

Our Blessed Mother's 12th Anniversary message of 25 June 1993:

Dear children, also on this day I rejoice at your presence here. I bless you with a motherly blessing and I intercede for each of you before God. I invite you once again to live my messages and put them into practice in your lives. I am with you and I bless you all day by day.

Dear children, these are special times; that is why I am with you, to love you and protect you: to protect your hearts from Satan and bring all of you all the more closer to my Son Jesus. Thank you for having responded to my call.

I am with you to love and protect you in these special times

What could the Queen of Peace say at the sight of the crowd gathered once again in Medj. for the 12th anniversary? **I rejoice at your presence here.** The "here" indicates that She doesn't want us to forget that this is the *oasis of peace chosen by Her* (26 June '86); and all can see that it has remained such despite the war. For Mary this oasis is *dearer to Her than the other places where She gladly remained when sent by the Father to the earth* (21.3.85).

The message is an invitation to return here for those who can, or at least visit a Marian Sanctuary or group. If we look for Her, we will make Her happy for She can then give us Her graces: *he who honours his mother is like someone amassing a fortune* (Si 3:4).

Our Lady blesses us with a motherly blessing both on Her feast days when She is given much power in Heaven, and **day by day**, for She follows Her children step by step. **She blesses and intercedes**; meaning She prepares the way for us with Her blessing and She intercedes for us so we may be filled with divine grace. Mary, Who will not allow others to beat Her in being loving and generous (Montfort), *expresses our plea in a way that could never be put into words, and the Spirit, Who prays in Her, knows perfectly well what we need* (cf. Rom 8:26-27).

At the start of this 13th year, we are called anew to **live Her messages**, which are both antique and new: **Prayer** is at the heart of them all, being the key that opens all the treasures. *If you only knew how much grace God grants you in prayer, you would pray unceasingly* (8.11.84). Our goal is **peace** that comes from **faith** in God, live and present, and from **conversion** to Him. All, however, is acquired in **prayer**, in particular the **Rosary**, accompanied by **fasts**. Through this the spirit of **Love** is poured into us, to remain and grow with the aid of the sacraments: **Holy Mass, confession and the Word of God**.

Living my messages means letting yourselves be loved by Me. If you do not live them, you are not accepting My love. Jesus says: *Remain in my love ... As I have kept my Father's commandments and*

Lord, come to the rescue of your children whom you redeemed with your precious Blood

"Do not forget who brought you out from Egypt!"

Search conscience after 12 years of apparitions so as not to lose the sign of Medj.

The 25th June will be the 12th anniversary of Our Lady's apparitions in Medj. We all have to acknowledge the fact that it is only thanks to the Queen of Peace that today we can call ourselves "souls born again," and as such should search our consciences.

The worst thing that could happen now is forget where we come from, and forget what we received, personally, in Medj. The beginning was surprisingly full of enthusiasm. We can't now afford to let a cold, administrative spirit take over. We have to keep what we received and understood, without forcing it, so the Father's will can be realized to the full.

We know that for many faithful, Medj. has become nothing more than a fact of culture: just curious to keep up with the latest facts, to know who's going and who's coming, who the goodies are and who the baddies are in the Church, etc. All this has nothing to do with the new life in the Spirit that Our Lady has been offering for the last 12 years to all those searching for it.

The best way to make this great feast of the Queen of Peace solemn is to question oneself in depth, and **recall the moment in which Our Lady**, unexpectedly and out of no merit of our own, broke down the wall of unbelief in us that impeded us from living in full communion with Christ.

We must never forget that our conversion is a gift. Should our conversion fall apart due to weakness then our interest for Medjugorje also drops, and this can be seen happening to many. Nonetheless, **the indifference being met by Our Lady** depends on the fact that when the messages are not put into practice, a person's spiritual life is impeded and the walk of purification is not seen as important anymore. So you lose the joy that comes from staying with God, and His Mother's messages become just something to converse about; you lose sight of the fact that they are, instead, the salt of our life and light for the Church.

In Medj. each of us received from Mary something fundamental for our lives, that no one, nowhere, was ever able to give us before. This is something to keep in mind always. Remembering this should be a daily exercise, and it can teach us something very important: our one and only duty is to live in obedience, gratefully and joyfully, and remain open to Our Blessed Mother's calls. For it was She who brought us to the faith and placed us before Crucified Christ.

Clearly impressed in the memory of each one of us is the moment in Medj. in which the Holy Spirit began dwelling in our hearts. Each of us can remember the moment when Our Lady placed us before the Truth. *I have come to tell you that God exists! In Him is Life, peace, joy! Turn away from sin!*

From that moment we were made again,

remain in his love ... and your joy will be complete. (Jn 15:9-11)

These are special times, because they are the last. Today, like never before, the *mystery of lawlessness is revealed in the power of Satan, in all kinds of miracles and a deceptive show of signs and portents, and everything evil that can deceive those who are bound for destruction* (2 Th 2:7-11). Evil magnifies; in particular it is revealed in a shameless and devastating dimension. These times, however, are also times where the chosen ones, *the children of the woman*, are blossoming in a new, hidden flowering, driving the adversary wild.

I am with you to love you and protect you from Satan, who is trying to sweep away everyone, making war on the woman and the rest of her children (Rv 12:17). If we are faithful to Her teachings, **She will be with us** and will save us from *the great seduction* being carried out by Satan against the Church with *signs and portents, enough to deceive even the chosen if that were possible* (Mt 24:24). Our Blessed Mother brings us all together, **ever closer to Her Son Jesus**, Who makes us grow to a perfect stature and saves us.

Pick yourself up and start again on the luminous way of Her calls: *look to the Star, invoke Mary!* Fr. Angelo

12th Anniversary CELEBRATION OF PEACE

Thurs., 24 June, 11 a.m.: Many thousands of pilgrims from all over the world gathered in the new church of the Franciscan convent in Humac for the PEACE MARCH.

It began a little before midnight, with arrival in Medj. around 3 p.m. **Msgr. Frane Francic**, Archbishop emeritus of Split (over the 80 mark), did the first 4 km, walking and praying with Vicka.

The Blessed Sacrament was also carried

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born from above (cf. Jn 3). However, if this extraordinary gift is not fed and served daily, it gets lost amid the multitude of ideas on religion that the world, and we with it, invent. Medj. is not in fact one of the many forms of Christian living. No, it is the fount from which we received that communion with Christ that we had lost. This helps us see how our obedience must always, in a certain sense, be oriented to its beginning. That is: God has already spoken to us, we have already been raised again by Our Lady, Christ has already redeemed us, we have already received the Holy Spirit; so our life is essentially a praise of and a correspondence with that God Who entered us to become a *permanent* part of our lives.

If our communion and intimacy with Christ (that exploded in us on that first day) has now become foggy, we cannot put the blame on Him. We are the ones to have silenced it, and *the lustful eye, the sensual body and pride of possessions* (1 Jn 2:16) have found room in us again.

If we truly want to please Mary, then let us contemplate the grace we received in Medj. and meditate upon how the Queen of Peace and this grace are the most important signs for us. In fact, the greatest wealth we have is our obedience to Her, for **Our Lady keeps us from the danger of believing we are our own creators; She draws us to a state of redeemed humanity.** However, this obedience (out of love) operates, as we have already said, in reverse, towards its beginning, for everything in the Church and for the Church comes from a sole fount, *the mystery hidden from ages past in God* (Eph 3:9) which existed before us. There is nothing we can invent, but we need to keep our life hooked up to He Who did invent it and choses to give it to us right there in Medj.

Furthermore, it is important that we do not allow fear to enter our hearts for the serious contradictions arising against Mary's presence. In history, when God manifests Himself, a mysterious yet painful "law," is triggered off, whereby the more God loves men the more they close themselves up - for this is Satan's work. "Only where the heavens are opened, hell is also thrown wide open" (H. U. Balthasar).

