we have to indicate the way to God with the help of Our Lady.

Then it is up to us to enter into the depths of this peace so that peace does not remain just a word. Our Lady wants us to be a sign and thus in the message, She invites us to become bearers and witnesses of Her peace in this unpeaceful world. In order to become bearers and witnesses of peace, however, we must try to grasp at the deep meaning of Christ's peace: first of all, live this call, i.e. the birth of Christ in us, then go right to the very depth of Christ's passion, to then fathom the resurrection.

If Christ does not rise in us, in our suffering, we cannot be bearers of peace. Only those who have gone through trials and have remained faithful to Christ, are full of peace, full of joy, full of light, and these persons can then bring the peace of Christ to others. This is why Our Lady invites us to fathom the mystery of the Eucharist, of death and resurrection.

Do not let this remain just a word, but each one of us must live the Risen Christ in our own trials and suffering so that the depths of our souls will be filled with His Divine Peace. This is real peace, the peace of God that goes beyond every barrier, beyond every boundary.

This is why Our Lady invites us to be bearers and witnesses. When we have really grasped at the depth of the Eucharistic mystery, that is, when we live the resurrection in our suffering and in that of the world, we are already open to the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit comes down on us and He is the witness of Himself and of the Trine and Only God. In this way we become bearers and witnesses.

For me, the key to this message is the call for us, followers of Our Lady, to grasp at the depth of the Eucharistic mystery, and to live death and resurrection. We see much suffering in the world, much darkness and many difficulties. In the midst of these difficulties we must be light, peace, joy and love. In this way we are witnesses and bearers of peace and in this way the Divine Peace continues His work in the world. This is why we pray, because God's peace comes as a gift, He does not throw it down upon us, but he who searches for this gift receives it.

LET US PRAY: Oh Lord, You are our peace, You, the Risen One, have dispelled the darkness. When the world crucified You and You died, You were not dead, as You were with the Father and surrendered to the Father, You won over hell, You won over death and You gave us perennial peace.

"YOUTH 2000" - FESTIVAL OF THE EUCHARIST!

5,000 young people from the West and East were present for the festival.

Fr. Tomislav played high stakes and the young people responded beyond all hope.

Adoration was held in the huge tent set up for the occasion. The festival, held from 31 July to 6 August, drew 5,000 young people from around the world. Participants were from England, Scotland, Ireland, Canada, the US, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Australia, Singapore, Austria, Germany, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Italy, Spain, Portugal, France, Belgium, Holland, Mexico and Puerto Rico. Language barriers were overcome by simultaneous translations from Italian into German, English and French, and sometimes into Spanish and Magyar.

Something peculiar to festivals and which dominated the assembly was the Blessed Sacrament: Jesus in the Holy Eucharist was placed at the centre of the tent, on an altar made of bricks and surrounded by candles - present day and night for the duration of the festival.

Right from the first day, Father Tomislav was excellent in calmly and surely instilling his experiences on the Eucharist into the hearts of the many young people, who resisted under the heat for 6 days - from 9.00 a.m. to 1.00 p.m. with only one 15 minute break. They then returned again in the afternoon for Adoration and other meetings.

The way Fr. Tomislav conducted the week (so intense it was astonishing, yet so deeply felt that it was not tiring) is quite surprising if one thinks that the young people of these days seek out only pleasure. But Fr. Tomislav challenged them: "I have asked much because I love you very much," and he invited them to experience the living Jesus by asking them to organize non-stop Adoration so they could receive His grace.

Every morning began with half an hour of Adoration, with brief invocations to Jesus. A group of people formed a choir which was passionately directed by young Irish priest Fr.

Liam, and the songs turned out to be a determining part in creating the atmosphere for Adoration and in reaching the aim of joyfully and fully opening the heart to God and to others. They greatly helped one live the mystery of God's love and they were impressed into the very inner of souls until they became a murmur, beating together with the heart. We all remember: "Oh, oh, oh, Adoramus Te, Domine; Jesus I believe; Laudate Dominum omnes gentes; Vive Jesus el Senor; Alleluia risuscito; Ave Maria gratia plena; and that lovely song that expresses our trust in Jesus: " Trouver dans ma vie ta pr»sence, tenir une lampe allum»e, choisir d'habiter la confiance, aimer et se savoir aim», " yes, the conclusion of living with Jesus, was to choose to trust God, to love and to know we are loved. The general theme was "Adoration: the living Church adores the living God and is renewed."

Two memorable vigils for the Feast of Our Lady and of the Transfiguration:

On Saturday, at 4.00 p.m., "operation throw away that which smells" began - i.e. confession. The confessions were open, exhaustive, tearful and joyful; a grace from Our Lady. In every language and every corner there were about 50 priests, available to listen to the confessions of the young people and immerse them in God's mercy.

The first vigil began in the tent at 10.00 p.m. on Saturday, in the dark, followed by a procession to the cross placed outside where everyone lit their candles and burnt their past, written on letters and offered to Jesus. Still in procession around the church, everyone sang and recited the glorious mysteries of the rosary, the Hail Mary's were being recited in not less than 20 languages! The youth prayed for each other, whilst holding up a big wooden rosary, donated by the Poles, which was divided into 15 parts to make up the 15 mysteries. These young people walked around the alter as they held onto the rosary to demonstrate their desire for a world united by peace.

Then at about mid-night, the Easter of Resurrection was celebrated: Christ is Risen, and bringing out of the sepulchre our sins. On the banquet table: the best bread in the world! The highlight of the feast was Our Lady's birthday which was celebrated by a gathering full of joy and light.

On Sunday the 5th August each went to their respective Holy Masses according to language. In the afternoon, on the alter behind the church, the concert in honour of Our Lady was greatly appreciated by everyone; with Fr. Slavko directing the crowd and Fr. Liam leading the songs together with the choir, and the large crowd in front singing along to those beautiful songs which had accompanied the meetings all week long. It was an extremely joyful moment and finished at 6.00 p.m. as it was then time for the rosary. That wasn't the end of the day, however. At 10.00 p.m. everyone went to Mount Krizevac for a second vigil. The top of the mount was covered by young people. There were groups who prayed, or sang all night long and many, under their blankets, listened and rested. At dawn, Fr. Tomislav began the Rosary and then at 5.30 a.m. Holy Mass began, in front of the big cross, as a seal to the week of grace. Fr. Tomislav reminded everyone of the importance of being a sign of Mary. Four large forms of bread were offered during the Mass as gifts from the parish and as a sign of their willingness to share the bread with all those who come to Medjugorje.

