



ECHO OF MARY

Queen of peace

164

July- August 2002

Message of 25 May 2001:

"Dear Children, Today I invite you to give prayer first place in your lives. Pray, and may prayer, my Children, be joy for you. I am with you and I intercede for you all; and you, my Children, be joyful bearers of my messages. May your life with me be one of joy. Thank you for responding to my call."

"May your life with me be one of joy"

Our Blessed Mother had already spoken about **prayer and joy** as consequences of the same reality. Prayer comes first, but right next to it is **joy**. If prayer does not lead to joy then we should doubt about the quality of our prayer. If prayer is communion with God; if it is a state of surrender to the Holy Spirit which creates this communion - and while He inspires us He also opens our minds and hearts to comprehend the Word - then it comes to pass that joy: immensely deep joy; is produced from this communion. The joy we receive is the joy that comes from feeling loved by God and accepted by God despite our limits, our worthlessness and our sins: it is the joy that comes from knowing that *Christ is in us and we in Him* (Jn 14:20).

This gives way to the desire to pray again, to pray more, and above all, to pray better; that is, to let oneself be pervaded ever more deeply by the Holy Spirit so that our experience of God is less fleeting and our involvement is more profound. With this type of experience it becomes natural to **place prayer first in our lives**, because it changes the quality of our lives. In the Old Testament, the Psalmist proclaimed: *"Let all who take refuge in you rejoice and exult forever. Protect them, that you may be the joy of those who love your name"* (Ps 5:12); and: *"You will show me the path to life, fullness of joys in your presence, the*

delights at your right hand forever" (Ps 15:11).

How much greater is our experience of joy now that God is not just One who protects us and shows us the way, but is Christ, God made man, He who seeks a place within our own hearts! God 's closeness is so intimate that to distinguish oneself separately from Him is to offend Christ. The distance between the Creator and his creatures disappears, and with this distance goes fear; and in the place of fear comes joy. Mary has a fundamental role in this encounter between God and man: **"I am with you and I intercede for you all."** And she asks for our response: **"be joyful bearers of my messages."** Mary's presence can't produce anything but joy, and we have to communicate this joy first with our lives and then with our words.

"May your life with me be one of joy" How could it be anything else? Fear indicates that Satan still has a hold on us; he induces us not to trust Mary and God. Mary leads us to Jesus; she makes it possible for us - with her intercession - to experience Jesus' love; and His love is stronger than any human event, stronger than any other power, which *neither death nor life can take away from us* (Rm 8:35-39) because Christ's love defeated death.

It is living with Mary that our own lives will *account for the hope that is in us* (1 Pt 3:15). *"With her"* means to *live the way she does*, that is, with humbleness, hidden from the world, completely surrendered and totally trusting in God. It means to accept God's will without hesitation, without worrying if we don't understand straight away, without ever doubting. However, all this is not possible if we count on our own forces and capacities; but Mary continually ensures us of **her presence**, of **her intercession**, so that all we need do is offer her our "yes." Let's say it with a sincere heart, with joy, and she will help us, she will obtain for us from God the necessary graces, and the Holy Spirit will do the rest.

Peace and joy in Jesus and Mary!

Nuccio Quattrocchi

Anniversary message of 25 June 2002:

"Dear Children, today I pray for you and with you, that the Holy Spirit may help you, and may increase your faith, so you might accept even more the messages I give you here in this holy place.

My Children, comprehend that this is time of grace for each of you; and that with me, my Children, you are secure.

I desire leading you all on the way of holiness. Live my messages and put into your life every word that I give you. May they be precious to you because they come from heaven! Thank you for responding to my call."

"Words from Heaven"

If our faith were as big as a mustard seed we could transfer trees and mountains from the land to the sea (cf. Lk 17:6; Mk 11:23). Just imagine what we could do if we had greater faith in Mary's messages! **"I pray for you and with you, that the Holy Spirit may help you, and may increase your faith, so you might accept even more"** - with greater depth - **"the messages I give you here in this holy place:"** It can't be denied that the *new evangelization* being wrought by Mary's presence in Medjugorje is bearing fruit, but it clearly isn't enough; and this explains her exceptionally prolonged stay in this holy place.

