



ECHO OF MARY

Queen of peace

163

May- June 2002

Our Lady's message, 25 March 2002:

"Dear Children, Today I invite you to be united to Jesus through prayer. Open your hearts to Him, and give to Him everything that is within: your joys, your sorrows and your illnesses.

May this be for you time of grace. Pray, my Children, and may every moment belong to Jesus. I am with you and I intercede for you. Thank you for responding to my call."

"With Jesus"

"Come to me, all you who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Shoulder my yoke, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. Yes, my yoke is easy, and my burden is light" (Mt 11:28-30). Called to be "friends of Jesus" (last month), and to be "united to Him through prayer," let us now run to Him and take refuge in Him. It is not a way of escaping from the world, or of hiding from our responsibilities, but rather, it is a way of accepting them more fully. And we don't have to renounce our personality either, for we find it there in God's original plan.

When the message was given it was Holy Week, a special time of the year when the Church relives Christ's Passion. Of course, the message can be applied to any moment in our own lives, for example, when our own burdens feel particularly heavy. And so we are called to meditate on His Passion, and unite ours to His. Be united to Him through prayer; place yourself within that great Event! (Don't look at it as the commemoration of an historical event!) We are not called to be viewers of a show; but to celebrate the Easter mystery within our own lives, and with our lives, day after day, in profound communion with Christ. "He who does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me" (Mt 10:38); that is, isn't similar to the Son.

Mary became our Mother from the moment of Jesus' death (Jn 19:26-27) and since then she has practised her motherhood by generating children in the Son, making them similar to Jesus, and then presenting them to the Father.

Today she calls us to be united to Jesus through prayer. Be united to Him, to enter into His loving relationship with the Father. May there be no distinction between His prayer and ours; may it be one with Jesus', so that the Father might hear it and answer it, not according

to our expectations, but according to His plan of infinite mercy and wisdom: "Not as I will, but as thou wilt" (Mt 26:39). The Father's will above all! Jesus taught us to say, "Thy will be done" - we say it every time we recite the Lord's Prayer. This invocation was most powerful when Jesus said it in the Olive Grove. It was much more than a wish then; for the Father's will triumphed in Jesus' soul, mind and body at that moment.

We ought to do the same when we feel that the yoke is too heavy; but we can't do it without Jesus' help, unless He lives in us. May every moment belong to Jesus. When the cross gets heavy, carry it together with Him. When our hope is shadowed by doubt, may He be our Hope. When approval becomes condemnation, may He be our refuge. When friendship and love is betrayed, may He be our Love. When suffering, illness, and death seem to threaten and destroy our life, may He be our Life.

May every moment belong to Jesus. Let Him live in us, for us, with us. May Jesus Christ, our friend and brother, through the intercession of Mary, the Father's mercy and the action of the Holy Spirit, grow in us and live in us without hindrance. Then nothing in our life will be without meaning; everything will be donated, in an exchange of love, of fruitful love. So let's open up our hearts to Him and give Him everything that is within: our joys, our sorrows, and our illnesses. Thank you, Mary, for responding to our call. Thank you for being with us and for interceding for us!

Nuccio Quattrocchi

Our Lady's message, 25 April 2002:

"Dear Children, rejoice with me in this time of Spring when all of nature is awakening and your hearts long for change. Open yourselves, my Children, and pray. Do not forget that I am with you and I desire taking you all to my Son that He might grant you the gift of sincere love of God and of everything that comes from Him. Open yourselves to prayer and ask God for the conversion of your hearts; He sees and provides for everything else. Thank you for responding to my call."

"Rejoice with me"

Just as any other mother, and even more so, Mary knows what it means to generate life. The reawakening of nature in Spring is symbolic for life and reminds us of life; something which Mary has often referred to in her messages. Rejoice with me in this time of Spring when all of nature is awakening and your hearts long for change. Spring is a time of blossoming; a time when things change. To stay closed up within ourselves, in our own convictions and ideas, often means that we are unable to open ourselves up to the Holy Spirit, our Sun.

Without that Sun, we cannot blossom; what we do is wither. This goes also for those who have been called to the priesthood or religious life; there is never a point of arrival on the path to holiness, and to take refuge in positions gained can mean, instead, regression.

A heart which yearns for change has to be an open heart, and if the heart is open to God, then the change is certainly a God-oriented one. That is why we need to open our hearts and pray; and let ourselves be penetrated by God's merciful love; let His Spirit penetrate us so we are permeated with life. God is waiting for us to open up to Him so He can give us His life, and give it to us for all eternity. That is why Jesus came into the world (Jn 3:16-17).

"Don't forget that I am with you," Mary assures us. For us and all those who invoke Mary with a sincere heart, her presence is guarantee that we will reach Jesus, the fruit of her womb (Lk 1:42). Whoever wants a fruit must climb the tree; and whoever wants Jesus must go to Mary; and whoever finds Mary will certainly find Jesus, said St. Alphonsus Liguori (The Glories of Mary). Mary is the quickest and surest way of reaching Jesus, St. Louis Montfort adds.

Mary desires taking us all to her Son so that He might grant us sincere love of God. The Holy Father entrusted mankind to her so she can take us to Him for He is the true light, the light which illuminates every person (Jn 1:9). So what are we waiting for? Only in Christ can we love God sincerely; only in Him can we experience being God's children; only in Him can we know and love all that comes from God. "I am the door," says Jesus. "If one enters by me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture" (Jn 10:9).

Open yourselves up to prayer and ask God for conversion of your hearts; for the rest God sees and provides. "Seek God's kingdom and his righteousness; all the rest shall be yours as well" (Mt 6:33). May our hearts open like a bud in Spring and blossom in Christ. This is the joy Mary wants for us. Don't fear, for nothing can stop us from reaching this joy, not even the worst of sins. Even manure can become compost! N.Q.

"War has been declared on Peace!"

This is one of the most recent expressions of the Holy Father, who like us all, is deeply saddened by the dramatic situation in the Holy Land which was the stage for terrible violence during the Easter period.

In all his public appearances, John Paul II never fails to implore with the peoples at war to put down their weapons and to seek dialogue and reconciliation. In particular, on the day of Christ's Resurrection, while the entire Church was chanting the Easter Hallelujah, the Pope, in solemn tones, announced: "Christ is truly risen, and brings peace to all! This is the 'good news' of Easter... His peace is the fruit of the victory over sin and death."

Deeply sorrowed for what is happening in the land where Jesus was born, where he himself went on pilgrimage last year, John Paul II continues: " 'I leave you peace, I give you my peace. Not as the world gives it do I give it to you' (Jn 14:27). Peace, in the manner of the world (and the experience of every age shows it) is often a precarious balance of powers, that sooner or later turn against one another.