Satan has no power over God's works, but he can and does persuade men to live without Him. In the same manner, he cannot cancel the gift we received in Medj. for it is an experience made possible by the Holy Spirit. Satan can, however, work to close us up in a type of deafness, a forgetfulness, or urge us towards being "carefree" Christians who wait till tomorrow to convert whilst forgetting that the Holy Spirit is urging us **here and now** to a total surrender. And let us not forget that it was Our Lady to have communicated such fervour to our souls the day she took pity on us. *Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits.* (Ps 103) *Edit. staff*

MEDJ. YOUTH FESTIVAL

Starts **Saturday 31 July 1993**, 6 p.m. for all pilgrims in Medj.. Ends Friday 6 August at day-break with Holy Mass on Krizevac. Theme: **From the darkness to the light** - or: **where the new world begins.** Young people, come without fear, Your Blessed Mother is there waiting for you!

YOUTH 2000 UK - 2nd Int'l Prayer Festival at Aylesford Priory in Kent from 25-30 August '93. Open day for general public: Sunday 29. Contact: Youth 2000, P.O. Box 119, London SW7 5RH.

Do not reduce Christianity to merely human wisdom ignoring supernatural character of faith and truths about "last things"

We who have been pupils at Mary's school for all these years should by now realize that the teachings of Mary and those of the Pope are in perfect communion, for both are expressions of God's Only Spirit.

On 28 May, **John Paul II** received in audience the third group of **US Bishops** at the conclusion of their *ad limina* visit and he spoke to them about the conditions needed to live the Mystery of Christ and His Church in its entirety.

The first step is in acknowledging the **lack of spirituality**: "It is not an exaggeration to say that man's relationship to God and the demand for a religious "experience" are the crux of a profound crisis affecting the human spirit. While the secularization of many aspects of life continues, there is a new quest for "spirituality" as evidenced in the appearance of many religious and healing movements which look to respond to the crisis of values in Western society. This stirring of the *homo religiosus* produces some positive and constructive results, such as the search for new meaning in life, a new ecological sensitivity, and the desire to go beyond a cold, rationalistic religiosity. On the other hand, **this religious re-awakening includes some very ambiguous elements** which are incompatible with the Christian faith."

In this regards, the Pope mentioned the New Age Movement: "New Age ideas sometimes find their way into preaching, catechesis, workshops and retreats, and thus influence even practising Catholics, who perhaps are unaware of the incompatibility of those ideas with the Church's faith." In declaring these false responses to religion leads, however, to the formulation of a positive Catholic programme, one that the Pope presented to the Bishops of the US. "Pastors should insist on the spiritual dimension of the faith, on the perennial freshness of the Gospel message and its capacity to transform and renew those who accept it. St Paul tells us that we must *seek the things that are above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God* (Col 3:1). **To neglect the supernatural dimension of the Christian life is to empty of meaning the mystery of Christ and the Church: If for this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied** (1 Co 15:19). Nevertheless, it is a sad fact that some Christians today are succumbing to the temptation *to reduce Christianity to merely human wisdom, a pseudo-science of well-being.* To preach a version of Christianity which benignly ignores, when it does not explicitly deny, that our ultimate hope is the *resurrection of the body and life everlasting* runs counter to Revelation and the whole of Catholic tradition."

The supernatural character of the faith requires **thoughtful meditation on the truths about the "last things"** (of which the CCC offers a summary). "The fullness of the truth which God has enabled us to know tells us that life in the body has a transcendent goal and that decisions and actions in this life have irrevocable consequences which cannot be ignored. While many prefer to avoid these ultimate questions and **some are tempted to think of salvation as a right and as a foregone conclusion**, the Church must continue to remind people of the awesome reality of human freedom, the price of salvation (cf.

1Co 7:23) and the riches of divine mercy (cf. Eph 2:4)."

Only God's love and His forgiveness, not therapy, can heal the heart of man

"The renewal of religious life depends on each consecrated person seeking and loving God above all else, ever bearing in mind that the **contemplation of divine things and assiduous union with God in prayer is to be the first and foremost duty of all religious.** The only effective way to reform religious life is the arduous path of personal and prayerful conversion, with a humble acknowledgment of one's mistakes and sins and with confidence that the power of his resurrection will overcome all weakness and mediocrity, and heal the sense of disappointment and anger:" a feeling that occurs when one's soul is not in "tune" with its Creator.

An integral part of **inner healing** indeed comes from the experience of **forgiveness of one's sins**: "a recurring need in the life of every Christian. Restoring a proper sense of sin is the first step to be taken in facing objectively the grave spiritual crisis looming over men and women today, a crisis which can well be described as *an eclipse of conscience.*

Without a healthy awareness of their own sinfulness, people will never experience the depth of God's redeeming love for them while they were still sinners. (cf. Rom 5:8) Given the prevailing idea that happiness consists in satisfying oneself and being satisfied with oneself, the Church must proclaim even more vigorously *that it is only God's grace, not therapeutic or self-convincing schemes, which can heal the divisions in the human heart caused by sinfulness.*"

Prepare oneself through prayer for meeting in Denver

After tragic experiences you can be born again in Christ

These central elements of spiritual life that the Pope reminded the US Bishops about should now be able to find an application in the **Eighth World Youth Day** to be held in Denver from 14-15 August. For some time now the Holy Father has been inviting the youth not just of America, but all over the world, to participate in this meeting. To the pastors of the US the Pope said: "more than merely a festive occasion, the gathering in Denver is intended to be an authentic moment of evangelization. When the saving word of Christ enters the sanctuary of the human heart, it invites each young person to become a courageous and generous evangelizer." In fact, "the Church counts on her young people, remade as a new creation to proclaim the Gospel in all the circles in which they move. My visit to Denver will truly be a pilgrimage which I, along with so many young men and women, am **preparing for through reflection, prayer and penance.** I invite you to join me so that we shall be spiritually ready for that *kairos.*"

The theme of the Youth Day in Denver was taken from a message written especially by the Pope and modelled on Jesus' words: *I have come so they may have life and have it to the full* (Jn 10:10). After having spoken of how the young people are so **tragically deceived**, enchanted by false masters who

teach them to follow their instinct, money and self-achievement, and who make promises of "spiritual liberation" which is destructive illusion, the Pope continued with a consideration on human conditions: "Daily experience tells us that life is marked by sin and undermined by death, despite the thirst for goodwill that beats in our heart and the desire for life that runs through our limbs. Though we are little attentive to ourselves and the setbacks presented by life, we find that everything in us wills us to go further. **Everything invites us to overcome the temptation of [succumbing to] superficiality or desperation.**"

There is a way out! This is the grandness of the hope the Pope wants to communicate to us: "In the mystery of His cross and Resurrection, **Christ destroyed death and sin, He abolished the infinite distance that exists between every man and the new life in Him.**" This life flows through the sacraments. Starting from the sacramental foundations of Christian life, it becomes possible to be born again, and in particular in a total and sincere donation to the Lord, according to the means offered by the Church. "**A man who is born from above is able to see the kingdom of God** (Jn 3:3) and commit himself to building up social structures more worthy of man, of every man, in the promotion and defence of the culture of life against all threats of death."

The Pope's intentions are very clear and just as clear are his teachings with regards to the authenticity of faith experience. Furthermore, the Pope makes frequent references to the new *Catechism*. This should help us accept the message, for in these times it is indispensable that we **let ourselves be educated and guided by the maternal indications of the Church, in humble obedience**. Authentic Catholic obedience doesn't mean throwing oneself headlong into doing what we think will please the Lord, but in allowing Him space (by being open to communion in Him - see Echo 102 and 103) so He can conduct our lives by means of His Spirit, Who is live and present.