If the tree still hasn't fully blossomed, the responsibility is ours, and of our hard hearts. It makes us think of Jesus' lament over Jerusalem, and we hope that it won't be that also *we won't have known the time the time of our visitation* (Lk 19.44b).

Mary often repeats to us that **this is time of grace**, and this time she adds that **we are safe with her**. That is to say that if we do what she says, we will put this favourable time into good use. Till when will we be given this possibility? Will it be for as long as heaven remains open and Mary's **precious words** descend upon us? *"And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the babe leapt in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit"* (Lk 1.41). We, too, should feel something leap within our souls when we hear Mary's words: not fleeting emotions, but an inundation of Spirit is what is needed to make us radically change, and this depends on our openness to His action. This is why Mary's words are **precious**, infinitely more precious than any other thing in this world. If we **live her messages**, miracles will be wrought.

Mary is with us - she **prays for us and with us** - so let's join her in prayer! If we pray with her we will find a place in God's Heart, and He will be able to dwell in us. It is for this that Mary comes: **to lead us on the way of holiness**. It doesn't mean to add more words to our prayer; it doesn't mean to give a part of what we have; it means to give ourselves, to surrender ourselves entirely up to Mary, with childlike trust, *as a babe in his mother's arms* (Ps 130:2).

We have to put Mary's every word into our lives; that is, do everything that she asks of us, which isn't to repeat prayer formulas, but to live according to her teachings. Her precious words aren't made up of letters of the alphabet. Her every word is made of flesh and blood, and Holy Spirit. The Word she brings us is Jesus Christ. Mary is asking us to live according to Jesus' teachings. *N.Q.*

Our Lady's Messengers

Jesus taught His disciples to go out into the world to announce the good news. Everyone should do as they did. Christians have an obligation to do this. In particular, priests have an obligation to do this. They are consecrated to God and it is their faculty to announce. Priests are representatives of Jesus Christ in the Church and in the world. That is why **it is important that there be priests**, for their presence ensures the presence of Jesus amongst men.

A future without Jesus is impossible. Without priests, there is no bridge which connects God to man; no one to impart the Sacraments. Christ needs men; He needs priests who have become messengers and are willing to make Him known to others throughout the world. So just as **Mary became God's messenger and a bearer of hope**, we too must carry the message of peace to others. Priests, above all, must be bearers of the good news.

Priests from all over the world come to Medjugorje. They come with their faithful to this Shrine in search of a true Christian message. Most of these priests act as guides to prayer groups in their own parishes or communities, and many of these groups are fashioned after the Medjugorje model. And as such, they spread Our Lady's messages. They become the Blessed Virgin's messengers and her representatives. It is interesting to note that the priests who come to Medjugorje do so in a humble manner - in the manner of Mary, we would say. **Many of these received their vocation right here in Medjugorje**, and come back to give thanks to God. Truly, the Queen of Peace's messages have spread far and wide, and we can say that there are practically no dioceses or countries in the world which do not have a priest who has not embraced the Medjugorje message. God is great; nothing is impossible for Him. Silently, humbly, almost imperceptibly, the Shepherd has been calling His servants and through them, His sheep are finding their way to the safety of His fold.

To think of them means we are being prompted to pray for them, for it is the Holy Spirit who inspires us to support each other with prayer. *Fra Mario Knezovic*

Youth at Toronto shine with light

*"You are the salt of the earth... you are the light of the world" (Mt 5:13-14) is the theme chosen by John Paul II for the **17th World Youth Day** to be held in **Canada** at the end of July (2002). Opening day is the **23rd**, while on the **28th**, the Pope will close the meeting with the celebration of Holy Mass at Downsview Park. The youth will make their way to the grounds the evening before for the night-long vigil, just as they did two years ago at the now famous Torvergata University grounds in Rome.*

"The symbol of the cross evokes the desire for truth and the thirst for the fullness of knowledge which are imprinted deep within every human being," said the Holy Father in his message for youth preparing for the WYD. "In the heart of the night we can feel frightened and insecure, and we impatiently await the coming of the light of dawn. The light which Jesus speaks of in the Gospel is the light of faith, God's free gift, which enlightens the heart and clarifies the mind."

The youth of our time, it is known, have to take account of a society and a life-style which, in a subtle and alluring way, tries to put out every light that the Holy Spirit infuses with Baptism, and in exchange it proposes many false lights which quickly die, condemning those it had attracted to groping in the darkness of incredulity, bewilderment, uncertainty and fear.

