



ECHO OF MARY

Queen of peace

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Our Lady's message of 25 March 2000:

Dear Children, Pray and use this time, for it is time of grace. I am with you and I intercede for each of you before God so that your hearts may open up to God and to His love. My Children, pray without ceasing until prayer becomes joy for you. Thank you for responding to my call.

Use this time: time of grace not to be wasted

The call to prayer is a constant in Mary's messages; and also in this one she urges us to pray. I think we should all ask ourselves the reason for such insistence, particularly those of us who consider themselves recipients of these messages, that is, those children whom Mary thanks for having responded to her call.

If after so many invitations still today there is need to remind us to pray then perhaps it means that our response is not adequate, not sufficient, and not consistent with Mary's request and expectations. So we need to review our way of praying. Rather than feel discouraged, we should be stimulated to advance further, to hope more, and to renew our will to respond to her appeal, for this is time of grace (cf. Echo 149, comment to the message of 25 Dec. 1999).

This truly is a good time to return to the Father who awaits us with infinite love and is ready to hold us to His Heart and celebrate our return (Lk 16:20). Mary's presence in the world, and the Great Jubilee, are unique occasions for us to accept this grace which God is generously showering onto us. Mary is inviting us to accept, not lose, this favourable occasion: "use this time for it is time of grace."

We should, then, treasure these words, take them seriously, and decide for God (how many times has Mary asked us this!); but decide today, not tomorrow. We must be more determined, and review our faith walk, our way of praying, and start off again. Being aware that our response to Mary's call is insufficient should not discourage us, but, instead,

strengthen our determination to do better. It is time to humbly admit our littleness, our limits, our sin and our absolute dependence on God's mercy. If we are truly convinced that we are sinners and totally in need of God's forgiveness, without being false or hypocritical, then we can pick up anew our faith and hope to make a treasure of this time of grace.

Mary ensures us of her help: "I am with you and intercede for each of you before God, that your heart may open up to His Love." Her intercession is not general, but specific, for each of us. What a great grace this is! Mary has always asked in her messages that we open our hearts, be surrendered to God. It is not possible to pray if the heart is closed; we can verbalize prayers, but not be in communion with God. So, it is impossible to pray if in our hearts there is hatred for a brother, even if he has caused us to suffer. It is also impossible to pray if we speak badly of a brother, even if he has erred.

We need this grace of an open heart from Mary. So let us ask for this grace without tiring! Let us ask her for it also through the intercession of Fr. Angelo who continues to oversee this paper from up in heaven; and through the intercession of our Saints, of Blessed Padre Pio, of St. Faustina Kowalska who was canonized on Sunday, 30th April 2000, from now on Sunday of the Divine Mercy. We will be able to continue on our journey in the wake of Jesus, and improve the quality of our prayer, and in it we will discover and experience God who is love - the most important thing in the world! - and we will have peace and joy of the type that doesn't depend on human events or on good health. With the help of Mary we will be able to pray without ceasing till prayer becomes joy for us, that is, until Christ, our Joy, lives truly in us.

Nuccio

"Each day we should begin to pray again, as though we had never prayed, until our life becomes prayer." (Fr. Angelo)

Our Lady's message of 25 April 2000:

Dear Children, Also today I invite you to conversion. You worry too much about material things and too little about spiritual things. Open your hearts once again and work more on your personal conversion. Decide everyday to dedicate time to God and to prayer, until prayer becomes a joyful meeting with God for you. Only in this way will your life have meaning and with joy you will contemplate eternal life. Thank you for responding to my call.

Occupying self with God favours personal conversion

It is Easter! Easter is the greatest event of human history. Christ rises from the dead; death is defeated definitely.

There is no other, there never has been, and never will there be more comforting news, or a more important event for man. Death is not the end; it is not true that everything ends with it. From death it is possible to rise. Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep (1Co 15:20). We too will rise because Christ, our first fruit, has risen and death no longer has dominion over Him (Rom 6:9). However, to reap the fruits of Resurrection one needs to enter the garden where these fruits mature; and gather from the tree of the Cross; and contemplate Christ pierced and dying, who was lifted up to draw us all to Him (Jn 6:44; 12:32), and who died to give us Life (Jn 3:14-15).

This journey towards the tree of the Cross is called conversion. In this journey it is necessary to distinguish between what belongs to the world and what belongs to God (you worry too much about material things and too little about spiritual things); and to understand what really is important. We have to do our part to stay on this way: open your hearts anew and work more on your personal conversion; but we can't do it alone, for without God's grace it is impossible; but God's grace cannot reach us if our hearts are closed. Open your hearts!

This is one of the most pressing and frequent messages of Mary. Surrender to God is a necessary condition for authentic conversion. God so respects our freedom that He will remain at the door of a closed heart patiently waiting for us to open it. It is up to us to decide for Him. How many times has Mary asked us this! To decide for God means to believe in His Love, accept this Love, and let ourselves be transformed by It so that our response to love can mature.

Decide every day to dedicate time to God and to prayer. To set aside a time in the day especially for God means to subtract a bit of time from the material things which keep us occupied more than necessary. Dedicating extra time to the spiritual things is more often than not a slow and long journey and must be taken gradually, one step at a time, day by day. It is a time for listening and for talking with the Father who turns our constant and daily prayer into a joyful encounter with Him. This way, and only this way, will our lives have meaning and can be lived in full, and we will joyfully contemplate the eternal life which is knowing God and Jesus Christ (Jn 17:3). Now that doesn't mean just on an intellectual level; but it will be knowledge which involves all one's faculties, able to perform profound transformations in us.

It is communion with Christ which gives us life (Jn 6:53-56); it is dying with Him that allows us to rise with Him (Rom 6:4-5). But Christ's life in us, fruit of the sacraments of the Eucharist and Baptism, is to be cared for, protected, and nourished, but nourished much more than what we nourish our bodies, and it is to be done within the sphere of our daily lives whatever the happy or sad circumstances of the day may be. May the Light of Risen Jesus shine always in our eyes, sparkle in our tears, glow in our smile; and may our heart open up to God's Mercy and our Fiat bloom before His Will. Nuccio

Celebrating Divine Mercy

The first canonization of the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000 was that of Sr. Faustina Kowalska, the humble daughter of Poland and great apostle of Divine Mercy.

Born in 1905, she died in 1938 in the convent of the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy. Her life was one of silence, work, prayer and sacrifice. Nothing revealed her rich mystical interior life. Although her life was apparently insignificant and monotonous, she hid within herself an extraordinary union with God. She received many supernatural gifts, such as revelations, visions, hidden stigmata, bilocation, the reading of human souls, prophecy and the rare gift of mystical espousal and marriage: great gifts which were accompanied by great suffering.