That is why it is fundamental that we put aside all our "missionary" projects if they are not confirmed by obedience to the Magisterium. The true identity of a Christian is in being ready to carry out the will of Another. *Edit. Staff*

To youth in Loreto march Pope says look at faithfulness of Chinese

John Paul II opened the **16th pilgrimage by foot** from Macerata to Loreto with Holy Mass on Sat. 19 June. In his homily he urged the youth to learn from the experience of one's walk to live one's faithfulness to Christ, and spoke of the **luminous example** of faithfulness of the **Chinese Catholics**. He said how he would like to visit that Church "to thank together the Lord for the many gifts received and to confirm the Christians in their walk as faithful and generous disciples of Christ and good citizens, totally dedicated to the good of their country."

The Pope also **invited the youth to Denver**, reminding them that the meeting, "in response to the urgent challenges of our times, that often tend to break up society, is a sign and a proposal of a new unity, in the announcement of Christ."

30 km was not too far to walk for the 30,000 youth, for their destination was Loreto, to see their common Mother. They carried lit torches as they walked and prayed (Rosary, Bible readings, songs). They arrived in Loreto at daybreak, tired but happy. *

The four plagues in the life of a Christian today

but consecration to Mary's Immaculate Heart can heal them

After having been introduced to the meaning of consecration to Mary (cf. Echo 99 pg.2), which is openness to the Spirit by and as Mary, we must now realize what illnesses most impede this openness.

Consecration to Our Lady leads us to Her Son and to the Gospel. It makes us more aware in our spirit, i.e. it gives us spiritual judgement that alone can reveal truths that would otherwise remain hidden. Our Lady helps us see the plagues in the spiritual life of a Christian these days that affects the way we see the Gospel. **The danger of these 4 plagues** is the lack of negativity, for it is a matter of **relative good being raised to an absolute state**.

1. The first great plague is so-called "effectiveness," or that spiritual illness whereby one tends to **reduce everything to one's own abilities** and possibilities, in contrast, from a practical point of view, to God's grace. For Christians this is a serious sin for in doing so one **cancels the saving potential of Christ's grace**. Men's qualities are God's gifts, but "effectiveness" centralizes these gifts as human values, and Satan uses this against us. This plague also tends to restrict the Spirit within our views and schemes, so that we expect what has already been decided by us.

St Joseph, though he was a righteous and pious man, needed an angel to help him understand that God uses extraordinary ways, unknown to man, to realize His plan. The world, however, does not believe, and if someone says today they live by Providence, he is considered an idiot. When situations are normally without solution, Our Lady teaches us not to confine the Holy Spirit within our schemes, for *His ways are totally unknown to us and He can change situations that we, with all our intelligence and abilities, cannot*.

2. Another great plague is the **dominion of the world of appearance**. The most appealing things, founded on power, money, pleasure, approval of others, etc., have entered the life of Christians, making them **passionately attached to self-fulfilment**. So they care about the way the world sees them, and don't consider God when choosing a vocation. In always and only looking for what pleases us and the world runs counter to the Gospel and makes you unable to see that before anything else there must be an effective spiritual life; that the effectiveness of Grace, not of man, is decisive.

This attachment, decidedly mundane, is becoming more and more a case of self-idolatry where worldly satisfaction and comprehension is desired. Then what happens for example, is that Christians look upon **choice of profession as being more important than choice of vocation**: "First I'll become a doctor to serve the others, then I'll think about responding to God." Of course, it's normal to want to accomplish, however, the man who accomplishes the most is he who lives according to the Spirit (St Paul). It is becoming widespread among Christians to consider the way the world wants us first, then the way the Church wants us, with the excuse that the world has to understand us too. This plague is destroying among the youth the desire of searching for one's vocation, for they feel continuously hindered by a false way of

living the Gospel.

3. The third plague is **legalism**: a return to moralism, that cold severity of *law that kills*. Being unable to oppose legalism with mercy means we are still in Old Testament times.

A law can be positive, but that doesn't make it all-important, and above all it does not make it God's way of treating others. To assume this moralism is to become like pharisees, who base their relations on their own judgements - thus the rigidity and severity that determine even the simplest relations. Without a doubt, justice requires clear judgement, but this requires openness to Christ's message which says that **mercy comes before law and forgiveness before judgement**. Legalism or human justice will not save us, as these are factors with a marginal value when compared to the type of conversion and the depth and fullness of the New Law realized through mercy.

Again, we cannot accept the **atheistic legalism** of those who want to make people follow moral commands that totally oppose love. A clear example of this is legalized abortion. Those who do it feel proud before the others because they act according to the law, though what they're doing is killing a baby. A person though who cheats or steals is pointed at and publicly mocked. This is just how uncivilized we have become for having abandoned God. The world thinks that "ethnic" cleansing, like "ethnic" cleansing, will bring justice, but to date all that has come of it is an increase in violence. Let us remember that in the name of legalism the Scribes and Pharisees condemned Jesus.

4. The fourth plague is **subjectivism united to a certain "protestantism"** within the Church. With this one tends to stress the particularisms, opinions, individualisms and mediations that sacrifice the catholicity and universality of the Church. This danger comes from a wrong idea concerning communion. If one thinks this comes totally from the Holy Spirit, then He Himself with His gifts, takes us back to unity. If, however, one thinks of communion as being something that comes from man, from his knowing what to do, how to interpret and how to synthesize, then the various goods oppose one another, and instead of tending towards unity, each one takes its particular aspect and raises it to the same level as the universality of the Catholic Church.

With **subjectivism one stresses one's own ways of considering the Church and how to use the Gospel** (with ideas that come from human interpretations) instead of the spiritual experiences that contribute to the common good. Consequences are seen in the education of the young people. Like everyone, they need human experiences, not intellectual explanations.

I find it odd that Bible study is being given such exclusive accentuation. Not that it isn't positive, it just isn't essential. Giving Christ is essential - He interprets the Holy Scriptures, for He is the accomplishment of them. What really counts is **giving others real Christian testimony**, not hypotheses. If what we give lacks what has already been carried out by Jesus, it lacks Jesus and the Gospel, then it's all artificial, idolatry and illusory. When a young person discovers this he quickly turns his back on it all.

The danger is that since these 4 plagues are not totally negative elements, they are not easy to see. They are relative goods trying to take the place of the **absolute Good**: God, Who revealed Himself in the Son.

Niki (Brescia, 15.6.93)

God knows we are oppressed AND HE FREES US

if we let ourselves be led by Him
in total confidence

On the 4th June Fr. Tomislav spoke in Villanova to a large crowd: This evening, as I was preparing for this meeting, I prayed to the Lord to tell me what to say, and this is what I heard: Exodus and purification.

In Exodus, Moses was protected and guided in a miraculous way. Today in the Church we have two guides: the Virgin and the Pope. Analysing and arguing will get us nowhere; we know that the Virgin is present in the world. Right from the beginning of the world She was foreseen as being the Woman who would crush the serpent, and today She is here among us in a special way, to offer Her Immaculate Heart to the Church and all humanity so they may be protected under Her sure guidance. God prepared the Woman to be Mother of Jesus and of each one of us, making Her Mother of the Church. With us, in the Church, there is also the Pope, John Paul II. He was foreseen by God; he was prepared for these times. In him we can see the light, for God conducts the Church through his hands.

In these times we must recognize Hers and God's presence in the Pope. **God has prepared ranks of chosen people, He has prepared many small, hidden souls**, not just those who cry out and of whom we hear, but the "offered" (victim) souls who are carrying out His work. Would you also like to be one of these? Inside of you is God's power, all His wealth, because you are born of God, that live God, God the Holy Spirit. He lives in you and wants to lead you to the Promised Land, towards the novelty of the Church and the world.