The peace which is the gift of the Risen Christ is deep and complete, and can reconcile man with God, with himself and with creation."

The Holy Father then urged all the world's believers to "join their efforts to build a more just and fraternal humanity." Then to the Christians of every continent he said: "With trepidation and hope I ask you to bear witness that Jesus is truly risen, and to work so that His peace may bring an end to the tragic sequence of atrocities and killings that bloody the Holy Land."

His appeal was addressed first of all to the Father of infinite Mercy: on the second Sunday of Easter, Divine Mercy Sunday, the Pope invited all Christians to join together in common prayer to the Father of Mercy for peace in the Holy Land. "Implore a special intervention upon all those who have the power and responsibility to take the necessary steps."

Sadly, the world pays no heed. Through the Vicar of Christ, God is speaking to His children of conversion and reconciliation. He is warning them against the traps of the age-old serpent who continues to nourish the culture of death through a spiral of hatred which seems to have no end; or rather, which seems to grow stronger as each day passes.

Much is said, many comments are made, but too little prayer is lifted up to God, to the almighty God of Peace; and too weak is our faith in the belief that only He can loosen the knots of the tangled mess mankind is in. And worse still, people continue to kill in His name.

"Open your hearts to Christ, crucified and risen, who comes with the offer of peace! Wherever the Risen Christ enters, he brings with him true peace! May that peace enter, first of all, in every human heart, the profound abyss not easy to heal."

It is not our intention to sound pessimistic, even though the situation is very worrisome. Rather, ours is an appeal to form a chain of prayers, of sacrifices and of love, that it might intercede before God on behalf of the many hearts which are closed and cold to His fatherly calls. It is an invitation to pray unceasingly, with a living prayer that comes from the heart; that is able to open God's mercy for the sake of the many innocent victims which, with their blood, are paying for the sins of others.

In Medjugorje, Mary has been asking this of us for the past 21 years, but now in these difficult moments we realize how our response is still terribly weak, slow and uncertain. So let's stop looking to the powerful of the earth, to the politicians, as if they were able to resolve conflicts and wars! Victory over evil is determined on a spiritual plane, and it is there that we are all called to do our part of the fighting, with the very weapons given to us by Our Lady: the Rosary, fasting, penance, the offering of one's own life...

"No one can remain silent and inactive; no political or religious leader!" said the Holy Father. We, the recipients of the grace of being personally visited, called, and instructed by the Queen of Peace, the Mother of Risen Christ, cannot remain silent and inactive.

Stefania Consoli

Invitation to Holiness

People are often unreasonable, illogical, and self-centred. Forgive them anyway.

If you are kind, people may accuse you of selfish, ulterior motives. Be kind anyway.

If you are successful, you will win some false friends and some true enemies. Succeed anyway.

If you are honest and frank, people may cheat you. Be honest and frank anyway.

What you spend years building, someone could destroy overnight. Build anyway.

If you find serenity and happiness, they may be jealous. Be happy anyway.

The good you do today, people will often forget tomorrow. Do good anyway.

Give the world the best you have, and it may never be enough. Give the world the best you have anyway.

Mother Teresa of Calcutta

Place your trust in Mary Immaculate...

The Holy Spirit, with grace, "forms souls in and through Mary Immaculate, to make them similar to the first son, the Man God." St. Maximilian Kolbe spent his entire life trying to put this profound intuition of his into practice. Some of his companions (though very old, their memory of "Our Lady's madman" is very vivid) tell how they are aware of Padre Kolbe's spiritual presence, "as if he were here telling us: put your trust in Mary Immaculate; let Her guide you."

"He often prayed," they continue, "brief prayers in front of the Blessed Sacrament for the intentions of readers and benefactors. The intensity of his prayer was impressing. We only gradually realized how great a man he was. He was a mystic of the Immaculate Virgin. He drew his energy from Her, and his fragile health (he had only one lung) didn't make him less able to work. He would recite the Rosary with us, but not the way we did. We could perceive that he had a privileged relationship with Mary Immaculate.

One day, seven brothers were seated in the courtyard talking about Our Lady and what she meant for each of them. "Padre Kolbe came to sit down with us and said: 'Beloved children, Mary Immaculate is within us; heaven is within us!' " ***

India's Love of Mary

The variety of cultures and ethnic groups in the very populated country of India is expressed also within the Catholic Church which has 153 bishops, 23,000 diocesan priests, 80,000 nuns and religious brothers, and many lay faithful.

Mons. Ivan Dias, Cardinal and Archbishop of Bombay, in Rome for last year's Consistory, in an interview spoke about the faith of the people in his country. Everyone is very much devoted to the Mother of God. "It was Our Lady who called me to the priesthood," he said. "Devotion to Mary was something I learnt in the family. My parents taught me to look up at Her as Mother and teacher. She was very important to our family and venerated with the Rosary which we recited every evening."

The Church in Bombay, where the archbishop lives, is dynamic, and centred on the Sacraments and on Our Lady. "Mary is God's greatest work. St. Louis Montfort said that God gathered together all the waters and called it Sea; and He gathered together all the graces and called it Mary. Montfort also says that Mary is the compass which always points to Jesus; the magnet which attracts the Holy Spirit.

All India loves Our Lady; but this love for her is typical of our treble faith (in Jesus, Mary and the Pope) and distinguishes our Catholic Church. The faith of the Catholic people is truly alive and contagious. Many are approaching the Catholic faith thanks to the example of many witnesses and to Mary's direct intercession."

The Rosary, a lullaby for the soul

In a recent interview of renowned theologian, Card. J. RATZINGER, prefect for the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, he spoke about his personal relationship with the prayer of the Rosary, saying how this expression of "popular piety" is fundamental for the soul, and that praying the Rosary is fount of serenity and peace.

Historically, the Rosary prayer originated in the mediaeval. It was a time when the Psalms were the main reference point for those who prayed. The biblical Psalms, though, were a gigantic obstacle for all those who couldn't read, and in those days, that meant the majority. Therefore, a more suitable Psalter was sought for these, and the answer was found in the Marian prayer with meditation of the mysteries of Jesus' life, lined up one after the other like beads of a necklace.

The Rosary prayer is a form of, and aids, meditation. Its repetitive rhythm has a lullaby effect on the soul, giving it serenity; and the concentration on the words, the person of Mary and the mysteries of Christ's life which "appear" before us as we pray, bead after bead, have a calming effect on the soul; it frees it of its worries, enabling it to lift up to God.

It is a time-proven truth that repetition in prayer and meditation has a calming effect on the soul. It isn't that necessary to follow every single word, as it is to let oneself be rocked by the rhythm and to let it calm your soul. In fact, the words of the Rosary aren't void of meaning. Quite to the contrary, they help us see with our mind's eye extremely rich images of Our Lady and of Our Lord.

