

Our Blessed Mother's message of 25 April 1993:

Dear children, Today I invite you all to awaken your hearts to love. Observe nature and see how it awakens: this will help you open your hearts to the love of God the Creator. It is my wish that you awaken love in your families so that where there is hate and lack of love, love will reign. When there will be love in your hearts, there will also be prayer.

So, my dear children, do not forget that I am with you and that I help you with my prayer, so God may give you the strength to love. I bless you and I love you with my motherly love. Thank you for having responded to my call.

Awaken love that has cooled with the fire of the Spirit!

Observe nature and see how it awakens. In this month so full of flowers and dedicated to Her, Mary like the *love-sick* Bride in the Song of Songs, invites us to love with the help of images impressed into nature by God the Creator. If our hardened hearts are unable to recognize God, then look at all Creation and see His unchanging Love that continues to operate, for nature continues to obey His laws, unlike man who has been deformed by disobedience; and the desire to imitate nature will be born in our hearts.

Awaken your hearts to love, like nature wakened by the heat of the sun, for with *the increase of evil-doing, the love of many has grown cold* (cf. Mt 24:12). Mary knows well; Her Jesus came *to set the earth on fire* and what more could She want if not that it continues to blaze? (cf. Lk 12:49). Could it be that those who were to keep the fire ablaze have let it cool down, reducing faith to no more than external practice?

Where is that revolution of love by which *everyone should have known we were Jesus' disciples?* (Jn13:35) So let us awaken the image of God-Love *that was impressed in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which was given us* (Rm 5:5), like Spring that awakens the lifeless nature after the winter months. So, in contact with the Paschal Mysteries, with the fire of the Crucified Love and with the power of the Resurrection, that life [of ours], imprisoned by sin, must awaken and start bearing fruit (works of love) again.

Mary's heart is with us and burns for us and gives us warmth. More than this, the rays of Her presence burn us so we may awaken to love. It is difficult to love, but this is the only commandment that Jesus left us: *my command is that you love one another as I have loved you.* Everything is possible with His grace!

Awaken love in your families. God's love entered two hearts, making them one. Why then are they now strangers, at times even enemies? Our Blessed Mother wants this live spring to reopen so that water may flow from it again, water to quench those thirsting for love. The fire that was lit on the wedding day must light up again through faith in His help and with His grace that made it blossom in the first place, so it may

*Send your Spirit and everything will be recreated
and you will renew the face of the earth.*

Our Lady's message of 25 March 1993:

Dear children, Today, like never before, I am inviting you to pray for peace: peace in your hearts, peace in the families and peace in the entire world; because Satan wants war, he wants the absence of peace, he wants to destroy everything that is good. So my dear children: pray .. pray .. pray! Thank you for having responded to my call.

Return to God with prayer before Satan destroys peace and all that is good

The social, political and religious situation has worsened not just in former Yugoslavia, but in many countries, particularly here in Italy, and indeed all over the world. Mary, Queen of Peace, can see better than all of us. She warns us and asks only one thing: **an immediate return to God.** The message is brief. It openly talks about Satan's ruthless dominating will. It makes us see that Our Lady sees the war as a sad reality for some and a threat for many.

So, like never before I am inviting you ... Her Dear children, I invite you is full of the delicacy and respect that She has always shown us, but also of maternal anxiety (cf. Lk 2:48). Mary invites us at the start and end of the message **to pray** - above all so we can **live peace within us and our families, and for world peace.** In the first months of the war Mary warned that *Satan WANTS to show his shameful face to the world, and through it sweep as many people as possible onto the path of death and sin.* (25Jan.'91) Now She repeats: **Satan wants war, he wants lack of peace, he wants to destroy everything that is good:** the work of God's creation (Gen1) and the fruit of Christ's Redemption, which is peace.

If we do not live our filial relationship with God and in **obedience to God's saving will** through our faith and prayers, we become slaves to Satan's will of death and destruction. If we do not search for and live God's peace through praying and being faithful to Him, our lives endorse Satan's will; we side him and become his instruments; he uses us to make war and destruction. If we are not in God, we cannot have peace, so that means war. War is in the will of man who follows Satan's will.

Mary, Queen of Peace, is inviting us to follow the Father's will. So my dear children, **pray, pray, pray.**

We are not being asked to recite prayers, but to **decide for God**, to turn to the Father. It is an invitation to turn away from all evil, and turn to the Father, to hand over our will to the Father. It means being with God, to become helpers of God and gifts of God to men: bearers of peace like Jesus. Mary, Queen of Peace, has every right to frighten us, but She doesn't. She is truly a Mother, our Mother. And then what good would it do? The only thing that counts is returning readily and definitely to God. He **WANTS** to save us. He alone can give us peace in Jesus our Saviour. *Fr. Remo*

JESUS, I TRUST YOU

Merciful Love - sign of the times (pg. 4)

overflow onto others. **When love will be in your heart, there will also be prayer.** Yes, because prayer means either being part of love or searching for love. (see pg. 2, col. 2)

In the end Our Lady repeats (She does not want us to forget) that She does not forget us. **I am with you and I pray for you so God may give you the strength to love.** Her words are like those of Jesus: *I will pray to the Father and I will send you the Consoling Spirit.* Thank you Mother for your untiring love. *Fr.A.*

May, a continuation of Easter

Why did the Church choose May as a special month for Mary?

One reason is this: during the liturgical year May is the most holy, the happiest and most festive period there is. May belongs to *Pasqual time* which lasts 50 days; this is the period in which May falls - if not completely, at least the first half of it. The big feast of Jesus' Ascension is celebrated in May, except for 1-2 times every 40 years. Pentecost usually falls in May, and the feasts of the Holy Trinity and Corpus Christi often fall in May. It is thus the time in which the *alleluias* are more frequent as Christ rose from the tomb, ascended into heaven and the Holy Spirit came to the earth to take His place. *(Newman)*

PUT MY MESSAGES INTO PRACTICE

Satan wants destruction and damnation God wants to use His mercy!

The brief yet powerful message of 25 March containing these meaningful phrases: *Satan wants war ... Satan wants to destroy everything that is good* ..; is matter of fact, and should ring out loud in our ears. [You may have noted that] I had interrupted my series of articles regarding "The Woman, Enemy of Satan," [and that] the Blessed Virgin has continued talking about the devil. In Echo Father Angelo has certainly not forgotten to stress Her words, however, there are some key factors to consider and that I would like to insist on.

1. Satan always makes news. Newspapers, magazines, the radio and TV have spoken about him a lot of late. I also talk a lot about him, to say what the Church says about him. It is clear that the mass media talk about the devil so much to make news. They present things that attract peoples' curiosity. What they look for is the sensational. The reason the Bible - and Our Lady - talks about the devil is totally different. The aim here is to warn us, to save us, to bring humanity to God. In fact the Bible mentions him more than 1,000 times, 300 of which in the NT.

2. **God is the Creator, Satan is the Destroyer.** St. Augustine does not hesitate in saying that if Satan was not impeded by God, he would kill us all in an instant. I add: God is the Saviour and wants us all saved, Satan is the perverter and wants us all damned. Satan's action is not turned to just the single individual, but to all of society.

That is why our society tends to be disorderly and why we have wars going on in people's consciences, the families and the nations. Our Lady reminded us of this with extreme clarity. One only needs to open one's eyes to see the abysses into which we are falling.

I am no prophet and I have never received any messages in particular, but one only needs a bit of good sense to see that Italy is only at the start of an economic and social catastrophe with unforeseeable consequences. Who can save us? Who can make us turn back to the real values in life? Only prayer and a sincere return to God.

3. All eras have seen the **presence of people chosen by God for special missions.** Take for example our recent past; there is no doubt that *Padre Pio* was a sign for all humanity: a sign of the Passion and divine Mercy, a call to conversion and prayer. [And Sr. Faustina was the apostle of love of Merciful Jesus, sign of the divine will to make Mercy triumph - right when evil is so rampant that it would make us think more of God's punishing justice.