Many search, they search a lot, and they desire to know. They go left and right and don't know where to look. Everything has already been prepared inside of you. All you have to do is blossom, and make God blossom in you. This is what happened to Moses and the chosen people, and it will happen in those who follow this walk. So let us begin our walk with this conviction: God is in us and wants to guide us to the mount.

You know how God presented Himself to Moses, don't you? From the desert, Moses saw a blazing bush that was not burning up, and he went to see it. *God called to him from the bush: "Moses, Moses!" (...) "Come no nearer. Take off your sandals, for the place on which you stand is holy ground. I am your God ... I have seen the miserable state of my people in Egypt and I have heard their cry... I mean to deliver them out of the hands of the Egyptians and bring them to a land rich and broad, where milk and honey flow."* (Ez 3:1-8)

The first step is this: **prostrate ourselves before God in us**, like Moses who removed his sandals and prostrated himself in God's presence. When we are able to prostrate ourselves before God, [Who is] mighty, strong, holy, marvellous, Who prepared everything in us, then in our walk [to God] we will start experimenting true joy. This was the starting point for all saints in the history of the Church and it is also ours.

The second step is in recognizing that **God in us knows everything**. He hears your tears and your sadness. What he said to Israel through Moses, He also says to you: *I have heard how you, the Church and my people are oppressed. I have come down to save you.* If we do not have the replies to the

many questions inside of us then it's because we do not believe God knows them: "I will go in front of you, for I have heard your sorrow. For this I have come."

So for this second step, we have to keep on repeating in us, like Moses, that God is more powerful than the biggest powers in the world. The powerful in the world can do nothing without God. There are, however, other powers that frighten us: Satan, our illnesses, our problems ... Know that **God is more powerful than all the powers** that you feel within and around you!

Weeks ago I exorcised a person with a strong satanic presence. I told Satan to prostrate himself before God. He told me he was god and that he wouldn't and didn't want to. So I said: "OK. Now we'll prostrate ourselves before the Blessed Sacrament and all the spirits within us will be prostrated before the Holy Trinity." I asked that person if he wanted to prostrate himself and offer himself to God. He said yes so I asked Satan what would become of him. He replied he'd end up with the rubbish.

The worldly powers and the powers we fear end up with the rubbish when put before Jesus. Like in the time of Moses and the Pharaoh, God is more powerful.

God guided Moses as one would guide a child. Moses knew nothing of Egypt and for every difficulty he turned to God. Also in you there is God Who teaches you how to open the Red Sea and the rock of your heart and problems. It is the Lord, your Father, Who teaches you the way through the desert, He goes before you. When you are weak, tired, old, sick, and lost, God shows Himself to lead you back on the way. But if you look for people, things, or human values, leaving God by the way, you will never be able to get through the exodus, because it's putting yourself before God.

God could not have done miracles through Moses if he had not had an open heart. Among the chosen people, only those with hearts open to trust, hope and love were able to reach the Promised Land. It's the same for us. When Our Lady invited us to continuous prayer, She meant that interior condition that would make it possible for God to guide us towards the promised land. The secrets cannot be reached with ideas, the signs of these times cannot be understood with your head, but only through the openness of a heart donated by the Holy Spirit. Jesus did many miracles in His time, but not in His town for their hearts were closed. Those whose hearts were open, through conversion announced by John the Baptist, were able to understand the signs and follow the grace that came from Jesus.

In the walk of the chosen people, **there have to be trials**. Without trials, trust, hope, love and communion with God do not grow. Moses was tried, all the prophets and saints were, and they were necessary for Jesus too.

Trials have been announced for the last times. Why do there have to be trials? Because God loves you, He wants to heal you and all humanity, for He wants to take His Church to holiness. Only through trials can people's holiness grow. They are God's signs to place joy, peace and light in your hearts. You need God, but are you aware that God also needs you, that He needs your souls to use as instruments of grace for His other children? In this time of trial, you have to be the light of God for the others.

In this moment **God is calling you to love**. You heard the last message given at Medj.: love ... love, because without love

MEDUGORJE NEWS

Australian Bishop visits after seeing change in faithful

Australian Bishop, **Henry Kennedy**, visited Medjugorje early May with a group of about 20 pilgrims. Among other things the Bishop said about Medjugorje: "I firmly believe in what is happening here. I first heard about it in 1983. The faithful of my diocese that had been here underwent such a profound spiritual change that I felt I had to spend more time on looking into this Sanctuary of Our Lady. I started reading books on the subject and talking to pilgrims, and in the end I decided to come here myself."

Msgr. Kennedy said he was surprised and delighted to see so many faithful in Medjugorje as he had not expected to find the hundreds of pilgrims and the many priests because of the war. He added he wasn't afraid to come, for he strongly believes in Our Lady's presence.

With regards to the messages, the Bishop says the calls to conversion, prayer and fasts are important. "Often many of those who come here are full of prejudices, but once they arrive in Medjugorje they take on a totally different attitude and return home extremely satisfied, and ready to change their lives."

About 4,000 pilgrims from Australia have come to Medjugorje so far, but this number will grow decidedly once the war is over."

Msgr. Kennedy hopes to return to Medj. regularly.

* On Saturday 15 May, in the church of the Queen of Peace, a **Holy Mass was said** for Lt. Arturo Muñoz from the Spanish forces of the UNO staying in Medjugorje.

He died from wounds received during the liberation of Fr. Ivan Vuksic' (a priest from Mostar who had been held by the Muslims). Main celebrant was coadjutor bishop, Msgr. Ratko Peric'. Fr. Ivan Vuksic' concelebrated.

In his homily the bishop recalled Jesus' words: *no one has a greater love than he who gives his life for his friends*, and said how they now sadly spend more time in the cemetery than in the church or school, etc.

* **First Communion** was held in the parish church on Sunday 2nd May for 117 children, of whom 64 were from Medj., and the other 53 from Sarajevo, Mostar and other towns, but residing temporarily in the parish of Medjugorje.

* For some time now in Medjugorje, the faithful climb Podbrdo to pray the **Rosary for peace** every Sunday. On 2nd May, the parish group was joined by a large group of pilgrims from America, various regions of Europe and other countries.

* A happy note: Pilgrims from **former Yugoslavia** have started returning to **Medjugorje on pilgrimage**. Lately there were groups from Metkovic, Dubrovnik, Split, Zagreb and Rijeka. Saturday is the day of the youth: some, from Ljubuski, were with their teachers and others came in their class groups.

* **Humanitarian aid** arrives, and 700 tonnes of it arrived aboard the American ship *Spirit* which docked in Omis. Another ship from Ireland docked in Ploce with a load of 1,500 tonnes. Everything will be distributed to refugees in Bosnia and Croatia.

(From *Nasa Ognijista* - June '93)

From Sr. Emmanuel's diary

* (1 June) - Our dear Nikola from Medj. came back to us from Mostar wounded in the arm. He kept on repeating: "Mostar is hell." When the Muslim sniper shot at him, he leapt into a hole for protection. Now this hole had been dug only 2 hours beforehand! In the hole, losing blood, his first reaction was to pray for the person who had wounded him. I ask myself: if I were in his place, would I, a consecrated person, have had the same reaction to forgive so quickly? We are evangelized by the humble!

* **3 or 4 soldiers from Medj. have been wounded, but no one killed.** Franjo was shot right in the middle of his chest, but that day, instead of putting his bullets in his belt as he normally did, he wore them across his shoulders - so the bullet went through several centimetres of metal and stopped just 2 mm before entering his skin. Thank you dear Gospa! Please place your shield against hatred on all front lines all over the world.

* **Young widows in ever increasing numbers** are coming from all over to weep at the foot of the cross on Krizevac. This breaks our heart. Let us remember the tears of the Virgin on Podbrdo on 26 June 1981 (10 years to the day before the war began). She saw then what we were heading for, and begged us: *Peace, peace, be reconciled!* She did not want to see Her children slaughtering one another. With a handful of chosen ones and a little village, She wanted to inundate the world with love. A part of these chosen ones did not respond, others have stood up... but still more are needed!