Those who first recited the Rosary had been out all day working extremely hard, and were not able to follow great prayer schemes. They needed a prayer which would offer them restoration and consolation, and free them of their worries.

The repetition and the rhythm of this prayer, particularly when recited with others, has a magnetic effect, and a calming one too; and it is a very complete prayer, and is never annoying, but donates tranquillity, consolation and liberation. It is no surprise then, that the Rosary became such a popular devotion for everyone, illiterates and literati alike.

* The list of Countries being consecrated to the Blessed Virgin is growing. On the 1st April a group of pilgrims from Viet Nam, with 3 accompanying priests, consecrated their country to the Queen of Peace in Medjugorje.

In procession, each of them donated a rose to Our Lady, whilst alternating prayers and songs, and entrusting to Her care their country with all its people.

Saints and devils

by Fr. Gabriel Amorth

I have often been asked, when being interviewed for the television or one of the many papers or magazines, if an exorcist must have special gifts or charisms and what instruments he uses for driving out demons. Perhaps I disappoint them when I reply that there is no particular quality that singles out an exorcist from anyone else, and that his power lies completely in the name of the Lord Jesus. I love St. Peter's speech at the Sanhedrin when he was arrested for having committed the shocking crime of healing a cripple! They wanted to know what mysterious power he used; and Peter cried out: "The name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth has given the man this perfect health (...) There is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved" (Acts 3-4).

In my Name drive out demons!

An exorcist also avails himself of those aspects of Christ's Passion, which are attributed with

saving power in the Bible. For example, we invoke the power of Christ's Blood, of His Wounds, His Cross, His Death and Resurrection, and of the open wound in His side. But first of all we invoke the Holy Spirit, because everything we do must be His work. And we invoke the Blessed Virgin, for it is she who crushes Satan's head, and intercedes with all God's graces. Theologians who don't believe in the universal mediation of Mary (she is the mediatrix of all graces) and start doing exorcisms would very quickly come to realize their error. We also have the help of the angels and archangels, especially St. Michael, the prince of the heavenly army, and we have the help of saints, who often surprise us. More than once I have had cases of diabolic possession being resolved thanks also to the intercession of a saint who had not been invoked, and for whom none of those present had any particular devotion. In the middle of an exorcism the saint has made his or her presence be known, so that we invoke that saint from then on to resolve the case.

There is another aspect, though, regarding the saints that I care to enhance. I wish that there could be a deeper study into the lives of saints and a story be written on saints and devils and the continuous battle that they fought. There are two aspects, both of which are extremely interesting, that should be given consideration: the torment, persecution and torture inflicted by devils on saints; and the victory of the saints over the devil. Part of this victory, of course, is their powerful intercession in exorcisms. There are many episodes, backed by historical evidence, that can be read in the lives of saints all the way down the ages. Even during the three centuries in which exorcists were practically eliminated (the reason why there are so few still today, and those that are receive little preparation), there continued to be saints who liberated people under the devil's influence.

I look back and like to recall St. Benedict who wasn't an exorcist, and may not have even been a priest, yet his prayers of liberation were so effective that Honorius III proclaimed him patron saint of exorcists; and still today his medal is used as protection against the devil. More recently, we have St. John Bosco; he was heavily attacked by the devil, and his prayers of liberation for people suffering diabolic influence were so effective, that in some cases his sole presence was sufficient to drive out the Enemy. In my own experience as exorcist, I must say that Padre Pio has always been my great help.

Padre Pio, great in battle

Faithful to an old promise made more than forty years ago, Padre Pio helps me constantly in my hard work as exorcist. Those who know something of the life of Padre Pio know how much he had to fight against the devil; and how he suffered because of the devil's vengeful attacks; because Padre Pio fought to win back souls from the devil and offer them to the Lord. It was a continuous battle. Padre Pio confided to his spiritual director, Fr. Agostino, that the diabolic apparitions began when he was about five years old, and that for nearly twenty years the devil took on human forms that were both obscene and bestial.

At the time of the first great battle (in the form of a vision) he was about five, and he was sent to fight "a horrible man who was so high that his forehead touched the clouds." The resplendent person that stood beside little Francesco (perhaps St. Michael) urged him to fight that monstrous giant, adding that he would assist him. The clash was tremendous, but Francesco (Padre Pio's baptism name) had the better of him, thanks to the help of that mysterious person. The episode, which Padre Pio considered very significant, concluded with these words by that mysterious person: "(The beast) against whom you have fought will return to attack you over and again. Fight valiantly; I will always help you so that you

will overwhelm him always."

My spiritual children will be yours

When I went to see Padre Pio for the first time in 1942 I didn't think that I would keep on going back to see him for twenty-six years. At the time I was a university student, and I got a degree in law, then I entered St. Paul's Society. After I was ordained a priest I wasn't happy being just a spiritual child of Padre Pio, but I wanted to take all those people who had become my spiritual children to him as well. I asked him to pray also for them; and then I got a promise out of him. One day I told him: "I have a big favour to ask of you Father." He encouraged me to talk, bending over me with a big smile. "I would like all my spiritual children, present and future, to automatically become yours. If you adopt them it will make me feel more tranquil." His smile widened even more and he closed his eyes to reflect briefly; then said: "Yes, my son. All right." I added: "These people, then, won't call you Padre (Father) Pio, but Grandpa Pio!", to which he laughed heartily.

On my part I have never ceased counting on his help, and I am always aware of his presence. Now that I am an exorcist, I haven't even the slightest doubt that all those people who come to me for help are placed under his protection without even knowing it. On some occasions his presence has been tangible. At times, some of those being treated by me have dreamt of him where he has been beside them to assist them in their suffering. On other occasions, during exorcisms, the devil has cried out, full of fear: "Away with that monk! I don't want that monk!", and upon my insistence he has been forced to admit that Padre Pio was present.

(From Exorcists and Psychiatrists, by Fr. Amorth)

Just a monk who prays...

"They seek God in books; but He is found in prayer," said PADRE PIO one day to his spiritual children. "If no one believes today it is because no one prays. God is not found in books, but in prayer. The more you pray, the stronger your faith gets, and the more you find God. My children, don't ever neglect your prayer. Pray often during the day. Do a bit of meditation, too. You'll find and you'll see God."

He would often say: "Prayer is bread and life for the soul; it lets the heart breathe; it is an intense and prolonged encounter with God." The Bible is full of people who conversed with the Creator. Jesus prayed and urged us to pray. Early Christians were called men and women of prayer.

Prayer must be intense because you can't pray without preparation; when you are full of your own problems, worries and concerns. It must be prolonged because you can't pray in a second; it takes time to turn inward. It often happens that as we begin to pray we stop, for we have to go, but when we go, also our prayer goes.