And today Mary, with Her many apparitions, has roused an army of souls who offer themselves for the plan of the Divine Mercy so as to counteract the destructive plan of Satan.]

Satan is wild because he is given the freedom to act, by many ecclesiastics as well. [New and old communities, groups or single people, make a total offering to God of themselves. At times, they take upon themselves the pains of hell to continue the expiating work of Jesus. One of these people is **Joan.**] The unheard-of sufferances of Joan, caused by demonic possession (it seems that she has all hell

When there is love there is prayer Praying means doing nothing which is not Love

It is obvious that those who pray, really pray, are people in search of God. Theirs is a conversation of love able to defeat every difficulty, that goes directly to its destiny. There is no praying by the hour, but praying always in complete love. In God these people place their inner joy and their troubles, letting themselves be guided from above. The same commitment - even if in a lesser degree - is had from others who notice their constructive example. An example which obliges others to pray, to reflect, to pass from distraction to unconditioned attention. It obliges one, by an irresistible force that comes from the heart, not to remain stagnant.

There are few, however, who live at these heights: only the righteous do not grant themselves respite as they follow in the wake of the Saviour. They perfume everything with love and their prayer becomes *total* surrender to God.

Blessed are they who let themselves be won over by their example and so enjoy an inner life! There are no actions - apart from blame - that do not belong to the Lord. St Paul had already said: *Whether you eat, or drink, or do any other thing, do it all for the glory of God.* The righteous have it firm in their minds, so that nothing is done that does not belong to Love.

Do they wash in the morning? It is for Him. Do they go down the stairs? Every step is an act of love. And every step during the day? All for the Lord and Our Lady. Do they tire beyond all description? For their friends. Do they suffer in soul and body? How wonderful to suffer for the Lord! Do they suffer the heat and cold? Thank you, Lord. Do they work diligently all day long? For you, Jesus. If they meet their defamers? It is a meeting of Love. Do they read a little? It is done in Their company. And rest a little? It is done in the name of the Father, and the Son and the Holy Spirit. And so on, with every action.

For them it is still not enough: God's Love is infinite, and requests more and more for the glory of the Highest and for the good of our brothers. *Holiness slowly grows with the offering of little things.*

Fr. Giacomo Bozzo

inside of her), her continuous prayer and offerings to God are extremely significant. If her liberation is tied to a big defeat by Satan, then it is worth our while helping her through that chain of Rosaries that Our Lady has asked for.

We must say that for Joan too, the heavenly request for help has not been taken seriously enough, like Our Lady's requests in Fatima and Medjugorje have not been accepted seriously enough. We can all see the outcome of this lack of response.

We need faith and we need perseverance, so let us keep on praying (the Rosary recited before the Blessed Sacrament is particularly efficacious).

We promise to inform our readers when Joan will be liberated.

Fr. Gabriel Amorth
(remarks between [] are the editor's)

Those marks on Our Lady's dress: confession and spiritual guidance

In the early days of the Apparitions we had an extraordinary experience: we had been wanting to touch Our Lady and She consented. At 10.30 pm we went to the field indicated by Her. Others were with us. We visionaries took their hands so they could touch Her too. They all felt something: some warmth, others cold, or an electric shock. We however, in that moment saw black spots appearing on Her dress. She started crying and we did too. She told us those spots were the signs of our sins and for the first time Our Lady asked us to go to confession to encounter God in the truth.

We have had other similar experiences, but we were deeply moved by that one for the way the Blessed Mother led us to confession. She also told us: *choose a priest as your spiritual guide to understand what God wants from you.* (Marija Pavlovic)

Sacramental confession as a way to spiritual healing

The Church, which reflects Mary's maternity, also offers us abundant teachings on penance in the New Catechism. Through confessing one's sins and offering hospitality to the **healing work of the Holy Spirit**, we will see the fruits of revival in our lives.

In the Catechism we find a brief remark by St. Augustine who magnificently explains this important phase in our spiritual growth:

«When you recognize your sins and condemn them, you already agree with God. God condemns your sins; if you also condemn them, you are united to God. A man and a sinner are two distinct things: man is work of God, a sinner is your work, oh man. Destroy what you did so God may save what He did, and your good deeds will begin, because you condemn your bad deeds. Good deeds start with the recognition of bad deeds. Through being truthful you will come to the Light.»

St John Bosco teaches to confide in spiritual guides

F. Piccollo on St John Bosco: "One day I noticed some of my friends snatching bread rolls and I, tempted by greediness, took advantage of that moment and took two rolls too. I ran behind the arcade and ate them avidly, but I soon felt remorse: "It's stealing. Tomorrow you take Holy Communion. You'll have to go and confess!" But the father confessor was Fr. Bosco. I knew how he hated theft. What on earth could I do?"

Not so much out of shame, but not to disappoint Fr. Bosco, I ran out the door of the church and went to the *Consolata* (a nearby Sanctuary). I was glad it was dim inside. I chose the confessional with the thickest grating and started: "I came here because I feel too ashamed to confess to Fr. Bosco!"

A voice responded: "Go ahead, he'll never know a thing..." but it was Fr. Bosco's voice! Mercy! How could it be! He shouldn't be here! I was covered in cold sweat. Was it a miracle? No, Fr. Bosco had been invited, as usual, to help with the confessions, and I just happened to find the father confessor I had been trying to avoid.

"Speak up son. What happened?" I was shaking like a leaf. "I stole two bread rolls" "Did they hurt you?" "No." "Then don't be so distressed. Were you hungry?" "Yes." "Hungry for bread, thirsty for water. Good hunger and good thirst. When you are in need, ask Fr. Bosco. He'll give you all the bread you need, but remember: Fr. Bosco prefers you to confide in him rather than believe in your innocence. If you confide in him he'll always be able to help you, but your innocence could make you slide and fall and no one will be able to help you. Fr. Bosco's wealth is the trust of his boys."

I never forgot his goodness or that lesson.»

Pasqual Triduum - foundation of Christian living

the Pope's magistral guidance

The teachings of the Pope have of late been centred on the great Pasqual Mystery of the Death and Resurrection of Christ.

Meditate upon Christ's humiliation - In particular, starting from PALM SUNDAY with St Paul, he celebrated Christ who *humbled himself, becoming obedient to death, even death on a cross* (Ph 2:6-8), stressing that, "when we reflect in deep recollection on the words about Christ's humiliation and his exaltation by the Father, we are reminded of what he, Christ, said of himself in the parable of the Good Shepherd who gives his life for his flock. *This is why the Father loves me, because I lay down my life ... No one takes it from me, but I lay it down on my own. I have power to lay it down, and power to take it up again* (Jn 10:17-18). We find ourselves at the very heart of the "mystery of the Gift:" a free gift that testifies most perfectly to freedom, that represents the revelation of the complete love that redeems and saves." It is a testimony that: "demands the courage to die to oneself, abandoning the ways of sin to follow the narrow way of the Gospel."

Holy Thursday: the Eucharist perpetuates Jesus' sacrifice - "During the Supper that evening, Jesus mystically anticipated the sacrifice of Calvary and gave himself in sacrifice, under the appearances of Bread and Wine, as he himself had foretold (cf. Jn6) and entrusted to the Apostles and their successors the mission and power of perpetuating its memory by repeating the same rite: *Do this in memory of me!* (...) Words of fundamental importance! They recall what Jesus actually did at the Last Supper; they proclaim to us the sacrificial intention through the consecration of bread and wine, replacing the sacrificial lamb of the Jews, and his express intention to make the Apostles and their successors the ministers of the Eucharist.