* (15 June) **Enormous waves of Croatian refugees** are arriving from Bosnia where their villages were burnt down. For example, 1,500 refugees arrived in Caplijina from Travnik, and others went to Ljubuschi. 1,400 refugees have been put up in Medj. The **Franciscans** are worried for the many monks and also nuns who have disappeared. They fear for their lives.

* **In Mostar** the Franciscans are trapped in their monastery which has become a target for Muslim snipers. Fires have been put out just in time, but the situation could explode from one minute to the next. And to think that those who are now shooting were kept by the convent for the past year!

* **The Muslims hit out bitterly** against convents and priests in Bosnia. For the Muslims extremists it is a good deed to kill a Christian. This mentality did not exist in the country before, but Arab Mujahedins, come from abroad, are working hard at stirring up hatred. The Muslim population which has suffered the most under the Serbs is open to any kind of hope, even illusory, that these extremists propose.

* **Let us thank Mary** for the gift of these 12 years of Her presence with a **novena** (may be said after the anniversary). This idea was suggested by the Virgin Herself to one of the visionaries.

Some ideas as gifts to Her: give hospitality to a poor or lonely person; turn off the TV or radio to pray more; give up smoking, alcohol or a hobby; curb your complaints or prideful words; do good to your enemy and pray for him; give up a particular sin which has a hold on us. And do not forget that it is our dosage of love that makes our offerings more beautiful.

* Sr. Emmanuel's book, *Medjugorje, the war day by day*, can be obtained at: Florida Center for Peace, P.O.B. 431 306, Miami, FL 33143, USA. Retail price US\$7.95

Satanic logic prevails in Bosnia: survival of the strongest

Another plan more evil than the first being decided for Bosnia, will legalize the conquests of the aggressor and condemn the weak. Meantime, destruction and death continue.

The situation in Bosnia can be summarized as follows: **The Serbs say:** we will make peace if you let us have the territories we've occupied. The Vance-Owen peace plan did not favour us enough, so we rejected it. Accept the new plan, made up in common accord with the Croats; but till it is accepted we will keep on fighting to defend the last of the oppressed Serbs in Bosnia.

The Europeans, scorched by the failure of all diplomatic attempts at finding a solution, don't want to dirty their hands. They say: make peace! Be good and make the Serbs happy by accepting the new plan if you want this war, that has destroyed the better part of your territory, to finish and the six *enclaves* freed (Goradze, Srebrenica, Zepa, etc.). These were areas that the UNO had declared "protected areas," but are every day more at risk.

The Muslims: "We do not accept the new peace plan which is worse than the last one. It splits Bosnia into 3 ethnic states, giving 50% to the Serbs (who made up 32% at the beginning of the war), 20% to the Croatians (were 18%) and 25% to the Muslims (were 44%), plus the free zone. If you don't want to defend us, then remove the embargo and give us weapons so we can defend what's left of our territory." In the meantime, however, the Croatians, who had freed their own ethnic area and put up resistance for this last year, are now falling. There are among the Muslims some who would like to accept the plan, to gain power, but President Itzebegovic holds back for fear of the Muslim extremists who want war to the bitter end.

The Croatians: we made agreements with the Serbs to split up Bosnia and end the war, but now the Muslims are upsetting our plans by putting up resistance in Mostar and breaking into our territory, occupying our cities, sending away our people and burning the villages.

The result: The talks and the war continue and people are losing their lives and their homes. We ask ourselves: have any of the heads ever thought about the catastrophic consequences that the war is causing to these people? Are they not moved by the disastrous effects the war will have on these people for generations to come, and see that the war must stop? How Satan has darkened their hearts and minds!

A latin proverb says: *Principiis obsta, sero medicina paratur* (cut the bad back in the beginning for the remedy to work). The extinguisher should have been used at the first signs of smoke to stop the fire spreading so far. Only a great and continuous gust of Spirit of love, moved by unanimous prayer, will dry up this immense sea of hatred, injustice and revenge that keeps on spreading. And the international community, which so far has practically turned a deaf ear to the cry of the poor, should start occupying the territory to guard and help the peoples live together. But here, like elsewhere, it would take love for this to happen.

And it can happen, through great purification, and men will overcome that tragic egoism that makes them say, like Cain: *Am I perhaps the guardian of my brother?* Fr.A.

Fabio Moreni, aid worker killed in Bosnia

Love makes its way in kingdom of hate

Victims among aid workers were
children of the Queen of Peace

The whole world was moved by the death of the three Italians (2 aid workers and 1 journalist) who were robbed and killed by an armed band close to Gornji Vakuf. The two aid workers, Fabio Moreni from Cremona and Sergio Lana from Brescia, had been won over by the Queen of Peace. This sad event has brought to light for the unknowing world the unceasing sacrifices of the volunteers, most of whom are inspired by the Queen of Peace, and since the start of the conflict work silently and tirelessly to help the peoples of former Yugoslavia out of love and total disinterest.

Fabio, by A. Bonifacio

On the evening of 20 Dec.'92, Fabio called me to tell me his factory would close up from Christmas to New Year and that he would make his two lorries available for transporting aid. Fabio himself did 2 trips, one after the other, and then a further 15 over a period of 5 months, nearly all at weekends. He also had his factory to look after (left to him by his father who died some years ago), and many other things to keep him busy. I honestly don't know how he did it all, but nothing could keep him down. He was sure of himself, sporting and dynamic, and he was highly intelligent, graduating at 21. Last year he was consecrated a guard of honour to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. He was faithful to his prayer and **rosary**, and **fasted** rigorously every Wed. and Friday, even when he was travelling.

He and Sergio Lana, 21 years old, died because they were generous. With them was also Guido Puletti, a journalist. It was Sat. 29 May '93, the eve of Pentecost, and Fabio had just turned 39. He was an only son. Now his mother is alone, and though she has been left with many problems, she is rich in faith. I'm certain that from heaven Fabio wants us to continue taking aid to those in need.

Fabio kept a **diary**. Some of his thoughts were directed to a **prayer group**. Following is an extract:

"... When we're travelling it makes us happy to be able to recite the rosary together thanks to our ham radios. We nearly always stop in at Medjugorje during our trips, and I can assure you that when our souls are inundated and consoled with such peace and joy that it could only be **the Blessed Mother's gift**.

(...) People ask why we care so much

about these trips and what makes us do it. Without a doubt the so-called humanitarian reasons, solidarity and human brotherliness are behind it. But more than that there's something in my heart that could even seem a little egoistic. It's those words of Christ: I was desolate because of a cruel war, I was hungry and in need of everything, and you came to bring me help and comfort. For us it is a privilege to go, thanks to the Lord and Mary who give us the means to make it possible. Those who can't go have a powerful means at their disposal for helping: prayer. The Lord always ends up listening to our prayer, and should our spirit be more practical than spiritual, then may the Good Lord grant us righteous intentions so we may always live in His love ..."

Fabio

The Poor Clares are still in their monastery (see article next column). **Bruno Zanini**, journalist for Vatican Radio, rang **Alberto Bonifacio** 19 June: "Contrary to what the monks of Busovaca told us (they'd left) and what others say (they're dead), the Clares of Brestovsko, the only contemplative community in Bosnia, are still in their monastery. I found them praying in the basement. They were still bombing the town when we entered the monastery. A grenade had hit the door of their chapel and the roof caught fire, but the nuns managed to put it out. They're a little afraid, being practically on the front line. They gave me two cases full of documents to take to Split, but they have no intention of escaping. All around are burnt houses; it's a real disaster. Nobody else is left."