Today's society is aware of the profound uneasiness amongst the youth who often end up with drug and alcohol problems, or worse, commit suicide, but it does not provide any valid or resolute solutions which might give the youth a sense of hope in the future. *"That is why the words of Jesus explaining his identity and his mission are so important: 'I am the light of the world; whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life' (Jn 8:12),"* continued the Pope. So it is in **"our personal encounter with Christ that life receives new light, and we are set on the right path."**

Through Peter's successor, God invites today's youth **to resist the spirit of the world:** *"In this secularized age, when many of our contemporaries think and act as if God did not exist or are attracted to irrational forms of religion, it is you, dear young people, who must show that faith is a personal decision which involves your whole life. Let the Gospel be the measure and guide of life's decisions and plans! Then you will be missionaries in all that you do and say, and wherever you work and live you will be signs of God's love, credible witnesses to the loving*

presence of Jesus Christ."

There is a lot of expectation in the air for this special youth meeting in Canada and its various **gatherings, lessons and festivities**, and the incredible atmosphere of joy and enthusiasm for which they are known; that same joy and enthusiasm which changed the face of Rome two hot summers ago.

Young people from all round the world will be going there, to become "salt." Let's listen to what the Pope has to say about being salt of the earth: *"One of the main functions of salt is to season food, to give it taste and flavour. This image reminds us that, through Baptism, our whole being has been profoundly changed, because it has been "seasoned" with the new life which comes from Christ (cf. Rom 6:4). The salt which keeps our Christian identity intact even in a very secularized world is the grace of Baptism. Through Baptism we are re-born. We begin to live in Christ and become capable of responding to his call to "offer [our] bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God" (Rom 12:1). Writing to the Christians of Rome, Saint Paul urges them to show clearly that their way of living and thinking was different from that of their contemporaries: "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and pleasing and perfect" (Rom 12:2).*

For a long time, salt was also used to preserve food. **As the salt of the earth, young people are called to preserve the faith they received, and pass it on intact to others.** At Toronto, a multi-cultural and multi-faith city, millions of young people will speak of Christ as the one Saviour and proclaim the universal salvation of which the Church is the sacrament.

"Come, and make the great avenues of Toronto resound with the joyful tidings that Christ loves every person and brings to fulfilment every trace of goodness, beauty and truth found in the city of man. Come, and tell the world of the happiness you have found in meeting Jesus Christ, of your desire to know him better, of how you are committed to proclaiming the Gospel of salvation to the ends of the earth!"

Stefania Consoli

Cross and Conversion in Canada

Its pilgrimage across 72 dioceses took it to the arctic regions and vast prairies, it's been on fishing boats to cross lakes and rivers, it's gone over mountains and through parks and along city streets. The **WYD Cross** is just 3.8 metres tall, but its power is such that people's lives are turned about.

Canada's citizens were caught unawares, used as they are to meetings of quite a different nature (and not all of them edifying); but who could have expected that a piece of wood, a symbol for another much older piece of wood used to crucify the Son of Man, would have struck them so deeply! Many wept in its presence, others pushed their way in so they could touch it, and local papers dedicated their front pages to it. An apparently 'normal' event was able to move people's hearts and transform a rather 'formal and drowsy' faith into a fervent acceptance of that God who gave us life through His Crucifixion.

In his **homily at Padre Pio's Canonization** (16 June), John Paul II emphasized the importance of the cross as a gift from God which becomes an instrument of salvation. " *'But may I never boast except in the cross of Our Lord Jesus Christ' (Gal 6,14)*. Is it not, precisely, the "glory of the Cross" that shines above all in Padre Pio?" The Pope never misses a chance to remind us of the essential, and to silence those silly voices that want us to enter heaven through doors which aren't 'narrow.' Someone commented: "That cross emits immense energy, its power is irresistible. It's a symbol of unity, because we're all attached to it." *S.C.*

Raised up to heaven with Mary Assumed

On 1st Nov. 1950 Pope Pius XII proclaimed the Marian dogma of the Assumption. The fourth dogma, it came after those concerning Mary's divine motherhood, her perpetual virginity, and her immaculate conception. The dogma had been preceded by many requests, and was eventually proclaimed after lengthy consultation with the world's bishops. In a similar way the dogma of the Immaculate Conception had been proclaimed nearly a hundred years earlier in 1854 by Pope Pius IX. Both these dogmas are characterized by a lack of explicit biblical foundation, and are founded, instead, on Tradition of the Church. In fact, very early in Church history, perhaps as far back as the second century, Christians were expressing their belief that Mary was taken body and soul into heaven.