To pray is to love

We can't fool ourselves. Just as there is no love without suffering, neither is there prayer without suffering, because to pray is to love. A person who loves God prays; a person who says words to God does not pray. When a person loves God, everything becomes prayer, every moment is good to pray. The reason is because when you love, you think constantly of your Loved One, and want to be with Him. So your heart breaks out with a song, words of praise, of thanksgiving, a good deed, etc.

Prayer was Padre Pio's daily bread

A few years before he died, he said: "All I want to be is a monk who prays." And where do we remember Padre Pio? At the altar, in the chancel, on his knees, in the confessional, and always with rosary beads in his hands. On the subject of prayer, Padre Pio wrote on 1st November 1913 to Padre Benedetto, his spiritual director: "When I pray my soul loses itself in God... Other times it consumes with love for God... I perceive within my soul that it ardently, but ardently desires being loosened from life... I feel that time gets away so quickly; there is never enough time to pray..."

Prayer for him meant to be lost in God, to forget oneself so as to find oneself in God, to consume oneself for love of God, and the most ardent desire to be in communion with God. It was leaving this time behind so as to participate in a reality that was way beyond time.

Prayer indispensable for everyday life

This is what Our Lady has been telling us for centuries. Padre Pio paid heed and put her calls into practice; and for all of us he became a teacher of prayer. Not that he attended courses to specialize in prayer, but because with great humility, he prayed.

He would say: "When you are feeling discouraged because of doubt, anxiety, pain or sorrow, it is then that you need to have recourse to the Lord through prayer and find in it support and renewed courage." And: "Prayer is our most effective weapon; it is a key which opens God's heart."

Seeing Padre Pio made you want to pray

Next to his tomb you would desire opening up your heart to God. Countless people began to pray after having seen Padre Pio pray. The Apostles, too, wanted to know how to pray after seeing Jesus pray: "Lord, teach us how to pray." In response to calls by Jesus, Our Lady and Pope Pius XII, Padre Pio started up prayer groups. He said: "If you are my children, be united to me, and together we'll respond to Jesus' commandment, and to the Pope's invitation and desire to pray together. When my children will be united in groups to pray, Jesus will be amid them; and also Jesus' Mother will be with them. I, too, will be with them in spirit, and united in prayer."

Padre Pio recommended individual prayer in particular

Individual prayer, however, must flow into and be nourished by community prayer. There cannot be one without the other; both are necessary. The finality of our prayer is to bring the world to God. When he was asked why he started up prayer groups, he replied: "To bring souls to the Lord; to get people to pray, to pray together, and with Jesus. I have always recommended, and it is my desire that prayer groups be Christians in the family and in the world, that they practise fraternal love and do works of good, and that they be submissive and obedient to the Holy Church according to our Franciscan spirit."

Prayer is not an end to itself

If praying is encountering God, then a prayer meeting must change us, and make us witnesses of the Gospel in the family and in the world, and be for us a fount of joy and good, of charity and peace.

Padre Pio would often say: "If you are my children, I want you to pray together in the evenings, as a family: and together recite the Holy Rosary in honour of Our Lady."

To know Padre Pio is to know God's love for mankind, and the love that a person can have

for God. From him we can learn to be true Christians, and to understand that prayer must lead to charity, and that without prayer charity does not exist, for Jesus Himself tells us: "Without me you can do nothing!" So it is only when we are in communion with Him that our deeds become efficacious.

Without Him I can create a perfect organization, and surround others with kind gestures, and assure their rights and allocate their duties; but I will never be able to love them, for only God can teach me how to love. God is love. Love is found in Him alone.

Prayer radiates love

One day one of Padre Pio's spiritual daughters was half awake when she had a vision. In this vision she saw that in the middle of the sky there was a priest dressed in richly adorned robes. Then she saw his face: it was Padre Pio's. He became like a sun, and from this sun myriads of rays radiated in all directions. The rays were made up of little white and red roses.

When she asked Padre Pio what it meant, he replied: "The rays made up of roses represent the prayer groups which are springing up all over the world. The white roses represent those souls which strive to live in the grace of God, and be loved by God, and to practise fraternal charity. The red roses represent those souls which bear with joy the cross of suffering, and united to Jesus and to me they collaborate in the conversion of sinners and in the salvation of our brethren."

This is what Padre Pio wants from each of us. We are called to become roses; either white or red roses; but roses in any case. Padre Pio is with us; he won't abandon us; but he can't respond for us. He has already done his part, now it is up to us to do ours.

Liberally taken from: "Il Cuore di Padre Pio"
by Fr. G. Giacomelli

* Padre Pio will be declared a Saint on 16 June 2002.

Hundreds of thousands of faithful will be in Rome for his canonization. Let us unite ourselves spiritually to this great event so we too can receive the large portion of graces which God will grant to the world through the intercession of this beloved son of Pietrelcina!

Venerable Charles universal brother

One year ago (24 April 2001), in the presence of John Paul II, the Papal decree regarding the heroic virtues of the Servant of God, Charles de Foucauld, were officially proclaimed, giving him the title of "Venerable." A priest from the diocese of Vivieres, Charles was born on 15th September 1858 at Strasbourg (France), and was assassinated on 1st December 1916 at Tamanrasset (Algeria) by a band of marauders.

Cardinal Martins (Prefect of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints) said of Charles: "Charles de Foucauld was an extraordinary priest, a contemplative and a missionary. Known as "Jesus' Little Brother" he took Christ's humility, poverty and charity to the Tuaregs of the Sahara, proposing himself as a Universal Brother of Christians, Jews and Muslims."

A young rebel

The "little brother" had a very independent, ambitious, and stubborn character, and was very

firm in his own decisions. As a young man he was extremely impatient and rebellious. He lived a dissipated, reckless life, and because of his "undisciplined and notorious conduct," he was discharged from the army where he had been serving as a French officer. Yet, God had called this man; a man who had no respect for law and discipline. He was called to encounter God, walk with God, to be in God's company, and to be a friend for his fellow men.

"God, if you exist, make yourself known unto me"

In 1886 Charles was moved to conversion, and in October of that year he made his first confession to his "spiritual guide", Fr. Huvelin, thereby accepting not to seek the Truth on his own any more. He said "yes" to God with all his heart; it was an unconditional "yes" to that God who had patiently waited for the young 28 year-old. Fifteen years after his conversion he said of himself: "The moment I realized that God existed, I knew I could not do otherwise than to live for Him alone."

