

Our Lady's message of 25 March 1994:

**Dear children, Today I rejoice with you. I invite you to open yourselves up to me and become instruments in my hands for the salvation of the world.**

**My little children, what I would like from all of you who have sensed the fragrance of holiness through my messages, is that you take it to this world which hungers for God and for the love of God.**

**I thank all of you who have responded in such great numbers and I bless you all with my motherly blessing. Thank you for having responded to my call.**

## **Take holiness to the world it hungers for God and His love**

**1. Today I rejoice with you...** Our Lady is particularly happy on the feast of the Annunciation - when Her *yes* brought the Son of God to the earth. Her wish is to share this joy with all those who await *the consolation of Israel*, and to encourage them to say their *yes* to the will of God and **become, like Her, instruments of salvation.**

2. We should not forget that 25 March is a special day for those **consecrated to Mary**. St Montfort also tells us this. It is a special day for those who give themselves up totally to Her and depend totally on Her, as Jesus did Himself. Jesus said His *yes* to the Father by accepting to enter the Virgin's womb, to depend on Her. Every consecrated soul then, as though enclosed within Her womb, can say: "On this day, by your motherly goodness, make a new life in me, the life of your Jesus."

**Consecration to Mary** is the *easiest way, the shortest way, the surest way, the most perfect way of being formed like Jesus* because Mary is the *mould of God*, where the Perfect Man was formed and where the saints are also formed (cf. Montfort 219). How many teachers, though, ignore this fact, making their labour difficult and less fruitful!

3. Our Lady also says: **open yourselves up to me!** What does this mean? As if to say: as your trials increase, show you trust me, tell me your problems, ask me to help you, because I have received from God great power to help you in these times. Surrender yourselves to my action of grace so that it can enlighten you and mould you.

4. Thus **you can become instruments in my hands to save the world.** This is the reason behind all her actions. Her desire is to save the world, i.e., that *all men may be saved and come to knowledge of the truth* (1Tm 2:4). This is consoling; it leaves no room for pessimism, it means the world can still be saved. Yeast, though, is needed in the dough.

This yeast is the **holiness** of Her children, a true testimony of God in the world, so hearts may be drawn to Him, for the fragrance is His. *For we are the aroma of Christ... in every place* (2Co 2). Men are hungry for a Truth confirmed in humility and peace; for a love that fulfills, and is faithful to the point of giving one's life; for a mercy that knows no limits; for the unblemishing beauty of a pure heart. This is God's perfume.

*Oh Jesus alive in Mary, come and live in your servants, with your Spirit of holiness, in the fullness of your power, in the perfection of your ways, in the truth of your virtues, in the communion of your divine mysteries.*

*Dominate every adverse power, in your Spirit, for the glory of the Father. (Olier)*

**Yes, men are hungry for God, for His love.** Mary knows. Men are suffering the pangs of hunger for that Love they have gone so far from. That same Love will bring them back to the house of the Father, just the way it brought back the prodigal son.

*So let us clear out the old yeast to become a fresh batch of dough* (1 Co 5:7). *Away with all that malice and deceit, insincerity, envy and slander* (1 Pt 2:1).

Mary had not pronounced the word **holiness** for some time, though Her messages are always directed at this. In fact, the only aim in life is that of *reaching the maturity of the perfect man, who is Jesus, for we were created to be holy and without blemish before He who is love* (Eph 1:4). *Woe betide us if the man who hungers for God and his love is unable to find God manifested in us.* Not just words and empty rites, but in holiness and love is how God is manifested.

5. Finally, She is moved by the **large number** of people, and **gives Her motherly blessing to all.** Now a blessing is the act with which God communicates His power to us so that His plans are realized and those who receive them are enlightened, protected and assisted and will bear the desired fruits.

So the blessing transmitted by the Mother of God - the holder of so many merits and authority - are great indeed for the children who place themselves under Her protection, who love Her with all their heart. We are to treasure these "days of grace" in which She can grant us Her gifts in greater abundance, and celebrate them with a pure conscience (through confession), with the Eucharist, and signs of affection towards Her. *Fr. Angelo*

Our Lady's message of 25 April 1994:

**Dear children, Today I invite you all to make the decision to pray according to my intentions. I invite each of you, my little children, to help me with my plan which is to be realized through this parish.**

**What I particularly invite you to, my little children, is to decide to walk the way of holiness, for this is the only way you can be close to me. I love you and I wish to lead you all to heaven to be with me, but if you do not pray and you are not humble and obedient to the messages I give you, I cannot help you. Thank you for having responded to my call.**

## **Mary has not abandoned her plan. She asks us to help her realize it**

Over the Easter period Our Lady began talking to us again about **Her plan which is to be realized through the parish of Medj.** She spoke about this during the first years of the apparitions - perhaps we had forgotten. Mary, Queen of Peace, wanted to involve **everyone** in Her project: the visionaries, the prayer group made up of young people, the Franciscan community, the villagers and the pilgrims. So much so that going to Medj. did not mean going to meet any particular person, but a parochial community that had been summoned by Mary, which faithfully and fervently accepted Her presence and let itself be guided by Her.

The gift was indeed a great one, but the responsibility was also great. Not all had the humility and faithfulness to keep up the effort and persevere, especially after the ecclesiastical and political events that came to be. Despite all, the Queen of Peace is still telling us that She has not abandoned Her project, but intends carrying it through to completion: *God never regrets having granted His gifts.*

I believe that with her last words She means: do not stop to look back, to cry over good times lost, to look at others and judge them. Her project for the salvation of all humanity is still written in heaven and has been entrusted to Her.

What Mary humbly **asks** is **help** from those who believe in and listen to Her. She asks that our lives **be holy and that we pray**, that we **be humble and obedient** to Her, as She was to God, so the divine plan of salvation for humanity, which is so threatened by the forces of evil and death, may be actuated.

*Fr. Remo*

Mary has a **plan** (which is also God's plan), and it is quite different and more important than all our plans and problems. It is our duty to help Her actuate it. How?

**1. By praying according to Her intentions**, to strengthen the power of Her intercession before God. Let us begin immediately during this month of May and with our preparation for Pentecost. **2. By deciding to walk along the path of holiness - but together.**

This means the parish of Medj. and all those who have accepted the message, united in faithfulness and intentions. It is a good thing to exhort and correct one another.

**3. By walking along the path of holiness.** This means living according to our baptismal promises; i.e. remove sin [from our lives] without making any compromise, look for what heals us with God's means (His grace), no longer depending on worldly things. In fact, the word "holy" in Greek (a-gios) means: that which does not belong to the world. Peter exhorted: *Save yourselves from this corrupt generation* (Act 2:40). Through holiness we are close to Her. Sin and being slaves of the world separate us from Mary.

**4.** The message contains a condition. For Our Lady to help us we must be **humble and obedient** in accepting **Her messages**. That means accepting those simple rules of life that She has been giving us all this time, to straighten out the crooked ways of today's Christians and turn Medj. into a model parish. Those who choose not to submit themselves to Her teachings are left without defence against the intrusion of the mundane life-style and the dazzle of idols that have so changed the original face of Medjugorje.

---

*Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise prophetic utterances. Test everything; retain what is good* (1Thes 5:19-21).

### **The various messages must lead to discovery of Jesus in the Church**

For the many disoriented people **it is important that [others] have recognized Medj.** By this grace, however, **we must arrive at complete communion with the Church**, that others may be freed and saved.