Croatians from central Bosnia flee from their devastated land - The journalist continues: "I went through Gornji Vakuf where the 3 Italians were killed. A soldier told me the truck is now being used for transporting wood. (...) It's not safe anymore to travel with private convoys. The UNO do not escort Caritas convoys. In Vitez, Busovaca and Kiseljak the problem is the amount of wounded, and all the dead people. At first I thought it was just another case of rumours gotten out of hand, then I saw the death registry in the parish of Busovaca: there really are hundreds. One of the priests told me all about the situation: frightening! The two Franciscans from Zenica, thought dead, are alive but not allowed to leave."

* **There's a beautiful sanctuary in Sutjeska**: one of the most historical and important in Bosnia. The whole area now has been evacuated. All the Croatians have fled. I came across columns of them making their way to Vares - on foot, with trucks, tractors, cows and everything they could carry with them. (...) 15 thousand Croatian refugees from many different villages that were attacked by the Muslims are in **Vares**: they're trying to reach Croatia via Serbian territory."

* **From Romania** we learn that Frenchman Pierre Godbert visited many parts of Romania (Bucharest, Timisoara, Jasi, Roman, Bacau, etc.) with Anca Dragos as his guide (our translator for the Romanian edition of Echo - now being printed in 15 thousand copies per month). His aim was to spread the message of Medj. He was received warmly wherever he went and the meetings concluded with the same evening liturgical conclusion as in Medj.: Rosary, Holy Mass, songs, etc. Vocations flourish here and their seminaries are full.

Faith and miracles

from tragedy of former Yugoslavia

Our friend and Franciscan priest from **Ogulin** (Croatia) writes: "*Dear Fr. Angelo, (...) In these last few years, though the Evil One seems invincible, the Mercy and Goodness of our Father-God and His infinite love for men is also unfolding. These are just a few of the many examples.*"

* **Adoration, day and night, saved old Ragusa**. Some months ago I was travelling from Split to Zagreb with the Bishop of Dubrovnik (Ragusa), Msgr. Puljic', and during the trip he told me: "During the assault on the old city, enclosed within the mediaeval walls, about 1,500 bullets fell onto her in a matter of days, but not even a tenth of them actually exploded. In fact, in our monasteries, and particularly in the female ones, the religious remained in front of the Blessed Sacrament day and night. People know this and say: It is the Lord to have saved us. Otherwise the old city would certainly have been totally destroyed."

* **Clares uses monstrance** to save monastery from invasion by new Saracens.

Just a few days ago I received a letter from the Mother General of a new Poor Clare monastery in Bosnia & Herzegovina (they arrived only 3 years ago and the monastery is still not completed). She writes: "Towards the end of February two Croatian (Catholic) soldiers came and told us to escape, for the Mujahedins (volunteers from other Muslim countries) were arriving. We exposed the Blessed Sacrament and remained in adoration day and night. Our chaplain, a Franciscan, said a solemn blessing with the Most Holy One every morning."

Yes, we were afraid, but none of us, nor those who had taken refuge in our monastery (the aged, women and children), escaped. We could see the Mujahedins from the window, we were surrounded by them. It all lasted 10 days, then all of a sudden they disappeared, leaving no sign of their presence. We give thanks to the Lord and our foundress, St Clare, for having sent away these modern Saracens, like the time in Assisi. We continue praying in adoration and we believe that the Lord will always protect us for the intercession of St Clare on this eve of her 8th centenary."

To date (I heard from them again 2 days ago), the sisters are living in peace praying and praising the Lord.

* **Bombs in Sarajevo saved our marriage** - A refugee from Sarajevo told me: "My husband and I had been living together for the past 14 years as if we were divorced. Because of our different characters we came to the point that we couldn't stand one another. We had already agreed to divorce, but because of our three children we had still not done anything about it. When the bombings started, however, our concern for each other made us each go looking all over the city for one another and when we did find each other we all embraced so happily. A new, fresh, holy love was born. (...) That was the moment of our rebirth. We began a new life. We met the Lord - thanks to the bombings."

* **"Pray for enemies and you will be saved" - and becomes apostle among refugees**. Another refugee from Vukovar tells: "I survived the destruction of Vukovar. Our home was destroyed. My mother, father, husband, two brothers and a son were all shot dead. Another 5 members of the family are among the *displaced*. I am

alone. I went through hell. For many days and nights all I could think of was suicide, but in the darkest moment the Lord gave me the strength to pray for my enemies. I could even bless them. For a long time I invoked the Lord's blessing on them and I could feel a peace invade my being. (...) A voice echoed in my soul: "I have chosen you and I have freed you so you may serve me, to testify to the beauty of life of the children of God."

Yes, I can't deny that once I had time for my family, for the house, for the fields, the hens and the pigs... but for my soul and the Lord I had none. And He took everything I had, he freed me and made me able to announce and testify to the beauty of the redemption of the children of God." This woman is now a true apostle of the refugees. By now they have become her new family, spread all over Croatia, all over Europe. For them she has become a spokeswoman of forgiveness, peace and blessing.

Yes, we have to say that the Lord is visiting His people and He is healing the wounds and the sicknesses. Thank you, Lord for Your Goodness! Alleluia!

fra Jerko Penava

Fr. Jojo invited "the pilgrims and believers all over the world" to celebrate a **Mass for Peace** on the 12th anniversary. He observes how "all the winds and storms over these years that have blown up against Medj., in particular the war, have not been able to destroy it. The decisions of the powerful and the politicians have continued to disappoint us, however, you have helped make our climb up calvary easier. The noise of the weapons has not silenced the voice of our Mother, and Her words help us find trust in Peace that the world cannot give us."

Thanks and praise be to Mary for Her visit. Your prayers and help have proved to be light for we who are closed in by darkness. Since you have been chosen to be like actors in the biggest fight ever between good and bad, complete your task and take part in the victory." Siroki Brijeg, 23/6

The Conversion of a Journalist

Apparitions of Medj. are vertex of all present-day spiritual movements Not end of world but an era

Meeting people who come to Medj. means listening to things that really move you. Grace bursts into the lives of some in an extraordinary way, and they are like renewed. This is the story of an American, **Michael H. Brown**, a journalist and writer of books on anthropology, ecology and social sciences. "Now," he says, "I write about Mary and Her action in the world." His latest book, a copy of which he gave to **Fr. Slavko**, is entitled *The Final Hour*. His aspect is that of a normal-looking pilgrim; he carries rosary beads in his hands and he has a pack of papers over his shoulders. He was here in Medj. at the start of Lent this year. He said to "start Lent well."

Q. Why this complete change in interests?
A. I was just like many of my colleagues - I lived as if God didn't exist. We were very poor, but with my job I made a fair bit of money. A change came about one day when, in a dream, I felt the presence of an evil force beside me - a real evil presence. It was then that I started going to church, but only occasionally. Now I go to Mass every day, and the emptiness I felt before has been

replaced by an inner wealth and a great peace. I defend myself with constant prayer against the aggressiveness of evil. In 1984 on Good Friday I experienced the presence of a person close to me, and I realized that it was Our Lady. From that day on all my interests have been in Her.

Q. What happened after that?

A. I became more interested in the Marian messages of Guadalupe, Lourdes, Fatima. Then I heard about Medj. My mother went in 1988; I went the year after. Coming to Medj. was like lighting the fire of my love for the Virgin. I decided to start going around the world to visit the places where Our Lady has appeared: those recognized by the Church and those that haven't yet been recognized officially. So far I've been to 30; in Russia, Africa, Asia, Canada and obviously in Europe.

Q. What are your conclusions?

A. Our Lady speaks in different places in different manners, but Her exhortations are always the same: **conversion, penance, the Rosary, Holy Mass**; and importance is placed on the matter concerning secrets and sufferances to come if we do not convert. I have noticed a design common to all: this is a time of mercy that will be followed by a time of justice. The title of my book (*The Final Hour*) didn't come from me; but from an inspiration one morning at Mass after listening to a reading from St John's first letter: *My children, this is the last hour*. That's how the title came about. For me it means **the last hour of divine mercy, but also the last hour of Satan's power**.