The Eucharist, as Christ's real presence and as the sacrament of interior communion of love and salvation; the priesthood, as the Eucharistic ministry reserved to the Apostles and their successors: this is the essential meaning of Holy Thursday. It is a question of a dogma of faith, to be accepted then with deep, abiding gratitude. It means Christ's gift, to be increasingly appreciated in an attitude of sincere, intense devotion."

Good Friday: God does not follow our ways - On Good Friday John Paul II led the WAY OF THE CROSS. "We have come to the Colosseum, which speaks to us of ancient Rome. It was at the time that the cross entered the life and death of the first Christians, called to bear witness to Christ by the sacrifice of their lives. They were able to do this because the Cross filled their death with the death of Christ; it filled their death with inexpressible life: his life. *Whoever loses his life for my sake and the Gospel's will save it* (Mk8:35). They sacrificed their lives, and they saved their lives in Christ. What a mystery is Christ's passion: God made man suffer to save man, taking upon himself all the tragedy of humanity. Good Friday thus brings to mind the continuous succession of historical trials, the human events marked by the perennial struggle between good and evil. **The cross is truly the scale of history:** it is understood and accepted only by meditating on and loving the Crucified. St John wrote: *In this is love: not that we have loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as expiation for our sins* (1 Jn4:10); and St Paul asserted: *God proves his love for us that while we were still sinners Christ dies for us* (Rom 5:8)." In his plan of salvation and sanctification, God does not follow our ways: he undergoes the cross to reach his glorification, thus spurring us to

patience and confidence. Let us learn from Good Friday to accompany Jesus on his way of sorrow, with humility, trust and abandonment to the will of God, finding support and comfort amidst the sufferings of life in the cross of Christ."

"Even though to the eyes of human experience death still seems the winner, Christ, in dying and rising, despoiled it from within, so to speak. Faith is needed to be open to this new, wondrous horizon. Jesus says as much to the Apostle Thomas, assailed by doubt: *Blest are they who have not seen and have believed* (Jn 20:29). Faith is not an illusion; it is a piercing gaze enabling us to penetrate to the deepest level of reality. Faith is **acceptance of the inner voice of God's Spirit** and reasonable trust in an historically based testimony."

Risen Christ gives life in abundance - "Let us allow ourselves then be touched by the consoling message of Easter and enveloped by the triumph of his light that scatters the clouds of fear and sadness. The Risen Jesus walks by our side. He allows himself to be experienced in some way by all who call upon him and love him. We can meet him not only in our prayer but in the various moments of life, if we live with faith and love."

In the URBI ET ORBI message the Pope said in his prayer to Jesus: "(...) You have the power to give your life for the world and to take it back again in the resurrection. **You have the power to communicate to the world this divine life that is in you.** The world does not have this Life in itself. In itself it has a life that is subject to death. You alone have the immortal life that comes from God. But God loves the world and God loves you who have come into the world. In you, the Father gives Life to those who are in the world. And you too want this, O Christ our Redeemer. Your wish is that *they may have life, and have it abundantly* (Jn 10:10)."

This pasqual message and experience reflect the theme for the World Youth Day to be held in Denver, Colorado: **Born to new life in Christ Jesus.**

Christian testimony, which comes from his personal experience of death and resurrection, must not forget that "though it is surely dutiful to take care of the various earthly tasks, the Apostle urges us not to let us become absorbed by them to the point where we lose the supernatural perspective of eternity." The Pope's many appeals for peace and a return to God are founded on the strength of the Risen Christ and in Whom the Holy Father trusts.

"From the now empty tomb there springs forth the Life which overcomes the forces of death threatening our human existence. Believers cannot but act with courage and commitment wherever there is poverty, hunger, injustice, wherever life is threatened, from its beginning to its natural end, wherever life is despised and scorned. Christ's followers should feel obliged to dedicate themselves without pause to the demanding and urgent task of renewing society, working with trust and in harmony, to imprint on history's progress the enlightening guidelines of the Gospel, which are indispensable for making this world, our world, on the eve of the Third Christian Millennium, the hospitable homeland of every human being. Brothers and sisters in the faith, the Risen One calls upon all his disciples, to bear joyful witness to justice and truth."

(from col. 3) Fr. Leonard was also surprised that he was so clearly referring to Medj. It was referred to me that the Pope was told about Medj. not being destroyed and he supposedly said that this was a miracle in itself.

Pasqual Alleluia in the streets of Moscow

18 April'93 - Orthodox Easter. The mayor of Moscow ordered that all the poor people of the city be given a free meal. Large banners announcing CHRIST IS RISEN line the streets and at midnight the streets were lit up and the bells of all the churches rang out to announce the joyful news. During the last years of Communism everything possible was done to cancel religious festivity from people's memories. Easter Saturday was *Lenin's saturday* and volunteers from the party cleaned up squares and streets. Then on the night of the Resurrection free concerts were held for the youth. 70 years of Communism however are not enough to make people forget 2000 years of history and yesterday the churches were overflowing with faithful.

The Russian president took part in the solemn rites in the Cathedral which were presided over by Patriarch Alexei. They began yesterday evening at 11 pm, lasting till nearly sunrise this morning. Happy Easter in Russian is *Kristos voskrese!* (Christ is risen) to which you reply *Voistinu Voskrese!* (He is truly risen). It is a greeting that is accompanied by a traditional exchange of kisses.

When the Tsar, Nicholas II, was enthroned at Easter in 1904 he noted down in his diary that he exchanged kisses and greetings with more than 1,000 faithful, 730 being soldiers from his personal guard.

Death and Resurrection in Albania

A tomb we thought had been sealed for ever has sprung open again: we are talking about the resurrection of the Albanian people! Who could have guessed this would happen when only 3 years ago every sign of religion was destroyed in the name of the most radical of atheisms, and those who had themselves baptized were condemned to death?

Now the Pope is here, amid the enthusiastic crowds, in Tirana and Shkodër. Only 10% are Catholics, 20% are Orthodox and 70% are Muslims - all living peacefully together.

The Pope found them before him in their poor clothes, with their mule-drawn carts, amid their homes and churches in ruins. Next to him was Mother Theresa, "humble servant of the poorest who carried the name of her homeland to the whole world."

In the Cathedral in Shkodër (used for decades as a sports centre) 4 priests, survivors of the persecutions, were consecrated as bishops. The Pope told the crowd: "Your experience of death and resurrection belongs to the whole Church and the entire world. This experience must not be forgotten, to avoid repeating the same errors. The venerated Sanctuary of Our Lady of Good Counsel, which was destroyed by the Communists, will also be rebuilt as a sign that being part of Jesus' Church means starting from Mary."

The Pope and the Rosary

"The Rosary is a daily encounter that neither I nor She ever fail to go to. If you would like to be close to the Pope's heart for a little, then may I propose the Rosary hour, in which I remember all of you to the Virgin, and I would be happy if you could remember me in the same way." 12 May'92

The Pope said: Mary asks for fasts and prayer

(23-3-93) Bonifacio reports: 2 Sundays ago the Pope spoke about the apparitions saying Mary is asking for *fasts and prayer* and that we *must listen to Her*. It made me think of Medj. **Fr. Slavko:** I did not read this homily of the Pope, but I was told that the only word missing was Medj. Everyone understood that he was talking about Medj.

Beatification of Sr Faustina - or the triumph of the Divine Mercy

Low Sunday, 18th April 1993. The Holy Father beatified (together with others) Sr. Faustina Kowalska, a Polish religious known all over the world for the great message she left to the world concerning the Divine Mercy.

The Pope, in obvious spiritual communion with the blessed nun, greeted her: "I salute you, Sister Faustina. Beginning today the Church calls you blessed. (...) How extraordinary your life was! Precisely you, the poor and simple daughter of the Polish people, were chosen by Christ to remind people of this great mystery of divine Mercy! You bore this mystery within yourself, leaving this world after a short life, filled with suffering. (...) *I clearly feel that my mission does not end with death, but begins...*, Sr. Faustina wrote in her diary.