This is our reply to the many who write about and asks opinions of extraordinary manifestations and messages, in particular those regarding Vassula (see also Echo 101).

It is a good thing to take what is good from everywhere, but with discernment, but all of it must call us back to the Gospel. So what we are being asked is to pick up the Gospel, to place our faith in Jesus, not in people. People pass on, He remains: *He must grow and I must diminish.*

One of our helpers writes: "If these messages are urgent and the visionary says we must let everyone know about them, how is it that they aren't known by people here? We reply: The important thing is to know the Gospel! What can these messages say more than the Gospel? It is important to live out the Gospel message, and then we can joyfully spread the good news of our experience, as one who discovers a hidden treasure, without parading other messages.

**The Christian experience is Jesus in us, not words said by others.** A Christian needs to pray and obey God who speaks to one's heart, not be led on by sensational events. Besides, what is more sensational than the Gospel?

Those who have received conversion through certain messages must put those messages into their lives and be obedient to the Church if they do not wish to isolate themselves from the Church. The true, Christian, catholic vision of life cannot be found out of the Church. It is when we are out of the Church that we risk becoming more sect-like in our ways than Christian, and cause for mistrust in the Church. *Fr.A.*

## **POPE'S HARSH REACTION to UNO project which destroys the family**

This is the International Year of the Family, yet we are witnessing a progressive increase of satanic plans to destroy the family. In his battle against these plans, the Pope spoke out harshly against the conference on population and development organized by the UNO to take place in Cairo in September.

The Pope described this conference as *completely lacking in ethical discernment*. What does it involve? The Conference was idealized by the Egyptian woman Nafis Sadik and is based on the idea that by the year 2000 the world should have no more than 6,000 million inhabitants. The "prophetess" has calculated that the following is needed: 151 million sterilizing operations for men/women; 8,000 million courses of the pill; 662 million contraceptive and abortive injections; 300 million IUD's, 44,000 million condoms.

For some time now, thanks to funds supplied by industrialized countries, there has been further development of the **family planning policy**. It has gone as far as offering money to people to be sterilized, for example in Bangladesh, where they offer a new outfit or a week's wages. These are the initiatives that the UNO thinks up for the family! Such initiatives are totally unacceptable for anyone who cares even the least about human dignity.

The Pope reacted by writing a LETTER to ALL THE HEADS OF STATE - something which is done only in moments of exceptional gravity. Besides the Letter, he has repeatedly spoken out during audiences and meetings and during the SYNOD of African Bishops. This policy clearly expresses that **civilization of death condemned by the Pope**. That is why the Pope called all Christians to construct a new Maginot line in defence of life.

In the GENERAL AUDIENCE of 6 April, before 30,000 people, prior to the conclusive blessing, the Pope forcefully expressed his concern: "*...We are concerned lest this Year of the Family become a Year against the Family. We protest! We cannot walk into the future while planning the systematic death of the unborn! We can, only with a civilization of love that welcomes life.*"

On Sunday 17 April, during the REGINA CAELI reflection he spoke out again: *In this Year of the Family, we expected that the principle asserted by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights that the family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society, would be rediscovered and reasserted. Because of its character, it is not an institution that can be modified at will: the family belongs to humanity's most fundamental and sacred heritage! It even has priority over the State, which is obliged to recognise it and has the duty to protect it.*

*I address all those who are able to resist the spreading models of fatuous freedom and false progress, which, seen in depth, turn out instead to be forms of slavery and regression because they undermine humanity, the sacred character of life and the capacity for true love. Whatever violates the moral law is never a victory, but a serious setback for man and makes him a victim of himself... Today it is more urgent than ever to react against models of behaviour that are the fruit of an hedonistic, permissive culture, for which the unreserved gift of self, mastery of one's instincts, the sense of responsibility seem to*

*be notions belonging to another age. I ask: to what kind of society will this ethical permissiveness lead? Are there not already worrying symptoms that make us fear for humanity's future?*

Without a doubt a similar policy will produce sick fruits in the future. We fear that one day these same young people, as adults, will want to settle accounts with today's leaders for having deprived them of reasons for living, for not telling them the duties that an intelligent being endowed with a heart has.

The Catholic Church is alone in its stance. We are watching an authentic cultural battle concerning the dignity of life and the primacy of God. The Church can fight this battle in the name of Christ because its proposal is one of real life to counter the moral confusion in this wealthy society. It is a proposal of holiness, freedom and love of life. What the Pope warned us about in Denver (Echo 105 - 106), in his encyclical *Veritatis Splendor* (107) and in his letter to families (110) has now become tragically evident. St Paul's appeal is becoming ever more actual and urgent: *Do not conform yourself to the mentality of this century* (Rom 12:2).

### **The Pope: I am gentle, but ...**

The Pope's unusually harsh tone can be justified by the gravity of the events. We can understand this better, however, if we listen to what he says about his own character: *The Pope has a gentle nature. He is neither severe nor strict. One must be strict, though, when it comes to principles. We need to be very comprehensive towards all the human weaknesses, but for the family intended as the start of construction of society we need to be intrepid and uncompromising... The ten commandments are rocks which cannot be removed; not even one of them can be abolished; they must all hold strongly. That is how the Church is built.* (Rome, 6.3.94).

### **Mother Teresa said: The family that prays together remains together...**

As she spoke I noticed the rosary beads in her calloused hands. I asked her why she always holds them. She told me: "I think that if we returned to Our Lady we would begin saying the Rosary again. The family that prays together stays together. If they stay together, they will love one another as God loves them."

### **... and there would not be abortion.**

"I believe," she said with force, "that abortion is the worst scourge in family life today. It is the biggest threat to world peace." I queried her about this statement and Mother Teresa replied: "Yes, abortion is the worst enemy of world peace. If a mother can kill her child, what can stop us from killing one another? The unborn child is sacred and untouchable, and abortion is a terrible homicide."

I asked her what she would say to the Italians if she were allowed to talk for 10 minutes on the TV. Mother Teresa replied: "I would tell them that Jesus is love and loves each one of us. We need to pray because prayer gives us a pure heart, and a pure heart lets us see God. If we can see God in the others we will love one another, as He loved us. We would live in peace with everyone. We know that He loved us because He died for us. We too then must love one another to the point of sacrifice.

**Love starts from the family.** To make this love come about we must pray together.

The family that prays together stays together. If we are united we will love one another as God loves each one of us."

### What saddens the Pope

Cardinal **Deskur**, an intimate friend of the Holy Father, was asked what saddens the Pope. He replied: "Knowing that many people are united to him and pray for him is what comforts him the most and gives him strength to carry on with his untiring mission. He is very saddened by abortion which is practised on a world-wide scale, particularly in the poor countries because of the influence of international organizations. Being killed by an enemy is very serious, but being killed by your own mother, who was made to give life, is truly despairing. If a person can accept to kill another and have no scruples, and even be supported by the law, how could they be kept from being violent with others?"

### Man drops family to animalistic level, God raises it to divine level

*Bishop Sgreccia from the Pont. Consilium for families* said: "Our world is unique. Man makes great attempts to develop all his creative power, but when it comes to family, his attempts are limited at making comparisons with animals. A modern-day science compares the behaviour of animals with that of men to demonstrate that man's history is tied to that of the animals.

What does God do? He compares man, the couple and marriage to Him and He tries to elevate our poor humanity to His image, as it was in the beginning. Therefore, marriage has its roots in communion with the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit."