With that first "yes" Charles de Foucauld offered over his life completely to the Lord, promising Him obedience; and from that moment on he sought to be a champion of obedience, improving on his own records, if you will, with each passing day. Charles had a constant desire to embrace the Will of his Lord, to follow Him close by, to know Him more profoundly, and to give Him to others.

A desire for radicalness

After various experiences as a Trappist monk (in the Holy Land he was fascinated by the hidden life of the Holy Family in Nazareth), God led him amongst His poorest "sheep" in the wilderness of the Sahara desert where the young Frenchman underwent a profound rebirth accompanied by the desire to live a life of poverty and simplicity: "I cannot conceive of loving You without feeling a constraining need to do and be like You..."

His ascetical practices were the wings which enabled his spirit to soar high in ever deeper communion with God. From a life of complete independence, young Charles became totally dependent on his Beloved Lord, made evident by his concern for the poorest: "I think that no other words in the Gospel left such a deep impression on me as these: 'Everything you do for these little ones, you do for me.' ", and by his love for the Eucharistic: "I have Eucharistic Jesus here with me; He is the best of friends, and I talk to Him day and night."

No followers in his life time

Charles lived in solitude, and it is precisely here, in the heart of the Sahara desert and of Islam, that his vocation blossomed. He didn't manage to make anyone convert, and humanly speaking, we might say that his spirituality was sterile, for his every attempt to found any type of "order" failed. His call, though, really was quite unique, and he wasn't allowed to do any form of apostolate. But God's call wasn't futile; He had taken Charles under His protection as a sign of contradiction.

Our "Universal Brother," as he is known, was and still is today a sign of contradiction. The seed which died as a martyr and was buried in that barren land, shot up some years later. The fruits of his sacrifice starting budding in Algeria in 1933 and are known as the Little Brothers and Sisters of Jesus, and continue to bud in the souls of many others, who, inspired by his ideas and examples, feel the call to be "universal brothers and sisters."

Kresimir Basic

Become another Mary

Charles' programme of life was precisely to become another Mary, inspired by that "madman" of Mary Immaculate, St. Maximilian Kolbe. "I want to safeguard within my heart my will to give to Mary all my actions, and my entire spiritual life, so that She might offer it all to Jesus," wrote the future Blessed which expressed his desire to "become as Mary, alive and working, so that thoughts, desires, words, deeds, prayers, and sorrows might be transformed in her and through her..."

Born on the feast day of Our Lady of Sorrows, this Marian date had in some way influenced his life and vocation: "If Jesus came to us through her, became one with her, and was born from her, than what better way for us to go to Him than in the very same way He chose to come to us?!" Red.

Father, I abandon myself into your hands; Do with me what you will.

Whatever you may do, I thank you:

I am ready for all, I accept all.

Let only your will be done in me, and in all your creatures.

I wish no more than this, O Lord.

Into your hands I commend my soul;

I offer it to you with all the love of my heart, For I love you, Lord and so need to give myself, to surrender myself into your hands, without reserve, and with boundless confidence, for you are my Father.

Charles de Foucauld

Martyrs of our time

"He paid with his life for his firm opposition to every form of violence and his dedication to social promotion," the Pope said of the death of the Archbishop of Cali (Colombia), Isaias Duarte, who was assassinated on 16 March in front of the Good Shepherd Church in Cali. Colombia's 38-year-old civil war has intensified since peace talks with the main rebel army (Farc) collapsed in February. The archbishop had frequently criticised rebels for their attacks and kidnappings, and in 1999 he publicly excommunicated all the members of the rebel group after they kidnapped an entire congregation. More recently he had said publicly that money from drug traffickers was being used in campaigns of some candidates in recent congressional elections.

His prayer for the Country shocked many. "May the Lord have mercy on this wretched Republic," he had said.

The courageous sacrifice of Mons. Duarte goes to swell the ranks of martyrs of our time who write history, not with words, but with their blood and death. *

Pray for Peace in Holy Land urges John Paul II

On Sunday, 28 April, John Paul II called for "universal and constant prayer for Mary's special intercession for peace in the world, and in the Holy Land, during the month of May." "We may be sure that Mary can sustain the efforts of the one who seeks peace with sincerity and determination. No one more than she, the Queen of Peace, constantly watches over this laborious journey of humanity. May uninterrupted and common prayer be raised to heaven

from every part of the world during the month of May, so that at last initiatives for easing tension and for dialogue will be affirmed in the Land of Christ, and in every other place of the planet, marked by violence and pain," the Holy Father pleaded.

"In the month of May which is consecrated to Mary, let us pray the holy rosary, if possible every day, either on our own or in community," he said. "The rosary is a simple prayer, but profound and very effective, to implore graces for families, communities and the whole world."

Little Flower's Mission of Peace

One of St. Therese of Lisieux's desires was to be a missionary, so that the peace of the Gospel might reach all five continents; and that wish is now being fulfilled. Her relics, on a world tour due to end in 2005, are being met by enthusiastic crowds which greatly outnumber estimates.

"From heaven I will let fall a shower of roses," she said. Let us sprinkle the way on her pilgrimage with our own little flowers (prayers and sacrifices offered to God through her) so that the shower of roses she has been disseminating might find tilled, fertile ground, and blossom into beautiful gardens for the King of Peace!

English edition Echo of Mary, 163

"Blessed art thou amongst women"

"Return to the primitive fervour"

In the Upper Room with the Queen of Peace

The Queen of Peace calls us unceasingly to experience full communion with the divine Spouse who mysteriously "overshadowed" her at the moment of the Annunciation (Lk 1:35). In fact, Mary wishes to introduce and associate her children to that mystery of regeneration being wrought in the world by her Son, whom " God placed as the first-born among many brethren" (Rom 8:29; Lumen Gentium 63), since: "the maternity of Mary in the order of grace lasts until the eternal fulfilment of all the elect." (LG, 62).

This important maternal mission of Mary's, which gushes forth from the Father's unfathomable mercy, is fulfilled today in an extraordinary way through the special presence in the world by the Mother of the Church, who desires a rebirth of the members of the Mystical Body of Christ, through the action of the Holy Spirit. It is for this reason that Our Lady today is calling together her children to co-operate with her in her Son's work of regeneration in the souls of a multitude of brethren. And for this she is asking them to offer their lives to God - with simplicity, freedom and love - for the salvation of the world.

Mary asks that our "yes" to co-operate in God's plan of love be without reserve, and from the heart, as hers was when she totally offered herself to God right from the very beginning of her Immaculate Conception, and in particular at the moment of the Annunciation and at the foot of the Cross.