In spite of being so richly endowed with extraordinary graces, she knew that they do not in fact constitute sanctity. In her Diary she wrote: "Neither graces, nor revelations, nor raptures, nor gifts granted to a soul make it perfect, but rather the intimate union of the soul with God. These gifts are merely ornaments of the soul, but constitute neither its essence nor its perfection."

This modest woman, unknown and without any scientific preparation, worked as cook, gardener and porter. The Lord chose Sr. Faustina as the apostle and 'secretary' of His mercy, so that she could tell the world. "In the Old Covenant," He said to her, "I sent prophets wielding thunderbolts to my people. Today I am sending you with my mercy to the people of the whole world. I do not want to punish aching mankind, but I desire to heal it, pressing it to my merciful Heart".

The mission of Sr. Faustina consists in three tasks:

- &endash; remind the world of the truth of our faith revealed in the Scriptures about God's merciful love towards every human being;

- &endash; entreating God's mercy for the whole world, and particularly for sinners, also through the practice of new forms of devotion to the Divine Mercy, such as:

- veneration of the image of Divine Mercy with the inscription: "Jesus, I trust in You";

- the feast of the Divine Mercy celebrated on the first Sunday after Easter;

- chaplet to the Divine Mercy and prayer at the Hour of Mercy (3 pm);

- &endash; initiating the apostolic movement of the Divine Mercy, whose task is to proclaim and entreat God's mercy for the world and to strive for Christian perfection ... the faithful are required to have an attitude of childlike trust in God, expressed in fulfilling His will, and an attitude of mercy toward one's neighbour.

In his homily during the Canonization the Holy Father announced that "the second Sunday after Easter will from now on be called "Divine Mercy Sunday." And he added: "Christ has taught us that man not only receives and experiences the mercy of God, but is also called 'to practise mercy' towards others: 'Blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy' (Mt

5:7). He also showed us the many paths of mercy, which not only forgives sins, but reaches out to all human needs. Jesus bent over every kind of human poverty, material and spiritual."

"Sr. Faustina's canonization has a particular eloquence: by this act I intend today to pass it on to all people, so that they will learn to know ever better the true face of God and the true face of their brethren."

The revelations to Sr. Faustina are private ones. They add nothing new to the deposit of the faith which the apostles transmitted to us, but they are a sure sign that the charisms have not died out in the Church, and that the Holy Spirit may, even in our days, grant special gifts to whomever He chooses. With extraordinary interventions God wants new light to be thrown onto certain truths of the faith so that mankind can receive greater benefit from them.

By elevating Sr. Faustina to the rank of Saint, and by proclaiming the second Sunday of Easter as Divine Mercy Sunday, the Holy Father stressed the importance of apparitions and private revelations also for the life of the Church of today.

fra Leonard Orec'

Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus

The recent canonization of Faustina Kowalska (30th April 2000) offers us the occasion to reflect on the devotion to the Sacred Heart.

The heart is symbolic in many cultures for the living centre of man; a complexity of thoughts, feelings and experience.

The core of Christianity is not based on doctrine, but on the encounter and the faith in a person called Jesus Christ. The heart of Jesus symbolizes the source of our faith; it is the place where His feelings, actions, and His cross are released. The love of Jesus is neither symbolic nor detached, but is real, tender, and passionate. His heart truly did experience joy, admiration, friend-ship, sorrow, indignation and especially mercy.

Devotion to the Sacred Heart does not derive from private revelation, even though the latter has influenced its diffusion, but has its roots in biblical revelation and in Church tradition. From the very beginning God in the Bible reveals Himself as One who is present, who remains at His people's side, who is part of the story of love, unfaithfulness, forgiveness and reconciliation. The Scriptures contain wonderful pages on God's love for mankind. This love, however, is not represented by a heart because the sense given to the Hebrew word "leb-lebab" (heart), in biblical mentality, is "will" and not "feelings".

Also the Greek word "Kardia" was used by the Fathers of the Church (III-IV centuries) to express heart in an intellectual sense rather than affection, and this influenced Greek platonic philosophy in particular, which had some difficulty in attributing human feelings to the divine. We find the first forms of devotion to the Sacred Heart in the XII century by the Benedictines (thanks, in particular, to the disciples of St. Bernard) and by the Franciscans (thanks to St. Bonaventure). In the XVII century the Jesuits took this devotion with them to the missions. It was, however, with St. Margaret Marie Alacoque (1648-1690) - the recipient

of divine revelations - that the devotion was spread so widely. To her Jesus showed His Heart which so loved man and which received mostly ingratitude and insults; and He asked that a special feastday be instituted to atone and to honour His Heart.

This devotion received official though limited acknowledgement by the Church in 1765 by Pope Clement XIII. In 1856 Pope Pius IX (soon to be beatified) formally extended the devotion to the entire Church. Amongst Church documents the most significant one is *Haurietis aquas* (encyclical by Pius XII in 1956) which is a complete treatise on the doctrine regarding devotion to the Sacred Heart. This encyclical settles once and for all the controversies raised in the XVII century by the Jansenists who wouldn't accept devotion to Jesus' heart.

According to the encyclical the receiver of devotion to the Sacred Heart is Jesus Himself, and His Heart is the natural symbol of His love both for the Father and for mankind. Today, like other practices of popular piety, devotion to the Sacred Heart is diminishing, perhaps because of the sentimental language and spirit of penance tied to it. In any case, everything that has to do with the Sacred Heart is an encouragement for us to come closer to God's mercy, no matter what situation we may be in. The devotion is also instrumental in making God's face more familiar, and in helping man "talk" to God when he prays rather than just repeat formulas, and, in general, to make him feel more at home in God's presence.

In today's world where religious syncretism is rampant (placing various religions on the same plane and mixing them up to give the idea of a same, general, impersonal god for all), Christians too are feeling disoriented. The first commandment (love God with all your heart) is not put into practice because it is difficult to love someone you don't know personally; so people drift to the second one (love your neighbour), but this is producing laborious ecclesial activism.

Devotion to the Sacred Heart helps us size down our activities by reminding us that only God can help us live and help us truly love others who aren't always lovable. Furthermore, the trust that comes from prayer reminds us that words are important, but that the only thing which can save us is God's love; God's unconditioned love.