#### LATEST NEWS (26 April 1994)

#### Liberalization of abortion rejected!

Conference on Population and Development - At the final session of the Preparatory Commission in New York all the references concerning abortion in the documents were rejected for further discussion. To note, it was the clear intention of some delegations to have abortion-related texts approved already in New York, but this did not occur! Let us continue to pray that the Pope's protests and man's good sense will continue to take effect.

## NEWNESS OF EASTER is letting Jesus act with the power of His Spirit

The post-paschal liturgy in the Acts of the Apostles presents us with the change in Peter. Peter was bold yet at the same time he was hesitant; he was humiliated by his denial of Christ. He became, however, the disciple who not only feared nothing, but who announced the truth without a shadow of compromise. The exceptional change in Peter and the other apostles came about because by then they were moving with and in the Spirit. Peter is explicit: *We must obey God rather than men* (Act 5:29); and God's supremacy was foremost even when the first problems arose with regards to the community.

To be moved by the Spirit means embodying this supremacy in one's vocation and acting with that value in mind. The disciples' transformation also depends on the acceptance of the *obscure discourse* of the Cross: *They left, rejoicing that they had been*

*found worthy to suffer dishonour for the sake of the name* (Act 5:41). Before Easter, Jesus announced His Passion, clearly and in detail, three times, but for his disciples it remained obscure. The conversion of his disciples comes from this new way of being, according to which this way of talking is no longer obscure, but becomes reason for joy. This is a total turnabout.

Accepting the obscure discourse is accepting to live in the shadow of Another, like John the Baptist: *I must diminish, He must grow*. What the Apostles are experiencing is the desire to deny oneself so that Jesus of Nazareth may shine through. That is the reason for the strength and new humanity in Peter, and above all for the spiritual fertility of the first communities. They were fertile because their acceptance of the Spirit made them respect supremacies and accept the cross. Christ grows and the old man diminishes. The name of Jesus is the way and reason for which the disciples move, in order to build that necessary communion regarding self denial.

The liturgy of this time of Easter also tells us about **Nicodemus and Stephen**. Nicodemus listened and though he was a good teacher, he did not reach an attitude of faith. Faith is not just understanding something, but also believing with one's heart, and letting God have the upper hand.

Stephen is a young deacon, his fervour is typical of the youth; he is sincere. He is full of enthusiasm for what Jesus did. He is filled with truth because he let himself be involved by Jesus' works. That is what makes him more discerning than Nicodemus the teacher. Stephen became truly wise, more so than the learned Nicodemus. Though Nicodemus had good intentions, he was unable to see beyond his own humanity. Stephen, though, had a much wider view: that of the Spirit, which showed up in his actions. The Acts tells us that when placed before his persecutors *his face was like that of an angel*. This is owed to the spiritual wisdom that becomes light and strength of the announcement in freedom of spirit that cannot be likened. Stephen was not afraid. He who is free in spirit does not succumb to situations but dominates them.

### This is imitation of Jesus and communion of self-denial

1. How can we recognize the wisdom of the Spirit? **If it is imitation of Christ** it is the wisdom of the Spirit. We see that Stephen died the way Christ died, forgiving his persecutors like Christ did. The Holy Spirit always leaves an indelible mark in confirmation that love is stronger than all evil. He allows you to imitate Christ so perfectly, that nothing, not even death, can make you bad, ugly, burdensome or desperate. With the love of the Spirit, in the name of Christ, you truly defeat everything.

What is the important thing in these great examples offered to us by the Church? First, we must look down to the roots of our vocation and let our **conversion be a continuous process**. The first reason is that the **Christian vocation is above all a gift and as such it can never be self-directed**: I cannot use and abuse it according to my wishes, without respecting the conditions tied to it.

2. Vocation is a call with its own horizon and root in the trinitarian communion. This means that it must tangibly express only this origin, and work toward this object. This, however, is not given for granted. For

example, we are fairly convinced that we should make communion with others, but we do not always keep in mind that we are already part of a communion. If we kept this in mind we would understand how we cannot do as we will. Being aware that we are already rooted in a communion would change our way of being and moving. If this trinitarian horizon was considered by the Church too, there would be less risk of starting off from oneself and less errors would be made.

The outcome of our efforts, of which one is constructing communion in our communities, can resist only for as long as our efforts withstand. When we are depressed or hardened by sin, or when our faith fails, all dies. If you are not already a vital part of the communion that bears you, then you are bearing yourself, and the communion will break down.

3. The third reason for which a vocation demands denial is that it can't be reduced to intellectual or historic comprehension. It belongs to the plan of the Father and the redemptive trinitarian work. It is a completed work; it requires our energy and our support by not stopping at historical situations, but by going beyond. Otherwise it is only a human vocation, not a divine one which is moved by the Spirit.

### Obey the Pope in the fight against secularization and division

From these three motives we see how the process of conversion that accompanies a vocation is a continuous state of **rebirth from above**. It means reasoning like God and not like men; conforming to what God thinks, wants and judges as best, and not to the mentality of the world.

Being born from above coincides with a total change of judgement. If one's head does not undergo a change, nothing else will. A change of heart is only the consequence of this. Jesus rebuked Peter for his human way of thinking only just after he made his profession of faith: *Get behind me, Satan. You are thinking not as God does, but as human beings do. For this you are my enemy*.

The obscure way of the world is becoming clearer all the time. We can already see the results of the secularization of the last 20 years, and they are serious. **Division is becoming greater** all the time. We have the exaltation of man without God. Man no longer has a link to his origin or his finality; he idolizes himself. What he believes and does depends on what he has or does. For we Christians though the state of being is worth more than the state of doing or having. When man will not acknowledge his origin he no longer knows who he is. It is like a kind of efficiency with neither head nor tail, and at the most it's only a social state.

So human work cannot be a form of cooperation with God's creation and redemption, but a satanic instrument. The great danger is that this division is at work in the Church every day. **Secular tendencies** start up in the seminaries and they are producing the bitter fruit of aridity and the loss of objectivity and orthodoxy which the Pope is trying to bring back into Catholicism. It is clear that what we have before us is a diabolic (diabolic as in division) programme, the aim of which is to try and empty the New Testament.

There is a strange fad of being Hebrew even in the Church, as though the Messiah had not yet come. **Hebraism and Protest-**

**antism** are two attitudes that are making a lot of way into the Church, and the worse thing is that distinguished scholars are passing off their own ideas as truth. It's a bit like being in Gethsemane, where all the enemies are lined up against just one. Today the enemies have formed a coalition against the Catholic Church and in particular against the Pope who is the foundation of unity.

**Obey the Pope, [in a fight] against all these disintegrating acts; that is what the Spirit has to say to us.** Our Lady's priorities and those of the Pope coincide.

In these dramatic historical moments the Spirit demands something tangible. **The Spirit wants communion**, nothing else. Just look at Jesus' priestly prayer (Jn 17). Communion strengthens, it confirms, it actuates and becomes ever stronger in a total offering. There is no other way. The Spirit is asking us to offer ourselves as instruments, to be consecrated to Our Lady and become in a perfect way instruments of the Spirit, just as She was. *Niki*  
(Rome, 19.4.94 - Reflection for priests)

## We are living Eucharist!

### Letter for Pentecost

Peace to you brother. Peace to you sister.

The Pope dedicated this year to the family. The Church is God's big family. Every spiritual community in the Church expresses itself in a particular way and thus enriches God's family. We prepare ourselves for Pentecost (a time when the Church experiences and manifests her identity) through profoundly living our call as a spiritual family.