In all the apparitions it's easy to see how the Blessed Virgin and her children fight against the power of darkness and evil, i.e. against Satan. There will have to be a time of purification. Here there is no talk about the end of the world, but the end of an era. If we look at all the apparitions and relative messages then we can talk about this time ending, after which will come a new era where Jesus' presence will be more evident in the world.

On being asked about the war he replied that as a believer, he sees that many people have woken up and started taking Our Lady's messages seriously, for in fact, She started calling us to peace right from the beginning but people didn't pay heed, thus the consequences.

Q. How do you see Medj. with respect to other apparitions?

A. For me Medjugorje is the vertex of them all. I am convinced that the apparitions of Medj. are the greatest and most important of all time. The message has made its way through enormous obstacles and this, apart from being a sign of authenticity, has brought attention to the events, making them more widely known.

Our Lady's invitation to pray for sinners and their conversion is a sign of Her motherly concern for the entire world, and have been particularly echoed in America. Many Americans have been to Medjugorje and have accepted the messages with enthusiasm.

This is our hope amid the sea of spiritual darkness and moral decadence that we live in. Many convert after a pilgrimage and this is a sign that God has not forgotten us.

It is important that all take Her messages seriously and start praying. The war in Bosnia is a warning for all, and the message of peace is addressed to everyone.

(from *Nasa Ognjista* - June '93)

MARIJA WAS ASKED ...

On the 30th May **Alberto Bonifacio** asked **Marija Pavlovic** about her marriage.

Q. Why is it that first you wanted to enter a convent and now you're going to marry?

A. "Every year during vacation time I went to convents. I felt particularly drawn to the contemplative, enclosed, orders. I spoke with nuns and mother superiors, and they told me: "When Medj. will be recognized, and if you'll be in a convent, if the mother superior or bishop say you can't receive pilgrims, you won't be able to receive them." I also did a 6 month experience and then I couldn't see clearly anymore with regards to my vocation. I asked Our Lady and She told me that She gives freedom to us all. It certainly isn't a sin!

Q. At Catechism classes we learn that, God has a design over us and we have to find out what our vocation is. It's nice to think that the Lord wants something better for us, and through prayer we have to try and see what this better thing is.

A. Up till not long ago I didn't know that marriage was also a sacrament. So I thought: I'd better stay the way I am. If I become a nun I don't receive a sacrament - and it's better to receive an extra sacrament.

Q. On a TV programme in Italy you said Our Lady would like you to take vows and enter a convent. You've decided differently.

A. These days, thanks be to God, there are also other communities, like the Focolarines, or the Oasis of Peace, who accept families.

Q. We have to pray, isn't it so, to understand which way is the one for us?

A. Sure. I say I decide for my own life, depending on what I feel in my heart. Yes, convent life is a greater sacrifice .. I don't say I won't go - I'm still open. I've made this clear to my boyfriend. What we want is do God's will. We pray about this. Many tell me I shouldn't marry, and they've started praying for me. I tell them to pray and keep on praying. If they pray for me not to marry, that's OK by me, because it's the Lord Who judges me, He knows what's inside of me. So keep on praying; many times what we do is for our own interests.

For now I think my vocation is that of always being a visionary. Even when the apparitions will have stopped, people will still want to hear my testimony. But I won't be just testifying before you, but before God. When I go to heaven I won't be presenting myself as a visionary. I have to present my life the way it is, with all the good and bad I have lived. * *

Words of visionaries not oracles when not telling Mary's message

Marija is to marry on 9th September (should all go well). Last month we spoke about her **legitimate freedom of choice** and what the Word of God says concerning choice of vocation. It's not up to us to say what she should do, but since Italian and French private TV stations and papers keep bringing up certain motivations to justify her choice, we feel it is our duty, both towards readers and Marija, to clarify some of these expressions.

And by the way, it may be that her Italian does not allow her to express her feelings the way she otherwise would in her mother tongue. Above all, however, we are not to think that what she says or does has been inspired by Our Lady (and Marija is the first to know this).

Need for a spiritual guide

Firstly it is important to note that:

1. It's not the number of sacraments that counts. What counts is God's design over us that we have to look for through profound prayer (Marija also says this) and in being obedient to an **ecclesial guide**, whether in a convent or not. A spiritual guide is all the more necessary when a person is a visionary for they are watched by millions of pilgrims and their behaviour thus becomes all the more important (see Echo 96). So they in particular have to look for a spiritual guide as they would their daily bread. Comparing their matters with the ecclesial way of seeing them ensures that the treasure is well kept and gives the certainty that it really is the Lord the builder of the house.

Testimony isn't just talking to pilgrims

2. It is indeed dangerous to think we can get out of obeying a superior to follow our own will. If today our contact with pilgrims would be conditioned by a mother superior, tomorrow it will be conditioned by obedience to a husband; and we know how many limits these have justly imposed on their wives (and not just husbands do this).

It seems that there is a basic misunderstanding with regards to the word **testimony**. Marija says she doesn't want to enter a convent as she wants greater freedom to testify to the pilgrims. Testimony is not just continually receiving people, to then remain empty perhaps, but is communicating with one's most inner soul the power of the message received. Bernadette went to a convent, Lucy of Fatima is in a convent. Have they not, with their holiness, given a most luminous testimony from their convents? The fruits can be seen if we look how Lourdes and Fatima have made so much way in the world. We hope the same will happen of Medj., if there will still be time.

Whether or not life in a convent is a greater sacrifice than marriage is to be seen. If wanting to marry comes from trying to avoid the cross to be freer, then that person will come against even heavier crosses, for the cross God chooses for us will always be the lightest one.

3. **Concerning sacraments**. Above all, it is not the amount of sacraments we receive that counts, but how one receives them and makes them bear fruit. The sacrament of marriage is a **sign** of our nuptial union with Christ, which is fully realized in eternity, where *we will take neither wife nor husband, but we'll be like God's angels*. On the other hand, the virginal state is the gift of living this nuptial union with Christ already on this earth, which does not cease. Marriage is an anticipated and passing figure of the eternal marriage of our soul with Christ. Virginity, like martyrdom, goes beyond the sacrament for it is not a passing sign, but the reality of life filled with God.

Thus we cannot say that religious life is inferior to matrimony because it isn't one of the 7 sacraments. Does Jesus not encourage us to live this total donation of oneself for the Kingdom? And though He asks the virgins to renounce people and things, does He not assure them a hundredfold already in this life (Mk 10:29)?

4. We are happy to hear that Marija is open to both vocations, though her decision seems to contradict this. That is, unless she's thinking of remaining in a community that accepts families, but even so she would still

continued on page 8

continued from page 4 - Tomislav

there is nothing. Look at the war: what could be born in the heart of a father who finds his children massacred? If hate is born this increases the nothing in the world. You know how love can be put out by a simple situation in daily living. Do you not think that love has been put out by now in many?

Ask yourselves: what is this coldness between husband and wife or between children? What is coldness in a community of consecrated people? It is hate. Satan's strongest weapon is this coldness, because no one realizes it is hate. Praying now for love to develop in us is the road of the chosen ones, of the heroes and the saints.

This evening the Lord wants to put peace in your hearts so you can take it to the others. He needs us to take to our brothers and sisters the breath of the Spirit that only He can give, before taking to them any other activity or initiative. He who remains in peace, in love and in trust will see the life of God blossom in him and will bring about a renewed Spring in the Church. *Edit. staff*

continued from page 7 - Marija

be bound by obedience.