And her mission continues and is yielding astonishing fruit. It is truly marvellous how her devotion to Merciful Jesus is spreading in our contemporary world and gaining so many human hearts! **There is no doubt this is a sign of the times.** The balance of this century about to end presents, in addition to the advances which have often surpassed those of preceding eras, a deep restlessness and fear of the future. Where, if not in the divine mercy, can the world find refuge and the light of hope? Believers understand that perfectly."

Sr. Faustina, simple and humble, with unlimited trust in God, was entrusted with a special mission through messages from the Lord like this:

Write down my words, my daughter; tell the world about my mercy. All humanity should appeal to it. Write that before coming as a just judge I shall throw open the door of my mercy: those who do not want to pass through it, shall have to pass through the door of my justice. The souls who appeal to my mercy give me great joy; to them I concede graces that exceed their own desires. I cannot even punish the greatest sinner when he appeals to my forgiveness, but I justify him thanks to my mercy which is infinite and which for you remains incomprehensible. (...) Daughter, tell the world about my mercy, about my love. The flames of mercy burn me, I want to pour them onto the souls of men. Oh, what sorrow they give me when they do not accept them! My dear daughter, tell the suffering humanity to cling to my merciful heart and I will fill it with peace. When a soul comes to me with trust, I fill it with so much grace that it is unable to hold it all and it radiates onto other souls. The souls that spread the cult of my mercy are protected by me all their lives; [I am] like a loving mother who protects her suckling babe; in the hour of their death I shall not be Judge for them but merciful Saviour. In that last hour a soul has nothing in its defence but my mercy. How I am sorrowed by the mistrust of my goodness! The sins of mistrust are the ones that hurt me the most.

Dear daughter, if I use you to ask men for the cult of my mercy, on your part you must be the first to place your every trust in it. From you I want works of mercy that come from your love for me. Be merciful always and in every situation, without ever feeling you may be exempt, without finding excuses or justifications. Be merciful when you do things for others, when you speak with them, when you turn to God with prayers in their favour. The mercy you show on others is irrefutable proof of your love for me. This

is the way that a soul glorifies my mercy and bestows upon it the cult I am asking for.

Sr. Faustina's entire life was a response to the mission she was entrusted with. This is what she said: «When my human nature is taken by fear, my trust in the infinite mercy is awakened in me immediately. [Nothing can stand up to it, but] everything yields to it, like the shadows of the night that yield to the first rays of sunlight. Jesus, the certainty of your goodness is so convincing that I look with courage even into the eyes of death. **I know nothing will happen to me without the divine mercy being present.** I will celebrate it during the course of my life and at the moment of my death, of my resurrection and always.

Jesus, every day my soul is immersed in the rays of your mercy. Your mercy is the conducting line of my life. My soul overflows Lord with your goodness. I wish to love you as no other living creature has ever loved you, and though I am so miserable and small, I cast the anchor of my trust into the profound abyss of your mercy. (...)

As I write I am aware of the devil's anger. He cannot stand God's mercy being known. One day the spirit of evil told me: "when people will understand that God is merciful the worst sinners will find renewed trust [in him] and will convert, while I lose everything. You are my torment when you let others know that God is infinitely merciful."

But I don't care about the enemy's ire. Oh my Lord, may an inextinguishable fire burn in me to implore your mercy. My wish is that your mercy be glorified; I live for this and I desire nothing else.»

(To be continued)

Love God Infinitely!

Easter retreat with Fr. Tomislav

The theme for this year's annual retreat for prayer group leaders, held in Pescara (Italy) from 15-18 April, was: *Towards the trinitarian love.* 1,200 people attended. The retreat ended with an explosion of joy during Mass on Low Sunday. Fr. Tomislav, together with the young people from his community, had prepared the grace for this meeting, with many days of prayer. The following are some of Fr. Tomislav's reflections:

«It is important to see where we are and where we have to go. Our life is a walk amid day to day things; in it we can find God and reach the trinitarian love. It is love that opens the soul to living a vital relationship with the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. This is the only value we can present to God. We are not to put our problems in the centre. If you fix your life on your problems, you remain in them. We have to offer them to God, Who knows how to use them and glorify them.

This is the first step in opening ourselves up totally to God's love. We have to try and hear God's voice in the others, to see Him in our friends. He is here, in us, alive, if we develop our inner attention we will discover this. We tend to be heavily individualistic, imposing our thoughts on others. This is not aperture, it reflects a battle between those who live by reason and those who live by heart. Too few feel God with their souls.

The world has to find God its Creator and learn to relate to Him, see Him as a living presence. Without this relationship we will die. Jesus destroyed evil and thanks to Him the saving grace is in us; it is a power

that destroys sin. Our lives must be openness to this power within us. If we are open to it there will be less fighting among us, and along this road the world can be renewed. Only in God can unity and harmony be found.

My Father, our Father - In the NT, Jesus reveals the Father to us as one who loves infinitely, and He invites us to live a perfect life through being in communion with Him. Being in this perfect life is living Jesus' infinite love as He showed us on the Cross. Jesus, in His surrender to the Father, freed the infinite love which embraces all creatures. We too have to be surrendered to the Father and abandon ourselves to Him.

God the Father is immensely loving. His love is infinite. He is more loving than a mother. He does not govern, nor judge. He awaits us. He keeps His house ready for us. Our sins do not disturb Him; he softens at the sight of His children returning home. The world does not know the Father. Neither do we know Him; we are too superficial. Too few surrender themselves to Him in prayer.

The Church is full of the prayers of bigots, by people who are not in communion with the Father. Many people look only for miracles, for signs, but not for God. When we recite the Our Father, we repeat a formula. But it can't remain just a formula; for the Father is present, He is listening to us with outstretched arms, He loves us infinitely in that and every moment. So we have to feel this live relationship with Him, this feeling of true communion and be convinced of it.

The reason Christians are unable to manifest God and His holiness to the world is because of this lack of communion. Let us run to the Father, and free ourselves of feelings of guilt; because for Him, our faults don't mean a thing. Don't try to analyse your faults; Jesus offers Himself for us. Let us go to the Father, like little children; it is He Who thinks of everything, all we have to do is rest in Him. *It is God who puts both the will and the action into you.* (Ph 2:13)

My nourishment is carrying out my Father's will - Jesus came and died on the Cross so we could go to the Father, not for us to remain in this human condition. Jesus always remained in perfect union with the Father; He chose to do the Father's will. Jesus' love is a sacrificial love: this is His path and if we want to go to the Father our love too must be sacrificed so it can triumph in eternal communion with the Holy Trinity.

This is sublime love. What do we want? Sublime love or the left-overs of earthly love?

The Holy Spirit will guide you - Jesus wants our souls to be totally surrendered to the Spirit. Let us not then close ourselves up, but open ourselves entirely, simply and lovingly. Jesus told His apostles: *Don't worry about what you should say, the Holy Spirit will speak for you in that moment.*

How can I feel the Spirit in me? Our hearts are like filters. Our souls know the way that leads to God. Our aim is to be open to the Holy Spirit, descend into the depths of our souls, and we will be invaded by the Spirit; whose fruits are: love, joy and peace (Gal5:22). When we feel harmony, humbleness and fondness it means that our soul has merged with the Spirit, and in this profound union we will become efficacious means for salvation, for God's life runs through us.

Remain in silence and rejoice before God - If we look at Mary we will see Her own example of communion with God. Her humbleness and simplicity permitted God to be in Her. Our Blessed Mother stripped Herself of everything to carry out God's will: *I am the handmaid of the Lord. Let what you have said be done to me.* »

(O.R.S.)