**The divine and the human** - God in Jesus Christ became Man and redeemed all of us through him. With Him we are one body. He gave us His Holy Spirit. The flesh and the Holy Spirit became one life. Everything came through a natural way, because *Jesus was born of a woman* (Gal 4:4), but it was also a supernatural act by Grace: *The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. Therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God* (Lk 1:35). Thus, in every faithful, in every spiritual community and in the Church the Divine is joined to the human. Our model is the union that was in Mary.

Our aim then, is not to close ourselves up in prayer (pietism), or in sufferance (victimism), but to enter into a perfect union with God (cf. Jn 15:1-17).

**1. Conversing** - Father God communicates life to the Son and the Son to the Father through the Holy Spirit. Everything in Them is common. In the same way a brotherhood is tied to the Holy Spirit. Prayer formulas, though they may be perfect, are not sufficient on their own if one does not converse in the Holy Spirit and He cannot pray in the person.

**Converse with one's whole being** with one's thoughts, feelings, words and expressions. The whole being of a person should be in an attitude of silent listening and in sharing one's experience with others. Prayer with the heart opens us up to the Holy Spirit and our heart reveals the countenance of God to others.

**Recognize the Saviour** - As He revealed Himself to the Apostles, He also reveals Himself to every person as the Saviour, showing the easily visible and recognizable

signs of His Regality. Prayer is a pilgrimage towards the Saviour Who lives deep within us. He offers us fullness of salvation. If we recognize Him in everything He gives us and we accept it and love it, we will start blooming and rising. It is important to recognize Him in us and in others. Walking towards the depths of others is the pilgrimage towards the Saviour Who lives and works also in others. Discovering it and showing it to our brothers means being in communion with the Risen Lord, and the whole community will rise.

**Walk together towards dialogue** - Let us start off, like Jesus together with the disciples, on the road to Emmaus (Lk 24:13-35). Let us listen to the needs of others and be bearers of peace, love and redemption, like the tender and graceful Mother who does not touch the wounds, or talk about others' sins. To the contrary, she heals, and full of hope she patiently waits for her child to grow. When our human capacities are insufficient, we do not turn to using force, but we pray with serene hearts to He for Whom nothing is impossible. We give everyone room in which to make free decisions. Walk unceasingly! When we pray, when we converse, when we think in our hearts of others who may be distant. Above all, we persevere when Satan provokes darkness around us and when we see only evil. Jesus opened the way right to the end, to defeat every evil with good.

**2. Premise on dialogue** - For all those who desire offering themselves as a holy and living sacrifice (Rm 12:1), it must be clear to them in their hearts how one reaches communion in the Holy Spirit and how one can realize communion in others. The Holy Scriptures tell us:

**Die to oneself.** The Apostles died to themselves when Jesus died. In that moment, their personal interests and human securities died. That was the moment of death for every form of egoism and the condition for turning to the Risen Lord. When we leave aside every form of egoism, we and the whole brotherhood open our hearts to the Holy Spirit. Each moment of trial is a chance to die to oneself and to open oneself to Resurrection.

**Discover the Risen Lord!** St John says: *He is expiation for our sins, and not for our sins only but for those of the whole world* (1 Jn 2:2). Jesus says: *Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and enter into his glory?* (Lk 24:26). Jesus has already offered Himself for our sins, weaknesses and sufferings. If we acknowledge this deep down we will find peace and joy. If we hand over our sins to Jesus He will forgive us for them; if we accept our weaknesses and carry our crosses with love to Him, we will find happiness. If we try our best to forgive our neighbour and help him bear his crosses, as Jesus does for us, we will be strengthened by the Risen Lord and we will be in communion with the others in the Holy Spirit.

**Be co-redeemer** - Let us come close to one another in the Spirit of the Risen Lord. Jesus is looking for the weak apostles who denied Him. It was to Peter that He gave first place! He wants to bring back to Jerusalem those who have run away from themselves and their salvation. To them He says: *Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and enter into his glory?* Yes, it was necessary! Jesus goes beyond the limits of our capacities, beyond the flights of the apostles and offers Himself. To them He

offers Himself as the bread of life (Lk 24:13-35). This *was necessary* is important for us if we wish to enter into communion with others. There must be in us that necessity to offer ourselves for the others, to be able to "donate" ourselves as living Eucharists. This love in the walk towards our neighbours burns all the crosses and is offered as a gift of life and nourishment for eternity, just as the Risen Lord offers Himself.

**3. Living Eucharist** - Each person is to offer himself for another as a living sacrifice. Each person is to donate himself to another as pure love of the Risen Lord. This way the community may reach Christian maturity and the Holy Spirit may fill it and mould it. So then *you are no longer strangers and sojourners, but you are fellow citizens with the holy ones and members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the capstone. Through him the whole structure is held together and grows into a temple sacred to the Lord; in him you also are being built together into a dwelling place of God in the Spirit* (Eph 2:19-22). We too become a community in the Spirit and enter into communion with the Church of Heaven, with the Earth and with Purgatory. The reciprocal love of the first Christians was admirable. May the Love of God revealed in us be testimony of the presence of God and confirmation of the truth that only the living Eucharist can give room to the Spirit and create the Christian community. May the Holy Spirit work in us. Let us pray much till Pentecost and transform this prayer into a state of being. In particular, let us be united in prayer during the Pentecost novena:

Oh living Spirit, eternal God, in Thee I adore the Holy Trinity. I adore Thy wisdom, present in Thee from all eternity. I acknowledge Thy light, it enlightens every soul. I pray to Thee - Who art prayer in me - to pray unceasingly. With Thy eternal word - silently in me - be my eternal adoration. Fill me with faith and hope! Thou, Who alone art love, be my love in me. Guide me, that to the Triune God alone I may be faithful all the length of my life. Amen.

Together with the continual blessing with which I bless you, I desire that we all enter into communion with the living God, and in His love, with all creatures.

**HAPPY PENTECOST!**

May the Lord bless you and keep you. Amen. May the Lord let his face shine on you and be gracious to you. Amen. May the Lord uncover his face to you and bring you peace. Amen. And the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit descend on you and remain with you always. Amen. *Fr. Tomislav Vlasic - 25 April 1994*

**Fr. Thaddeus from Radio Maria in Poland** and his helpers were present at the general audience of 23 March. The Pope expressed his pleasure at "how it has developed and spread, providing a rich variety of programmes to meet the needs of man, at the service of the Polish Church and in strict collaboration with her Bishops. This radio will help realize the new evangelization of families and education of the people. This radio is work of Mary whom we venerate as the *Star of evangelization*." The Pope concluded with thanks for the fidelity and solidarity shown by all involved.

## African Synod Put God first and promote authentic evangelization

In the Synod of Bishops for Africa - quite a singular event held in Rome during the month of April - various indications of fundamental value emerged. Once again, they confirm the line of Mary's school. The priority of evangelization work and of fundamental **inculturation based on union with Jesus** represent the primacy of prayer that Our Lady calls us to: *I desire that each of you decide to change your life and work more in the Church - not with words or thoughts, but with your example* (25 Feb. '93).

This means that the most important ecclesial work is **being new men, not producing advanced projects or giving things**. This is a mysterious law but a determining one for the Church, and many fathers of the synod brought this up, to repeat what the Pope has always said: *a Christian transforms the world by transforming himself*.

**Cardinal Zoungrana** from Burkina Faso reported "the lack of consideration for the real evangelizing work by the European aid organizations which prefer to support socio-economic works. (...) Our African Dioceses must form pastoral agents and faithful to count upon their personal contributions above all, so as not to build Churches of perpetual beggars."