Mirco

NEWS FROM THE JUBILEE

From forgiveness blossoms reconciliation

One of the most significant moments of the Jubilee, on the first Sunday of Lent (12 March), was when the Pope publicly asked forgiveness for the sins, past and present, of the Church's sons and daughters. Already in Tertio Millennio Adveniente Christians were reminded that the Church "cannot cross the threshold of the new millennium without urging her children to purify themselves through penance for errors, unfaithfulness, inconsistency and delays."

The Pope explained in the Bull of Indictment of the Great Jubilee that purification of the memory is done with a spirit of penance which opens up the soul to receive God's mercy to be able to then offer it to others. The Lord's Prayer is an indication: "forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us." The Pope invited each believer to ask forgiveness and to forgive; that "the fruit of this Jubilee Day be forgiveness reciprocally given and received" - since reconciliation is a fruit of forgiveness.

The request for forgiveness was broken up into seven invocations which summarized the sins committed, starting from the most recent ones. There was a confession of sins in general, of sins committed in the service of truth, of sins that have harmed Christian unity, of sins against the people of Israel, of sins against love, peace and respect for cultures and religions, of sins against the dignity of women and the unity of the human race, and of sins related to the fundamental rights of the person.

Amongst other things the Pope said: "One of the characteristic elements of the Great Jubilee is what I described as the 'purification of memory' (IM 11) ... The authentic request for pardon is based on the objective responsibility which Christians share as members of the Mystical Body, which spurs today's faithful to recognize, along with their own sins, the sins of yesterday's Christians, in the light of careful historical and theological discernment. Indeed, 'because of the bond which unites us to one another in the Mystical Body, all of us, though not personally responsible and without encroaching on the judgement of God who alone knows every heart, bear the burden of the errors and faults of those who have gone before us'. The recognition of past wrongs serves to reawaken our consciences to the compromises of the present, opening the way to conversion for all.

Let us confess our responsibilities as Christians for the evils of today .. atheism, religious indifference, secularism, ethical relativism, the violations of the right to life, disregard for the poor in many countries. We humbly ask forgiveness for the part which each of us has had in these evils by our own actions, thus helping to disfigure the face of the Church. To grasp the precise sense and value of the word 'reconciliation' we must first recognize the possibility of division, of separation. Man is the only creature on earth who can have a relationship of communion with his Creator, but he is also the only one who can separate himself from Him. Unfortunately, he has frequently turned away from God."

The Holy Father concluded with a prayer to the Mother of God: "help us to accept the grace of forgiveness which the Jubilee generously offers us."

Return to origins of faith to rediscover unity

With his 90th international voyage (24-26 Feb.) John Paul II began a long pilgrimage to those holy places which still today witness to the history of revelation and redemption. It began with his visit to Mount Sinai in Egypt 'where God revealed His name! Here he gave His Law, the Ten Commandments of the Covenant!'

Here the Pope met representatives of the Church and Ecclesial Communities in Egypt. To them and to all those present at the Liturgy of the Word in the Our Lady of Egypt Catholic Cathedral, he renewed his appeal for unity, inviting "Church leaders and theologians to

engage with me in a patient and fraternal dialogue on this subject; keeping before us only the will of Christ for his Church."

At St. Catherine's monastery the Pope commemorated the moment when God spoke from the burning bush and revealed His name: "The fundamental norms of the natural law are reflected in the Decalogue. It shows the way to a fully human life, and without it there is no calm or peaceful future for individuals, families or nations."

Voyage of Hope

A few weeks after his visit to Cairo, the Holy Father went on pilgrimage to the Holy Land (20-26 March). His itinerary was dense with meetings and emotions as he visited the places where our Redeemer was born, lived, and died.

The Pope himself stressed that this visit was not an Apostolic visit like others, but a pilgrimage to the biblical places where the roots of our faith lie, with the desire to pray for the catholic Church as it crosses the threshold of the third millennium, and to promote interreligious dialogue.

Jordan was the first stop, where the Pope visited the Memorial of Moses on Mount Nebo. It was from here that Moses saw the Promised Land after leading the Israelites through the desert for 40 years.

Bethlehem: birthplace of "world's greatest wealth"!

The heart of John Paul II's Jubilee Pilgrimage was Bethlehem. Here he celebrated Mass at the Basilica of the Nativity, and later that afternoon he made a private visit to the Grotto in the basilica.

In his homily he said: "The joy announced by the angel is not a thing of the past. It is a joy of today - the eternal today of God's salvation which embraces all time, past, present and future. At the dawn of the new millennium we are called to see more clearly that time has meaning because here Eternity entered history and remains with us for ever.

Every day is Christmas in the hearts of Christians. And every day we are called to proclaim the message of Bethlehem to the world - 'good news of great joy': the Eternal Word has become flesh and has made his dwelling among us.

The newborn Child is the world's entire wealth. He is our all! In this Child we find rest for our souls and the true bread that never fails: the Eucharistic Bread." On the relationship between Nativity and Cross, "work of the redemption unfolding in weakness," he said: "The Crib of Jesus lies always in the shadow of the Cross. The silence and poverty of the birth in Bethlehem are one with the darkness and pain of the death on Calvary."

This must have been a very moving moment for the Pope whose desire was to celebrate the beginning of his pontificate in the cave of the Nativity in Bethlehem. "That was not possible then, and has not been possible until now. But today, how can I fail to praise God, whose

ways are mysterious and whose love knows no end, for bringing me here in this year of the Great Jubilee!"

* It is nice to note the reciprocal respect used to solve the problem of overlapping of time of the Pope's Mass and the prayer by the Islamic faithful. John Paul II observed a long pause of silence after his homily to respect the chant of the muezzin, who had waited for the end of the Pope's homily before calling Muslims from the minaret for midday prayer.

Memorial of the Supper

"When the hour came, he took his place at table with the apostles... Then he took the bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them, saying: 'This is my body, which will be given for you...' And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying: 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which will be shed for you.' " (Lk 22:14-20).

The Pope, profoundly moved, echoed these words of Jesus in the place where the Eucharist was born, in the presence of 12 bishops and patriarchs of the Eastern Catholic Churches which concelebrated with him; it was the first time this had been done publicly since 1551. "It is with deep emotion that we listen once more to these words spoken here in this Upper Room 2,000 years ago. Since then they have been repeated, generation after generation, by those who share in the priesthood of Christ through the sacrament of Holy Orders." The Pope explained: "In a sense, Peter and the Apostles, in the person of their Successors, have come back today to the Upper Room, to profess the unchanging faith of the Church: Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again."

"Remember, to purify"

The ceremony at the Holocaust memorial was perhaps the most significant moment of the Pope's visit for the people of Israel. It was certainly the most awaited one and was charged with emotions and memories. During the ceremony the Pope recalled his Jewish friends, some of whom had died, and some who had survived; and was able to embrace those he himself had saved from the hands of the Gestapo.

"We wish to remember," he said, "but we wish to remember for a purpose, namely to ensure that never again will evil prevail, as it did for the millions of innocent victims of Nazism. How could we have such utter contempt for man? Because he had reached the point of contempt for God. Only a godless ideology could plan and carry out the extermination of a whole people. We remember, but not with any desire for vengeance or as an incentive to hatred. For us, to remember is to pray for peace and justice, and to commit ourselves to their cause.

In this place of solemn remembrance, I fervently pray that our sorrow for the tragedy which the Jewish people suffered in the 20th century will lead to a new relationship between Christians and Jews."

The Pope's words touched the hearts of those present; so much so that the Israeli Prime

Minister, Barak, who had greeted the Pope with feelings of "friendship, brotherhood, and peace", told him in the end: "You are blessed in Israel!"

Pope to the Youth: "Choose the voice of God who speaks to hearts"

At Korizim the Holy Father met the young people on the Mount of the Beatitudes. The estimated 100,000 participants were from Israel, the Palestinian Territories and from around the world. The rain, humidity, and mud didn't curb the enthusiasm of this crowd of young people; but to the contrary it spurred them on to be even more joyful. The Pope called it "a rehearsal for the World Youth Day to be held in August in Rome!"

The Holy Father did not disappoint the expectations of his young friends, and during his homily he used clear and inspiring words which were able to awaken in hearts the desire to witness and to follow Christ.

"Mount Sinai and the Mount of the Beatitudes offer us the roadmap of our Christian life and a summary of our responsibilities to God and neighbour. The Law and the Beatitudes together mark the path of the following of Christ and the royal road to spiritual maturity and freedom. The Ten Commandments of Sinai may seem negative ... but they are extremely positive. Moving beyond the evil they name, the point the way to the law of love which is the first and greatest of the commandments: 'You will love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind... You will love your neighbour as yourself' (Mt 22:37, 39).

Jesus himself says that He came not to abolish but to fulfil the Law... instead, it leads what went before to its fullest potential. Jesus teaches that the way of love brings the Law to fulfilment. And He taught this enormously important truth on this hill here in Galilee." He continued: " 'Blessed are you who are poor in spirit, gentle and merciful, you who mourn, who care for what is right, who are pure in heart, who make peace, you who are persecuted!' It may seem strange that Jesus exalts those whom the world generally regards as weak. He says to them: 'Blessed are you who seem to be losers, because you are the true winners; the kingdom of heaven is yours!' Spoken by Him who is gentle and humble of heart these words present a challenge which demands a deep and abiding metanoia of the spirit, a great change of heart.

You young people will understand why this change of heart is necessary; because you are aware of another voice within you and all around you; a contradictory voice which says: 'Blessed are the proud and violent, those who prosper at any cost...' And this voice seems to make sense in a world where the violent often triumph and the devious seem to succeed. 'Yes,' says the voice of evil, 'they are the ones who win.' Jesus offers a very different message. His call has always demanded a choice between the two voices competing for your hearts; the choice between good and evil, between life and death.

To be good Christians may seem beyond your strength in today's world. But Jesus does not stand by and leave you alone to face the challenge. He is always with you to transform your

weakness into strength. Looking at Jesus you will see what it means to be poor in spirit, gentle and merciful... This is why Jesus has the right to say, 'Come, follow me.' He does not say simply, 'Do what I say.' He says, 'Come, follow me.'

Young people of the Holy Land, young people of the world: answer the Lord with a heart that is willing and open!"

* The Holy Father does not cease to amaze us: not so much his formal deeds, but his fine gestures are a window through which all can see the patient and merciful love of God who operates through him. Prior to his departure from Jerusalem, the Pope went to the Western or "Wailing" Wall. Here he paused in prayer and left a written message in a fissure in the wall (it is a Jewish tradition) imploring God's forgiveness for those who have caused the children of Abraham to suffer. It is a gesture which will definitely remain in people's memories.

* Before returning to the Vatican the Holy Father also visited the Holy Sepulchre. Here he celebrated Mass, and made another appeal for unity and reconciliation. "Here, at the Holy Sepulchre, as we renew our profession of faith in the Risen Lord, can we doubt that in the power of the Spirit of Life we will be given the strength to overcome our divisions and to work together to construct a future of reconciliation, unity and peace?" Editorial Team

IN JERUSALEM PRO-UNITY WORK CONTINUES

Patriarchs and heads of Churches in the Holy City (Orthodox, Orientals, Catholics, and Protestants) sent a common message to the faithful at Easter time. It is a new event of great ecumenical significance which confirms the determination expressed on the 4th December last in Bethlehem (on the occasion of the opening of the Great Jubilee in the Holy Land) to proceed on the way of reforming unity through repentance of past sins, and commitment to giving each other more love and more peace.

Significant is also the hope expressed to see "all religious and civil authorities unceasingly committed to removing all obstacles on the path of peace in our area" (the Holy Land) "the heart of which is the city of Jerusalem."

(From Avvenire, 19-04-2000)

"Return to Primitive Fervour" Call to Holiness is main reason of Mary's presence in Medjugorje

Through her messages Mary repeatedly tells us that the main reason for her presence of grace in Medjugorje is to lead us to complete holiness: "I wish to teach you and help you to progress along the way of holiness" (message of 25-06-1991). It is her most ardent desire: "I

wish to lead you all to complete holiness. I desire that each of you be happy here on the earth and be with me in heaven. This, my Children, is the purpose of my coming here and it is my wish" (25-05-1987).

This is also the supreme scope of Christ's redeeming work. Through His death and resurrection He calls us to share fully in God's holiness. Holiness is the universal vocation of all believers. The Church reaffirmed this with renewed prophetic vigour at the second Vatican Council: "All those who believe in Christ, of whatever condition and social standing they may be, are called to the fullness of Christian life and to the perfection of love" (cf. Dogmatic Constitution "LG"). The call to holiness is the very soul of the Gospel message: So be perfect, just as your heavenly Father is perfect (Mt. 5:48).

This is also the main scope for which God created us. Says St. Paul: He (God the Father) chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world, to be holy and without blemish before him (Eph 1:4). In her incomparable spiritual teachings, Mary guides us to an ever more mature acceptance of the gift of holiness which is a gift of baptism; which is fully expressed by being true and efficacious instruments for each other: "As your mother, I wish to call you all to holiness, so that you may communicate it to others. You are a mirror for others" (10-10-1985).

In this time, so dense with compromise and relativism, Our Lady strongly reminds us that there can be no real spiritual life without a radical decision for holiness, "Dear Children, without holiness you cannot live" (10 July 1986). It is a privileged way: "If you live my messages you will sow the seed of holiness" (10-10-1985). She does not hide from us that Satan, with every possible means, will place obstacles on the way of those who decide for holiness, but Mary also offers us two sure spiritual weapons which defeat him inexorably: persistent prayer and the unconditioned offering of one's life to God through her Immaculate Heart.

The generous and wise use of these weapons gives rise to a living light which is stronger than any satanic darkness; it is a source of living water, and like the waters that flowed from God's Sanctuary in Ezekiel's vision (Ez 47), it heals and gives new life to men's hearts and to the universe.

This light gives rise to a river of ineffable peace and joy which the world cannot understand or know; and it has the power to usher us onto the walk of life to the point of full heavenly communion where Mary joyfully awaits us: "I do not want Satan to hinder you on the way of holiness. Dear Children, pray and accept all that God offers you on this way, which is sorrowful, but for all those who will begin to follow it God will reveal all its sweetness, so that they will respond willingly to each of His calls. Do not give any importance to the little things of the earth. Aim for heaven!" (25-07-1987).

(To be continued), Giuseppe Farraro

Mary's mediating role

At the General Audience of 12 January, the Pope explained Mary's mediating role as one of cooperation founded on Christ's unique mediation, where her sharing in his work removes nothing from him as the unique Mediator. The following is an extract.

"The Father desired Mary's presence in salvation history. When he decided to send His Son into the world, He wanted Him to come to us by being born of a woman. Thus He willed that this woman, the first to receive His Son, should communicate Him to all humanity. Mary is therefore found on the path that leads from the Father to humanity as the mother who gives the Saviour Son to all. At the same time, she is on the path that human beings must take in order to go to the Father through Christ in the Spirit (cf. Eph 2:18).

To understand Mary's presence on our journey to the Father, we must recognize with all the Churches that Christ is 'the way, and the truth, and the life' and the only Mediator between God and men (1 Tm 2:5)

Mary's maternal mediation 'is mediation in Christ'. The Council explains: 'The Blessed Virgin's salutary influence on men originates not in any inner necessity but in the disposition of God. It flows forth from the superabundance of the merits of Christ, rests on his mediation, depends entirely on it and draws all its power from it. It does not hinder in any way the immediate union of the faithful with Christ but, on the contrary, fosters it' (Lumen gentium 60). Mary too was redeemed by Christ and is indeed the first of the redeemed, since the grace granted to her by God the Father at the beginning of her existence is owed to the merits of Jesus Christ, Saviour of the human race.'

Seen in this way, Mary's mediation appears as the most sublime fruit of Christ's mediation and is essentially aimed at bringing us into a more intimate and profound encounter with him. Mary does not want to draw attention to herself. She lived on earth with her gaze fixed on Jesus and the heavenly Father. Her greatest desire is to focus everyone's attention on the same thing. She wants to encourage a vision of faith and hope in the Saviour sent to us by the Father.

With her vision of faith and hope Mary encourages the Church and believers to always fulfil the Father's will which was revealed to us by Christ: 'Do whatever he tells you' (Jn 2:5). If we do what Christ tells us, the new millennium can take on a new aspect, one more evangelical and authentically Christian, and Mary's deepest longing will come to be. Also the Father on the mount of the Transfiguration said: 'This is my beloved Son .. listen to him' (Mt 17:5). This same Father, through the word of Christ and the light of the Holy Spirit, calls us, guides us and waits for us. Our holiness consists in doing everything the Father tells us. This is Mary's life: the fulfilment of God's will.

Fr. Angelo, like Jacob, a tenacious fighter and father of many

With pleasure we share with readers the most significant passages of the homily given during the funeral Mass by Fr. Alberto, a young priest and spiritual son of Fr. Angelo, so that the figure of this great man is known.

"Follow me!" were Jesus' last words to Peter in the Gospel we just heard (Jn 21:15-22). We are here before Fr. Angelo, and as we celebrate this Liturgy which contains the mystery of death and resurrection, we should pay special attention to this word, for it is addressed to each of us: follow me! We should listen with great care to what God wants to tell us in this Eucharist, for God still wants to speak to us. Each Christian is called to follow this command.

In this moment, here before Fr. Angelo, who was a priest with an excellent call to which he responded in an excellent manner, we should think of our own special call: God called us above all to be Christians, to be His children. The first reading from the Book of Genesis (Gn 32:25-31) speaks of Jacob who before entering the Promised Land wrestled for an entire night with a mysterious person. It is not the fight of temptation or of a decision for God; this is the image of the fight which comes from remaining before God. It is a fight without boundaries, which lasts all night. The night is the moment of encounter with God; it is not only the darkness of the faith; night precedes dawn.

With this [type of] prayer we experience God's might and the difference between Him and us; we experience His majesty, His everything and our nothing; and we feel little before Him. There is one thing, though, that we can do before God, and that is to insist, as Jacob did, and though he doesn't win, he keeps Him from going: "Let me go, for the day is breaking," says God, to which Jacob responds: "I will not let you go, unless you bless me!" Fr. Angelo wrestled with God in the same way.

His whole life did indeed reflect this quality. Those who met him - in the seminary at St. Orsola, at Villanova, or through the "Echo of Mary" publication - could not but notice this insistence in his prayer. And this helps us to understand that prayer is far greater than what our minds can imagine. This prayer is the type where you don't ask anything for yourself, but a need to understand the life of God. Anyone who had seen Fr. Angelo pray in front of the Tabernacle during his illness: kneeling down with his elbows resting on the pew in front so that he wouldn't fall, saw him wrestling with God, not to ask for something, but simply to remain before Him. Fr. Angelo learnt how to fight in this way when he was young.

We too need to adopt this inner attitude of battle, for that is what Fr. Angelo desired, and this is what he is telling us today. I don't think he would want us to limit ourselves to speaking well of him today, but that we continue to do what he began. His vitality and his fecundity, noticed by all, was fruit of this battle which produced the blessing, and is a sign of life transmitted. Anyone who knew Fr. Angelo could feel this life which continued, which flowed from him. It was noticed by those who were close to him in these last few days; and even in the presbytery during the hours prior to this celebration one could notice this life which continued, not despair or anxiety.

God changes Jacob's name and this indicates the depth of the meaning of our call. We are all called in Baptism, but each of us has a name and a path to follow. Fr. Angelo knew which was his path. This was his treasure, and it was a treasure made all the more richer through the presence of Mary to whom he consecrated himself while still young. Anyone who knew him when he was young knows how important this devotion to Mary was for him. It was his treasure, closed up in a clay pot. If we think that to give witness, to be good Christians, we should be in top form, be prepared, we have to remember that the Lord Jesus uses us just the way we are, with all our faults. We are fragile, like the clay pots in the second reading, and through this fragility the greatness of our treasure is better able to be seen.

"I shall not die, but I shall live." Once when Fr. Angelo was young he fainted during prayer at the spiritual exercises which he always did with total dedication. The fatigue, though, had exhausted him. He told me that while he was fainting he prayed with words from a psalm: "I shall not die, but I shall live" (Ps 118). This vitality of his came from this knowing how to wrestle. If sometimes we are frightened by the battle, it is because the Lord strikes at our thighbone (cf. Gen 35), and so our prayers may be lengthy, but we avoid the battle. Those who were close to Fr. Angelo when he prayed, including children, were aware of a serenity and a communication with God. Many of us here learnt how to pray, not at a school of prayer, but simply by kneeling down next to him and listening to how he recited the psalms, watching how he made notes in his Bible or Psalter, and how he interpreted them. He would often stop to add something to the psalms while he prayed with them. This fecundity, like that of the grape vine which continues to produce new shoots, mustn't stop. We are the heirs and it is our duty to see that it spreads. That is what he wants, it is what God wants. He wants us to be battlers, he wants to train our hands for the battle.

The Gospel we just heard was the same Gospel which was proclaimed on the occasion of Fr. Angelo's 50th anniversary last year - almost as though it were a prophecy. I would like to underline the three questions the Lord made: "Do you love me?" which is followed by three replies, and then this phrase: "When you were young you girded yourself and walked where you would; but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you and carry you where you do not wish to go. And after this he said to him, 'Follow me'." (Jn 21).

This also happened with Fr. Angelo. His soul did not decrease with his suffering, but it grew, it was refined. Those who knew him when he was young can testify to how this surrender to God made him grow. The Lord asks Peter three times: "Do you love me?" In Fr. Angelo's life we could say that the first question can be identified with his first experience as a teacher in St. Orsola; the second question with his experience as a parish priest, and the last one with his publication "Echo of Mary".

When he began he had to wrestle with the idea of whether to do it or not, since it seemed to him that he would have to forsake one thing for the other, but when this was overcome he managed, through his work, to spread the devotion to Mary to many in the Church and in the world. This must not stop! Let us ask the Lord - and let us ask Fr. Angelo - that this experience of his continue; that there may be others who will say 'yes' to the Lord, so that we in turn may say "Behold the Lord's work!" (From the homily)

IN MEMORY OF FR. ANGELO

Many letters of condolence for the death of Fr. Angelo have reached us. Due to lack of space, we publish only a few; and with the occasion we thank readers for their prayers and comforting words.

From **Fr. Slavko Barbaric** on behalf of the Parish of Medjugorje

"We are sorrowed by the news of the death of this great friend of Medjugorje, a tireless promoter of the messages of Our Lady, Queen of Peace. We are certain that Our Blessed Mother welcomed him with great joy and that Jesus said to him: "Come, good servant, into the house of the Father which has been prepared for you and earned by you because you served the others with love." Only the Lord knows how much good he brought to others. With this letter all of us here in Medjugorje wish to express our gratitude for the friendship and love which he showed us, and we promise to remember him in our prayers. To the friends who work so that the 'Echo of Mary' publication may continue, our wish is that you be inspired by the same spirit and the same love for Our Lady and for her messages. Hoping in a fruitful collaboration, we assure you of our prayers."

From **Alberto Bonifacio** - "We join the choruses of laments and prayers for the death of our dear Fr. Angelo to whom we were bound by profound esteem and friendship. Our wish is that his "Echo of Mary", so widespread in Italy and the world, may continue to live and spread much good, thanks also to his intercession".

Marie Dobrovolska, Frankfurt - "I wish to express my sorrow for the death of Fr. Angelo. May the Lord bless him, radiate His light on him and grant him peace after having done so much work for His kingdom. And may the Lord give you who remain strength and consolation as you continue his work.

Fraternity of Mary Immaculate - "We have just read in the last issue of Echo of Fr. Angelo's death. He would come to see us occasionally, bringing with him prayers and gifts. We will keep him in our prayers. We hope that the "Echo" will continue with the same spirit."

Francesco and Anna, Turin - "We met Fr. Angelo at Medjugorje, and knew him for his great human and spiritual qualities. The friends of Medjugorje have lost an important reference point, but now we ask him to continue to follow us from heaven."

Sr. Barbara - "It is difficult for me to accept Fr. Angelo's death. The Lord has taken him up into His arms, and this moment is certainly one of immense joy after having suffered so much."

From Indonesia - "Dear Echo, you are Mary's Voice which is the eternal echo of God. I wish for you long life now that you have a new saint to watch over you: our dear Fr. Angelo, a humble instrument in Mary's hands." (Pastor Dharmo)

From England - "Many thanks for the Echo; it is inspirational, a joy to receive and a real gift from Our Blessed Mother through you. It was with deep regret that we read about Fr. Angelo's death. Now we have someone else in Heaven praying for us!" (Mr. & Mrs. Bree)

News from the blessed land

Annual apparition to Mirjana 18 March 2000

A great crowd turned up for the annual apparition to Mirjana on the 18th March at the Cenacle Community. Our Lady remained 5 minutes; she did not speak of the secrets. Mirjana prayed especially for the sick; and referred the following message:

"Dear Children, Do not seek peace and wellbeing in vain at the wrong places and in the wrong things. Do not allow your hearts to become hard through love of vanity. Invoke the Name of my Son. Receive Him in your heart. Only in the Name of my Son will you experience true wellbeing and true peace in your hearts. Only in this way will you come to know God's love and spread it further. I invite you to become my apostles."

On foot to Medjugorje

Polish pilgrim Henrik Kozlowski remained a few days in Medjugorje during his journey on foot to the Holy Land. Henrik is 48 years old and has already been to Santiago de Compostela, Lourdes and Fatima on foot.

"The Radio Prayer Group"

Every Tuesday the Medjugorje "Mir" radio station runs a programme called "Pray together with a joyful heart." The members of this "prayer group" came on their second pilgrimage to Medjugorje on April 24th, and were from all parts of Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina. The prayer group is led by Fr. Slavko Barbaric, and the members are all those who follow the transmission.

About 270 members came for the pilgrimage. They intend to come on pilgrimage to the Shrine more often. On Monday they went to the Hill of Apparitions, then they continued their meeting in the church. It was an occasion for them to become more acquainted with each other and to exchange experiences. Each member also received a membership card as a symbolic sign of cooperation in this out of the way prayer gathering. God bless them, and may they persevere and spread Mary's message of peace in their surroundings.

Bishops in Medjugorje

Confession is greatest grace of Medjugorje - Msgr. Robert Rivas, a Dominican, was in

Medjugorje for a private visit. Bishop of St. Vincent and the Grenadines in the Caribbean Islands, he spent ten days in Medjugorje, and said among other things:

"In Trinidad a lot was going on in regard to Medjugorje, even at the beginning of the apparitions. One of the pilgrims invited me to come as a priest. I only responded to the invitation in 1988. I was very happy and satisfied with my first visit to Medjugorje, because I experienced a renewal of faith and life by the faith of the pilgrims.

A special grace of Medjugorje is that priests who come with a group start to minister especially as priests, making themselves available for confession.. The greatest grace of Medjugorje really is confession. Pilgrims who come here become eager to be active in their own parishes - both in regard to prayer and the sacramental life, and parish activities in general.

.. I really believe that Our Lady is speaking here.

The love of the faithful for a bishop especially touched me. Whoever loves a bishop, loves the Church. The Holy Spirit is at work here. Our Lady is at work here. I personally want to be continually under Her protection.

All that I want is to do God's will and God's work. My message to the parish community, to the visionaries, to priests in the parish and to all pilgrims is that they be capable of surrendering their life completely to God and to be free for love, that the Gospel be lived in complete simplicity and beauty. I want for all of us to know that Jesus is the King of our life. We Catholics must be capable of showing the world the beauty of our faith with the help of Our Lady. I would recommend to everyone to come to Medjugorje, because here they will deepen their faith for the Church and Our Lady and thus become good witnesses to others of the good news. And in Medjugorje the good news is: Peace.

From the fruits one can tell if the tree is good - From March 18 to 23 Msgr. Franziskus Eisenbach, auxiliary bishop of Mainz, visited Medjugorje. He said:

"I am here as a pilgrim. I wanted to get acquainted with Medjugorje and to pray here. I have known about Medjugorje, and I have been following it for years.

I immediately noticed how the church is always full at all the Masses, and especially at Adoration. It is clear that many have understood this to be a special place of prayer. The experience of many is that their personal prayer improves and is supported by the experience of community prayer. I know many people who in Medjugorje have renewed their faith and have learnt to pray again. And now I too have personally experienced this.

Another very important thing is that in Medjugorje there is not just prayer but fruits of prayer, in the service of man, especially of man in affliction. It was especially important for me to get to know the "Mothers' Village" where mothers with children, abandoned children and orphans of war find refuge. Meetings are organized between children of healthy families and children who for various reasons have lost a normal family, so that abandoned children have a chance to learn how to live. And that is very important.

Sr. Elvira's community where those addicted to drug and other evils find a place of refuge and healing also impressed me deeply. I celebrated Holy Mass and prayed morning prayer

with them. It was very nice to see with what strength they pray and how joyfully they celebrate Holy Mass. I understood that the main method of healing is the deepening of faith and the experiencing of community in prayer and work.

It was also important for me to hear about the fostering programme for children - many families from Germany cooperate in this by helping every month with a financial contribution. These works of active love for the needy especially showed me that Medjugorje is not just concerned with the correct spirit of prayer. Love of God that is shown in prayer has brought fruits that are recognized in the care of man.

I also wanted to understand better the phenomenon of apparitions, hence to meet at least one of the visionaries. At my first meeting with Marija in her family home I found her in the garden working in rubber boots. She is a completely normal, young woman with three children. In conversation with her I understood that she is a very alert person, knows how to ask questions and to speak of her experiences and discerns things well. I was also present for an apparition where we prayed the rosary in various languages.

Medjugorje is a place that continuously prays for peace. The message of Medjugorje for the world is clear: to overcome wars and conflicts by the power of love. Prayers and the place of prayer here take a hold of the entire person, and so in this sense, Medjugorje carries a message for the whole Church: allow God and Our Lady to touch us in the totality of our human reality and let us allow Mary to bestow her love on us, and thus learn to love with our whole heart.

Therefore I can say that no one needs to be afraid of Medjugorje. Here prayer changes a person. Multitudes of faithful come here to learn to pray. My wish is that this message and experience be carried also to Germany, for we Germans are inclined to be rational. Here the question regards a message for man in his entirety, something that is really necessary for everyone."

In March the auxiliary Bishop of Brazilia (Brazil) Joao E.M. Terra, made a private visit to Medjugorje; it was his second visit. (Bulletin)

* Some hesitate about coming to Medjugorje because they also desire to obtain the indulgence for the Jubilee, and the church of St. James in Medjugorje is not a designated church for this. However, pilgrims should consider that the Jubilee indulgence can be obtained by visiting the Franciscan Convent at Siroki-Brijeg, or the church of St. Anthony of Padua at Humac-Ljubuski (13 km before arriving at Medjugorje).

Vicka responds

Following is the second and final part of the interview published in Echo 150 by Padre Livio on Radio Maria.

Each person live his mission

Q. Vicka, your task is to transmit Our Lady's messages, but you say that each of us has his

mission on the earth to fulfil. How can we discover this gift in us?

A. Above all, each person must know himself and ask himself how to best live his vocation. If this is done with earnestness, we become aware of the Lord's response, of His suggestion, in our heart. For example, a priest must be aware that he takes the living Jesus in his hands when he consecrates the bread and wine. The Eucharist is an even greater gift than Our Lady's presence - She herself has affirmed this. .. Each of us has a task; it's up to us to see how to fulfil it in the life of the Church..

Satan: tireless seducer

Q. Vicka, many people seek you out, including people who don't believe but would like to. What do you think?

A. We believers should be more aware of how immense the gift of faith is, and feel the need to dedicate time every day to prayer and be good examples for others. The excuses offered by non-believers who think that God should intervene directly are not valid. It takes personal commitment by each person to obtain God's grace, and God who is Father full of mercy will not fail to answer us.

God is infinite love. We have to do all that we can to obtain His intervention. So, besides praying, we should make an effort to know the revealed Truth and keep away from evil. Unfortunately, Satan is a tireless seducer: he hides evil beneath a good appearance; he tempts people (these days especially the young people and weak families), making them prefer fleeting joys, which lead inexorably to tragic unhappiness, thereby inducing them to renounce the immense joy which God grants straight away to those who resist temptation and live their Christian lives in an orderly and honest manner.

Young people and families today

Q. What advice would you give to young people who wish to prepare themselves to live marriage in a Christian manner; and in general to families, to overcome the difficulties of the moment?

A. Young people who wish to get married should discern whether their plans correspond to God's plan for them. At the same time they should put God first in their lives and pray to Him so that He will help them with their life as a couple.

They should also accept with joy the children which will make up their family. God will be close to them if they always invoke Him and if they help one another to form the family. It takes serious preparation and real, total dedication. Faith, prayer and communion are essential elements for today's family to be saved. And today there is a new style of life, where often both parents are away at work all day, and when they get home they don't find the way to stay together or have the time to pray. There is no more dialogue between parents and children! More than once Our Lady has said that young people and families are in a very difficult situation. Unfortunately today, many young people have lost the sense of Christian marriage and choose to live together without feeling the need to receive the sacrament of marriage.

In these situations, besides prayer, there is need of families to witness the serenity which

comes from the sacraments. Families in crisis should turn to prayer: father, mother and children should decide for a moment in the day when they can pray together. Young people also need to be wary of everything fleeting that the world offers, and seek, rather, the valid realities of the spirit.

Our Lady's messages unheeded

Q. How can we live this time of grace?

A. Our Lady has said a number of times that this time of the Jubilee year is a moment of great grace, and that she would like to give us many more messages, but can't because we have not listened to those She has given us so far. We have lost that initial zeal. That is why she insists that we pray, so that other, more generous, people will correspond. Her hope is that we will decide to listen to her.

Our Lady is very patient. At the end of each message of the 25th, she adds: 'Thank you for responding to my call.' and she does this to incite us to correspond with ever more commitment to her requests. We are in the time of the great conversion, and we should take advantage of it. Our Lady also says that many people listen to the messages, but then get tired. She is happier when we take the messages seriously and live them day by day, a little at a time, with constance, rather than live them with great fervour immediately and then forget them.

We should not worry about tomorrow; but care about living God's will today, for "this moment" is the most important one of our earthly existence. [End]

Underground Church in China shocked by death of Cardinal Kung

The archbishop of Shanghai, who had been in exile in the United States since 1987, died last March. Ignatius Kung Pin-mei served thirty years in prison because of his fidelity to Rome. He was 98 years old and the Church's oldest Cardinal.

It was a great loss for all Catholics of China! Kung Pin-mei, who was an indomitable defender of freedom for the Church in the Republic of China, was made a cardinal by John Paul II in 1979 when he was still in prison. When he became bishop in 1949, Communism had already begun its persecution. He promoted the Legion of Mary in China, but the association was quickly declared illegal by the government and accused of espionage. He was arrested in 1955 and condemned to life imprisonment, but did only thirty years. He was later invited to the USA, officially for medical treatment, but actually to offer him exile. His desire was that the Church of China be "one flock with one shepherd." Fides agency says that "the death of Cardinal Kung could signal the moment of reunification between the underground Church and the official Church in China" also because of the profound crisis felt by the Patriotic association following the illegal ordination of five bishops last January. The new bishops have expressed their sorrow for having participated.

The Holy Father said on the occasion of Kung's death: I join all of you in giving thanks to almighty God for the late Cardinal's priestly and episcopal ministry, his heroic fidelity to Christ amid persecution and imprisonment and his outstanding witness of communion with the universal Church and the Successor of Peter.

The 24th March was the 26th anniversary of the death of archbishop Oscar Romero, killed in San Salvador while celebrating Mass. He had received frequent threats, and was warned not to celebrate Mass in that place on that day.

International Caritas have petitioned for his beatification. Many religious institutes and other church organizations hope that "the extraordinary grace of his martyrdom may bring new life to the Church at the dawn of the new millennium." Some in Rome and in San Salvador, however, say that his was not proper martyrdom since his killers did not act out of hatred of the faith, but to silence a defender of human rights.

Pope Pius IX soon beatified

It should not take long before Pope Pius IX is declared blessed, for a decree was recently proclaimed regarding a miracle obtained through his intercession. Pius IX's papacy (1846-1878) was during a historical period marked by great political and social revolts. Not at all disheartened, he dedicated himself to the pastoral activity and the evangelization of the various continents. During the entire historical process which culminated in the unification of Italy he remained open to change, and for this was greatly esteemed.

The prefect for the Congregation for the Causes of Saints said: "This Pope defined the dogma of Mary's Immaculate Conception, he indicted the first Vatican Council, he reaffirmed Peter's primacy - thus revealing the soul of a man of God whose only intent was to serve as universal pastor of the Church, and to build up God's kingdom on the earth." He particularly wanted to give greater value to popular piety and to strengthen spirituality based on the sacraments (in particular confession and the Eucharist) in a newly-born Italian state where the dangers of the lay movement were already fermenting. He was a Pope who wanted to separate the Church from politics by steering the people's interest towards popular spirituality which involved processions and pilgrimages, and devotion to the saints, especially to Mary, by acknowledging the apparitions at La Salette and Lourdes. Concern for the people, and more in general, for the needs of others, was felt in his years as a young seminarian and priest when he dedicated time to the assistance of old people in St. Michael's home in Rome; and while in Chile as apostolic nuncio where he was more concerned about the people than diplomatic relations. Not by chance Pope John XXIII was one of his admirers!

** Indications for priests in Medjugorje - We would ask priests coming to Medjugorje to bring with them their alb, stoles and "celebret" from their superior. We would also ask that mass be celebrated in agreement with the Parish in the area of the sanctuary, and not in private homes or Apparition hill or Krizevac...

Please tell the pilgrims of your language group not to enter a liturgical area during the mass of a different language group, so as not to disturb the faithful. (Bulletin)

** KNOCK, Ireland: Jubilee Pentecost 10-11 June 2000, all night vigil 10 pm - 4 am (Mass). Speakers include Archbishop Paul Cordes DD, Dana Rosemary Scallon MEP, Bishop Thomas Finnegan DD, Fr. Michael Ross SDB, Pat Clarke. All welcome. Tel./fax 01

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