Our task is to *pray* for all visionaries, who are in greater danger, so that such great gifts, in clay vases, are not lost, for the devil does everything in his power to rob them and render vain such great events.

Fr. Angelo

SOLIDARITY

There is more joy in giving than in receiving (Acts 20)

Aid workers are untiring in their efforts to deliver medicines, food, etc. Let us support them and help our brothers and sisters in need.

Contact your nearest Medj. or Caritas centre. If you wish to send donations through us, please indicate your intention. Make cheques out to: Eco di Medj., and mail to same at: Cas. 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.

ECHO IN OTHER LANGUAGES

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during the march/procession by priests who took it in turn at leading the prayer. Msgr. Franic' celebrated Mass at 7 p.m. under the outdoor altar, and Eucharistic Adoration was also held there on Thurs.(24/6) and Sat. evenings. The Adoration chapel was kept open day and night.

Croatian TV estimated the crowd at over 40,000, though a more realistic figure would be 20,000. About 4,000 were from America and Canada, 150 from Australia and 50 from the Far East. The French made up about 1,000 (the French have been the most numerous over this war period). There were 5,000 Italians, 500 Germans and 500 from the UK and Ireland. There were also Czechs and Slovaks, and the many pilgrims from Croatia, Bosnia and Slovenia was very encouraging.

In spite of the enormous suffering throughout the region, the Anniversary Celebration assumed a festive note of joy in the certainty that peace can be obtained through following Our Lady's messages. Food shortages were compensated by most of the pilgrims bringing gifts of food. All the visionaries were present in the choir loft.

On the evening of the 25th, Our Lady appeared to **Ivan** on Mt Podbrdo at 10.30 p.m. Many pilgrims were present. Ivan said: "This evening Our Lady was happy and She greeted us with: *Praised be Jesus Christ, my dear children!* Then Our Lady prayed lengthily over us with Her hands outstretched, blessing us all. Then She said: *I am truly happy, dear little children, to see so many of you here. My dear children, I wish to tell you that you must decide for peace and you must decide for God.*" (From notes by A. Bonifacio and B. Ellis)

Ivanka in tears

Ivanka also received her usual annual apparition on the 25th, in her home. Sr. Emmanuel refers: "There were others present, including an Italian TV team. The apparition lasted 4 minutes and began joyfully, but Ivanka quickly became sad and started crying. Also when she recited the Our Father and the Glory Be with Our Lady, she was in tears. Once the apparition had finished Ivanka, who was visibly distraught, discreetly withdrew from the others.

During the apparition the Virgin apparently showed Ivanka some terrible images that she cannot describe. Ivanka said they are things that will happen soon and regard the whole world. Our Lady was crying and in the end said: "Open your hearts to my Son so He may guide you on the right way." Then: "Be bearers of peace."

Ivanka said that this was her most difficult apparition. These images do not regard the secrets but are like a warning for us. "But they can be changed through prayer," Ivanka said. Ivanka urges us to: "Pray, be converted, surrender ourselves totally to Jesus. We are too unaware; let us not remain so blind. God wants our conversion to be more complete and for us to persevere in this walk."

Ivanka also referred above to Fr. Slavko.*

For the many who ask about **Naju, Korea**. Fr. Raymond Spies, Jesuit priest, has been following the visionary, Julia, for years. He recently wrote to us and said: "The Virgin cried for exactly 700 days, at times tears of blood. From 24 November '92 to date, scented oil exudes from the statue. I have soaked up a little of it for you in a small piece of cloth. (...)"

Echo is free, but lives on your donations. If you would like to contribute, you may send personal cheques to: Echo of Medjugorje, Casella Postale 149, 46100 Mantova, Italy. If you prefer, you can send your donation to your local distributor who will see to sending it on to us. * Thank you and God bless.

Donations for June: *Medj. in East:* Lit. 6,670,000; *Croatia-Bosnia:* Lit. 6,133,000; *Radio M. Poland:* Lit. 750,000. From **France:** for *Croatia/Medj.* Lit.1,085,000; *Bosnia:* Lit. 212,000; *Radio Maria:* Lit.160,000.

WORLD YOUTH DAY in DENVER with Pope John Paul II - 11-15 August '93.

"I tell you most solemnly, unless a man is born from above, he cannot see the kingdom of God." (Jn 3)

FAMILY NEWS

12th Anniversary sign of deeper interest. Interest is growing all over the world, and new children are being called - the last workers of the parable. Medj. can now be found wherever people accept Her messages. A sign of this growth is also the increase of requests we receive for this little instrument: every month more than 60,000 copies of Echo in the principal languages is printed (without counting the reduced versions).

* **Success of Dutch Echo** - 2,000 copies of first number. Frank says he is moved to see how people thirst after the word of God. He spent days receiving telephone calls and requests, and had to do a reprint.

* **Portuguese Echo** is published in Brazil (100,000 copies). Gilberto Da Cunha Correja is now going to produce a similar edition in **Portugal**. Our blessings and best wishes.

* **In Canada**, Michele Cacchione, proprietor of ArtoGraph, reproduces 5,000 copies of the French Echo per month for distribution in the French-speaking zone. He has now started reproducing the English Echo for rapid distribution in north America. **Thanks be to Mary** and to those who spread Her messages.

* **Printer for Marian Centre in Moscow.** We decided to trust the Providence and buy it with the help of a loan. It costs DM 25,000 (about 22 million lire), and our readers have been fast to respond to the appeal - 6 million have already arrived. God bless you. In the meantime in Moscow, they have already started printing a first number of **Echo in Russian** (previously it was being printed in Cracow with great difficulty). The first number also included a summary of the history of Medj. for those who are new. This has brought great joy to Msgr. Hnilica's fathers and our brothers and sisters of Moscow.

For all the gifts, let us give thanks to our Almighty Father, benedicamus Domino - and we bless you in the Immaculate Heart of Mary, Who gave us the precious Blood of our Redeemer. May we never leave this dwelling place so sure, not even now during the holidays.

Simplicity of messages attracts others

and are efficacious when we explain them with simplicity. How a **teacher** explained the last message to his pupils. "Listen kids, Our Lady is always with us, so let's get used to thinking of Her as our companion. She intercedes on our behalf before God so we can help Her realize His plan of salvation for all humanity. Each of us is important for Her, because each of us has a specific task in this great plan. Pulling out means putting the salvation of our brothers and sisters at risk.

With this disposition to be God's helpers, and with the Holy Spirit in us, we can love everyone and automatically become bearers of good and peace. We still need to be renewed though through conversion and prayer, always, for despite our good proposals, we "slip" often. But conversion means getting up again, to renew our proposals, to ask forgiveness and keep on walking towards God.

But prayer is not just reciting formulas. It's offering everything we do to the Father. It's talking with Jesus, Mary, the Father, the Holy Spirit, the Saints, our Guardian Angels. It's telling them what makes us happy, what troubles us, it's talking to them to ask for help, to praise, to thank. Prayer is a great instrument that opens our hearts to God, and permits the realization of His interventions in us.

After having spoken though, we need to remain silent, so we can hear the Spirit's response: through the good thoughts, positive decisions, and serenity that invade of us and the joy that comes from knowing we are with Jesus and Mary and thus we know we have nothing to fear. Our Lady opened and closed Her message with the Holy Spirit, Her spouse, Who lives in us and turns us into authentic witnesses of God's love and power. *L. Bonacina*



From the Mail: Bernard Ellis quotes the *Friends of Medugorje* in Malawi who, "sold their second-hand clothing locally and used the money to buy tea, coffee, powdered milk and baby food" and dispatched it to the Medj. Appeal for refugees in Bosnia. There were also some beautiful "baby clothes knitted by a group of friends in north Malawi." And as the aid worker from Malawi says: "all the donations from this part of the globe come from those with little themselves. They are the most spontaneous and generous. Please God may we learn from their charity and concern!"