The Bishop from **Madagascar** made a protest: "The mass media of the developed countries only mention Africa on the occasion of massacres, cataclysms... Africa is merely a setting for so-called humanitarian action reserved to 'saviours' coming from outside."

From the appeals by the African prelates we see that often the European missionary initiatives end up being little more than proposals of construction works and economical and technological works. Something else is more important, like giving support for **authentic evangelization based on spiritual values**. This is clearly stated in *Redemptoris Mater*, something that Our Lady has been teaching us for years. Could it be that the poor quality of European catholicism and the presumption of not having anything else to learn, is what balks any other form of "mission" being actuated?

**Cardinal Ratzinger** stressed that the much proclaimed "inculturation" (i.e. lowering Christianity into the indigenous cultures) is possible when one thing is clear: "The Incarnation of Jesus is an historical event, unique and unrepeatable. It implies a permanent link with this history. It is not an end in itself; it is completed by the Paschal mystery, the Cross and the Resurrection of Christ. It is a way towards purification, transformation and renewal. **Cultures need this encounter with Christ** and Christ awaits this encounter, because it is only thus that the Incarnation event is fulfilled." *Edit. staff*

The new church dedicated to the **Queen of Peace in Perugia** will be consecrated on 29 May. The ceremony will begin at 10.30 am. At 4 p.m. Fr. Jozo, Vicka and Mirjana will meet with the pilgrims. This will be followed by the Rosary and Holy Mass. For info call: (Italy) 075-41060 - Fr. Ignazio Zaganella.

**Fr. Jozo** will be in **Assisi** on the 3rd June for the international meeting which will begin at 4.30 pm.

## the blessed land

**Anniversary of consecration of world** - Great feast on the 25th March. In Her message Our Lady thanked the many people present. There were many Croatians, more than 100 Czechs and Slovaks, and thousands of other pilgrims from Italy, Germany, Austria, France, Ireland, Britain, North America and even Brazil and Mexico.

We have also had with us over these last few days Archbishop Franic and Bishops Paul Hnilica and Nicholas D'Antonio, the latter from New Orleans. They arrived to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the Consecration of the world (and Russia) to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, the celebration of which was done by the Pope on 25 March in 1984. Together with the bishops we celebrated Holy Mass in the evening. Then we made our consecration to Our Lady using the same formula said by the Pope 10 years ago. There were many people everywhere, including the confessionals. Many also came forward for the **prayers of the people** which were said in the various languages.

The **consecration prayer was also said** earlier in the afternoon on the hill of apparitions after the Rosary at 2 p.m. There was a great crowd of people. The consecration was said in Croatian, Italian, German, English and French, using the same formula.

For the Croatians and all those people who have suffered because of the war, Medj. is becoming a place of hope, consolation and inner healing. Only the father confessors really know what goes on in people's hearts, but there is something that we too can see, and that is the tears, the serene looks, the joy that lights up their eyes. These are the exterior signs of the grace received. Truly, many miracles of grace occur here and have been for the past 12 years. This is reason to rejoice!

All the visionaries were present. Marija arrived a little before the prayer which began at 5 p.m. and after the Rosary she related the message to us. Vicka participated in the prayer on Podbrdo. Jakov and Ivan were also here.

**What Our Lady said to Marjana** - *Prayer fills one with happiness. Let me help you and guide you.* - 18 March: Mirjana's birthday. Our Lady appeared to her as She had promised She would do every year. The apparition began at 2.35 p.m. and lasted 6 minutes. The message was: *Dear children, Today my heart is filled with joy. I would like you to find yourselves in prayer every day, like on this great day of prayer. That is the only way you can find happiness which fills your soul and body. As your Mother I wish to help you do this. Allow me to do it!*

*Once again I tell you: open up your hearts to me, let me guide you. My way leads to God. I invite you to pray together, because you can see yourselves that with our prayers all evil is destroyed. Let us pray and hope.* Mirjana said that Our Lady did not say anything about the secrets. This is already the second time (on this birthday apparition) that Our Lady has not mentioned them to her. Mirjana says that if she cried it is because of the happiness she feels in meeting Our Lady.

\* **25 April 1994:** The number of pilgrims is growing. There are many more French-speaking people coming, plus Belgians and Italians who arrive with lorries loaded with

aid. These also arrive from Britain, Ireland and Poland, plus Germany.

\* **Mirjana gave birth** to her second child: Veronica, born 19 April.

(Fr. Slavko)

\* Our Lady had stopped giving messages for the pilgrims who joined Ivan in his evening prayer meeting on the mountain, but just lately She has asked on two occasions for pilgrims **to pray for the Pope, the bishops and the priests**. If Our Lady is asking there must be a good reason.

\* We often hear people say: "I will go to Medj. when it will receive official recognition by the Church." Well to start with, two things are certain. 1. **Medj. has already been recognized as a place of prayer** and worship.

2. To date, the Church has never approved apparitions while these were still occurring. With regards to Lourdes it took 4 years and 14 years for Fatima. That means we must be patient, especially if we think that the Blessed Virgin promised Mirjana and Ivanka that She would appear to them for the rest of their lives! The kingdom of heaven *belongs to the violent who know how to seize grace as it passes by*, and in Medj. grace has been passing by for quite some time. *You are living in a time of grace*, Our Lady has said.

\* On Good Friday at 3 p.m. **Marija's father**, Filip Pavlovic, was buried. Just before he died he said: "I want to go, I want to return home." He was in his own home at the time, but his soul felt the need to return to the Father, to return to our true home. \* Marija spent 3 days at the bedside of her brother in the hospital of Split. His body had rejected the kidney that she herself had donated. Thanks to God he is now safe.

\* Beautiful death of a French priest (75 years old) on the morning of Easter at the 9th station on Krizevac. He collapsed after having spoken with love about Jesus' three falls.

(from Sr. Emmanuel's diary)

## Split spared by war

It is a miracle that a port even more strategic than others on the coast has not been touched while the others have been severely damaged. Reliable sources have said that there was a plan to bomb Split in May 1992, which was when Medj. had been bombed though it underwent no damage. Apart from an isolated air-raid which caused very little damage, the plan was never put into action. From *Medj. Gebetsaktion* (a monthly bulletin from Vienna, no. 30) we read that a journalist queried Mons. Franic about Split not having been bombed: "We know that the bishops of Bosnia and Herzegovina were contrary to acknowledging the supernatural in the apparitions of Medj., and that now they have lost a large part of their dioceses and that not even their sees were spared. On the other hand, Split has been spared in an exceptional way. Could you say that it's your positive attitude towards Medj., and your prayers, that have called divine protection over your city?"

Mons. Franic replied: "I am a poor man and a feeble witness. Most of the priests in my diocese did not follow me in my support for Medj. However, most of the faithful accepted Medj."

We will only know once we are in heaven if fewer sins are committed in this city than in others. I do think, though, that if Split has been spared, it is by a miracle. Other cities like Sebenico, Zara, Dubrovnik and Sarajevo, have greatly suffered. Here in Split we have practically lived in peace all during the war, at least so far!"

## **Bosnia: peace between Croats and Muslims. Serbs forced to make peace?**

The recomposition of the conflict between Croats and Muslims (which was so discouraging since they were once allies) has gladdened the hearts of all who recognized it as a gift of the Queen of Peace. In Her message of 25 February, She thanked those who helped her to make the war end as soon as possible.