To realize this extraordinary plan of grace, Mary asks us to open our hearts to the gift of the Holy Spirit. Mary wants to lead us on a spiritual journey of unconditional surrender to Jesus, so that ever more profoundly He can live in us and manifest in us the Father's work, so we can become true "light of the world and salt of the earth." In Medjugorje Our Lady said: "Turn your hearts inwards to prayer, and ask that the Holy Spirit be poured out over you" (9 May 1985), and "I ask you especially to open your hearts to the Holy Spirit ... Open your

hearts and surrender your lives to Jesus so that He might work through your hearts..." (23.5.85).

It is only through a full participation in the life of the Holy Spirit that we can become effective witnesses in the world to the joy and light of the Risen Lord. Mary said: "Pray, my Children, that the Holy Spirit may come to dwell in you in fullness, so that you can witness in joy to all those who are far from the faith" (25.5.2000). And with our lives we will proclaim the victory of God's pure love over every power of darkness which today more than ever threatens to wipe out sentiments of hope and love among the brethren. "In particular, my Children, pray for the gifts of the Holy Spirit so that in the spirit of love, every day and in every situation, you may be closer to your fellow men; and that in wisdom and in love you may overcome every difficulty" (25.5.2000).

Our Lady helps us discover and defeat the many spiritual obstacles and hidden idols which settle in the folds of our sick hearts. These constantly offer resistance to the living action of the Holy Spirit, impeding that the fruits of grace in souls might blossom. Our Lady at Medjugorje said: "My Dear Children! You are absorbed with material things, and because of them you lose everything that God desires granting you. I invite you to ask for the gifts of the Holy Spirit which are necessary for you now so you can give witness to my presence here and to all that I am giving you. My Children, surrender yourselves completely to me so I can lead you without impediment. Don't be concerned for material things" (17.4.86).

Nonetheless, the Blessed Virgin is aware that the greatest obstacle which we must overcome so we can be true "instruments in her hands for the salvation of the world" (25 March 1994), is our ego; it is so proud and radically incapable of welcoming and transmitting true love to our brethren. Our egos are tragically paralysed by the hundreds of attachments we have to the insatiable idols of our times which noisily encumber our souls, and rob God's space.

Therefore, Mary invites us to enter with her into the Upper Room for this important spiritual move which will purify our hearts, enabling us to experience with her the great Novena of the Church renewed and reborn. John Paul II affirms: "Spiritually, the Pentecost event does not belong to the past alone. The Church is always in the Upper Room; it has never left her heart, and she continues to pray ... with Mary, the Mother of Christ ... since this union with the Mother has been part of the mystery of the Church since its beginning" (RM)

Says Our Lady in Medjugorje: "My Dear Children! Today I invite you to seriously decide to live this Novena (Pentecost). Consecrate the time to prayer and to sacrifice. I am with you and I desire helping you so you may grow in (the spirit of) renunciation and mortification and be able to understand the beauty of the life of those who give themselves totally to me in a special way..." (25 May 1990).

Giuseppe Ferraro (to be continued)

God's loving gaze

"Lord, you examine me and know me,
you read my thoughts from afar,
behind me and before, you hem me in,
and rest your hand upon me" (Ps 139)

With these words, the Psalmist introduces us into the mystery of being in God's presence. We might wonder what it means to be in God's presence, and immediately think of

Eucharistic adoration, or a visit to Jesus in the Tabernacle. These are two aspects; however, remaining in His presence is not something which is limited by time and space, but is rather a permanent condition of our daily living.

Remaining in God's presence is allowing His eyes to look upon us, to search us, and to know us. It sounds fairly obvious and simple enough, yet it is much more difficult than what we might first think. We only need recall the times we haven't had the courage to admit our errors before Him; and the times that our limits have weighed down on us so much that we've wanted to suffocate them. The old man in us comes to the surface and says with Adam: "I was afraid, and I hid myself" (Gen 3:10). When we are afraid and hide from his presence, all our lengthy prayers and vigils won't move our hearts if we haven't let His eyes meet ours, and unless we open our souls to His Spirit which penetrates ours from afar. But who is this God who looks on us so lovingly, and why are we afraid to stay in His presence? God is different to us; radically different to our desires, our reasoning, and our calculations, and we know it. Our souls perceive it, making them shrink back, afraid to show who they really are. Precisely because of this difference, He doesn't answer our little selfish prayers; and this can induce us to think that He is absent; even if every encounter with God is an experience of His presence and of His absence, strange as it may seem.

At times God is both present and absent at the same time. This helps us see how God is not at our disposal as though in a vending machine; and neither is He predictable. God is never predictable; to the contrary, the novelty of His grace always amazes us. If it weren't this way, His presence would become habitual for us. Instead, God wants us to seek Him with enthusiasm, and without egoism, but out of love. This way we would not be afraid of His gaze, and being in His presence would be His reward for our efforts as creatures seeking to be reborn. St. Augustine says: "Absence makes the seeking more intense and purifies our desire." Jesus says: "It is for your own good that I take leave" (Jn 16:7).

If it is true that God is different to us, it is also true that God is our Father. His intentions aren't to humiliate us, but to lift us up. He desires communicating to us His grandeur since He has called us to a glorious destiny. To this end, He humiliated Himself to death on a cross, and for the same reason He continues to call us before His presence so He can love us. Therefore, being in God's presence means to allow our souls to reach out to His Spirit of truth. He will show us what we really are, enlighten and purify us, and help us remove the obstacles so we can journey towards Him more speedily.

His gaze is not the gaze of a man, which can often be superficial or malicious. God's is the gaze of a Creator who constantly regenerates us in the amount we allow Him to embrace us. It is full of life, peace and joy; and similar to the loving gaze a mother bathes her new born babe in. We are called to let ourselves be bathed in God's gaze, and to let His gaze shine out through our own eyes so that others can be helped to understand themselves.

Knowing that God looks upon us and that He never takes His loving gaze off us, makes us certain that He accompanies us all the way along our life journey. "Where can I go from your spirit? From your presence where can I flee? If I go up to the heavens you are there; if I sink to the nether world, you are there," continues the psalmist. This knowledge makes us certain that we are loved and that we can love; and that without love we are poor and insecure creatures.

Are we ready to stay in God's presence? and be bathed by His gaze of love? and offer ourselves to Him for His work of salvation? Or are we like the young rich man in the Gospel upon whom Jesus looked and loved (Mk 10:21), but who wasn't able to hold His gaze?

Stefania Caterina

The Family is part of divine project

Man is a sinner, and through sin he detached himself from God, thereby giving place to a different order from that created by God. In today's society we see new matrimonial orders and new social orders which are gaining more and more ground and approval.

To approve means to legalize; so we have people wanting to legalize new forms and new ways of bringing life onto the earth. God had established one way; it was the way of love. Today new ways are being established. Life needs warmth, but here we are placing embryos in -60° temperatures!