One form was offered to a young handicapped man who was carried up on a stretcher, and

those around him broke away pieces of the bread as a sign of wanting to share his pain. The other forms were passed around the crowd and each one broke away a piece.

At the end Fr. Leonard thanked the young people for the spectacle that they had offered to Medjugorje during the week. It was clear that they were searching for God, that they desire peace and that they're tired of the idols offered by our world. a maturity of spirit, or at least has prepared them in order to be able to receive such an immense gift. Of course, not everyone was on the same level, but it's a wonderful thing that so many young people experienced how good Our Lord is, seated or lying down on the carpet in the tent, adoring Him. They are proof that the Gospel is not a theory that one must learn, but is life and that Jesus satisfies our every need and makes us completely happy, because He is "bread descended from heaven, that bears every delight." Somebody rightly observed that this gathering of young people, so much bigger in its second year, represents quite a big step forward with respect to Taizé». The central theme here was the Eucharist, where live contact with Jesus during Mass, at Adoration and confession, began a movement within one's soul and a wonderful fusion of souls, so different in the many races, cultures and mentality. It really was a case of one big family around the same table.

Fr. Angelo

The Festival told by one young girl (extracts from a letter)

(...) Mary, Queen of Peace had already called me here last year and changed my life, so I was anxious to participate in the festival this year too, but I never imagined that I would have visited heaven ... Meeting with Jesus Alive was so intense that it was as if all the inhabitants of heaven had come down among us to celebrate together: the Most Holy of Sacraments, the Catalyst, at the centre, with bodies and looks in adoration. There was carpet on the pavement and thus people had to remove their shoes. It was as if we had abandoned the world with those shoes left outside, and with the world, all the filth that goes with it. In the tent there was only purity, oxygen for our souls, gushing from the monstrance; and our voices reduced to a whisper. It was as if Mary had covered us with Her mantle, holding us around Jesus' Heart, live, palpitant and dispenser of gifts at an incessant rate.

(...) Our Lady gave us an excellent and experienced spiritual guide for the meetings. Youth of all races, languages and culture were entrusted to the guidance of Fr. Tomislav, who took us right to the centre of the Divine Love.

(...) At 9.00 in the mornings the choir helped us, with their many instruments, to pray ... To the song "Adoramus Te Domine," Fr. Tomislav led us by hand to the very depth of prayer and adoration. Then, after half an hour, the theme of the day and after a brief break, prayer began, based on the theme, to permit the words to penetrate into our hearts. Then at 6.00 p.m. there was the Rosary, followed by the Holy Mass at 7.00 p.m. All back in the tent again at 10.00 p.m. till midnight, where in the still of the night, Fr. Tomislav made our hearts vibrate in adoration before Jesus.

He was placed in the centre of our gatherings and the greatness of His Love began, bit by bit, to penetrate us, so deeply that the more we fathomed His Love, the more the fire of our

hearts inflamed us. (...) We accompanied Him to the top of the mount together with the three apostles, for the feast of the Transfiguration where He showed us His glorious body. After the night spent singing, and in prayer, with swollen eyes for the lack of sleep, but immensely happy, the sun rose upon our lives and He, big round bread in the hands of Fr. Tomislav, invited us to remain with Him, to eat Him and divide Him among us.

We never imagined that one could be so happy, that such a happiness could be so real, so intense and above all, free, fruit of the gift of a Mother. .. Thank you for forming a family of young people, whose characteristics are unique to the world. Only You know why You put us together, but certainly to help many other young people who are distant from Your Immaculate Heart.

Fr. Tomislav's vast spiritual experience, together, of course, with Mary, brought us to knowing and to becoming friends with Jesus Who is Alive amongst us.

Stefania, 30 years, from Milan, Italy

A SAMPLE OF THE FIRST DAY- "DO YOU WANT TO BECOME A SIGN?"

Now we shall try to gather a little of that spiritual food that Mary, the heavenly dispenser, had prepared on the table for her children, so that readers may also respond to Mary's invitation who uses the words from the book of Wisdom: "Come to me all you who desire me and take your fill of my fruits" (Si 24:19).

Tuesday 31: The first thing asked of the young people was sacrifice by being punctual and by giving absolute priority to the meetings. "Be present, and be aware that the Master of heaven and earth is among us. Therefore, be silent whilst in the tent. We are here to pray, so dress correctly. All of you will find happiness during these days. All you need is desire and faith as big as a mustard seed. The Almighty God will be here at the service of this mustard seed. You have already taken a step forward: you are bare foot and seated on the floor like children...

I will teach you a simple method: repeat as you remain seated, and with your eyes fixed on Jesus, or with closed eyes, only one word: JESUS. Let this word reverberate within you; sing this word along with the choir, let yourselves be penetrated by this word, and it will transform you.

Repeat the word JESUS in silence so that it will open your hearts to the Word of the Lord. To pray is to be one with God.

Repeat the word JESUS till it becomes for you song, peace and joy...

"Oh, oh, oh, Adoramus Te, Domine."

Fr. Tomislav said how Our Lady had announced there would be a sign on the hill of apparitions, and he asked: "Do you want to become this sign? It is important that we become the sign that God wants us to be."

...

"You have seen Europe change. The announcement at Fatima is happening before our eyes. What will be the centre of Europe united and of the world in peace? JESUS, with His life in

the Eucharist, is the centre of the cosmos. If you want to go to the core of the Eucharist, you will become light for the whole Church.

Those who convert and enter into the core of the Eucharist, become visionaries and will understand all the mysteries. We, with our light, cannot illuminate the mysteries of life. Mary adored Jesus from under the cross, the apostles could not understand anything, but their eyes were opened with the breaking of the bread. In Christ the Risen One, also we become light and we carry light to the world. "The Blessed Virgin takes us to this mystery. In fact, even here She took the people from the place of the apparitions to the church, around the altar and said: "When you adore Jesus in the Eucharist, I am with you. If you knew who you were receiving in the Eucharist, you would jump with joy." She takes us to the centre of life, to Jesus. I implore you to become this light of the world. The Church will see in you the heart of Mary, you will become Mary's explanation to the Church and the Church will recognize you as Her beloved children. Do you want to take on this task?

EUCHARIST IS LIFE OF THE WORLD

The Eucharist nourishes you and you cannot live without Eucharistic hunger: "If you do not eat the flesh of the Son of Man ... you will not have the life in you;" "and for this reason there are weak and infirm people among you and many are dead." Yes, it's true, miracles are lacking the Church because the priests are lacking strength as they do not understand the sense of the Eucharist. The strength does not come to them because they do not eat that bread. How many are sick, destroyed, because they could not find that sign in the Church that could heal them, that wins over sickness, even death. Do you want to renew the Church? Do you want miracles to be renewed in the Church, as in the first Church?, Do you want to stop wars? Do you want to take peace to everyone, love to all the creatures? Then we must all become the living Eucharist. (...)