This tells us in an eloquent manner that different peoples can live in peace in the same territory, which is exactly the opposite of what the lengthy and useless conferences were proposing with the division of Bosnia and the constant changing of the borders. Just as well that **man's projects without God fail!**

The federation between Croats and Muslims in the central part of Bosnia, supported by the USA, indicates the only way out of the conflict. The Pope had always been in favour of this. This understanding stirred up the **anger of the Serbo-Bosnians** who felt isolated, and thus began the assault on the Muslim strongholds. First Tuzla, then Maglaj, now **Goradze** has had to suffer the agony of bombs and the massacre of the defenceless. The great powers, lacking in ideals and consequent decisions, have so far showed fear and inability to conclude. Threat followed threat while the Serbs faked truce after truce and in the meantime continued attacking and destroying. The present **Russian-American agreement**, with the ultimatum, seems to have dissuaded the Serbs. They have retreated from the city, but they left behind destruction and death. Peace is not yet close at hand. We still need to pray much; and that is what we shall do to help Our Lady so that the war may end. \* \*

### **Aid into Mostar and beyond**

The 18th March was a memorable day. **Alberto Bonifacio** led a convoy of 1 truck and 9 vans across the Neretva river (which divides Mostar). He was accompanied by a director of a Muslim aid organization. His report follows: "We crossed with the help of an iron barge supplied by UN soldiers. The first stop was the town of Konjic. Though still deserted, it can now be reached. Here we met the Franciscans who had returned only days before after lengthy persecution. They were very moved. Aid was left to them and to a Muslim charity organization.

The stop on the way back was at the hospital of east Mostar. The hospital was in a small building that had been badly damaged and the "wards" were the dark and humid cellars. What they called the operating room was really quite frightening.

Chief surgeon, Dr. Milavic, received us in a bunker. He asked for generators, candles, paint to cover the mould on the walls, a cellular phone... the situation there was really dreadful when compared to the less dramatic situation of the hospitals in west Mostar. They urgently need an ambulance because at the moment the wounded people are being transported with private cars (that still work) - but really they lack everything. This part of Mostar has 57,000 inhabitants and they've been without electricity and water for 2 years.

We went back to the hospital of east Mostar on Sunday the 20th. We were also assisted by Muslim religious authorities. We went this time with other vans and doctor

friends who formed the association, *Ministerium Salutis*, and who work in the hospitals. On another trip on 2 April we went with 15 vans and delivered numerous sacks of haemocomponents and insulin, a generator and various medicines including tests for Aids. The children came up to us looking for water to drink. In the cities their only water is from the river.

As we walked around the city we noticed the destruction. Even the Karadzoz-Beg mosque (XVI century) - the most beautiful and monumental - had been hit. There is not a building, a monument or a house that has not been destroyed or badly damaged. The area of the famous Stari Most (old bridge) is a heap of rubble. A not-so-safe looking walkway is the only way across the river.

Some showed their disagreement when they saw us delivering aid to the Muslim populations too. We have not joined a political cause, but an evangelical cause. It teaches us to go wherever there are people in need, whatever their race. This is precious ecumenical work, Laurentin pointed out."

---

## **LIVE INSTRUMENTS DEAD INSTRUMENTS**

*Our Lady said in Her message of 25 March 1994 that She would like us to be "instruments in Her hands for the salvation of the world." The following will help us understand what being "instruments in the hands of God" means.*

The Lord needs all of us, to be as live instruments in His hands. In the Acts of the Apostles we read how God accomplished mighty deeds at the hands of Paul, and how through him, diseases left the sick and evil spirits came out of them. We also read of seven itinerant Jewish exorcists, sons of the high priest Sceva, who tried to invoke the name of the Lord Jesus over those with evil spirits, but they received such a beating that they were forced to flee (Act 19:11-15). I personally witnessed a similar case. The exorcist was a Catholic priest with a high opinion of himself, his powers and his special gifts. He had not, however, been appointed by the Church to do exorcisms. He used a big commanding voice, but he was able to do nothing. Satan just laughed at him, saying: "He thinks I'm afraid of his big voice!"

In both cases what we have is a **lack of communion with Jesus**. They were high-handed and arrogant and their hearts were closed to Jesus; so they had no power.

We are all instruments. An instrument in itself is unable to act on its own. When it does start acting of its own accord, it becomes detached from the person using it, so it can no longer be used for the purpose the Lord had intended it be used for. Thus, it is no longer an instrument, but, in our case, a useless object. One has to be aware that **to be God's instrument, one must be in perfect communion with Him**.

**Dependence on God or on our ego?** - What contrasts most with this total dependence on the Lord is a strong ego. For instance, a fanatical person has a strong ego; a person who quarrels and tries to forcefully convince others of God's existence has a strong ego. Even a priest, like myself, can have a strong ego and would impose himself upon others through his sermons, etc. In these cases, the persons think he knows everything and can dominate everything. It is the case of an

extremely proud ego.

God cannot, of course, use as an instrument a person who is self-sufficient and who will not surrender himself to His divine power! Divine power is love. Divine power is peace. This peace and love comes when an instrument is open to all that God wills.

There is another very strong ego that is active in spiritual movements outside the Church; but also within the Church. This ego is found in those people who by virtue of their own strong spiritual ideas, impose themselves on others, not letting them become instruments according to God's plan. This happens, in particular, to people who have received special gifts but who interpret them and use them on their own. Everything that we receive, be it ordinary or extraordinary, must be subject to God. Satan, though, moves in to use it for his own purpose.

**Live instruments** - the importance of **submissiveness**. From observing **Our Lady** we see that She presented Herself to God with all Her beauty and became as though a nest for God. She was totally open to God, and His programme for Her was able to be fulfilled in and through Her. We, who wish to understand how to be an instrument, may find in Her the perfect model.

Let us also take **Abraham** as an example. He was so obedient that he was ready to sacrifice his only son, his only hope in God's promise. With him it was just a case of being open; and what was the result? He was filled with so much grace that his lineage became more numerous than the stars in heaven and the grains of sand in the sea.

Let us look at **Moses**: He had been chosen right from his mother's womb. God preserved him from death and hid him in the house of the Pharaoh so that he would become knowledgeable there. Then God led him to the desert and Moses came face to face with God. Moses saw how he was nothing compared to God, and so God used him, telling him: *Go, do this, do that*, till his death.

Lastly, let us think of **Jesus**. He did nothing without His Father's consent. It is not an ordinary or extraordinary event that gives an instrument power, but it is the life that comes from God, and God manifests Himself both through simple and extraordinary things.

Let us now consider the problems that arise from **prophecies: if and when Jesus will come back**. There is no doubt that He will return; but [people ask] how and when. The only thing that counts is that we be filled with immense joy while we wait for Him to come and place us in His Kingdom.

It is not good to dominate the times by saying that tomorrow one thing or another may happen. We are only asked to love Jesus, to serve Him and use ourselves for His glory. From this comes a **profound need to adore God so that we may feel we are instruments at His service**. This is not just going down on our knees before Him, but it means profoundly admiring Him for all His power and beauty that is absorbed by our souls. This is how we should feel when we are before Eucharistic Jesus, Jesus on the Cross and Jesus the Word of God; because He is God here on the earth.

It is not correct to call Jesus a beautiful soul, for He is quite distinct [from us], and He did not come on His own account, for He came from the Father, He was subjected to Him, and it is to Him that He leads our souls.