Man's sin doesn't lie so much in doing evil, as in wanting to build his own way, his own order, his own creation which differs from that wrought by God. This is his sin! He wants to build a new order. In our days the Church has been asking all Christians to turn back to our origins, to what God created. She is also asking that we heal our memories, and a certain process has already begun and is touching hearts. It is urgent that a profound reconciliation within society is started so it can reach down to the roots of its problems.

The Holy Father is showing the Church the way to renewal and purification, because the Church desires becoming ever more real, and authentic. Today's society is in need of reference points which are clear, luminous and credible; but we, too, are in need of ways of peace.

Often I am presented with difficult cases of married couples; who are about to separate, and just about every possible way of reconciliation has been tried. In the end they come for a priestly blessing, to see "if at least this can help." When I ask if they felt loved by their parents as they were growing up, most of the times the reply is negative. And so at the origin of their incapacity to love each other and get along together is lack of love.

The sciences, too, support the idea that when a person has not had a happy relationship with his father or mother, he will most likely not be able to establish a healthy relationship with his spouse, or educate his own children with a well-balanced dose of love.

God disposed that every human being should mature, morally and spiritually, with the power of love which his parents would give him; and the Lord disposed that the father should give certain qualities to his children. Who is it that gives a child stability, character, firmness, the courage to face life, overcome difficulties and look with trust into the future? And as I say this try to imagine today's youth and how much strength they have to look into the future, and how weak they are, instead.

So who do these qualities come from? They come from the formation received by a father, by the paternal presence; because God gave to man, the father, these characteristics so he could transmit to his children the capacity to face the future with courage. Take away the paternal presence, and we have sons who though good, are unstable, insecure, and timid. The same goes for the mother who received from God other blessings to communicate to her children, such as love of life.. When a child is happy and serene you know his mother loved him.

What I have said about families also goes for society. In the past, society was built around this battle between men and women. Men dominated over women, and the latter were excluded from social life. Today, thanks to God, things are gaining greater balance. Allow me to transfer this matter to the formation of priests. When a man became a seminarian he was forbidden to approach women, and was told to keep as far away as possible from them

because they were dangerous! This conflict was so strongly felt that it was even institutionalized! Clearly, we have a case of errors being approved; and this is blameful. We can find the order of God again, not by looking back 50 years ago, but all the way back to creation. Jesus Christ, with His Resurrection, gave the outset to a new creation. To the Apostles who asked what they'd receive in return for having given up everything for His sake, Jesus said: "You who have followed me in the new world will receive a hundredfold in this life, and inherit eternal life" (Mt 19:28).

A new world; a new creation! Christ died and rose for us, and He began a new way of being. He took man back to his primitive state; not from a cultural point of view... but Jesus took man's nature back to its origins.

So we can ask ourselves how God created the couple, how He created the family. The Scriptures respond: "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." So God created man in His own likeness; but the Scriptures underline: "male and female he created them" (Gen 1:26).

The complete image of God is not in the male alone, nor in the female alone, but in both, because God distributed His qualities so that His perfect image could be found when the two of them are a unity. Men and women differ; they have different tastes, a different way of looking at things; and a different way of thinking and reasoning. A woman is more downright, and this is one of the reasons why they don't agree when they're together, because a man tends to be more rational and can distort things. But it is through the acceptance of each other that moderation and complementariness is reached.

Fr. de Fulvio (to be continued)

News from the blessed land

Annual apparition to Mirjana Dragicevic-Soldo, 18 March 2002: Several thousand pilgrims gathered to pray the Rosary at the Cenacolo Community for the occasion. Our Blessed Mother stayed 7 minutes and gave the following message:

"Dear Children, As a mother I implore you to open your hearts and offer them to me, and fear nothing. I will be with you and will teach you how to place Jesus first. I will teach you to love Him and to belong to Him completely. Comprehend, my Children, that without my Son there is no salvation. This you have to know, that He is your beginning and your end. Only with this awareness can you be happy and merit eternal life. As your mother I desire this for you. Thank you for responding to my call."

* At the 2nd int'l seminar for married couples ("Awaken Love in Your Family") in Medjugorje last March, about 40 couples from various parts of the world took part. Topics included: prayer, faith, dialogue and fidelity. The visionary, Mirjana, spoke about Our Lady's messages for the family. There were also two special occasions for the couples to express their difficulties, joys, needs and graces received. On the last day, during adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, the couples renewed their vows, while entrusting their marriage to Jesus.

* 7th Int'l Meeting for Priests, "Priest at the Service of Healing and Deliverance" in Medjugorje from 1-6 July next. Speakers will be: Fr. Gabriel Amorth, Dr. Philippe Madre, Br. Dominic Hession, Fr. Jozo Zovko; co-ordinator: Fr. Ljubo Kurtovic.

Book at one of the following: Email: lidija.paris&medjugorje.hr. Fax: 387-36-651444.

Email: informacije@medjugorje.hr. Fax: 387-36-651988

Instead of financial payment, priests are kindly asked to use up five Mass intentions.

Accommodation for priests is a gift from parishioners who will receive them in their homes.

Bring with you: alb and stole, Bible, small radio and head phones with FM frequency (for simultaneous translations).

* 13th Int'l Youth Prayer Meeting, Medjugorje 31 Aug. - 6 July: "With Mary Witness Peace and Joy".

Speakers: Fr. Daniel Ange, Fr. Pavol Hudak, Fr. Leo Maasburg, Fr. Karl Walner, Fr.

Maurizio De Sanctis, Fr. Jozo Zovko, Sr. Elvira Petrozzi, the visionaries, others.

Bring sunhat, FM radio and headphones.

* Card. Franjo Kuharic (RIP) passed away on 11 March 2002 at the age of 82. In defence of Medjugorje he had said: "We bishops, after a three-year long commission study, accept Medjugorje as a holy place, as a shrine. This means, we have nothing against it if someone venerates the Mother of God in agreement with the teaching and belief of the Church.(Glas Koncila, 15 Aug.'93).

* Mons. Nguyen Quang Tuyen, bishop from Viet Nam, together with 3 priests, paid a private visit to Medjugorje from 16-18 March. The Bishop prayed to the Queen of Peace for the Church in Viet Nam and for priestly vocations. He said: "...When we go back to Viet Nam, we will speak about Our Lady's call to conversion, and to adore the Blessed Sacrament, and to pray for peace. We ask you to pray for the Catholics in Viet Nam, that they may grow in faith, prayer and peace." Press Bulletin

Perhaps not everyone knows that Jelena was chosen by Our Lady for a special task; that of transmitting Mary's blessing to the prayer group. At each meeting, Our Lady always entrusted Jelena with a message with which She blessed the group, their prayer intentions and the people dear to them. "My dear Children... I bless you."