Now I want to talk about the big spiritual movements in the world, outside the Church, so that you will know how to distinguish the dark from the light. In the world there is great confusion on a mystic level. The movements that take you to other paths cannot nourish you. They are in a way, sympathetic towards Jesus, but this sympathy cannot save. They offer Jesus as an ideologist, as a magician that dominates over sickness, as a way of making success; others as a self-sufficient pleasure. What's missing? Jesus is the Life of the World: the life can be found only in the Eucharist. I'm sorry to say, but many of these movements are at Satan's service. Our Lady, through Jelena, said that She came to purify all the spiritual movements. She called you to take you to the centre of the light and, once purified, to be light for the others. (...)

Now let's get up and sing with joy.

It's now 11.00 o'clock. You may remain seated or lie down in silence. For anything you need, go outside, even if you feel the need to tell a joke to a friend. Be children, joyful, free, surrendered. ÝRemain, then, for a quarter of an hour in silent prayer!

Our Lady wants to take us to the centre of our faith with the mysteries of the Rosary of Jesus. After the reflection, there'll be a pause for personal prayer, then a song and five Our Fathers at every mystery.

Prayer: Lord, You are good. Our desire to come and look for You here is nothing compared to Your Love. You have offered Yourself for each one of us, You have desired each one of us, You offered you blood for us, You have become so simple that everyone can reach you. Thank You, Lord Jesus. Lord, come into us: see these young people.

...Evening Adoration:

This evening we are going to leave behind all our problems and enter deeply in to the Lord's peace! Man is able to pray all night long, even while sleeping. If you prepare your heart during the evening, and you put God's Word into your heart, you will fall asleep with this word and your soul will continue to pray during the night.

This is the mystery whereby God spoke to the saints even while they slept which we read about in the Bible.

The morning after our hearts will wake and immediately search for God and thus prayer will become easy.

Now let's all sing and then remain in silence with only the words, "Jesus, Jesus, Jesus" in our hearts.

As we listen to the song, let's repeat: Jesus, Jesus. Then open your hearts and calmly listen to this message from the Gospel: "I tell you most solemnly, whoever listens to my words, and believes in the one who sent me, has eternal life; without being brought to judgement he has passed from death to life." (John 5.24)

Start talking to Jesus, repeating this message in your hearts. To accept this word means to enter immediately into the life of Jesus, into the eternal life, where there is no more fear ... the heavens completely open!

Father, put these words into my heart, give me a heart that opens up fully to the word of God, Jesus, heal my heart so that it can listen to you and believe you. I want to enter into the centre and become a living Eucharist. Let this word grow in me and don't let it be destroyed by other words. Jesus, I feel in me the eternal life because I listened to your word. .. Now my heart is listening to a song (Jesus, Jesus); then we'll all sing together: *Laudate Dominum omnes gentes.*

(It's 11.30) As you go back home I beg you to pray in silence and fall asleep praying. Those who wish may stay on to adore in silence.

Dear youth, these are the messages that Mary gives for you:

Thursday morning, the 2nd August, VICKA said, "I wish to tell you the main messages that Our Lady gives to all of us; they are very simple: prayer, conversion, fasting, peace. Our Lady wants us to accept this with our hearts and live by it.

1. When Our Lady asks for prayer She means with the heart, not oral, which becomes a joy for us.
2. Lately She has been worried for the world's youth as they are in a terrible situation, and we can help them by praying with our hearts and by loving. Our Lady says, "All the things that the world offers pass away, but Satan uses everything, at every moment, to turn you away."

3. Our Lady offers us Her love, Her peace so that we can take it to everyone - to all those we meet and She blesses us.
4. Mary has expressed Her desire that families start praying together; all, adults, children; all together. If they pray together, Satan will have no strength.
5. She wants us to put the Eucharist in the centre of our spiritual lives as it is the most sacred moment in which Jesus comes to us.
6. For this reason, Our Lady has asked us to confess monthly, but we are not to feel obliged to confess each month. We must feel the need to confess and we must ask the priest to counsel us, to help us keep on this path and to change our lives. So this way, through confession, we will change and it will take us to God.
7. In these last days Our Lady has asked us to help Her with our prayers. She needs our prayers for God's plans to be realized. She has asked that we also renounce pleasurable things for this purpose. We offer this to Jesus through Her.
8. She recommends that we read the Bible every day and that we live it during the day.
9. This evening, when I will meet with Our Lady, I will pray for all of you. Open your hearts to be able to receive this grace. She came without us calling Her. You only need to desire Her.

MEDJUGORJE NINE YEARS LATER

by Father Slavko Barbaric

*** June 25 Our Lady appears in the church**

Before the evening Mass while people were already in the church and praying aloud, the visionaries Marija, Ivan and Jakov entered for the apparition. Behind them was Mons. Hnilica, and behind him Milona von Hapsburg who acts as interpreter. As usual, the visionaries' prayer is audible, then when Our Lady appears they look up while they continue to pray (we are no longer able to hear them, but we see their lips move). Once the apparition is over, they bow their heads and their prayer is audible for us again.

*** A surprise in the dark.**

That same evening at the conclusion of the outdoor Mass which was celebrated before more than 20,000 people, the altar became a stage for actors from Zagreb who recited the play "Brother of God" written in 1950 by a young priest called Karol Wojtila (Pope John Paul II). It was about the destiny of a Polish painter who had abandoned everything to found a religious order at the service of the poor.

We thought that this long dialogue about art, the meaning of life, and love would have tired the audience after so many hours of prayer, but to the contrary, the audience was attentive and appreciative of the performance.

With the final song "Christ on the beach," also written by our Pope, everyone started to sing together with the actors who seemed to be praying rather than singing even though not all were Catholics or believers.

Fra Leonard Orec, in thanking everyone, underlined how the play had brought the Pope and the city of Zagreb to Medjugorje.

*** Everyone prays and confesses here.**

Those who confess, doubt no longer! If one looks at the church and vast space that surrounds it, a sincere, straight-forward and untiring devotion may be seen everywhere. People know how to elevate themselves, more with prayer than with miracles. Any spot is considered good for praying, and thus the curious passers-by must be careful not to fall over pilgrims, who, kneeling down and heads buried in their hands, immersed in their talk with God, may be found anywhere and everywhere in the church grounds. Confessors of all languages are kept extremely busy both in the wooden confessionals and all around the church.

Those priests who confess are made aware of the wonders of conversions that Mary works and are startled and doubt no more.

The number of people who receive Holy Communion is growing. Fr. Leonard advises that, according to the statistics, in the first six months of this year communions grew by 30% compared to the first six months of last year (632,000 instead of 440,575 - editor's note).

* Approval or not? Questions that do no longer disturb. The reality of these graces does certainly not depend on the recognition and on the confirmation of the authenticity of the extraordinary facts that have accompanied and given birth to such sanctuaries. One has the impression that the pilgrims are no longer interested in knowing whether the Episcopal Commission, who follows the events of Medjugorje, confirm or not that Our Lady appears. People no longer ask this question. Medjugorje has simply become one of the best known Marian sanctuaries in the world together with Fatima and Lourdes; places where people search for God and receive abundant gifts of grace.

Now everyone knows that the apparitions and messages do not concern the infallibility of the Church. Nor can the Church obligate any faithful person to believe or not in such apparitions. The ecclesiastical authority has the duty of pronouncing whether or not the facts, messages and devotion tied to the same, are in harmony with the traditions of the Church and its doctrine, and therefore whether or not they can be permitted. If said devotion has its roots in the common Christian faith in Mary, who leads us to Jesus and to a strong sacramental life, people do not understand where the problem lies.

* Mary appears to Ivanka. Our Lady says thanks for accepting new life.

On June 25, Our Lady appeared to Ivanka at the usual hour, i.e. 6.40 p.m. She was at her home with her family. This time she did not permit any photographers or strangers to be present.

The decision was taken after year's experience where all were intent on taking photographs and not on praying.

The apparition lasted 9 minutes. Our Lady spoke to her about the 5th secret, but it being a secret, Ivanka cannot say anything about it. At the end of the apparition Ivanka saw her mother who was more beautiful than she had ever seen her (her mother died in April 1981, just a little before the apparitions began).

Our Lady thanked Ivanka and her husband for having sacrificed their own lives for a new

life. Their new son (Josip) was born on June 14, 1990.

At the end Our Lady gave her blessing to Ivanka's family and all those present.

A short comment by Fr. Slavko:

Ivanka was greatly consoled by the sight of her mother. And it is a message for us, so that we do not forget that we are destined for eternal life, which we must earn with good deeds on this earth.

Also Our Lady's gratitude for the new life is a beautiful message for all parents who should welcome children into their lives with love, and avoid at all costs the thought of abortion.

The new Chapel for Adoration was inaugurated the first week of July. Adoration takes place every day from 2-6 pm . Czech and Slovak pilgrims are on the increase.

IRISH BISHOPS ON MEDJUGORJE

The following is a declaration made by the Irish Episcopal Conference:

The Conference discussed the increasing numbers of Irish pilgrims who go to Medjugorje. In discussing the theme, the bishops showed interest and concern. Interest in observing the benefits that pilgrims draw from Medjugorje, and concern because apparitions and messages are constantly being spoken of.

In brief, the following was considered:

- a) It is Church tradition that people go on pilgrimage with a spirit of penance both to pray and to honour the Blessed Virgin Mary;
- b) Pilgrims are free to go to Medjugorje with private organizations. Pilgrimages should not be officially organized by bishops or priests. Priests may go to Medjugorje so as to offer their spiritual and pastoral help to the pilgrims;
- c) Decisions regarding the supernatural elements in the events which occur in Medjugorje are already under consideration by the Yugoslav Episcopal Conference;
- d) Hence, no one is authorized to make judgements regarding the events, which only the Church will in its own time make;
- e) Everyone should be reminded about the difference between public and private revelations. The first derive from the Holy Scriptures and Tradition and are part of the Catholic Creed. Faith in private revelations does not bind anyone and it is not necessary for salvation.

BISHOP FROM THE EAST SAYS TO THOSE WHO CRITICIZE MEDJUGORJE:

"20 million pilgrims, 50,000 priests, 100 bishops have been to Medjugorje - the Church does not speak , but lets things carry on. This is a sign of her approval!" (Msgr Paul Hnilica)

(...) Once, a person from the Church, who was sceptic about Medjugorje, said to me, "Hasn't Our Lady anything better to do than to visit the earth every day?" I replied, "That's right, She hasn't anything more important to do; as for a mother the most important thing is to save her children, starting from those most in need."

From the many conversations or meetings, I see that the Holy Father looks favourably upon Medjugorje and that he considers it as a continuation of the message of Fatima. Obviously, the Pope respects the local competent authorities - the Yugoslav episcopate and the

commission that are studying the events. On the 1st August, 1989, the Pope said to the group of doctors from A.R.P.A. (a group that has particular interest in the prenatal life of babies and that carries out scientific studies on the phenomena in Medjugorje): "You must show respect towards the local Bishop - he will answer before God's tribunal," and, "The world is losing its sense of supernatural and the people go to Medjugorje to look for it, and they find it; through prayer, penance, fasting ... people are finding God at Medjugorje." This is a wonderful testimony.

We must be humble and patient though and respect the Church's final decision, but we may also say that all the events that have occurred in Medjugorje up to date are in a "de facto" way recognized by the Church. During the last 9 years 20 million pilgrims have been to Medjugorje and just last year, more than 22,000 priests; and up to date, 100 bishops and cardinals; without counting, however, those who make incognito visits. Certainly they would have noticed if something was not right. So this is in itself a confirmation that there is nothing against the faith or morally wrong that could corrupt pilgrims

If there was something wrong, then the Church in Rome and even the Church in Yugoslavia would have shouted out to the faithful not to go, as they could not possibly leave all those faithful and priests in any danger. The Church would have shouted out against it, she would have punished and suspended her priests. But the Church has remained silent, she has let things alone! This means that she approves ... and this means that we must not fear to go to Medjugorje as there is no danger.

"Greatest miracle of Medjugorje is confession. There is no other place in the world like it."

"A tree may be recognized by its fruit." The fruits here at Medjugorje are wonderful - fruits that perhaps are not found in any other place in the world: prayer and fasting. Fasting is a practice that has disappeared from the Catholic dictionary and teachings. Then there's Holy Confession which has practically vanished in the Western world, whilst here in Czechoslovakia and in Poland .. we kept on confessing, first in secret, and now in public. Our Lady is here to renew the Church and the practice of confession, united with Communion, which is the best medicine.

Once in Germany I was asked if the events of Medjugorje couldn't have been Satan's works. I replied that Satan could support everything, but not confession, because confession is a liberation of Satan and thus it couldn't be him to push millions of people to free themselves of himself. It would be absurd! It wouldn't be logical. And so many people confess here at Medjugorje. So many. There is no other place in the world at the moment where people confess so much like at Medjugorje. Many times there are 50 or more priests confessing at once.

Once in Austria, when the Holy Father was on visit, a bishop told me, "I've been to Medjugorje and I confessed for 5 hours as there were so many people waiting. The penitents I confessed in those 5 hours were something that I have never experienced in my 40 years of life as a priest and bishop. Some of them knelt down and said to me, "Help me as I don't know how to confess .. I came out of curiosity, but I feel the need to reconcile myself with God, to start a new life .. Help me .. What should I do?" These are confessions like St. Paul's at Damascus: "Lord, what do you want me to do?" Hundreds of priests have told me, "For

us, the greatest miracle of Medjugorje are the confessions; hearing the penitents confess so sincerely and with such grief and then making sincere proposals."

The Pope and Bishops would intervene if there were any danger. They have remained silent and let things go on.

To all bishops and others who feel sceptic I say come and see!

I, too, came the first time because pilgrims (and Cardinal Tomasek) had asked me. I didn't know what I would find, but I wanted to find out.

Every Christian should feel obliged to find out whether a particular phenomenon is from God or not, because if it comes from God we should go down on our knees and listen to what He wants to tell us.

Of course God has told us everything with the Gospel... but I recall when I went to Fatima with Pope Paul VI, and also with the present Pope, that both tried to justify their pilgrimage with words that went more or less like this: "Here, Our Lady gives us the essence of the Gospel, she shows it to us, and she takes from it the remedy for today's ills, and she underlines for us those truths which regard our time."

I feel the same about Medjugorje.

I am sure that the Pope follows these events to know what is happening, for if there were any danger for Christians he would want to be the first to know.

If the Pope remains silent it means he is tranquil about it; that there is no moral danger or error regarding the faith.

I have also spoken to numerous Croatian bishops. They also say that they would impede people from going to Medjugorje if it were not good for them. So far they let their people go, and they, more than us, can see and hear of all the events and their effects on pilgrims. Hence, I say that Medjugorje has already become a shrine. (Medj. 25 June '90)

MEDJUGORJE, PRODUCT OF PSYCHOLOGICAL INSECURITY OR INTERVENTION OF MARY?

In reply to an article in a local paper which criticized Medjugorje, we say that it would have been better if the writers had tried the medicine Our Lady prescribes for today's world: prayer with the heart, confession, fasts, Eucharist, and meditation with the Word of God. It is the same old medicine found in Christian tradition. Had they taken it, they would have been able to recognize the work of God, that God who makes us rise from the dead, who makes the desert bloom again.

Only those who observe the phenomena from afar and on a purely rational and psychological plane could affirm that "psychologically fragile people are running to Medjugorje in search of the extraordinary."

Admittedly, people like this could be found there, (but who can say to be perfectly level-headed?), but we're all a little intent on looking for human efficiency rather than converting our hearts to trusting in "God's power, which shows up in the weak."

We stand by the poor in spirit, who are considered as privileged by the Gospel. The Lord "chose what the world looks down on and despises and thinks is nothing, in order to destroy what the world thinks is important." (1 Cor 1.28)

The same spirit of poverty and penance takes many pilgrims to Lourdes, to Fatima and to other sanctuaries, in search of that pure spring that God donates to this arid world and to many arid churches. Yet, nobody has found anything to say about them. Why then, do people wish to do away with Medjugorje? Perhaps because Medjugorje's call touches the soft spots and makes us feel at ease.

Furthermore, if on one hand the ecumenical spirit asks us to be on good terms with the protestants, lay people and atheists, of which we are favourable, we cannot then scorn, on the other hand, our "weak" brothers for whom Christ died, and call them inferior. (Ro 14)

It is obvious that the writer is misinformed about the development of Medjugorje as he accuses the vast and varied masses of people that frequent the place of being psychologically weak and inconsistent in their faith. These people, instead, have rediscovered their faith and have experienced God's mercy - many have decided for the path of perfection. - everything through means that the Church has always offered us which at Medjugorje have returned in use with great ease: prayer, communion, confession, fasting and the word of God. The crowds of people that confess and that return home healed in spirit are not pathological cases, but the fruit of the Ever Present Grace that heals hearts.

Why not recognize the presence of the Maternal Heart who is worried about the destiny of Her many lost children? Those who evaluate events in a similar fashion are very far from accepting the mystery of God's mercy.

Medjugorje is neither a product of psychological insecurity nor a reaction to the secularism of the times, but is an extreme intervention of mercy by God towards a world that is dying without the light of faith. "But will the Son of Man find faith on earth when he comes?"

To do away with the problem so simply is like ignoring the cause and on which we should reflect seriously. In our era, the senses of sin and of the healing grace have practically disappeared and this is a blow to the ecclesiastic community. Thus, heaven has come to our aid.

A friend of mine, a monk, wrote to me and said: "Even the revelation of Jesus' Sacred Heart was an intervention of 'subsidiary economy' in times of grave spiritual crises within the Church and of sacramental and biblical denutrition (Jansenism, etc)

Those who sought out St. Margaret's message (the Sacred Heart) thirsted after the Word of God, not after the extraordinary. It is the same with Medjugorje.

The Sacred Heart did not come to establish a new community, but to call back Christians to those normal founts of salvation. In fact, the practice of the first Fridays is a divine way of getting people to confess and take part in communion more than the required once yearly Communion at Easter.

The messages do not reveal anything new; the only thing new in Medjugorje is the renewed faith of the people who go there.

All this does not create aggregations outside the Church, but a living movement within the

Church which is putting new life back into our tired communities.

Fr. Angelo Mutti

LIVING MARY'S MESSAGES

No more enemies to criticize or condemn, only brothers and sisters to pray for.
Do not look for fault in others, but in self.

Maria Dobrovolska from Frankfort writes:

"In the school of Medjugorje Mary teaches us how to defeat the enemy who wants to destroy everything, and how to face problems and difficulties.

I think it unfair that we should look for the wrong in others, for example in our politicians or Church leaders. We should look for it in ourselves; in how we live our conversion and prayer.

"Be converted, so others may convert." (March '84) "Watch out that Satan does not act in you through misunderstandings, incomprehensions and refusal to accept each other." (Jan '90)

Regarding the problems of the East I oppose the attitude of blaming leaders for errors made, as this could awaken in others feelings of resentment, when what is needed is that these people be entrusted to Mary's motherly arms. The same attitude (of pointing the finger) also makes us people of the East feel sorry for ourselves when we need to be helped to understand that part of the blame could also be ours.

Regarding the churches that were given back to the Uniates, a Franciscan monk told me: "There is much bitterness, but this is not surprising, as we had forgotten how to pray!"

Prayer is what is needed then!

I believe that the message given to Fr. Tomislav must be taken seriously by all: "Pray, love, I will do the rest." Only this way can we help our brothers; not by complaining, criticizing, petitioning or being nervous. I know very well that this is difficult for us, sons and daughters of Eve - therefore, let's pray for each other so that we may grow in the faith.

Fr. Jozo said: "We do not need your criticism, we need your love and your prayers! Pray for us priests! We are weak, we are sinners, big sinners - so pray for us!" (said to a group of Germans - 9 Oct '89)

MARCH OF FAITH AND PURIFICATION FROM MACERATA TO LORETO

On the night of 15 June I participated in the march of faith from Macerata to Loreto (about 30 km). About 35,000 young people took part.

It was a stream of people walking all night long across the countryside to manifest their love and devotion to Mary; and an expression of desire for complete surrender to God.

During the night the 15 mysteries of the Rosary were recited (joyful, sorrowful and

glorious), and there were meditations and songs. The nicest part, though, was the blessing bestowed upon the participants at the end of each Rosary.

At the end of the first Rosary a priest waited at an altar set up in a field and blessed each person.

At the end of the second Rosary the blessing was imparted with the cross, symbol and seal of Christ's offering. The blessing offered to pilgrims support for their fatigue.

At the end of the third rosary, the blessing was imparted with holy water to strengthen them in the fight against Satan and all evil.

As the night lengthened, we grew wearier, but at the same time, our hearts were freed of contradictions and burdens, and became lighter and were able to open up to accept the Holy Spirit's graces.

Apart from the bad taste of some songs which followed a break during the night the experience was positive. It concluded in the morning in the square in front of the Shrine of Loreto, where all the young people were invited to consecrate themselves to Mary.

The march generated much desire for spiritual journeys. Though pilgrimages are physically tiring, they represent the itinerary that our hearts should complete so they can be freed from sin and from the consequences of sin.

The pilgrimage was enlivened by a radio intervention by Vicka, visionary of Medjugorje, who announced to all the urgency of conversion. She said how Mary desires that we all turn away from sin, especially the young people and families.

The presence of some bishops was significant, in particular the presence of Msgr. De Giorgi, who is responsible for the Catholic Movement Group and who defined the march as a real gesture of Marian faith.

Therefore, I would like to suggest to all groups who love Mary, and in particular to those groups born of Her, to participate in the march/pilgrimage next year.

My best wishes to Father Angelo and to all the friends of Echo.
(Father James Martinelli)

ON PENANCE (message of 25 May 1990)

Penance does not kill anything except that which must be killed. Do not fear for your flesh which you should love for what it is worth (that is, very little) but which you love as though it were something very precious. My penitents do not die from this; they die from the Love that burns within them. It is not Love that wears them away, not torment or discipline. Proof is that at times they reach old age and in such good physical health that not even those who take so much care about their physical condition can achieve.

My saints who die so young are those that die from the Love that burns within them, not those who are destroyed by austerity. Penance gives light and agility to the spirit to be able to tame humanity which is like a vampire, and that keeps you nailed to the deep. Penance uproots you from below and hurls you high, towards Love.

(From the writings of Maria Valtorta)

STORY OF A POLISH PILGRIM

Part 2

Authentic Christian experience leads Victor to repudiate Protestant science, and to accept Catholic submission. Then he discovers Mary and everything takes on light

Thanks be to the Lord who guided me to Assisi, because that brief visit of 10 days in the community turned out to be an authentic call from God.

It was the Lord's answer to my prayers. To begin with it was the beginning of the "holy voyage" that Psalm 83 speaks of towards love, peace, joy and eternal salvation. Of course the devil who doesn't want us to fulfil God's will filled my head with doubts: "This isn't the life for you. You won't be able to do anymore travelling or be a missionary skier. You'll have to give up everything; share everything. You're better off free. The Evangelical school in Spain is better for you." Thoughts of this kind assailed me, and to top it off friends from the mission made ironical remarks about my choice.

My main doubt, though, was being sure about God's will!

When I met the others members of the community I was surprised to learn that they came from various countries and faiths. Some had been Evangelicals and missionaries, others were Protestants, others were Catholics but not practising Catholics. The paths that led these people to the Catholic faith were many and varied, but their desire was to relive the experience of the first Christians, so with great zeal they listened attentively to God's Word and to the writings of the Fathers of the Church.

Looking back on my past I must confess and cry over all the wrong I had done to the Church and to Christ, with my indifference as a youth in Poland, and later on when I pursued the fleeting pleasures of Western materialism, and with the many arrogant criticisms I made towards Catholicism when I adhered to the Evangelical Church. "Mercy, however, was shown me because until I became a believer I had been acting in ignorance" (1 Tim 1:14).

For about seven years I persevered onwards in the community in Assisi which was based on work and prayer, but I gradually felt the desire to dedicate more time to prayer.

Even when I first began to read the Bible, I often asked myself where the miracles were today which the Acts speaks of. The Lord Jesus promised this to us, his disciples; but I could see only superficial Christianity where ever I looked.

I immediately began a 'hunt.' Wherever I heard that there was a hermit or an austere monastery, or somebody spiritually illumined, I went to see and talk. Results were bare for a few weeks, but I continued to pray and I wasn't discouraged. I could see that the Lord was helping me, even with material things, and I trusted in Him answering my prayers.

In January, 1990, during my travels, I met and spoke to a few people who told me wonderful things about people converting at Medjugorje in Jugoslavia. Then I came across a copy of the modest monthly publication "Echo of Medjugorje."

I said to myself, "I must speak to the people who write about these things, so wonderful and illumined. I must see this place." I feel I must also add, that up till then I had never felt the

desire to make a pilgrimage to Lourdes or other similar places.

The fruits of my 10 day stay in Medjugorje were many and far more than what I had expected. The biggest grace that I received was that God opened my eyes to the love of the Mother of God and to the fact that She is the most perfect way of getting to the Holy Trinity and on Her marvellous role in the story of salvation. (These things are well explained in St. Louis Maria Grignon de Montfort's "Treatise on the Real Devotion to Mary" - the best of its kind many say.)

Consequently, I also fell in love with St. Joseph. Why? Just stop and meditate on what an exceptional saint he is, head of the Sacred Family, chosen by God to guide the Son of Man and Our Lady. It is no wonder that he was proclaimed Protector of the Universal Church (and patron saint of dying persons). He and his Bride are the most holy of all creatures of all times, a sure bridge between us, miserable sinners, and the Holy Trinity.

My next step was obvious: consecrate myself to Jesus through the Blessed Virgin and St. Joseph.

The shower of graces continue for me, at Medjugorje and now here. It could be impossible to tell everything. All I can say is that the tender, loving care of Our Lady and of St. Joseph is felt by me every day.

Victor Bein.

"Sects that proclaim themselves the only custodians of the Christian truth need to be immediately broken away from the Church. To adhere to these sects means to deny the Catholic faith. From the deception of the sects the only way out is to be seriously renewed in the spirit and to remain coherent to the will of God and to the teachings of Jesus." (Pope John Paul II)

DO NOT BELIEVE ALL WHO CLAIM TO HAVE THE SPIRIT (1 Jn 4:1) **Supernatural manifestations and how to tell is they are genuine**

Supernatural manifestations are ever more frequent. The more man abandons his relationship with God to build his own house on the sand, the more God makes Himself be known. But the many manifestations which are a call to wake us from our sleep can also lead to confusion, because not all are genuine.

The Holy Spirit gives the Church the discernment to recognize which of these voices are His and which belong to the enemy.

In short, the Scientific Dossier on Medjugorje says: "This problem has been treated right from the beginning of Christianity. St. John said in his first letter: 'Dear friends, do not believe all who claim to have the Spirit, but test them to find out if the spirit they have comes from God or not. For many false prophets have gone out everywhere.'"

The saints, from St. Anthony of the desert to St. Bernard and Ignatius of Lojola had a method to help them discern. Pope Benedict XIV set the criteria for recognizing real apparitions. In particular "we should remember Jesus' words: "By their fruits you will know if the tree is good". And we should consider the so-called seer's conduct and whether he or she is mentally stable and whether there are lasting graces.

The following will help us recognize a true visionary:

1. Did the visionary desire to have the visions? Did he (or she) try to provoke them?
2. Does he seek spiritual direction, or does he speak to anyone about them without discernment?
3. Is he obedient to his spiritual director? Is he progressing in God's love and in humility?
4. Does he normally enjoy peace and serenity of conscience? Is it his intention to strive for perfection?
5. Does he choose credulous or contradictory people to be close to him? Does he like to be flattered?
6. Does he receive reproachment from the spiritual directors for any obvious vice? In particular, vain glory?
7. Has he received the promise from God that his reasonable and legitimate requests will be answered? Has he received great graces after having asked for them with trust and certainty?
8. Are those who approach him encouraged to love God and virtue?
9. Do the visions take place after fervent prayer or after Holy Communion? Has the visionary desired to suffer for the glory of God?
10. Does the visionary make bodily penance? Is he spiritually happy even during trials or if contradicted?
11. Does he prefer isolation? Does he avoid mundane society? Is he trying to rid himself of natural bonds?
12. Have theologians found anything in these visions contrary to the faith, or that is reprobable under any other aspect?

CHARISMS MUST BE PROTECTED AND GUIDED

humility and obedience signs of authenticity

Those who have extraordinary gifts have to take special care of their spiritual lives, and seek guidance. They are particularly exposed to the danger of being influenced by others, or used for other purposes, or of becoming victims of their own pride. Satan will assail them with great fury and create mistrust, mockery and isolation so that, discouraged and dejected, they will give in to the calls of the world and no longer represent a sign of God's love.

These people who are chosen by God to illuminate the darkness of the world will find opposition in God's own ministers. Nothing, in fact, infuriates Satan more than the prophetic spirit that bares open his evil work and that gives life to the Word of Truth.

Therefore, the faith which would be sufficient for a normal person, is not enough for these privileged people because of their exposure.

A charism does not automatically give one perseverance - it is transient, and if one does not establish a solid spiritual life, it can be lost. Even the donkey of Balaam was gifted with a

charism but it was still a donkey .. A charism must be well protected.

Our Lady is very discrete and does not impose anything on the Church or spiritual director. She gives the necessary indications but goes no further.

There is a way to discern whether or not a visionary is good. Does the visionary have a spiritual father and, if so, does the visionary entrust him/herself with docility and faith to him?

There is little hope, instead, for those who do not have one, or worse still, do not want one and claim to be lead by Our Lady or Jesus Himself.

Humility and obedience protect the charisms and allow them to bear fruit, otherwise the devil takes possession of them. Where a charism is welcomed, protected and guided, it becomes a blessing for all the community and the devil will shudder.

Fr. A

Certain Gifts More Frequent Than Before?

A reader asks if it is true that these days many people are gratified with gifts of inner locutions and invisible stigmata.

Our answer is affirmative.

It seems that the more men do not believe in Jesus' presence among us, the more He communicates with other people and wants others to participate in His suffering for the good of the Church.

Those who live correctly with these gifts normally keep them secret, speaking only to the confessor. They are personal gifts and are free, i.e. they are made without any merit on the part of those who receive them and hence can be given to anyone; even to married people, because God's love is freely shown in the way and with whom He wants.

The gift of locutions can even be given to the very young. such as St. Gemma and Sr. Faustina - and Jelena and Mirjana of the youth group in Medjugorje who were not yet teenagers when they were gratified with this gift. Sometimes this gift is given not only as a personal help in the journey of sanctification, but also as a help to others.

The gift of invisible stigmata (in the hands, feet, head or chest .) is usually personal. St. Paul (in Gal. 6.17) does not say if the stigmata that he carried in his body were invisible or visible; only that they were the seal of Christ. The stigmata are a gift and a sign of belonging to Christ and of a conformity to His ways and usually a call to offer oneself to God, as Christ and in Christ, as victims for the redemption of brothers.

But all that glitters is not gold.

For these gifts to remain it takes discernment, which means accepting the help of a spiritual guide. The charisms must be respected and safely guarded, with silence, and humility.

R.S

THE EASTERN CHURCH IN NEED

Moving testimony by Bishop Hnilica to Ukraine

I went to Ukraine in the province of Usvorod where the Catholics of the Oriental rite were forced to become Orthodox and their bishops and priests were imprisoned or went missing. They went for more than 40 years without a priest and their churches were closed down or turned into warehouses.

With the arrival of the perestroika, a priest from Riga was finally able to return and we donated a car to him. He now follows the Roman Catholics scattered in about 20 different parishes - some of them 100 km apart.

The people were used to being threatened and arrested when they met to pray. Even just recently the police tried to break up a gathering of children who were singing and praying at catechism classes. The priest replied that they were behind the times by 40 years, and kept on with his teaching.

Though there were no priests at all, their faith survived thanks to the families and in particular to the mothers who baptized their children secretly and taught them as best they could.

I visited many churches, arriving without notice, but the news spread quickly and all came, so excited they were to see a priest!

I had never seen such joy . They were all visibly touched by my visit, and moved to tears. Mass lasted from 2 to 3 hours, yet no one moved. I thanked the grandmothers for having kept the faith alive. Ý

Wherever I celebrated Mass I had to consecrate hosts to last all week as the people meet in the church every evening. First they read from the Bible which is commented, this is following by singing and prayers, and then Holy Communion is distributed by one of the nuns. They have Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament from 6-9 pm. The children go to catechism classes in the mornings. The children are very sweet and well behaved; and modestly dressed. They do not have toys like the children from the West, but they are very happy!

A divine force made Communism fall, but this is not yet conversion. The conditions necessary for conversion have been created: the field has been ploughed; now it is waiting on the sowers - Mary's children. After so many years of hearing only lies about the Church and religion, they now need to be educated profoundly on religion.

It was like a cold shower for them when I spoke about forgiving their persecutors; but then they cried, "We must forget, yes, forget and pray for those more in need than us!" They are very disillusioned by the regime, and now they're returning to the faith. God permits disappointment and humiliation so people are converted. I reminded them of the story of the chosen people who returned from exile. Let's pray and offer our sacrifices for them.

We must and can help them. They need Bibles and books. They have permission to print

books, but there are no printing machines. Above all, they need tape-recorders so that parishes without priests can listen to a taped sermon and songs. They need sacred articles, vestments, chalices, furnishings (they cannot even be bought here) and photocopiers. We appeal to the parish priests to twin up with these parishes to form a bridge of charity, and sponsorships for the seminarians who are our priests of tomorrow.

Mary's Immaculate Heart cannot win without us!

(Registration of conversation with Msgr Hnilica. 17 July 1990)

PROPHET OF TODAY SPEAKS ON THE EAST

Fr. Werenfried van Straaten, a supporter of "Aid for the Church that Suffers" told "Sabato" (Italian newspaper) on 25 August 1990: "The fight is not over. In no place has Christ's death sentence been revoked! The damage done to humanity stems from the same satanic presence that brought about persecution of Christians in the East and destroyed the innermost soul of millions of men and women. Our resistance to this evil power must continue.

I do not believe in an imminent conversion of Russia, as this implies the conversion of the West. But neither do I fear, for if Christ continues to be condemned to death, He is always present among us as the Risen Christ."

Regarding freedom in the Eastern Church, he says: "There is still no freedom. There are many more possibilities now; for we can legally offer them our help, but the Communists continue to work and sabotage our efforts. The Churches of Eastern Europe are torn between hope and fear. If they fear what comes from the East, we should doubly fear what comes from the West.

When the Iron Curtain had fallen, there was the arrival of bishops who destroy the Church from within. I call these people neo-modernists. The crisis in the Western Church is terrible. The Pope is terribly alone. He preaches to the world, but the world ignores him. "

... "Like the Pope, my concern is more for the Western Church. I see tabernacles that have been abandoned and deserted churches. If we do not turn away from sin, Russia will not be converted. Yet God does not destroy us as He did with Sodom and Gomorrah, thanks to the prayers of a handful of humble people, and to the sufferings of the martyrs of the East. We must start again from there..."

(His sermons are the fruit of night prayer vigils.)

Our Lady's Message of 25 August 1990:

Dear Children, Today I wish to encourage you to take the messages I am giving you seriously and to put them into practice in your lives. Know, my Children, that I am with you and I wish to lead you to heaven on the same path, which is beautiful for all those who discover it through prayer.

Therefore, my Children, do not forget that these messages I give you must be put into practice in your daily lives so that you can say: 'Now I have accepted the messages and have tried to put them into practice.' Dear Children, I protect you with my prayers before the Heavenly Father. Thank you for responding to my call.

Messages go Unheeded

This is the second message of the 10th year, and Our Lady invites us to take her messages seriously probably because she can see how superficial we are, that we are not earnest enough, or that we are still at the stage of curiosity. So, let's try taking seriously the messages of peace, conversion, prayer, fasting and faith. Above all, let's meditate on the second last message where She invites us to pray for peace because at the moment there is a lot of tension in the world and it is necessary to pray and fast because only God can resolve these situations.

Seriously! Speaking of 'seriousness', I must say that I am a little upset with many pilgrims, including the Italians, because they transform the evening Mass into a terrible market. They talk, walk around, and disturb. I appeal to group leaders and to the organizers of pilgrimages to help us, otherwise a little of the spirit of prayer will go lost.

It is necessary that we take this seriously too, because the evening liturgy with the entire Rosary and Mass and prayers that follow, is desired by Our Lady. Our Lady also desires that we put the messages that She gives us into practice, to make them a part of our daily lives. "Take seriously" and "put into practice" go together.

Then Our Lady wants to remind us that She is with us and desires to lead us to Heaven. This "lead us to heaven" has been said in various messages. On July 25 She said, "I love you and desire to bring all of you to the peace which only God gives." With this "leading" perhaps we can understand better what Our Lady's role is. She wants to lead us. She does not give Heaven, She leads us towards Heaven, because it is God who gives.

Then She adds, "on the same path," perhaps the same path that Our Lady took (of humbleness, simplicity, surrender). She adds, however, that you can only discover this path through prayer and She assures us that we will also discover, through prayer, that this path is beautiful. Hence, it is necessary that we take prayer seriously in order to discover the beauty of the journey towards Heaven.

Again, She emphasizes: "Thus, my dear children, do not forget that these messages that I give you must be put into practice in everyday living." Hence it is necessary to take the messages seriously and make them a part of our lives. Do not forget that we need to carry them out. Let's start now, let's continue with earnestness and don't let ourselves be overcome by fatigue. She suggests a phrase to us, "Look, I have taken the messages and tried to put them into practice."

Let's try doing this every day, and then in the evenings let's see if our life corresponds. For the next month we could take this phrase to become a way of examining our consciences every evening. Then, Our Lady says to us, as She has said other times, "I protect you with my prayer in front of the Heavenly Father." Protect, intercede, pray for us or bless us (as She

said in the last message) are different words but the content is the same. Our Lady is also our "help", we invoke Her in the litany as Help of Christians. Hence, this evening, She again promises us this protection.

Fra Slavko Barbaric