Some spiritual guides are more like gurus; they have placed themselves on the same plane as God. Jesus is subjected to the Father

and He leads to the Father, so when you adore the Father it must always be in Jesus and through Jesus. The heart of adoration is the Sacrament of love, which is the Eucharist; it is adoring and participating in the pure and complete love that God grants us. Every man who feels he is an instrument must be so united to this Love that he becomes one of its rays - but if the ray becomes detached from its fount, it loses all its power.

**Instruments of Love** - It is important to understand that an instrument can only be of onetype: that of being in God, being completely open to Him so as to receive from Him continually. It is one of being always in Him. Like the bulb that lights up when the switch is turned on, we will **automatically begin to radiate light in the world once the life of God is in us**. With this life, contact is made between the soul and God-Love, and His love radiates over the earth. The mission we have been entrusted with is this: live within to radiate outwards.

One day we were praying over a chosen soul, a victim of sorcery who was suffering greatly. She transformed the curses into love for the people who wanted to hurt her. This permitted the fount of hatred to be purified and the curses to be destroyed.

**Radiation of love puts out darts of evil**, causes the conversion of evil people, transforming them from instruments of Satan into instruments of God. This is why you need not be great preachers, or need do miracles. All you have to do is let God be great in you; let the power of His pure and merciful love descend upon all. So you see now that when Our Lady tells us to pray, She is not asking us to recite more prayers, but to be open to this contact in which we receive everything.

**Instruments of peace - If we are truly surrendered to God it is impossible for us not to have peace within us**. The mystics even experienced this when Jesus let them experience hell. When is it that we do not have peace? When we withdraw from the fount of peace and decide to govern ourselves, our past, our future and our sins. Without the grace of God we are not even able to renounce our sins; we can do nothing. We are made aware that God gives us everything, and He will give us all that we need for His kingdom in us. Then we will be filled with peace.

There is a way of giving peace and protecting peace, which Jesus explains to his apostles: *when you enter a house greet the householders; if they are worthy of your greeting your peace will descend upon them, if they are not worthy your peace will return to you*. This is an important law that protects us from evil. God respects our freedom, and we must do the same. We can offer the gift of peace, but it is up to each person to decide whether to accept it or not. Should someone wish to accept the peace, he may take it, should he refuse it, we keep it for ourselves!

You see, it's a matter of us not knowing how to listen to Jesus, not knowing how to protect ourselves. **Forcefully giving peace is using violence** - in return we get violence. This starts up an inner battle, a wound is opened and you lose your peace. See how Satan gets us involved?! We should be God's instruments, but by getting involved in this way with people who do not live peace, we also end up becoming Satan's instruments. We start arguing and even offending others.

Take for example those people with a **sense of guilt**; when they feel hurt they immediately put up their defences, so if we who bring peace start forcing them, they »

## Beatification of Gianna

*Mother sacrifices self  
so her child can live*

On 24 April John Paul II beatified **Gianna Beretta Molla**, a mother who gave her life for love of her fourth child. Paul VI called it a "meditated sacrifice"- an offering or sacrifice to God in a perfect imitation of Christ who *gave his life for his own*.

This model of faith has been proposed to Christians during the year that the Church has dedicated to the family, to the protection of that fundamental cell in a civilization of love. The latter is an expression that John Paul II often uses to express what family means.

We add that the story of Gianna perfectly expresses how the heart of a woman becomes priestly in the truest of senses, in the participation of Christ's sacrifice through self-donation so *that they may have life and have it abundantly* (Jn 10:10). Those who support claims concerning priesthood for women hide behind a repressed love for protagonism.

The following excerpt from Gianna's biography by A. Sicari will give us a greater understanding of this saintly person.

At the beginning of summer in 1961 Gianna Beretta and Pietro Molla were happily married with 3 small children (aged between 5 and 2). She was a dedicated medical doctor and he, an engineer, owned his own factory with 3000 employees. In August of that year they realized that Gianna was carrying their fourth, much-wanted child, but their joy was soon clouded by serious worries, as there was a large fibroma growing in the uterus. It was urgent to operate.

Gianna knew what that meant, either remove both the fibroma and the uterus, or remove the fibroma and terminate the pregnancy. Either of these would ensure the safety

---

» will hide all the more behind masks and all we make is war. All we have to do is *be* peace and be it in an unconditioned way.

**Instruments of light** - Remain in the Lord's peace to be instruments of light. If your inner self is opened far beyond your mental capacities, God will light up in you all those things you do not know and are unable to explain. The most beautiful thing is that **God is our guide even when we are unaware**; and He guides us through mysteries. God acts in us in the same way that a mother acts as the guide of her unknowing babe.

Often Christians are tempted to look for the extraordinary in things. We rush around because we try to resolve problems on a plane where it is impossible to resolve them: a plane of details. God is our light! He guides all, He knows all, He takes us by the hand even when we don't know what to do, He knows how to use our wrong steps and transform everything. Silent inner aperture, where trust, hope and love reign, opens us to the light.

We, who should be instruments of light, what do we give to the others? **It is wrong to give them our ideas**, our convictions, our aggressiveness. We must give God and teach others how to open themselves to God, but not with techniques; it must be with simplicity.

Read Our Lady's messages well; do not try to convince others. Do not be dominating. Just be light and bring them to being open to God. We can only be instruments if we are carriers of God. (To be continued.)

*Fr. Tomislav Vlasic - 5 Jan.'94*

of the mother. There was a third solution, that of removing the fibroma without harming the child. In this case, the mother would risk her own life. Gianna knew what she was doing.

Before being admitted to hospital she went to her confessor who encouraged her to continue hoping and have courage. "Yes, Fr. Luigi," she replied. "I have been praying so much. I place my life in the hands of the Lord, with faith and hope, even though I know it means either the life of the mother, or that of the child. Yes, I trust in God, but now it's up to me to carry out my duty as mother. I renew the offering of my life to the Lord. I am ready for whatever it will take to save my child."

The husband tells of an episode that happened about 1 month before the birth of the child: "It was one morning when I was about to leave for work, and Gianna came up to me and without asking me to wait a minute or to sit down - like the way we used to do when there was something important to discuss - she just said: "Pietro, please, if it comes to deciding between me and the baby, decide for the baby, not for me. It is my wish."

She didn't say anything else. I was unable to talk. I knew her well. She had always been very generous and the spirit of sacrifice was very strong in her. I went out without saying a word." Gianna repeated her wish to a friend: "I'm going to hospital, but I'm not sure if I'll come back. It's a difficult pregnancy, and they'll have to save either me or the baby. I want the baby to live." Her friend replied: "Think of your three other children." "No," she replied: "I want the baby to live."

And God willed that Gianna's passion would begin on Good Friday in 1962. One of the nuns from the hospital tells: "I met her as she was coming up the steps. She told me: 'Sister, here I am. I'm here to die.' She looked very serene though. She added: 'All I care about is that everything goes well for the baby. It doesn't matter about me.' The labour was very hard and lasted all night long. A lovely healthy girl was born Sat. morning. It was a Caesarean birth. When she was born, the bells were pealing to announce the beginning of the celebrations for Christ's Resurrection. When Gianna awoke from the anaesthetic they placed her little daughter in her arms. Gianna looked at her lengthily, in silence. She kept her by her side, and caressed her with indescribable tenderness. Gianna's passion lasted one week. The doctors were unable to cure the peritonitis.