Receiving the blessing and being a "transmitter" of it can be compared to the prism of a multifaceted crystal which refracts light and reflects it all round, greatly multiplying the luminous effect. After having transmitted the blessing Jelena would consult Scripture for greater comprehension of the blessing in the light of God's Word.

The Power of a Blessing by Jelena Vasilj

The Hebrew word beraka (blessing) derives from the verb barak which can mean several things, but in particular, it means to bless and praise; at times it can mean to kneel, or even to greet someone.

In general, to bless in the Old Testament (OT) means to endow someone with power, success, prosperity, fecundity, long life, etc., so that a blessing upon someone was an invocation of abundance and efficiency upon his/her life. It could also be the contrary, as in the case of Michal, Saul's daughter, who despised David's blessing upon her family, and she became sterile (2 Sam 6:23).

Since it is always God who disposes of and grants the abundance of life, in the OT to bless

meant above all to invoke God's presence on someone. Moses' blessing upon Aaron is still in use in the Church today: "Thus you shall bless the people of Israel: 'The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face to shine upon you, and be gracious to you; the Lord lift up his countenance upon you, and give you peace.' So shall they put my name upon the people of Israel, and I will bless them" (Num 6:23-27). Therefore, it is only in His name that a blessing is given. God is the sole fount of a blessing (Gen 12). The abundance of life gushes forth from God, particularly through His mercy and fidelity, and in the OT He was particularly blessed for these two qualities.

Fidelity is what God promised with the covenant which He made with the chosen people (Deut 7:12); and the covenant is the key to comprehending the blessing (Ez 34:25-26) since the oath made by both God and man has its consequences. To be obedient is to receive God's blessing; to be disobedient is to call upon oneself His curse (i.e., life or death). "I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse; therefore choose life, that you and your descendants may live, loving the Lord your God, obeying his voice, and cleaving to him; for that means life to you and length of days, that you may dwell in the land which the Lord swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them" (Deut 30:19-20).

It is in this same light that the new promise in the New Testament (NT) should be read. Jesus Himself (it is in Him that the old promise is manifested) established the new covenant; and His cross is the new tree of life which destroys the curse of death; and through which we receive the blessing of life. It is precisely thanks to His body, the Eucharist, that we receive eternal life.

Our response to this blessing is to bless God. Besides receiving favours, and being blessed, to bless was also a way of being grateful to a person. So blessing God is essential in our devotion. In fact, the Liturgy of the Eucharistic begins with these words (Blessed are you Lord) and continues with the tale of God's blessings upon mankind in the history of salvation which culminates in the institution of the Eucharist as a sign of the new covenant. It is the priest who consecrates the Eucharist; for he has received the special power to consecrate and bless, but everyone participates by offering oneself and one's assets to God in a personal offering and as a sign of renunciation of one's right to use them for our personal satisfaction.

Mary, blessed with all God's blessings, and blessed amongst women (Lk 1:42), for first lived the beatitudes. May she bless us, that we might perceive her desire for us to be with her in heaven amid the eternal bliss of the Holy Trinity.

(to be continued)

Our Readers Write...

"Thank you for the precious gift of your publication. It is light and stimulus for us to live our blessed Mother's messages. May her Immaculate Heart bless your apostolic work, and make it fruitful.

I was recently transferred to Esmeraldas, where I work with poor people, descendants of slaves. I began a prayer group, "Mary's Missionaries," and each family consecrates itself to Mary and promises to recite the Rosary every evening in the home with the family, and to read a page of the Gospel; but also to live authentic Christian lives (avoiding arguments and forgiving one another). So far there are 30 families in the Group; but people from a

neighbouring town have wanted to start one too; so the devotion is spreading .. the Queen of Peace would be happy!" Sr. Vitangela (83 years old)

* From **Alaska** - "As a Catholic in a remote part of the world where few practising Catholics even exist, reading Echo over and over not only is spiritually uplifting, but confirms in my heart and soul why I am Catholic. I pray for the grace to never weaken or depart from this awesome gift God has given me."

Nita Young

Prayer Retreat in **Scotland** with Milona de Rambures (von Habsburg).. 19-20 July 2002. "Our Lady's Path to Holiness" - Craig Lodge, Dalmally, Argyll, Scotland. ph. 01838-200216, fax 200622, www.craiglodge.org

Echo is a free publication. We rely on your prayers and donations. Upon the request of many, we hereby indicate suggested minimum donations for a year's subscription.

A single copy: Italy 5 euro; abroad 8 euro.

Multiple copies posted abroad: 35 euro for 14 copies; 80 euro for 63 copies; 140 euro for 130 copies.

Contact us for information on larger packets, since the mailing cost varies according to country of destination.

* Make personal cheques payable to "Echo of Mary Assoc.", and mail to same at: Casella Postale 27, I-31030 Bessica, Treviso, Italy;

or if convenient, pay into a bank account in your country:

- Italy: Banca Agricola Mantovana, Ag. 4, Frassinò, Mantova, Italy. Acc. no. 68068/0 - CAB 11504, ABI 5024

- Britain: Royal Bank of Scotland, 26 George St., Oban, Argyll, PA34 5SA. Acc. no. 8326 0400 154351

* In the USA cheques payable to "Echo of Mary Assoc." can be mailed to same at: P.O. Box 646, Pacifica, CA. 94044.

We thank Ron and Fran Venditti of Pacifica in **California** for helping us organize a collection point for donations in the US. See details in table above. We are also very grateful to the Medjugorje Sentinel of **Sydney** for helping us over the years with the distribution of Echo in Australia and Oceania. May God bless them, and Our Lady protect them and all their dear ones for the wonderful support and friendship shown us.

! Readers in Australia/Oceania now please note that Echo will be posted from Italy, and that you must now write to us to keep your subscriptions up to date, to submit your donations, and for any other correspondence.

Echo of Mary Assoc., Casella Postale 27, I-31030 Bessica, Treviso, Italy. Ph./fax 0423-470331

email: echomarybk@tiscalinet.it

Our Prayers for You!

We invite you all to join in our prayers which we offer up to God on the first Saturday of each month. On this day we shall pray for the intentions of readers (these may be expressed within the silence of your hearts and offered up in prayer; it is not necessary that they be

written down and forwarded to us). Once a month Fr. Alberto will also celebrate a Holy Mass for the same intention.

Fr. Angelo once said to a spiritual daughter:

"Choose a chapter from the Bible and read it often during the day. Reflect on the part of it that impresses you most; let it guide your personal prayer and inspire your proposals for the day; and keep a diary or notebook so you can write down any impressions or inspirations, or prayers."

May these words be the blessing which accompanies this May edition of Fr. Angelo's "beloved" Echo!
God bless you!

Villanova Maiardina 8 May 2002