Judgement of faith is not enough to remain in Christ, you need openness to the Spirit

Whoever does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. (Rm 8:9)

After Peter's profession of faith in Christ (Mt 16) he receives a great blessing from Jesus that fills him with a great power: the charisma of unity of the Church. *You are Peter and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of the netherworld shall not prevail against it. (Mt 16:18)* Peter receives the promise that the mystery of the Church will remain in history till the end of time, and he receives this promise as a consequence of his profession of faith. But, immediately after being the object of the greatest blessing a man ever received, he also receives the greatest curse: *Get behind me Satan! You are an obstacle to me. You are thinking not as God does, but as human beings do.*

The Apostle is praised before all, then severely reprimanded. Why? From a human point of view, Jesus seems schizophrenic; in reality it is Peter who is contradictory. It is openness to the Spirit that permits Christ's logical continuity with the truth that comes from Above. On a human, superficial level, it is Jesus who quickly changes his mind, while on a spiritual level, it is Peter who shows difficulty in being constantly open to the Light that comes from High. That is why Jesus said to Peter: *Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah. For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my heavenly Father.*

Jesus had prepared a dialogue: *Who do the people say I am?* From this general question, however, He passes on to a more personal one: *Who do you say I am?* Apprehension .. silence. Then Peter receives Light, his soul is opened by the Holy Spirit and he pronounces the famous profession of faith.

So **judgement of faith is important**, fundamental and always fruit of openness to the Holy Spirit; **but it is not sufficient**. This judgement of faith must continue in a permanent openness to the Spirit. In fact, if you do not live this way you cannot listen to what comes from High and your work becomes your own. That's what happened to Peter, who takes Jesus aside and reprimands Him, not accepting what Jesus says anymore. This is where the betrayal of faith is, not so much in judgement, but in the lack of permanence of judgement.

Why is Mary, Mother of God, not accepted today? Judgement of faith says that Her presence is indispensable, but in truth She is not accepted because hearts are closed to the fact that the Spirit can manifest Himself today, that the Virgin can come to help Her children today in a way we never imagined.

When Peter professed his faith he opened his heart to the truth that for a Hebrew was like blasphemy. The words that came from his mouth were certainly not his words. Immediately after, however, his heart closes to the Spirit and he begins being fearful for what Jesus is saying. This is the old Peter, closed to the Spirit and incapable of remaining in that initial state of openness.

It happens because we do not remain in a state of prayer. The Pope would say *not remaining permanently vigil*. Mary tells us: *To understand what you have to do, pray and God will make you see where you need to change and what you should do.* Without this continuous prayer, without being permanently rooted in an openness to the newness of the Spirit, judgement of faith remains but it becomes a judgement that kills faith. Life comes from a continuous openness to the Holy Spirit Who is Lord and giver of life.

Being closed to the Spirit is the fount of aridity, of the death of the Church, in communities and in our personal lives. Faith

is sterile without this openness, this trust and surrender to God Who is omnipotent.

If we look at the dialogue between Lazarus' sisters and Jesus, we see that Jesus says, *Do you believe this?* so Martha and Mary can be open to the Spirit in that instance, because either you are open now, or your faith does not exist. When there is openness, it is openness to the omnipotence of the Spirit.

Jesus reprimands Thomas, the doubter, for not having believed in the possibility of resurrection, because he was not open to the unimaginable ways of the Spirit. This reproach is seen in Mary's teachings - we are being called by Her not to think like Peter in our limited humanity. When we are like this we are cause for scandal, because the Spirit always finds new ways, different ways to our ways. It is the same scandal that made Joseph think he had to send Mary away. Joseph was a righteous man, but that judgement, in good faith, was not enough. He needed openness to the Spirit to make him accept Mary.

Being closed to the Spirit is a sin which can never be forgiven. We can see this in Judas. Jesus offered Himself for Judas right up to the end, but his closure remained impenetrable and he condemned himself. Definite closure to the Spirit brings about a seemingly irrevocable condemnation.

Judgement of faith that lacks openness to the Spirit imprisons the life of faith, it imprisons the Spirit, thus making us Satan's accomplices. The problem is not in knowing how to cite the Bible, because Satan knows how to do this too, even better than us.

Betrayal lies in this level, in taking it for granted that the Spirit is dead - so our only possibility is to recreate oneself, drawing on one's own capacities, on man's abilities. It is continually trying to find ways, different ideologies, building on what comes from human intelligence, never from what comes from the Spirit. It is obvious this happens because we don't pray, we don't remain in communion with the Spirit, we don't create the conditions for us to be used as His instruments. **No one reflects enough on Jesus' 30 years of silence**, and no one easily plans 40 days of desert, of silence and fasts to be able to face 3 years of apostolic life.

All things that do not come from Above are used by Satan who takes advantage of our weaknesses and [spiritual] wounds so our activities are, deep down, expressions of our old selves.

Nothing new comes from man, but everything comes from the Spirit. Men only fool themselves if they think they can recreate themselves by changing the way of making things. In the end they are the same and nothing has changed. To change we need conversion, we need the spark of the Holy Spirit to change us. It is only the Spirit Who manifests Christ's lordship today.

There are moments in Jesus' life where it is more than obvious that Christ wins his battle in the Spirit, and only in the Spirit. After 40 days of fasts, of desert, of prayer and offering, of openness to the Spirit, Jesus is tempted by Satan. Jesus, however, has already won His battle, before being tempted.

When you are deeply placed in the Spirit you have already won the world, Satan and all his contradictions; you have already resolved all your problems and sufferances; not because they don't exist anymore, but because on a deep level they have already been defeated. Let us learn from Jesus that in prayer He was able to tell Satan, **Go away, man does not live on bread alone**, because in the depths of the spirit He already had love, light and strength to win.

Fr. Giacomo

(notes from a spiritual retreat for priests)

IVAN AND HIS VOCATION Profound spiritual change in world fruit of apparitions

The following interview of Ivan by René Laurentin was taken from Chretiens Magazine: "We have to pray much for the non-believers. It is difficult to make others understand the fantastic amount of love with which the Virgin gives us Her messages. Right from the beginning She came as the Queen of Peace, saying: My Son has sent me to help you. Men have to make peace with God and with each other. The world is in grave danger of destroying itself. My Son sends me to show you how to remediate. But peace can't be obtained unless we help too.

Our Lady did not appear just for us Croats, but for all men of every race and religion that come here. The biggest sign of these apparitions is the **beginning of a profound spiritual change in the world**. Many have become aware of how little and miserable they truly are and have started trying being better at making peace.

After 11 years of frequenting the Virgin's school, I tell myself every day: it's time for you to convert. It's not easy living by proper values in a world that has wiped them out. But it's up to us to change this.

People say that the messages are repetitive; for me they are always new and unique every time I read them again. We have to talk less and work more. Personal prayer is very important for one's spiritual walk.

Q. Now that there are less pilgrims, do you find more time to work?

A. Yes, yesterday I ploughed.

Q. How should we recite the Rosary?

A. Without rushing, and adorn it with intentions for our and others' needs. Meditate on the corresponding biblical passages. If you pray well, at the end you are stronger, more joyful, more rested.

Q. What about fasting?

A. I was the first to receive the message requesting fasts on bread and water every Wednesday and Friday. In the beginning it was very difficult for me, but now I am used to it. It purifies and strengthens my faith. We are asked to fast not just on food, but other things too.

Q. Can you work properly on the days you fast?

A. In those days the further away I am from the house and kitchen the better it is.

Q. Ivan, you are 27 years old. What do you think you'll make of your life? Jakov is married now, what about you?

A. For the moment I will stay with my family. I am kept very busy with prayer for the youth. I am responsible for a prayer group and I care a lot about this. I try to spread Mary's message as much as possible. For the moment this is my mission.

Medjugorje and the war - How many men are stationed at Siroki Brijeg?

About 300. How many have died? 38! All the more amazing then when we think that not one man from Medj. has lost his life - even though some have fought in Mostar and other fronts. And not one person from Medj. has been raped or wounded. The peaceful Spanish UN soliders in Medj. are quartered in the Compas bungalows.

Regular confession of our venial sins helps form our consciences, [helps us] fight against our bad inclinations, lets us be healed by Christ, and [helps us] advance on the way of the Spirit. By receiving often the gift of the Father's mercy in this sacrament, we are urged to be merciful like Him. (CCC)

MEDJUGORJE - DAY BY DAY

Our Lady said to Mirjana: give me your hands

Fr. Slavko tells how **Mirjana** received an Apparition on 18 March, her birthday, and received the following message:

Dear children, My desire is this: that you give me your hands. That way I will be able to take you like a mother onto the right way; I will be able to take you to your Father. Open your hearts and let me enter. Pray, because I am with you in prayer. Pray, and I shall be able to guide you. I will lead you to peace and happiness.

The Apparition lasted 7 minutes and Mirjana said how afterwards she felt like she was in a desert, like when one returns from heaven (we understand little of what returning from heaven could mean). This time Our Lady did not talk about the secrets, which sadden Mirjana, but she did not forget to pray for the non-believers: *those who do not know God's love*. Another Our Father and Glory Be was said for our inner peace so we can transmit it to others.

Sr. Emmanuel was present (Alberto Bonifacio also was) and she said how the message made her think that: "if Our Lady asked for both our hands, it means one isn't enough to lead us to Jesus. Who would we lead by both hands? Very small children still unsteady in their walking, or people with handicaps and unable to walk without help. Our Lady knows us, and in Her humbleness, face to face, She takes us by both hands and leads us to Jesus."

On the 2nd March, in her monthly encounter with Our Lady, Mirjana prayed with Our Blessed Mother from 9.50 - 10.50 am for the non-believers.

Love enemies and children of violence

Alberto Bonifacio met Mirjana on 25 March and asked her how we could collaborate in bringing about peace for our brothers and sisters.

A. Pray to God that He may give us the strength to transmit peace to all, and pray more for our enemies, so God may help them understand what is right and what is wrong. Do not judge and do not hate. Pray. We have to consider them as our lost brothers.

Q. How do you feel about the tragic fighting between Croats and Muslims in Konjic?

A. As a Croat I suffered first for Communism, then for the war. I was taught that if you carry your cross while on the earth you will go to heaven. That is why I think we Croats are a people chosen by God to carry their cross to help Him, first with the Serbs, now with the Muslims, who received food, drink, everything from the Croats. Now they are killing us. We are praying for them, to give them love. We do not want people to call us: "those poor people," for we feel loved by God. I pray that there will not be hate; but it's easy to say when you haven't lost your family, your home, your town, just everything. Above all we have to pray for the children who have no blame in this. The Serbs are Orthodox, but they have no faith. All they have in their blood is war. If you look at history you'll see that the peoples have had to succumb to them, otherwise the Serbs would start a war. It was always them to start. Let us pray to God that He may change their minds and give them more love and more faith. Look at the women who have been raped and are now expecting babies .. it's terrible.

Q. Now what about these babies - why don't you bring them to us?

A. No one wants the children to leave their country, and now in Medj, together with

Fr. Slavko, we are planning to rent a house for them. Love must now be born from this hate.

Q. You'll need people to look after them.

A. Sr. Elvira said her boys know what to do for they already offer assistance to the old and have to feed them and change them. I will help too, but finding people will not be a problem. The important thing is love.

From Sr. Emmanuel's diary

15 April 1993 : * Exactly 1 year ago Easter here was much more like a Good Friday, but what joy this year in seeing the crowds return. All the visionaries were present.

* Our **bishop Paul Zanic'** has been admitted to the hospital of Split for heart problems. For our loving and intense prayer, may the Virgin visit and console him.

* We hear many testimonies. One is from a Bosnian priest who underwent cruel tortures: "it was extraordinary when we met to pray for our torturers..." Let us keep on helping the prisoners with our prayers, for there are still many thousands of them.

* Fr. Slavko has announced that the **Youth Festival** will be held the first 5 days of August, as usual.

* From chats with the visionaries we learnt that the Virgin often urged them to read spiritual material, and in particular the lives of the saints. How true it is that the greatest victories are won by holy people. Satan in fact, said to St John Mary Vianney (Curé of Ars): "With just three like you in all of France I wouldn't be able to put a foot in." Talking about saints, they exist our days too, in the poorest homes in Medj., that no one visits, but that hide treasures of prayers and mystical life.

* **Vicka** reports that Our Lady is more worried about the world's situation than that in Bosnia & Herzegovina. Our prayers for peace are more than ever necessary!

Vicka takes Medjugorje to the USA

"Vicka recently spent 2 weeks in the US." Peter Miller, distributor of English and Spanish Echo in California, wrote to us on 25 March. He continues: "She stayed 1 week in Chicago and 3 days in Los Angeles. The people filled 4 churches in Chicago and in LA I had to book 2 large auditoriums, as the largest churches would not have held all the people: 2000 per night with just 2 day's notice via word of mouth! Vicka said she came to the US to bring Medj. to the people, as most were afraid to travel to the peaceful village.

I still take regular monthly groups to Medj. *Queen of Peace Ministry* is the only Medj. Centre in the US that has never stopped taking pilgrimages there. We believe that as long as Our Lady is present in the village, we have nothing to fear. In fact, I've never heard of a single incident where a pilgrim was harmed in anyway in Medj.

There are many rumours here about this being the last year of Our Lady's apparitions..." *Dear Peter, We've heard this before - lots of time! Don't worry, we will know when Our Lady stops visiting the earth when She will stop appearing, and not a day before!*

Jakov, 22 years old, married **Annalisa Barozzi** from Mantova on Easter day in Medj. They met during Jakov's long stay (about 1 year) in her hometown. Fr. Slavko blessed their wedding and Sr. Elvira's boys sang for the Solemn Mass. The bride and groom will live in Medj. where they have set up their home.

We know how Jakov can be reserved and reluctant to talk about his personal life and the apparitions and he doesn't like publicity. It is quite some time that he no

Jakov and Annalisa pronounce their vows

longer goes to the daily appointment with the Gospa at 5.45 pm. Some of his expressions make us think that he sees Our Lady every now and again or perhaps every day at a different time "when he prays."

Brazil: where souls are open to Mary's wishes

We publish the following letter in its whole: Dear Father Angelo, I write to greet you and encourage you to continue with your mission right to the end. A prayer meeting was held on Friday 26 Feb. in the parish church of Romanengo (Central N. Italy), and guests were the **visionary Marija** and **Wayne Weible** (American writer, prior to Medj. a Lutheran). At the end of the Rosary we heard Wayne's beautiful testimony and then Marija, just back from Brazil, told us about her trip.

She said how happy she was to have witnessed so much faith in the young Brazilians. She told us about the meeting in the big Cathedral in Rio and how it was overflowing with people. The Archbishop and many other bishops were also present.

Someone asked why the bishops were there and they replied: "Because we have seen how the people have changed after coming to know the message of Medj."

And Marija talked about the message: *Don't talk about prayer, but pray. Testify with your lives not with words.* She said how the thousands of young people would not let her out of the Cathedral after the meeting. They wanted to keep on talking. "Marija, we won't let you out until you tell us what we can do. Tell us, what does Our Lady want us to do?" And outside the Cathedral the Carnival was in full swing. One young man said: "There are so many people outside dancing in the streets, some even for 24 hours non-stop. Surely we can find time to give to God."