Her last days were spent in prayer, and asking the hospital staff not to administer pain killers to her because she wished to remain conscious to be able to invoke Crucified Jesus and her own mother and ask them to take her up into heaven. On the Wednesday after Easter she awoke from the coma and told her husband: "Pietro, I am healed now. I was already there. If you knew what I saw! One day I will tell you. I was too happy, though; with our wonderful children, so healthy and graceful, with so many blessings from heaven, and so they sent me back to suffer a little more. It's not right to present oneself to the Lord without having suffered."

She suffered for a further 3 days so that she could complete Christ's Passion in her own flesh, according to the mysterious metre which is part of the good Father's plan.

Many asked why she made such a decision, from the woman who brutally remarked: "What an idiot!", to her friend who tried to make her think of her other three children, and her husband who shared her decision out of faith but was unable to think or talk about it. Even Gianna, on her death

## OUR READERS WRITE

**Oasis of Peace in Brazil** - The *Servos da Rainha*, who translate Echo into Portuguese, wrote to say: 8 members of the Oasis of Peace community arrived in Fortaleza on 7 January to set up their first house in Brazil. It will be in Quixadá. They were greeted by the bishop.

The community lives as per Our Lady's requests in Medj. Members can be priests, virgins and married couples. They already have 7 houses in Italy and 1 in Medj. In Brazil they will be dedicated to the Marian Shrine of the Immaculate still under construction.

**Mary in Côte d'Ivoire**. Fr. Mario Maniero from Abidjan writes: Our copies of Echo arrive regularly. The people here look upon it as an instrument of spiritual formation. They have a deep love for Mary. Some Christians tell me that Côte d'Ivoire has enjoyed peace so far because in moments of trouble the people continually pray the rosary.

**From Burundi** - On 25 March, 2500 people from the mission prayed for peace in union with the Pope. The ceremony began with the Rosary, followed by Holy Mass, adoration, consecration to Mary Immaculate and a procession. In the capital, Bujumbura, the shooting stopped. Now we are organizing a week for peace by the lakeside - on the other side of the lake is Rwanda. (Fr. V. Blasi)

**Letters from Moscow** - Our friends in *Dom Marii* (House of Mary) send us translations of letters in which people express their gratitude and delight for the Russian Echo. "From a remote area of Russia a small community of Catholic believers," writes to express their "joy at being able to read Echo. For us it is a ray of light that lights up our souls and gives us strength to survive."

Among the letters received, one was from a prisoner, another from a parish priest in Kazakhstan, one from 13 year-old Olga from Kamyscin, another from 12 year-old Jana who "enjoys going to the Catholic church and likes Echo very much." Aleksej, 32, from the parish of Our Lady of Lourdes in Sankt Petersburg expresses his "joy at coming into contact with Catholic brothers through Echo." Our thanks to Fr. Rudolph for the translations.

The **Servos da Rainha** (Portugal) inform us that their edition has now reached 150,000 copies - sent to people in various states.

The **Dutch Echo** is now being printed in Holland, under the direction of Mary's fervent apostle, Frank. It is a true blessing that 7,000 copies are being printed each edition after only 1 year!

**Romanian Echo** has reached the 30,000 mark!

**National Conference on Medj.:** Pentecost weekend 20-22 May 1994. **University of Notre Dame**, Indiana, USA.

**3rd U.K. YOUTH 2000 INT'L PRAYER FESTIVAL** - 10-14 August. Woldingham School, Marden Park, Woldingham, Surrey.

For information and details concerning other prayer meetings organized by Youth 2000 in UK, Ireland, USA, Australia, Germany, Trinidad and Colombia, contact: Youth 2000, P.O. Box 119, London, SW 7 5RH, England.

It is hoped that Youth 2000 groups will soon be started in other countries including India and the Ukraine.

\* Off the bookshelf - **Medjugorje Unfolds in Peace and in War**, by Robert Faricy and Lucy Rooney. Write to: The Medj. Appeal, Lambs Business Park, Unit J, Tilburstow Hill Rd, Sth Godstone, Surrey, RH9 8JZ, England

bed, told her sister: "How it hurts to leave small children behind like this!" So what was it that made her make that decision? Without a doubt a clear conscience of having obeyed God's commandment: *Thou shalt not kill*. She, herself, had said when a young woman went to her for an abortion: "You can't fool around with children." Three other children cannot be cared for at the cost of another.

Gianna's husband helps us see what was behind her decision: "To understand why she made that decision, one must consider her profound conviction, both as a mother and a doctor, that the child she was carrying was a human being - with the same rights as the other children - though it had been conceived only two months before. The child was God's gift and as such deserved sacred respect.

Another thing is that Gianna loved children, more than herself. Then of course she had complete trust in God's Providence. She was convinced, as a wife and mother, to be of use to me and the children, but above all, in that moment, she was indispensable for the little child she was carrying in her womb."

The decisive word that throws light on the event is God's Providence. God is present with His Providence. It only needs faith - that humble, simple, antique faith - to become aware of it. That is why Gianna's decision was a meditated one. Her husband courageously called it a "reasoned reaction."

The evidence is that for the other three children she was needed, but for the child in her womb she was indispensable. God could provide for the other three even without her, but not even God could provide for the new babe if she refused it.

Lauretta Molla, their third child, was three at the time. When she was 16 she wrote about her mother in a school essay: "I was only 3 at the time and maybe I was too little to understand the meaning of all those candles and tears. What impresses me the most is her sense of motherhood, her striking sense of duty towards the family. When I think of her I can't help but admire her for having given her life for the sake of her child, and I'm so proud she's my mother. I feel proud because she was so courageous, she was Christian to the end. I feel her presence. I know she helps me as though she were still alive."

The new-born babe was taken to church to be baptized while Gianna was still alive, and the father consecrated the child to Our Lady, as Gianna had done for the others.

The writing on her tomb comes from Revelation. It says: *Be faithful till death*.

### **Blessed Elizabeth - Her patience and prayer won the conversion of a faithless and violent husband**

**Elizabeth Canori** was born in Rome in 1774. She married a young lawyer, Cristoforo **Mora** whose psychological fragility quickly revealed. Attracted by a woman of simple status, he deceived his wife and estranged himself from the family, reducing it to destitution. To the physical and psychological violence of her husband, Elizabeth responded with absolute fidelity.

Forced to make a living by working with her hands, she continued to care for her daughters. She also dedicated much time to prayer, the poor and the sick. Her home became a reference point for many people who turned to her for material and spiritual help. Through self-denial Elizabeth offered her life for the peace and holiness of the Church, her husband's conversion and the salvation of sinners. She died in 1825 at the age of 51. Shortly after her death, as she had predicted, her husband converted, and later became a priest of the Conventual Franciscans.

He later told his daughters: "There is no other woman like her in the world and I am unworthy to have been her husband!"

An **information office** has been opened in Medj. by Mir Editions. It is on the church side of the bridge, to the left. The editions of Echo will now be placed in this office.

**Hospital of east Mostar** - Thanks have arrived from the Croatian Minister of Health to Echo for equipment that the hospital has received thanks to the notices published in Echo. There is still an urgent need for hospital material and equipment.

**Sponsorship of Croatian/Bosnian children** - Contact: Matteo Rossi, Via delle Grazie 9, 54100 Massa, Italy

On behalf of Our Blessed Mother, we thank all our helpers, near and far. A special thanks goes to all those who help with the distribution of Echo. Knowing that so many joyfully help with spreading Our Lady's message through this humble instrument is of great comfort to me. It encourages me to carry on even though my health is at risk.

In the Heart of Jesus and Mary I bless all of you who have accepted the good news; in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen