



ECHO OF MARY

Queen of peace

153

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Our Lady's message of 25 July 2000:

Dear Children, do not forget that here on earth yours is a journey to eternity, and that your home is in Heaven. Therefore, my Children, be open to God's love; and abandon egoism and sin.

May your joy be only in the discovery of God in daily prayer. Hence, use this time and pray, pray, pray. And God is close to you in prayer and through prayer. Thank you for responding to my call.

On Journey with Mary towards Eternity

Mary's call is always special in the sense that though it is not new, when it is said by our Blessed Mother it takes on the freshness and fragrance of spring water, of fresh bread. A breath of fresh air! Do not forget that here on earth yours is a journey to eternity. Though we should know this, we have forgotten it or think about it only occasionally.

How many things in the world would change if only everyone realized that our life is a journey to eternity! There would be so fewer worries if only we held our gaze on heaven, our home, instead of on the earth, our temporary abode (2 Co 5:1)! Much oppression, violence, injustice, abuse and crime, both on a personal level and a social one, have their roots in the idea of life bound to the earth. This idea also creates false idols, and human lives are literally sacrificed to these idols, the victims being mostly young people and children. But it's not a matter of comparing different models of life, it is rather remembering that we are truly God's children, and that the price paid for us was so high that no one or no nation could afford. The ransom paid was the crucifixion and death of Jesus, our Lord and God. A person who through baptism has died and risen in Christ (Col 3:1-3) cannot ignore this. We belong to God in Jesus Christ. The reality of this can be experienced only if we are open to God's love; that is, if we allow His love to touch us in the depths of our hearts and souls, and if we abandon all egoism and sin which act like shields and impede His love from reaching us. Just think how many times Mary has begged us to open ourselves and surrender to God's love! There is no true conversion without faith in the love God has for each of us and without an open heart on our part to the action of grace.

May your joy be only in the discovery of God in daily prayer. This joy is experienced by

those who truly enter into communion with God; by those who when they pray do not recite formulas, but speak with God. It is possible to discover God because Mary says so; all it takes is to follow her teachings faithfully. Moreover, the word "only" indicates the exclusiveness in the relationship with God. God is a jealous God (Ex 20:5) and wants us completely for Himself. In this relationship our needs are not mortified; they are satisfied (Mt 6:33).

Discover God in daily prayer. That is, live each day in His presence, rest in Him, take off the heavy worldly yoke to put on His which is sweet and light (Mt 11:28-30); and do this daily, not just on particular occasions. Each moment of our day must be immersed in prayer; it must take on form, substance and meaning from this intimate and constant relationship with our Creator so that even the most humble of our activities become fruitful and worthy of eternity.

Hence, use this time and pray, pray, pray. Time spent in prayer is never wasted, but is highly productive. In fact, God is close to you in prayer and through prayer. In other words, prayer is a place and means of meeting God. Could we desire more?

Created in the image of God (Gen 1:27) we are called to realize this image in us. This is what the journey to eternity is about; it is what gives meaning to our lives, consolation to our suffering, hope to our humanity. This is our journey; and we should invite those close to us to the same journey. Mary always asks that we live her messages, and in the past she has asked us to spread them. We must witness first with our lives, then with words, that walking alongside God is possible in all situations, circumstances and environments; and that this journey is the most fascinating one we could ever experience, it is true human promotion, it is peace and joy, it is salvation (starting in this world), it is experiencing heaven on earth. **

Our Lady's message of 25 August 2000:

Dear Children, I wish to share my joy with you. In my Immaculate Heart I feel that there are many who have drawn closer to me and, in a special way, bear the victory of my Immaculate Heart in their hearts through prayer and personal conversion. I wish to thank you and encourage you to work more for God and His Kingdom with the love and power of the Holy Spirit. I am with you and I bless you with my motherly blessing. Thank you for responding to my call.

In Mary's Immaculate Heart

Mary wishes to share her joy with us. Her joy comes from the fact that many have drawn close to her and this has allowed for the triumph of her Immaculate Heart in theirs. It is an invitation for us all to rejoice, to share in the joy of our Mother. It truly is reason for great joy for us all to know that Mary's Immaculate Heart triumphs in the hearts of men. Knowing this lends wings to our hope. Christ's sacrifice was not in vain; the world is saved in Him through Mary.

Mary comes to lead us on the journey of prayer and conversion which is characteristic of God's children. Mary is not just saying what we should do; this wouldn't be sufficient. She leads the way for us; it is one of total and trusting surrender, of unconditional faith, and it prepares for the victory of Her Immaculate Heart in our hearts so that her Fiat may become ours, in all truth and humbleness.

All can follow this way. You don't need to be particularly intelligent or learned. All it takes is personal will correctly oriented, sincere determination and a good dose of humility. And, just as Mary has often said, we must decide for God; i.e. put God before all else in our lives, so that all revolves around Him. Easy to say but not so easy to realize. We no doubt proclaim our faith in Him, but we also found our choices on belief in human power; we say He is Lord of the world, but we close Him up in our schemes and convictions, we subject Him to our tastes and interests, and we use Him to affirm our own ideas and principles. We do this every time we put ourselves in His place to judge another person, or to label our own ideas and convictions as His own.

Every day, every moment of the day, whatever our role in society is, our will is put to the test: do I tend to serve God or to enslave Him? We continually experience how difficult it is to be unconditionally open to God: our humanity tends to occupy all the spaces, filling times and places which should be set aside for Him. The difficulty is peculiar to man; we need to realize this without underrating it, but without overrating it, so that we can draw from the Holy Spirit the strength and love required by us to work more for God and His Kingdom, as Mary urges us to do.

So let's share in Mary's joy; let's learn to rejoice in Mary's joy, to be in harmony with her, and we will discover that the joys of the world are insipid when compared to the joy the Blessed Virgin is offering us. This joy has a name: it is Jesus.

Mary's Immaculate Heart is ready to take us so her victory will be ours, that the Light may triumph in the world. The night is almost over, it will be daylight soon (Rm 13:12). Do not we see the dawn of the day which will not die, the eternal Day of Christ? The signs are many by now, and it is obligatory to be hopeful, or rather, joyful. Mary truly is leading the world to God: it was through Mary that the salvation of the world was begun, and it is through Mary that it must be consummated (St. Louis De Montfort, True Devotion to Mary no. 49). Let us allow her to prepare us for the new day. Mary is always with us, and through her motherly blessing she will clothe us in the Lord Jesus Christ (Rm 13:14).

Nuccio

Mary and ecumenical dialogue with Churches

(continued from #152)

Another point which poses a problem for the reformed churches is Mary's co-operation in redemption and her title of Co-redemptrix. The objection of the Protestants is founded on the basis of the reformation itself, and that is, that man is saved by grace through faith in Christ, who alone is Saviour, independent of his works. Hence the term co-redemptrix is thought to introduce another element of parity between Mary and her Son.

The post-conciliar Magisterium has abandoned the use of "co-redemption" but not of "co-operation." It is to be noted that with co-operation the Church is not saying in any way at all that Mary adds even the slightest amount to Christ's work. Our salvation is totally the work of God through Christ in the Holy Spirit. A creature like us, Mary intervenes on our behalf by virtue of the grace of salvation which is received by all believers.

The other controversial aspect has to do with devotion to Mary. The Second Council of Nicaea (787) made a distinction between veneration of saints (*dulia*) and adoration (*latria*) due to God alone. True Christian devotion is owed to the Father, through the Son, in the Holy Spirit. The receiver of our devotion can only be God. The most direct way to Him is

through the Son.

The Orthodox and Anglican Churches have maintained the devotion to Mary and the saints so that the problem does not exist for them, but with the reformed churches the question is a rather prickly one. According to Catholic doctrine invocation of Mary is a prayer to God which He alone can grant. Intercession by the saints is an expression of the bond of charity that unites the entire Church - on earth, in purgatory and in heaven - in Christ who is the first and chief mediator. (Thus, in virtue of this bond in Christ, anyone in the Church can and should make intercession for others. After Christ Himself, the chief intercessor is Our Lady, who continually prays for those whom Christ has made her children.)

Protestants refuse the intercessory prayer of Mary and the saints. Protestantism went from initial sobriety to progressive abandonment. This was due both to a theological intent to enhance Christ's role as sole Saviour and Mediator, and to a reaction to certain exaggerated devotions in Catholic piety. In fact, in the past some Catholic theologians supported a disorderly popular piety by using expressions of exaggerated devotion towards Mary (such as "fourth person of the Trinity" and "a divine person") making her seem a goddess. It must be noted that the official catholic prayer (of the liturgy) has always been discrete, and the Magisterium intervened on several occasions to hinder the formation of aberrations in popular devotion. Vatican Council II also asks that theologians and preachers "abstain zealously both from all gross exaggerations as well as from petty narrow-mindedness in considering the singular dignity of the Mother of God" (Lumen Gentium 67).

The same Council, at the conclusion of a discussion, placed the text on Mary in the Church document Lumen Gentium, rather than in a document exclusively consecrated to the Mother of God; so that we were given a Marian doctrine fully integrated into the Church, in contrast to a mariology which tended to autonomy (above the Church). Mary is part of the Church, not above it; she is associated with the other faithful, though she is in a particular position. The Protestant reaction - at first one of sarcasm, then of silence - does not respect the position that the reformers gave to Mary in the economy of salvation. Some Protestants today work for a more correct evaluation of Mary in reformed theology and acknowledge that it is legitimate to venerate (i.e., love and honour) the Virgin Mary and to take her as an example to imitate. Nonetheless, since they do not acknowledge her intercessory role they do not invoke her (or any other saint).

At the conclusion of this outline on the problems connected to Mary's role in the ecumenical journey, we wonder if these points of disagreement really do present an obstacle on the way to unity and how this obstacle could be removed.

Should we Catholics, for the sake of authentic and visible unity, "renounce", or rather "re-interpret", all which concerns Mary acquired as truth of the faith, and at the same time, what should the brothers of the other Christian confessions accept and integrate into their faith?

An answer cannot be had without first specifying the following: above all, the aim of ecumenical dialogue is not to eliminate all the points of disagreement, but to make it so that those which remain are legitimate (i.e. are consistent with Christian Revelation) and tolerable. Unity does not necessarily mean uniformity. Unity within a certain amount of diversity is possible. Obviously, each Church is called to some sort of conversion.

Another point is that there is a "hierarchy of truth", pointed out by Vatican Council II. Some points are central and belong to the very nucleus of the faith. Not all the dogmas of the faith are placed on the same plane. Some were accepted into the Symbol of the faith (the Creed,

the apostolic Symbol), such as Christ's humanity and divinity, the Holy Trinity, Mary's divine maternity, etc., while others are subordinate, fruit of lengthy evolution. That which did not cause a problem of faith for nineteen centuries cannot now be considered a reason for separation. Perhaps the principle proposed various times by Card. Ratzinger regarding the Roman primacy can be applied here; that is, that Rome need not demand from the sister Churches more than what was formulated and lived during the course of the first millennium when the Church was united. Hence, the Catholic Church may not require that acceptance of Marian dogmas be an indispensable condition for full communion among Churches. It would only ask that the contents of the dogmas be respected; not to consider them contrary to the Gospel and the faith, but a legitimate consequence of lengthy theological reflection, consistent with Revelation.

To conclude, unity is a gift from the Lord which we should ask for through prayer. It is a path upon which we can slowly advance with the little steps of daily witness. To remain on it we are obliged to work at authentic conversion (in our families, parishes, and religious movements) by overcoming our disagreements, rivalry, hatred and battles. It is also a journey of tolerance for opinions which differ to ours but do not undermine the essential. With the Apostle we believe that the Church is a body and that the actions (good and bad) of each single member affect the entire body in a mysterious way. In the Church no one is an extra; each person in his own way is a protagonist, at times without knowing or wanting it.

Mirco

NEWS OF THE JUBILEE

Jubilee in Prisons

"I have come to tell you God loves you"

In Luke's Gospel we read that at the beginning of His public life Jesus went to the synagogue of Nazareth, got up to read, was given the scroll of the prophet of Isaiah, and said: "The Spirit of the Lord has been given to me, for he has anointed me. He has sent me to bring the good news to the poor, to proclaim liberty to captives and to the blind new sight, to set the downtrodden free, to proclaim the Lord's year of favour." Then he added: "This text is being fulfilled today even as you listen" (Lk 4:18).

Sunday, 9 July the Holy Father, in this year of grace of the Great Jubilee, desired renewing the hope of prisoners by bringing them the happy news of God's love for the poor and suffering: I have come to tell you that God loves you.

In this announcement can be seen the Pope's immense desire to recover, in the light of God's love, that human dignity which is often suffocated by the harsh and unhappy prison life. The highest freedom man needs to recover is the freedom which comes from being God's children.

Sin distances man from God. "Sin is devastating. It drives peace from hearts and causes a chain of suffering in human relationships. This is precisely the slavery from which the Spirit of God comes to deliver us." The Holy Father invited his prisoner friends to free themselves above all of this form of slavery which chains down the spirit, and to aim with all their strength at a new life in the encounter with Christ.

To the authorities John Paul II stressed the need to give those who have erred a chance to

reflect and to change their lives.

Young People... my joy and my crown!

This was the Holy Father's festive cry before the immense crowd of young people in Rome for the World Youth Day. More than 2 million young people from 160 countries around the world (30 of which are oppressed by war) filled the Eternal City with their joy and enthusiasm during the week of 15-20 August.

Gathered around "their Pope" the young people were like the crowd of men and women who thirsted for the Word of truth and in need of a pastor they gathered around Jesus of Nazareth in the land of Galilee. Together they reflected on the theme: The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us (Jn 1:14), and the Word dwelt among the youth, many of whom had travelled far, some on foot, to reach Peter's city.

My young people, what have you come in search of? asked the Pope at the opening ceremony in St. Peter's Square. Or rather, who have you come here to find? ... There can be only one answer to that: you have come in search of Jesus Christ! But Jesus Christ has first gone in search of you. To celebrate the Jubilee can have no other meaning than that of celebrating and meeting Jesus Christ, the Immanuel.

"He came to his own home, and his own people received him not" (Jn 1:10) continues John's Prologue. "My friends, are you among those who have accepted Christ? Your presence here is already an answer to that question. You have come to Rome, in this Jubilee of the 2,000th anniversary of Christ's birth, in order to open your hearts to the power of life which is in him. You have come here to rediscover the truth about creation and to recover a sense of wonder at the beauty and the richness of the created world. .. I wish to bear witness to this faith here before all of you.. Today I wish to tell you that I believe firmly in Jesus Christ our Lord. Yes, I believe, and I make my own the words of the Apostle Paul: "The life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me" (Gal 2:20).

Strong words, provocative but encouraging; words which call for radical replies but which open up onto a future of hope and good for those who let themselves be guided by the Good Shepherd.

During the week-long meeting, the Pope frequently brought up the theme of faith, offering his own personal testimony as encouragement: My faith, like that of Peter and like the faith of each one of you, is not just my doing, my attachment to the truth of Christ and the Church. It is essentially and primarily the work of the Holy Spirit, a gift of his grace. The Lord gives his Spirit to me as he gives him to you, to help us say: 'I believe,' and then to use us to bear witness to him. The journey of faith is part of everything that happens in our lives. God is at work in the concrete and personal situations of each one of us.

Believe unshakably in him. He directs the history of individuals as well as the history of humanity. .. Don't ever think that you are unknown to him, as if you were just a number in an anonymous crowd. Each one of you is precious to Christ, he knows you personally, he loves you tenderly, even when you are not aware of it.

The piazzas and streets of Rome were springing with their joy and singing. A sea of young people, strangers, yet they were like old friends at a class reunion. No barriers, God's love united them in a joyful embrace. Jesus was present amongst them.

Then at the university grounds Tor Vergata during the prayer vigil the Pope asked them: "Who do you say I am?" (Mt 16:15). Jesus asks his disciples this question and Simon Peter answers: "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Mt 16:16). Why does Jesus want to know what people think of him? Why does he want to know what his disciples think of him? Jesus wants his disciples to become aware of what is hidden in their own minds and hearts and to give voice to their conviction.

This event leads us, in a sense, into the "school of faith". There the mystery of the origin and development of our faith is disclosed. First there is the grace of revelation: then there follows the call to respond. Finally there comes the human response, a response which from that point on must give meaning and shape to one's entire life.

The Pope goes on to explain various experiences of the Apostles to say how they were schooled in the faith. "This gathering in Rome is also a kind of school of faith for you, the disciples of today. It is the school of faith for all who proclaim Christ at the beginning of the third millennium."

"To believe in Jesus today; to follow Jesus as Peter, Thomas, and the first Apostles and witnesses did, demands of us, just as it did in the past, that we take a stand for him, almost to the point at times of a new martyrdom: the martyrdom of those who are called to go against the tide. It was not by chance that I wanted the witnesses to the faith in the 20th century to be remembered at the Colosseum during this Holy Year.

Perhaps you will not have to shed your blood, but you will certainly be asked to be faithful to Christ! A faithfulness to be lived in the circumstances of everyday life. I am thinking of how difficult it is in today's world for engaged couples to be faithful to purity before marriage. I think of how the mutual fidelity of young married couples is put to the test.. of friendships and how easily the temptation to be disloyal creeps in. I think also of how those who have chosen the path of special consecration have to struggle to persevere in their dedication to God and to their brothers and sisters. I think of those who want to live a life of solidarity and love in a world where the only things that seem to matter are the logic of profit and one's personal or group interest.

I think too of those who work for peace and who see new outbreaks of war erupt and grow worse in different parts of the world; I think of those who work for human freedom and see people still slaves of themselves and of one another. I think of those who work to ensure love and respect for human life and who see life so often attacked and the respect due to life so often flouted.

Dear young people, in such a world is it hard to believe? Is it hard to believe in the third millennium? Yes! It is hard. There is no need to hide it. It is hard, but with the help of grace it can be done, as Jesus explained to Peter: "Neither flesh nor blood has revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven" (Mt 16:17).

Not at all frightened off the young people know it is the truth, and in outpourings of joy show their love for this old Pope who loves and understands them infinitely. During his discourse they interrupt him with timely acclamation, applause, and songs, making their presence vibrant and the meeting a true dialogue. A "grandpa" to them all he enjoys their festive celebrations in his honour as he admires and contemplates the multi-coloured crowd. What a wonderful feast; everyone is overwhelmed with joy and love!

"Dear friends," he continued, "at the dawn of the third millennium I see in you the "morning

watchmen." In the course of the century now past young people like you were summoned to huge gatherings to learn the ways of hatred. The various godless messianic systems which tried to take the place of Christian hope have shown themselves to be truly horrendous. Today you have come together to declare that in the new century you will not let yourselves be made into tools of violence and destruction; you will defend peace, paying the price in your person if need be. You will not resign yourselves to a world where other human beings die of hunger, remain illiterate and have no work. You will defend life at every moment of its development; you will strive with all your strength to make this earth ever more livable for all people.

How can we possibly remain indifferent? As the crude reality of the XX century is bared open, the Pope lights up the way of the future for the youth and to them he entrusts the mission of building a better world, a world founded on Christ.

"It is Jesus that you seek when you dream of happiness; he is waiting for you when nothing else you find satisfies you; he is the beauty to which you are so attracted; it is he who provokes you with that thirst for fullness that will not let you settle for compromise; it is he who urges you to shed the masks of a false life; it is he who reads in your hearts your most genuine choices, the choices that others try to stifle. It is Jesus who stirs in you the desire to do something great with your lives, the will to follow an ideal, the refusal to allow yourselves to be ground down by mediocrity, the courage to commit yourselves humbly and patiently to improving yourselves and society, making the world more human and more fraternal.

It is he, Christ! Have no fear of entrusting yourselves to Him! He will guide you, he will grant you the strength to follow him every day and in every situation."

God's people gathered in Rome experienced the truth of these words during the many moments of profound communion with the Church and with the other young pilgrims. A true mother, the Church in all the Italian dioceses opened her arms and took in youth from all over the world, organizing meetings and moments of recreation for the week prior to their departure for Rome. And in Rome 150 bishops and cardinals held lessons in various languages; and at the Circo Massimo a thousand or so confessionals were provided for the many hearts seeking reconciliation. It was a young Church which expressed its modernity by organizing artistic, musical and cultural events for all tastes. But more than this it was a live Church made up of the young people with its many happenings which changed the face of the city, making it brighter and fresher.

The city of Rome, and all concerned, were amazed by these young people who were able to express their youthfulness without being exhibitionists, without soiling or damaging the city's walls and gardens. All were struck by their serenity and spirit of tolerance in even the most difficult situations, such as the torrid heat, the long walks and lengthy waits, the crowds and the Spartan lodgings. All were struck by their spirit of happiness despite the discomforts, and by the respect they had for other people's belongings, by their good manners, their capacity to collect their thoughts in prayer, and the respectful silence at opportune moments, such as while lining up to go through the Holy Door (there were so many that two other "holy doors" were opened to accommodate the number of pilgrims).

"Will you also go away?" (Jn 6:67). "Christ's question cuts across the centuries and comes down to us; it challenges us personally and calls for a decision. What is our answer? Dear

young people, if we are here today, it is because we identify with the Apostle Peter's reply: "Lord, to whom shall we go?? You have the words of eternal life" (Jn 6:68)," the Pope told them in the conclusive Mass Sunday morning at Tor Vergata where the 2 million young people spent the night, side by side, beneath the stars.

"It is important to realize that among the many questions surfacing in your minds, the decisive ones are not about "what". The basic question is "who": "who" am I to go to, "who" am I to follow, "to whom" should I entrust my life?

You are thinking about love and the choices it entails, and I imagine that you agree: what is really important in life is the choice of the person who will share it with you. But be careful! Every human person has inevitable limits: even in the most successful of marriages there is always a certain amount of disappointment.

Only Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God and of Mary, the eternal Word of the Father born 2,000 years ago at Bethlehem in Judea, is capable of satisfying the deepest aspirations of the human heart.

It is possible to meet the divine Master personally: he is in fact truly present on the altar in the reality of his Body and Blood. In the Eucharistic sacrifice we can enter into contact with the person of Jesus in a way that is mysterious but real.

Christ loves us. He loves each one of us in a unique and personal way in our practical daily lives. Christ loves us and he loves us for ever! He loves us even when we disappoint him, when we fail to meet his expectations for us. To celebrate the Eucharist, "to eat his flesh and drink his blood" means to accept the wisdom of the Cross and the path of service. It means to signal our willingness to sacrifice ourselves for others, as Christ has done.

Our society desperately needs this sign, and young people need it even more so, tempted as they often are by the illusion of an easy and comfortable life, by drugs and pleasure-seeking, only to find themselves in a spiral of despair, meaninglessness and violence. It is urgent to change direction and to turn to Christ. This is the way of justice, solidarity and commitment to building a society and a future worthy of the human person.

"This is our Eucharist;" this is the answer that Christ wants from us, from you, young people, at the closing of your Jubilee. Jesus is no lover of half measures, and he does not hesitate to pursue us with the question: "Will you also go away?"

But no, the young people do not want to go because they believe in their friend Jesus, and they believe in him, the Pope who has never spared himself from the fatigue and suffering of witnessing Christ's love for all peoples.

Dear friends, when you go back home, set the Eucharist at the centre of your personal life and community life: love the Eucharist, adore the Eucharist and celebrate it, especially on Sundays, the Lord's Day.

May every community always have a priest to celebrate the Eucharist! I ask the Lord therefore to raise up from among you many holy vocations to the priesthood. May sharing in the Eucharist lead also to a new flourishing of vocations to the religious life; in this way the Church will have fresh and generous energies for the great task of the new evangelization. If any of you, dear young men and women, hear the Lord's inner call to give yourselves completely to him in order to love him with "an undivided heart" do not be held back by doubts or fears. Say "yes" with courage and without reserve, trusting him who is faithful to his promises.

At the end of this World Youth Day, as I look at you now, at your young faces, at your genuine enthusiasm, from the depths of my heart I want to give thanks to God for the gift of

youth, which continues to be present in the Church and in the world because of you. When you go home do not grow lax. Reinforce and deepen your bond with the Christian communities to which you belong. From Rome, from the City of Peter and Paul, the Pope follows you with affection and, paraphrasing St. Catherine of Siena's words, reminds you: "If you are what you should be, you will set the whole world ablaze!"

Editorial Staff

Joy mixed with sorrow

Antonius Hukunala is a young man and former seminarian from the Moluccas. He lost both his parents in the war, and his sister is missing. Together with the Christians from Buru he was driven away by the Muslims and his house was destroyed. In a letter to the editor of an Italian paper he expressed his loneliness and sorrow for not being able to be present at the World Youth Day with the Pope.

"There was an Italian journalist in Ambon a few days ago and he told me that in your country young Catholics from all over the world were gathering to celebrate the Jubilee. I am happy, we young Catholics from the Moluccas are happy to know that this wonderful international feast for young people is being held. You must be so happy! Even if we are so far away from your smiles, we want the young people of the Jubilee 2000 to know that we are united to them in our hearts and prayers.

I am sad because I am now alone. My only comfort is in prayer and in knowing that the Virgin Mary is close to me and wants me to go ahead. I hope very much that the war, here in the Moluccas, will soon finish. I don't know what my destiny is, what my tomorrow might hold, and I ask myself: is this the Jubilee for me, for the young Catholics of the Moluccas? In this solitude I have only one thing left: the hope that our Lord Jesus Christ will guide me to a better future, to a future of forgiveness."

Antonius Hukunala

News from the blessed land

Seminar for priests

From 30 June to 6 July, at the shrine of the Queen of Peace in Medjugorje, the 5th international seminar for priests was attended by 300 priests from 32 different countries. The theme was: "Priest, man of the Holy Trinity and servant of the Lord's Body." During the six days of work the priests attended lessons and moments of prayer and reflection, celebrated the Eucharist together, and climbed Apparition Hill and Krizevac. The seminar was organized and conducted by Fra Slavko Barbaric. Other speakers were: Fr. Daniel Ange, Fr. James Manjackal, Rufus Pereira, Fr. Martin Ramoser, Cosimo Cavalluzzo, Sr. Elvira Petrozzi and Fra Jozo Zovko.

Youth 2000 Festival

The 11th International Youth Festival, was held in Medjugorje from 31 July to 6 August. It is one of the great events held in the shrine each year, and also this year many young people

attended. Approximately 20,000 people from 19 different countries offered their time and holidays to Jesus and His Mother.

The theme of the festival, "The Word was made flesh and dwelt amongst us," was developed in various lessons, but more so, the Lord's presence could be seen on the faces of the young people which grew more joyful and beautiful with each passing day. But how can I describe the change which came about on people's faces, the tears of those whose hearts were filled with grace before the Blessed Sacrament, or the eyes full of joy after the encounter with God? What I can say is that the Blessed Mother brought 20,000 of her children to Medjugorje for a profound and live experience of the Mass, of prayer, of confession, of God.

The Festival came to a conclusion on the morning of 6 August, feast of the Transfiguration of Jesus, with the celebration of Holy Mass on Krizevac. The connection between the last day of the meeting and this particular feast is symbolic, as though to stress the transformation in the hearts of the young people after their encounter with the Lord Jesus. Many were the testimonies, and their inspired words touched the young people's hearts. There was Sr. Elvira, Fra Jozo, Fra Slavko, Fr. Cosimo Cavaluzzo, Fr. Martinuzzi, the visionaries and others.

Unable to report it all, the following serves to echo the voice of consolation and strength which pervaded the meeting.

A call...

Fr. Silouane was ordained the week before in Lourdes. African and from the Beatitudes Community, he opened the first day which was dedicated to the Immanuel. His was a pressing call to acknowledge God's love in His Son Jesus.

"Dear brothers and sisters, Jesus is here and wants to touch your hearts. Let Him reach out to you. The prophet Malachi (chapter 3) says that the sun of righteousness will shine out with healing in its rays. Jesus is the Sun of Righteousness; He is here to heal you, and to save you. He loves you.

What is your sorrow? Is it lack of love; are you sad, a slave to sin; are you love sick? Jesus hears your cry and He has come to save you from your unhappiness. The Lord knows your misery. The Lord says to each of you: choose life if you want to be happy, so that you and your descendants can live (Dt 30:19)".

An invitation...

Fr. Primo, physician for 23 years, psychiatrist for 18, priest for 9 in the Diocese of Rome, asked the young people to make a decision, to open up their hearts to God's plan: "Some who go from shrine to shrine without deciding for God do not give a good example. St. John Bosco said that out of 100 youth 30 are given the grace of consecration but that many don't respond because they haven't attained the freedom of God's children."

Witness by visionaries...

During the Festival the visionaries took turns to talk about their singular experience. In doing so they all spoke about the main messages of Our Lady: prayer with the heart, fasting on bread and water on Wednesdays and Fridays, Holy Mass, monthly confession, reading of

the Bible. They also spoke about the effect of the messages on their personal lives.

Jakov: "I grew up with Our Lady. I was 10 years old when the apparitions began, and it was the most beautiful day of my life. The day Our Lady told me that she would appear to me only once a year was the worst day of my life. I grew up with her and I didn't know how I could manage without her. Then I understood that in prayer I could see her with the eyes of the heart.

Dear young people, with prayer we can obtain everything. Know that because you came here to spend your holidays with Our Lady, she will pay you back 100 times for this choice, this sacrifice of yours. Thank you to everyone for your response."

Mirjana: "When I am with Our Lady nothing else exists for me; my only desire is to be with her. Yet Our Lady has often told us that if we had to choose between her and Holy Mass we should choose Holy Mass. Another thing is that she has never said to us: 'pray and I will give,' but 'pray and God will give through me'."

Ivan: "When the apparitions began I was 16, and out of many young people Our Lady chose me. I was not particularly devoted to her; I didn't even know that she had appeared in other places.

The apparitions have changed my life. In these 19 years at the school of love and prayer, staying with the Mother of Heaven has been one of the greatest gifts one could ever desire, but also a great responsibility. It's not easy meeting Our Lady and then returning to worldly reality; see the light of heaven and then stay here.

It is very difficult to talk about how loving she is, about her beautiful face! She has placed us all in her heart; you know, she starts all her messages with "Dear Children" and you should see how she says it! This evening, in the meeting with her, I will entrust you all to her intercession."

A pastor to his flock...

Mons. Robert Rivas, a delightful person who entertained us for the entire week, is Bishop of St. Vincent. He told of his experiences as pastor of the Church of St. Vincent in the Caribbean: a small island with a Protestant majority and 10,000 Catholics. His lesson was on the Eucharist, Jesus bread of life.

"When I was only 14 I started going to Mass every day. I have now been a priest for 29 years and a bishop for 10, and I am able to say that a priest lives on the Eucharist and he gives it to others. We must become bread for others. The Eucharist and Priesthood are gifts. The Eucharist is a fount of love, peace, and grace. It demands a radical change in one's way of living.

I came to Medjugorje in 1994 and I strongly believe that my coming here was not by chance. I feel that I received two important tasks here: to be a bearer of the Eucharist and to be a witness to the messages. I believe that Our Lady wants us to bring Jesus to her children. Priests and bishops are often shy when they come down off the pulpit, but the time has now come to speak up, to take the good news to all. If we are weak it is because we are not united to Eucharistic Jesus and because we don't know Him. Young People! How can you swim upstream, against this culture of death? If you are weak you cannot! Open up your arms, your hearts, to the strength of the Eucharist and then you will be able to swim

upstream in this world and become nourishment for others."

From darkness to Light...

On the day dedicated to "The Eucharist: medicine for wounds of the body and soul", the "boys" from the Cenacle Community told of their liberation from drugs, and from sin. They told their story this year too with the help of a recital on the story of Salvation, about Creation and original sin, and the birth, Crucifixion and Resurrection of Christ. Sr. Elvira's young people then spoke about how they fell and how Jesus came into their lives to help them rise again.

Gianluca: "I was a rebel kid. When my parents divorced I was so angry and I had a lot of pent-up hatred within me. The void within got even greater and I judged my parents. I sought happiness and pleasure from outside. When my friends and I took ecstasy I thought I was happy; then with heroin I touched rock bottom. I looked for help in a psycho-therapeutic community based on group discussion and things seemed to go well, but after a while I went back to the way I was. Then a prayer group helped me and eventually I entered the Cenacle Community. Now, after several years, my family has found peace and have forgiven one another. My healing was also their healing. I give thanks to God for the gift of a friend who helped me through her great faith."

In the morning was Sr. Elvira's turn. All the young people at the meeting were deeply impressed by her explicit, at times harsh, words because she spoke the truth.

"The Eucharist is the living, penetrating Sun. The only method which the Cenacle Community uses is healing through the Eucharist. Nothing else can heal life except the Eucharist. The young people let themselves be healed and liberated through Eucharistic adoration which changes and transfigures them. Adoration takes them from the darkness into the light. Together with Jesus we look back on our lives; and the Eucharist heals us because the Eucharist is healing. We have no other choice; we must let ourselves be healed by Him to become living witnesses of His life today. Jesus is alive today.

To you parents I say: do not be afraid to make your children pray starting from when they are little babes. Young people want to see facts, they have eyes and they want to see consistency. They are not scandalized if you admit being sinners, when they see your weaknesses. To the contrary, they will recognize the truth if we tell them the truth."

The Gospa's witness...

Fra Jozo Zovko's witness concluded the long series of talks. His prayer touched the hearts of the young pilgrims.

"For 20 years this place is the Upper Room where Mary prays and where millions of pilgrims want to pray with her when they respond to her call. In the Upper Room the Holy Spirit was given out, but it was also where the Eucharist was instituted.

It is not true that there is a crisis of the faith. The crisis concerns the apostles who don't know how to pray any more, the prophets who don't know how to keep their hands raised any more, and the priests who don't know how to go down on their knees any more. My dear brothers and sisters, thank you for responding to Mary's call, and for demonstrating that it is possible to live together in peace and joy.

Our Lady teaches us how to become new men by placing in our hearts the Eucharist which

is the heart of the Church. Where there is no Eucharist there is no Church. Our Lady is the first tabernacle! If you ask what the Church has done in these last 20 years in Medjugorje the answer is that she has prayed, fasted and celebrated the Eucharist.

At the beginning of the apparitions we began to celebrate Holy Mass in the evenings, but the police came to protest and asked us to close down the church. We didn't because we knew that if we couldn't celebrate the Eucharist it would have been the end of these people's faith. So we persevered and then the Gospa told us: "Adore my Son continuously."

My young people, you are the world's future. For years Our Lady has been saying that this is a time of grace. Fill yourselves with this grace so that you are able to overcome all barriers and all boundaries.

The Church is renewed thanks to the Eucharist; it heals man of his egoism.

Learn to be a gift for others; this is the meaning of Eucharist! There are five billion people who don't know Jesus. They know all about technology but they don't speak of God. That is why this youth festival is held. The prophet asks God: "who shall you send?", then the he responds: "Send me!" You tell God too: "Send me! Take my life and give it to those in need! Take my heart so it may become love in this world. God, send me!" This is the fruit of the Eucharist.

Lord, thank you for this day. Thank you Mary for these young people. Bless them all."

Berni

The young people's voices...

In communion with the Holy Father's intentions the Church of Medjugorje chose the theme of the World Youth Day as its own for the youth festival: "The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us" to reflect on the mystery of Incarnation, the miracle of God who becomes man and decides to remain with man in the Eucharist; the Immanuel.

St. John, in the prologue of his Gospel, says the Word of God is the light which shines in the dark (of the world): "He came to his own domain and his own people did not accept him. But to all who did accept him he gave power to become children of God, to all who believe in the name of him who was born not out of human stock or urge of the flesh or will of man but of God himself" (Jn 1:11-13). This divine sonship is fruit of the grace of Medjugorje given during this festival.

Through Mary, Mother of the Immanuel and our Mother, the young people were able to open their hearts to God and recognize Him. The effects could be seen in the joy and peace of the young pilgrims.

So that these days are not forgotten we asked a few pilgrims (between 18 and 25) to tell us their experiences:

Pierluigi: "The experience of Adoration in this festival was personally a fount of peace for me. I had been searching for peace in my daily life but I was unable to find it. This peace is lasting and is born in the heart. During Adoration I understood that if we open our heart to the Lord He comes into it and transforms us; all we need do is want to know Him.

It's true that here in Medjugorje the peace and serenity are different to other places, but this means that it is up to us to bring this oasis to other places, instead of keeping it in our hearts. Our Lady asks us to pray the Rosary every day, not to make fancy discourses. She has promised that the Rosary alone can do miracles in our life."

Paula: "During Holy Communion I cried very much because I could feel that God was present; I could feel His presence in me. I cried out of joy; my tears were tears of joy. In Medjugorje I learnt to cry out of joy."

Daniela: "From this experience I received more than what I expected. I experienced a deep peace, and I think this is the most precious thing I'll be taking home with me. I also experienced much joy, which was wonderful because I hadn't been joyful for some time. Here I understood that I had lost my joy because I had lost Jesus."

Many young people came to Medjugorje with the desire to understand what they should do with their lives. The biggest miracle is always conversion of heart:

Cristina: "I came here wanting to understand what I should do with my life and I was waiting for a sign. I was attentive, waiting for that "lightness" I experience when I encounter Jesus in the Eucharist, but then after listening to Sr. Elvira's boys I understood that the sign I should look for was conversion of heart; i.e. learn to ask forgiveness, not respond when offended, in short learn to be humble. I noted down a few practical points to work on, such as learning to talk less and listen more at home."

Maria Pia: "At this festival I was very impressed by the talks and testimonies and I discovered that my way of praying was wrong.

When I prayed I used to always ask Jesus for things, now I have understood that before we ask for anything we need to be freed of ourselves and offer our lives to God. I was always afraid of this; and in fact I was never able to pronounce the "Thy will be done" part of the Lord's Prayer and was never able to completely offer myself to God because I was afraid that my projects would not suit Him.

Now I have understood that we need to be freed of ourselves if we want to advance spiritually."

Those who experience God's tender, fatherly love are unable to bear grudges or ill feelings:

Manuela: "Here I experienced peace, serenity and forgiveness. I prayed very much for this gift and in the end I was able to forgive."

Maria F: "I saw here how the "coldness" in relationships is melted when placed before Mary's love; and I understood the importance of communion because staying on your own means to die, spiritually too."

St. John concludes his prologue with: "From his fullness we have received grace in return for grace" (Jn 1:16). We also wish to conclude by saying that here we experienced this fullness of life. We experienced Life which becomes flesh in the person who accepts it and from which comes eternal joy and profound peace.

Mary, on her part, was not just a spectator of these "miracles" but contributed so that God's plan for every young person at the Festival could be realized.

Agnese

The delicacy with which Our Lady helps her children to be reborn is truly surprising. Samuel, a French hair dresser who came to Medjugorje last winter, tells:

"I was homosexual. Though I had received a Catholic upbringing I was very far from God.

At Paris I used to go to the most perverse discos and my greatest worry was to "be on exhibit." At the age of 36, when I was urgently admitted to hospital, I discovered I had Aids. It was then that I remembered God, but once I was out of the hospital I continued to look for the man of my life for another 3 years. Disappointment after disappointment, I came to understand that I was on the wrong path and I started to turn to God: only He could give me the love I so desperately thirsted for.

I wanted to convert, and one day a book on Medjugorje came my way. I read that whoever goes there finds new life and new hope. Though I am normally a hard person, I broke down in tears. So then I went to Medjugorje and I was impressed by the intensity of Mary's presence; my Mother was giving me profound inner peace. From that moment on I began to work on my conversion of heart, and to look up to God.

My conversion began a little while ago, so I am still weak and vulnerable, but every day my heart spills over with joy for having found my Creator and my Mother. God used this disease which could have killed me to give me new life.

To all those who are the way I was I wish to say: God exists; God is the Truth!"

(From Sr. Emmanuel's diary)

Aid still needed

Divine charity continues to stir good hearts so that aid is delivered to those in need. Alberto Bonifacio and volunteers continue to deliver primary needs to people struck by war and hatred. Thanks also to the many "friends of Medjugorje" they are able to deliver not only material goods, but also a bit of hope.

From 19 to 23 August six vans took "family parcels" to the hundreds of Muslim widows and their children in refugee camps in north Bosnia (Gracanica). They pleaded with the volunteers to return more often, saying that they receive very little.

Alberto reminds us that through making donations to poor people (and with the proper dispositions) we are able to acquire the daily plenary indulgence of the Great Jubilee. So it becomes an extra incentive for us to help the poor, and to receive the sacraments of Confession and Communion.

Info: Alberto Bonifacio, Centro Informazioni Medjugorje, Via S. Alessandro 26, I-23855 Pescate (LC), Italy. fax: 0341 36 85 87

Echo on the NET: <http://www.webexpo.it/medjugorje>

Marija Pavlovic on Medjugorje

Mary's messages: a call to be witnesses of joy

Our Lady always asks us to live her messages. She doesn't want us to depend on them, but she calls us to be joyful bearers of her words and to be good Christians. The Blessed Virgin gives us the opportunity to come to Medjugorje and begin a new life. That is why she chose us 19 years ago.

When Our Lady appeared we asked her why she chose us, and she replied: "God gave me the possibility to choose, and I chose you." As one of Our Lady's witnesses I wish to help you, that you may be touched by this special grace in this year of the Great Jubilee.

Q. Our Lady continues to be present here despite the fact that many ask what she does and why she appears for so long. Is this so?

A. "I always say that Our Lady loves us and that is why she stays with us and desires guiding us on the path which every Christian should be on and would be on if it weren't because they are inert, dormant. A Pope once said that if a Christian is not Marian he is not a good Christian. That is why I would like to make you fall in love with Our Lady.

I recall that once Our Lady asked us to offer her some time in prayer during the night for nine consecutive days, so we went up the Hill of Apparitions and she would appear to us at 2.30 in the morning. We went up the hill for the entire novena, and offered it for Our Lady's intentions.

As I said, Our Lady appeared at 2.30 in the morning, but we, and the people who came up with us, wanted to stay on to give thanks for her apparition, and because we didn't know many prayers we decided that each of us would say an Our Father, a Hail Mary and a Glory Be. So it would often happen that we'd be there till 5 or 6 in the morning.

At the end of the novena Our Lady appeared very happy, but the nicest thing was that she was accompanied by many Angels, some of whom were big and some little. We have always noticed that when Mary comes with Angels if she is sad they too are sad, but if she is happy their expression of joy is even more intense than hers. That particular time the Angels were very happy.

At the moment of the apparition all the people who were with us saw a great number of falling stars, and they firmly believed in Mary's presence. The day after when we told the priest what had happened he told us that the day before was the feast of Our Lady of the Angels!

Mary's most important messages are: prayer, conversion and fasting. She asks for prayer, but even before this she asks for conversion. Our Lady asks us to begin praying so that our lives become prayer. I remember the time that she asked us to dedicate three hours to Jesus and we said: "Isn't that a bit much?" She smiled and said: "When one of your best friends pay you a visit you don't look at how much time you spend together." So that's how Our Lady invited us to make it so our best friend was Jesus.

Mary's invitation to prayer was gradual. The first prayers we said with her were the seven Our Fathers, Hail Mary's and Glory Be's, plus one Apostles Creed. Then, bit by bit, she asked for the Rosary, then the complete Rosary, and then she asked us to complete our prayer with Holy Mass.

Our Lady does not force us to pray; she invites us to change our lives through prayer. It is her desire that we live prayer in a way that our lives become a continuous encounter with God.

Our Lady calls us to give joyful witness with our lives. That is why, when I speak, I try to transmit the joy that she gives me. Her presence here in Medjugorje is not one of chastisement or sadness, but of joy and hope. That is why she is appearing for so long. Once, in a message to the parish, she said: "If there is need I will knock on the door of each home, of each family."

I see many pilgrims who feel the need of conversion once they are home, because improving the quality of one's own life means to improve the quality of the entire family, and of the world; and in doing so we begin to put into practice the request in the Holy Scriptures: become light and salt of the earth.

Our Lady is calling us in a special way so that we may begin with all our strength to be her joyful witnesses.

Edit. team

* **Molucca** Islands: Serious problems still concern various areas of the Moluccas. Several houses belonging to Catholics in the capital city were burnt down by extremist Muslims. Government troops present in the area did nothing to stop them. Furthermore, conflicts have broken out around the borders of Catholic and Muslim adjoining districts.

It is uncertain why these conflicts occurred, however, when the security forces intervened at least four people were killed and about twenty injured. In the meantime, Muslim snipers attack passing ships in the archipelago, and the Catholic community on the island of Saparua (central Moluccas) every day. Authorities of Jakarta sent 682 soldiers to the Moluccas for the sole purpose of requisitioning weapons.

* **Angola**: The bishop of Uije, Mons. Francisco da Mata Mourisca, has renewed the disposition of the Angolan Catholic Church to assist with peace talks in the tormented African country.

The prelate also added that his diocese, which has been harshly tried by the war being waged by government forces and Unita rebels (National union of total independence from Angola), has organized for September a week dedicated to the movement for peace so that a process of reconciliation may be launched on a national level through the people's participation.

Dedicated to Fr. Angelo "Cantor of Mary's glories"

The Association, "Solidarity and Aid for the International House of Peace," sponsor for the Padre Pio Hospital for handicapped and mutilated children, has dedicated its first fully operative unit in Medjugorje on the occasion of its inauguration to Fr. Angelo Mutti together with others who helped spread the "Medjugorje 2000" project. Fr. Mannes Ghizzardi, assistant Padre of the Association and Dominican from Bolzano, recalls Fr. Angelo:

"Fr. Angelo dedicated the last years of his priestly life to letting people know that the Blessed Virgin had come to Medjugorje to bring us the infinite mercy of her Son Jesus before the day of His judgement.

I met Fr. Angelo in 1985 by chance; it was a fraternal and warm encounter. He had already started publishing the Echo of Medjugorje with a typewritten sheet for his parish (the first one was dated 21 November 1984) with the latest news on the graces received by pilgrims who go to the shrine.

Fr. Angelo would say about Medjugorje: "Just think how many blessings a mother like Mary could transmit to those children of hers who obey and love her with all their heart! But let us treasure these days of grace during which she is able to grant us her gifts with even more intensity, by celebrating her feast days with pure consciences (confession), with the Eucharist and with other signs of affection."

During his last fifteen years of active priesthood, Fr. Angelo sang Mary's glories. He did it with love, in silence and all humility, as he prayed and typed. He received letters from all over the world; he used them to enrich his "Eco", but they enriched even more the hearts and minds of his many, many readers. Each time for me was a moment of grace; knowing that

Mary journeyed with her people in the world was reason for great joy.

Exhausted and consumed by his illness, Fr. Angelo would reply to queries regarding his health: "I hear the Blesseds calling me."

The news of his death appeared in Echo no. 150: that's 150 like the number of beads on a great Rosary of love which he recited to the very last for the Blessed Virgin Mary in a period of time which lasted 15 years like the 15 mysteries of the Rosary, like the stations of a personal Way of the Cross.

Fr. Angelo believed in the work being carried out by our Association, hence this expression of gratitude for his precious support. A commemorative plaque with his photograph will be permanently displayed in the new unit of the hospital."

Fr. Mannes Ghizzarda OP

Letters from our Readers

Fr. Lorenzo, Rwanda: "Dear friends, heartfelt thanks for your dedication and for the timeliness with which you send the Echo. It is an extremely useful and precious instrument; it helps me warm up the hearts of our young men. Their hearts explode with joy in discovering how tenderly our Blessed Mom loves them. We recite the Rosary for you every evening, that she may obtain for you the most beautiful graces."

Sr. Maria Assunta, Cremona: "Dear friends, sincere thanks for the Echo of Mary, and for continuing to publish it after Fr. Angelo's death. I pray that Our Lady may rouse generous hearts which will continue to support your precious work."

Zaira, Udine: "Infinite thanks! I am so happy that the work founded by Fr. Angelo continues. May his heavenly protection support and guide all those who work for it. We feel his presence now more than ever."

Fr. Diego: "For the sake of Fr. Angelo, and more so, of the Queen of Peace, please continue to send us the Echo because it is an excellent means of evangelization."

Giuseppe Bozzo, distributor of Echo in Canada: "Dear brothers and sisters, thank you for Echo! I know you feel orphaned, but take courage and trust in Fr. Angelo's spiritual presence. He is with you. With his and Mary's intercession Echo will continue. We are close to you in our prayers."

Anna, Bari: "I work in a parish and I picked up a copy of Echo by chance. I was surprised by the richness of its contents, the easy reading of the excellent articles which invite us to pray, and by the comments to the monthly messages Our Lady gives in Medjugorje. My devotion to Mary since has deepened!"

Clara, Genova: "I am always so happy to receive Echo and the people I give copies to are as well."

Anna, La Spezia, "Thank you, infinitely! I came across your publication by chance while in hospital. I enjoyed reading it so much; please send me copies regularly."

Daniela: "Dear friends of Echo of Mary, I've been receiving for some time your little

publication. It is a gift from God which needs to be spread to everyone so that His kingdom may come. What better apostolate could there be than to distribute publications which speak of Him through His and our Mother! Thank you for the light which comes from reading and meditating the articles in Echo."

Dear Readers, Our heartfelt thanks goes out to you for your numerous letters with words of encouragement, and your renewed trust and continued support!

And thanks to those who point out any inaccuracies so that its quality is guaranteed.

God bless you!

Editorial team

Rome to receive Our Lady of Fatima

"Blessed be you in this Holy Year oh Handmaiden of the Lord! Above all other creatures, your obedience to the divine call was complete! To you, entirely united to the redemptive consecration of your Son, our greetings!

Enlighten especially those peoples from whom you expect our consecration and trust. Help us to live in the truth of Christ's consecration for the sake of the entire human family and today's world" (J.P. II).

The venerated statue of Our Lady of Fatima has been "invited" to Rome by the Holy Father. It is planned to arrive on Saturday 7 October (Feast of Our Lady of the Rosary). For the occasion, in St. Peter's Square, there will be a celebration of the Holy Rosary with all the Bishops who will be in Rome for their Jubilee. The day after, Sunday 8, the Pope will celebrate Mass; and this will be followed by the consecration of the new millennium to Mary.

What a grace it would be to be present! Come with your families to honour Our Lady of Fatima! This way you will make a pilgrimage to Fatima... though you will be in Rome! Offer up your prayers for this initiative! It is one of the most beautiful of the Jubilee! Mons. P.M. Hnilica

We place our trust in the Lord as we ask you, dear readers, to continue showing us your support through your prayers and donations so that this little instrument can continue its mission in the world.

May Fr. Angelo intercede for you all!

And may God bless you all; and bless us too!

Villanova, 14 September 2000

Europeans travelling to Medjugorje should note that a passport is now required to enter Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Travelling to Medj. - By ROAD: bus from Trieste (adjacent to train station) leaves regularly every evening 6pm, arrives in Medj. 8am. Reservations ring Italy 040-425001. By SEA: Ancona Italy to Split. Departures Ancona: Mon., Wed., Fri. 9pm, Sat. 10pm. Departures Split: Sun., Tues., Thur., Sat. Reservations fax Italy, Agenzia Mauro: 071-202618; Agenzia Morandi: 071-202296.

* Main language editions of Echo of Mary available in Medjugorje at Miriam and Shalom shops right of St. James church and the last shop of the arcade under the International Hotel in front of the church.