I looked at Marija while she was talking to us and I noted how tired she appeared, yet at the same time very happy. On some occasions in Brazil she attended 3 different meetings on the same day, with temperatures reaching 40°C and over, at times without a meal. Although she was tired, and with only one kidney, she joyfully donated herself. It brought to mind a message given in 1985: *It is my wish that you who are weak begin to help, trustfully, and the Lord will repay you with trust.*

The joy of Marija's testimony had become contagious by the end of the meeting. I saw how people who had arrived looking worn out by the worries of life were transformed and starting radiating the same joy and peace to the others around them.

In Romanengo too, a bit like in Rio, the people did not want Marija to go once the

meeting had ended. They didn't want that joy to end. It made me think of the message of 25 May '92: *Start praying again and pray till prayer becomes joy for you. Then you will discover that God is Omnipotent in your daily lives.*

Let us pray that Jesus may grant us His joy and be able to carry it to others. God be with you. Paul (3 March '93)

Bosnia - no human remedy the war continues

The blind-alley situation is ever more tragic. The Serbs in Bosnia did not accept the Vance-Owen "peace plan." According to the plan proposed by the UN, Bosnia would be divided into 10 provinces and each one assigned to the larger ethnic group present in each. The Serbs in Bosnia continue taking time, pretending to negotiate, and laugh at the threats of military intervention (the divided European nations are afraid of doing this), and in the meantime they keep on occupying those territories that the UN had assigned to the Muslims. Nor do they intend retreating from the ones they have already occupied. So they besiege the Muslim cities, where terrified inhabitants of the villages have taken refuge, until out of hunger or bombings, they fall. Now, after the refusal, they are all the more enraged, pushed by a mad and brutal "heroism."

What we saw happening in Srebrenica is happening in many other cities. Their objective is to unite the Serbs of occupied Bosnia and Croatia to make Zara their port for the great Serbia. The length of the Croatian coast is held under fire by cannons. It is feared the Croatians, who have had their pride hurt, may react with violence. The number of victims increases. There is still no peace. Sarajevo's agony continues, and not only Sarajevo, but many other cities.

A further complication is the bloody fighting between Muslims and Croatians who are cleaning out their own provinces of each other. Here we can see the iniquity of the so called peace plan which could be more appropriately named a *plan of division* that legalizes ethnic cleansing. It is obvious that **people of different races can live together only with evangelical peace**, which we are all called to create in us and others. This war is the purulent sore of Europe, and shows up just how sick she truly is.

LATEST NEWS - The peace plan, approved on 2 May by the leader of the Serbs in Bosnia, Karadzic, has been rejected by the parliament of the Bosnian Serbs, despite pressure by the (Serbian) Serbs. The situation is now open to an armed intervention by the West, and *depends more than ever on our prayers and fasts.*

Who can say, "I did not know?"

The Pope makes many appeals to the leaders of the nations, (one in particular by letter to the Secretary for UNO); his Easter day message included the following appeal:

May the Pasqual announcement loudly resound especially wherever violence, anguish and despair still oppress individuals and families, peoples and nations. How can we keep silent today before the fratricidal struggles causing bloodshed in Bosnia-Herzegovina? **Who can say: I did not know? No one can consider that this tragic situation is not their affair**, which humiliates Europe and seriously compromises the future of peace. Leaders of

Radio Maria antenna on former Cultural Hall in Warsaw!

First message:

Merciful Jesus, I trust You!

Mary's works grow, the requests for the Father's love grow more urgent. Jesus knocks on all doors and throws open those of the ministries too! Thanks be to God and to His Handmaid, for on Friday 26th March, at precisely 7.38 pm, after interminable trials during the months before, the permanent link up for Radio Maria in Poland was activated and transmission began via satellite.

The first message was: **Merciful Jesus, I trust You!** Sr. Elizabeth was the announcer. She's from the same convent as Sr. Faustina Kowalska who was beatified on 18 April. Before becoming a nun Sr. Elizabeth worked for a local radio station in Poland. One evening, before Merciful Jesus in Cracow where Sr. Faustina received those famous messages, Sr. Elizabeth met Fr. Thaddeus who launched the idea of starting up a radio station. It was 11 February 1990, the day of Our Lady of Lourdes.

Then came the chain of hearts between Italy and Poland, that the Echo readers know about and the idea was slowly realized. Only God knows how many prayers and sacrifices it took. Do you recall Sr. Margaret Makarovic? She offered her life for Radio Maria. From her deathbed she sent a message to Fr. Thaddeus: "I offer everything for Radio Maria." On 8 Dec. '91, only a few hours after her death, Radio Maria was transmitting for the first time in Torun.

Things developed rapidly after that, with its growing popularity and countless conversions. Every diocese would like to receive Radio Maria. 2/3 of the Bishops have already obtained a frequency and at 9 pm every evening all the Bishops renew the consecration of Poland to Mary, Mother and Queen.

Then on 25 Feb. '93, **Card. Glomp** summoned the director of Radio Maria: "I would like to have your Radio here in Warsaw to receive the programmes for the millions of Catholics in my diocese, for everyone." Fr. Thaddeus went straight to the ministry. He found heavy traffic and was stopped by the police. Finally, at 10.59 am he arrived and obtained the frequency for Warsaw and 13 others: the last ones available, and just in time, for half an hour later he would have found the doors closed and the date expired. Who could have known? Mary of course, Who sent her angels to guide him.

In all there are **33 stations**, for now. The highest antenna is 198 metres, placed on the former Cultural Hall in Warsaw, with the statue of Lenin below watching as the world rises. Just a few days ago another antenna was erected in Katowice, an industrial town. A satellite has never been used so well, and never have there been so many debts!

We know the Holy Father reads Echo. Our gift to him is our joy. We assure him of our prayers and from him we invoke his fatherly blessing. *Ivan P.*

(We regularly send donations received for Radio Maria in Poland to Fr. Thaddeus.)

Nations, men and women of good will, with my heart overflowing with sorrow, I appeal once more to each one of you: stop this war! Put an end, I beg you, to the unspeakable cruelties whereby human dignity is being violated and God, our just and merciful Father, is being offended!

Mirjana and husband during Apparition of 18 March

OUR READERS WRITE

Readers often ask for news about other supernatural facts. Even though our programme does not allow for this, we have decided to give a brief mention of some.

- **From Naju in Korea:** Fr. Spiees, spiritual director of visionary Julia, wrote to Fr. Laurentin that on 14 Jan. '92, after 700 days of lachrymations, Our Lady stopped crying and there have been no more messages. An isolated fact: drops of delicately perfumed oil emanated from the wooden statue in early May '92.

- **Myrna of Soufanieh (Damascus):** After 10 years of apparitions, Myrna stopped seeing Our Lady on 26 Nov. '92. On the same date the oil that healed so many stopped oozing from her hands, and the blood stopped flowing from the mysterious wound in her side. In the last message Our Lady said: *This is the last time you will see me until Easter is united.* (The different Easters of the Catholics and Orthodox).

- **Emanuele Segatashja:** The little seer in Khibeho (Africa), who was pagan before the apparitions and did so much apostolic work in nearby towns, will soon become a priest.

Mary cause of division in married couple?

A brother from abroad writes about his marriage that is breaking up. His wife says he is too involved in apostolic work and she feels he gives her too little attention.

Dear brother, The grace that you both received, as a couple, through the sacrament of marriage, must be rekindled; you have to let it work in you. You must consider your wife as your own flesh. Jesus will give you the strength. It is the devil that wants to separate what God joined. It would be preferable for you to sacrifice your interests for hers. If you rekindle that first love you will glorify God. I am praying for you. You must pray together with your wife. Fr.A

YOUTH 2000

UK - 25-30 August: 2nd Int'l Prayer Festival, Aylesford Priory, Aylesford, Kent. Fr. Slavko Barbaric and Ivan Dragicic will attend from 26-30 Aug., and there will be an Open Day on 29 Aug with Fr. Daniel Ange.