What does the dogma of the Assumption suggest to our faith?

The dogmatic definition says: *"The Immaculate perpetually Virgin Mother of God, preserved from all stain of original sin, when the course of her earthly life was finished, was taken up body and soul into heavenly glory, and exalted by the Lord as Queen over all things, so that she might be more fully conformed to her Son, the Lord of lords and conqueror of sin and death... From the universal agreement of the Church's ordinary Magisterium we have a certain and firm proof demonstrating that the Blessed Virgin Mary's bodily Assumption into heaven ... is a truth revealed by God and therefore should be firmly and*

faithfully believed by all the children of the Church."

The Council Fathers wished to stress that Mary, unlike Christians who die in God's grace, was taken up into the glory of heaven with her body. The dogma of the Assumption affirms that Mary's body was glorified after her death. This means that while for other human beings the resurrection of the body will take place at the end of the world, for Mary the glorification of her body was anticipated by special privilege.

The encyclical, *Ad Coeli Regina*, by Pius XII four years later, proclaims Mary's regality, and in doing so affirms the sublimity of the glory endowed upon her. In defining the dogma, Pius XII avoided using the term "resurrection" and did not take a position on the question of the Blessed Virgin's death as a truth of faith. In fact, some theologians think Mary went into heaven after falling asleep without dying (dormition). This explains why the Church used to celebrate the Feast of Mary's Dormition before the Assumption was instituted. In fact, it was reasoned that if death is the consequence of original sin, and if Mary is free of the original sin, then Mary could not have died.

Today we are better able to define the question of Mary's death

The hypothesis that Mary did not die sounds today rather ingenuine and even unworthy in the Blessed Virgin's regards. In particular, the apocryphal Gospels (books which the Church considers not inspired by God, but are nonetheless valid testimonies of the faith during the early centuries) all agree that Mary died a natural death in Jerusalem in the presence of the apostles.

At the beginning of the V and VI centuries the majority of the Fathers of the Church agreed that Mary died, or at the most they refrained from speaking on the subject. Up to more recent times it was unanimously thought that she died. Today's theology has uncovered important notions about Mary's death. Should Mary, who was the Lord's most faithful disciple, not follow Him to the very end, and experience the mystery of death to be glorified then by the Resurrection? This would unite more closely the Virgin Mother to her Son, making her participation in the paschal mystery of Christ's death and resurrection much deeper and truer.

How does the mystery of Mary's Assump-tion effect our life of faith?

The Assumption gives us reason to hope in God's salvation. Mary Assumed into Heaven is a testimony to the final glory, of what will be at the end of time. She is the first of the redeemed; through her God's salvation has been fully applied - and it is exactly what God wants for each of us. Karl Rahner, a great theologian from the 20th century,

affirmed that Mary is the icon of what God wanted for man in the beginning, and of what God will do of man at the end. This is to say that the Virgin is the image of man fully accomplished in God. It tells us what we will be, by the hand of grace, in the Kingdom of Heaven. Of course, Mary precedes us, because she has already entered God's glory, and her glory is way beyond whatever degree of glory we might reach; but it remains that we will be similar to her, because like her, we are humans whose salvation is wrought by Christ's same saving power. Mary's Assumption is, therefore, a happy foreboding of the glory which we too will bathe in; it nourishes our hope that we too will one day be fulfilled and transfigured by God.

Mary's Assumption gives us reason to trust in future

Time does not rush forth blindly. It's course is set to take the world to the fulfilment of God's glory. This world which seems to be rolling downhill towards the abyss, bears the indelible mark of divine salvation; and this salvation will be fully manifested at the end, just as it was manifested in Mary. History will not come to an end in the depths of nonsense or the darkness of nihilism. The end of time is already marked by a glorified woman and a redeemed humanity, and the fulfilment of every human event in Christ who sums up all things in Himself.