USA - 11-15 August: YOUTH 2000 has been chosen by the World Youth Day Committee in Rome and Washington, D.C. to participate in Eucharistic Adoration during the Holy Father's visit to **Denver, Colorado**, for the 8th World Youth Day. *Enquiries for the UK event:* write to Youth 2000, P.O.B. 119, London SW7 5RH. Ph/ Fax: 071 370 0211 *Enquiries for World Youth Day* to the appropriate sources in individual countries.

Zealous but belated critics Much evidence in favour yet their eyes remain closed

A distributor wrote to say how leaflets against Medj. were being distributed in the local churches of her town, and among many of her friends. The author of these leaflets says he feels it his duty to inform the Medj. devotees about the other side of the medal: *if it weren't Mary speaking at Medj.*, spreading the messages would cause great harm to many ... because Satan comes as an angel of light, making use also of apparent conversions.

Dear sister, do not let yourself be perturbed.

1. *So far the truth has made its own way through, and in the future too, Medj. will defend itself with the help of all those who accept Mary's messages and start living a new life. The leaflet says, If it weren't Mary speaking at Medj. The message is the same as in the Gospel, and the world-wide response and the many conversions show where it all comes from - and it certainly isn't the devil.*

With what authority does the writer judge the many conversions "apparent?" Do not judge we are told. How blind can one be not to see the plant that produces so much fruit? It is the profound blindness of those who say they can see. (cf. Jn 9:39-41)

2. *Isn't the situation in former Yugoslavia enough to make people see that the church's lack of response to the messages of peace has been fatal? Our Blessed Mother started telling us 10 years before the tragedy broke out!*

And now look at those people helping to mend those infinite wounds (caused by refusing real peace) and taking aid to so many victims: it is they, the faithful of Medj. Without even wanting it, they are testifying to Mary's work done in the hearts of men.

3. *It seems that this zealous critic is rather behind with his facts. Do you really think that many of the Medj. devotees will let themselves be won over by the other side? We've been hearing that side for 11 years, but Medj. has not grazed by it. On the other hand, the message has continued to be spread all over the world, despite the battle it has met with.*

Then again, why bother to bring up that denigrating document again, that the Vatican disapproved and the Croatian Catholic press refused to print? Besides, since then quite a few things have changed. Msgr. Zanic in a few weeks will no longer be bishop of Mostar and a year ago Msgr. Ratko Peric' was appointed his successor, and he thinks a little differently. Medj. has been completely saved from the war, yet the territory surrounding it has been totally damaged, and during this time the pilgrims have slowed down, but never ceased.

Then let us recall that the Vatican removed the investigating power from Bishop Zanic and handed it over to the Commission of the JEC back in 1986. They declared that a supernatural presence could not be ascertained (but did not exclude it), and they offered to handle the pastoral side of the many pilgrimages to Medj, thus encouraging them.

Finally, does not the Pope's personal opinion of Medj. say nothing to a Catholic? He has never kept it hidden from the Bishops who asked what he thought, and has always encouraged them to go.

Let them sow wind, these zealous persons of a lost cause; they will reap hail. Those who have accepted Mary's seed in their hearts are reaping fruits of conversion and peace. The truth is that Medj. continues to scare those who want an accommodating Christianity.

Do not be perturbed, do not protest, for the opponents of Medj. end up bringing grist to our same mill. It is up to us, with hot coals of love (Rm 12:20) and peace in our hearts, to confirm the fruits of the Queen of Peace. She will do the rest. Peace.

Fr.A.

Jakov & Annalisa marry in St James church, Medj. Mirjana and family can be seen in first pew

SOLIDARITY

The hospital in Mostar has made an urgent appeal for medical and sanitary supplies.

The people of Bosnia lack everything. God bless those who continue organizing God's providence for them. He alone knows with what sacrifice they do it.

Let us continue offering our support.

Contact your nearest Medj. or Caritas centre. If you wish to send donations through us, please indicate your intention. Make cheques out to Echo of Medjugorje and send to us at: Casella Postale 149, 46100 Mantova, Italy.

In GB, donations may be sent to the Medj. Appeal, Unit J Lambs Bus. Park, Tilburstow Hill Rd, Sth Godstone, Surrey RH9 8JZ, England. Ph. 03-8827675

Bernard Ellis of the Medj. Appeal writes: At a meeting in Belfast in March an umbrella group called UNITED AID was formed to act as governing body for other (esp. smaller) charities who wish to assist refugees in central Europe, particularly Bosnia & Herzegovina.

Each member will retain their own identity. Its function is to consolidate aid in the UK, provide more effective deliveries, be supportive to one another, promote public awareness. Any individual or organization can join, being open to all religions and denominations and shows no affiliations to any political party.

Prime object: assist refugees and those who suffer as a consequence of war.

Contact the Medj. Appeal for more info.

Your Donations during March-April:

For Medj. in the East: Lit.10,074,500; Croatia-Bosnia: Lit.18,446,000; Radio Maria Poland: Lit.6,453,000; Other: Lit.815,000.

The Marian Centre in Moscow is asking for a German printing machine with which they would also print Echo in Russian. Cost: approx. 24,000 DM. We entrust the request to our friends with Mary's cause at heart.

The truth about Maria Valtorta's "The Poem of Man-God"

It cannot be denied that Maria Valtorta's works were placed on the Index in Dec.'59 and the fact published in *Osservatore Romano* in Jan.'60. 32 years have passed since then and many things have changed. For example, the Vatican Council II, the reform of the Holy Office and the suppression of the Index which thus has no further obligatory value.

Back on its feet again after that hard blow, Valtorta's works continued to be a source of incalculable benefit, for no one can count the number of people who have discovered or returned to the Gospel through reading her works. Neither can anyone count the number of priests (including bishops), religious, missionaries, spiritual directors, and men of God who nourished their souls on Valtorta's works, recommended it to others and used it to help others. In fact, the editor has never had the need to make any form of publicity.

The editor was never reprimanded by the Ecclesial Authorities, who gave the impression of wanting to let things go. The letter in circulation which says to be taken from statements by Fr. Philip, seems truthful at a first glance, but right from the title the letter is deceiving, wanting to pass off the Holy Office (no more existing) as the Universal Church.

The well-known Mariologist and consultant for the Congregation for the cause of Saints, Fr. Gabriel Roschini, and the Italian Marian monthly, *Madre di Dio*, both affirmed that those who receive spiritual benefit from reading the *Poem* may feel free to keep on reading it and should hold no doubts about doing so.

With all the materialistic propaganda, pornography, religious sects and eastern religions etc. that surround us, it is not through reading the *Poem* that the faith and moral attitudes of the Catholic will be disturbed!

Daily bus service to Medj. from Trieste - every evening at 6.00 pm. Cost: 50,000 lire one way. Where: the bus depot, adjacent to the train station.

Sponsorship of Croatian orphans: Fr. Jozo's contact for Italy and Australia is Matteo Rossi, Casella Postale 54, 54100 Massa, Italy. Bank acc. # 13000/63 Banca Toscana of Massa. Indicate for *Croatian children*. Tel. 0585/43653. Fr. Jozo sent out a letter to thank the sponsors of the 2,000 children already sponsored.

IN THE FAMILY

* Missionary friends from all over the world and consecrated people (religious in monasteries or lay people out in the world) often write to say how nourishing they find Echo. Thank you for your friendship, for encouraging us, for your prayers, for all that you do!

* Echo will now be translated into Dutch, thanks to Frank Van Strijthagen of Maastricht. Albania will also now receive an edition in their own language. For now a small introductory booklet on Medj., complete with a catechism and prayers, is being produced.

* Friends in Guam wishing to receive a copy of Echo may write to Delfina Cataluna who has offered to distribute on our behalf: P.O.B. 1655, Agana, Guam.

* Please write to us if your address label is incorrect or incomplete, and please PRINT your correct name and address.

We entrust our awakening to Love to Mary, while invoking a Holy Pentecost for all.