Christian view of future has to be optimistic

We mustn't fear for the future. Rather, we should go onwards with a constructive and trusting attitude, in the knowledge that we are walking towards God's Kingdom, towards the Virgin dressed in heavenly glory. May Mary be for us the certainty of final fulfilment, and incentive to make good use of our time, so that with commitment and responsibility, God's Kingdom might come without further delay.

Mary's Assumption is gift for us all

It is consolation in difficult times, and support for our Christian hope. Our life of faith will be greatly enhanced if we unite it to Mary, who is our glorious Mother, and if we pray with her, and walk with her down the path of time. Mary is with us; her Assumption doesn't place her further away from us. To the contrary, Mary walks by our side as we journey on our earthly pilgrimage. She opens up her motherly heart for us, and wants to fill us with love, so we can rejoice in her beauty and her glory, and together with her, can contemplate and praise God's splendour for having wanted to share His divine life and His holiness with all His children. Mary is the first of all creatures to be robed in glory, but next to her, in close communion with her, each of us will find his own place in the glory of Heaven. God loves us; He wants us with

Him, and He wants us transfigured, similar to the way He loved, wanted and transfigured the Virgin of Nazareth. May we open our hearts to God; may hope reign in our hearts, and may we encounter Mary in her Assumption, in the glory of heaven. *Massimiliano Curletti*

Fr. Ljubo: "Today" the Mother comes to us

Each message is proof that Mary, our heavenly Mother, walks by our side, accompanies our every step. Just as we didn't know when her apparitions would begin, neither do we know when they will cease. It seems to us that she has been appearing for a long time, and back in 1985 the seers asked her: "**Why do you stay so long with us?**" She replied: "**Are you tired of me?**" Needless to say, they didn't ask again. In fact, how could it ever be too long to be with and walk beside the Mother of God? When we are with the people we love we do not get tired of being with them. It is much more difficult to remain with people whom we don't love, just as it is difficult to work when we don't love our work.

Mary's motherly love is a force, a powerful attraction, and it is for this that she does not tire. Similarly, St. Paul wrote to the Philippians: "My brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you is not a burden for me, and it is useful for you" (Ph 3:1).

It is safer and better for us to live and grow in the faith in Jesus, while Mary is by our side. For it is today that Mary comes to us.

"Today" God loves us - not yesterday or tomorrow, but today. "Today" I can be closer to God through Mary's help, just as "today" I can distance myself from Him. If I don't grow in my faith with every passing day, then

my return to God becomes more difficult.

"Today I invite you to place prayer first in your lives." The tell-tale signs which indicate that God and prayer aren't of prime importance in my life are the difficulty I have deciding for prayer, and the distractions and excuses that I easily find so as not to pray. In doing such, I keep on delaying the encounter with God who is fount of peace and joy. Our Lady came to teach us to love ourselves and each other the way God loves us, but she also promised to remain with us along this journey. With Mary, whom God loves, we can rejoice as we hasten along this faith journey till when we'll be able to understand all our sufferings, efforts, crosses and joys in life. Our Mother wasn't spared either the effort of understanding God's plans for her. St. Luke wrote: "Mary kept all these things, pondering them in her heart" (Lk 2:19).

Fr. Ljubo Kurtovic

Mary, "Full of Joy"

This time, too, Mary's message is an invitation to be joyful. Joy as in fruit of prayer, as in the feeling with which we ought to transmit Mary's messages. But when our hearts are burdened by suffering and difficulty, it doesn't seem possible to us that we can also be joyful. Once again, Our Blessed Mother helps us understand how happiness does not depend only on "pleasant" situations. All life's events can be reason for joy. In fact, the Blessed Virgin, besides being the "*full of grace*" is also the "*full of joy*," fruit of her encounter with the Lord.

The Evangelist Luke presents an exultant Mary and her cousin Elizabeth. Mary learnt from the Angel that Elizabeth was expecting; Elizabeth "learnt" from the Holy Spirit that Mary was expecting the Messiah, and together, the joy in their hearts exploded: "*My soul glorifies the Lord, my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour.*" More than any other creature, Mary understood that God works marvels: His mercy is from age to age, He raises the lowly, He is faithful to His promises...

A joyful witness to the Father's love, Mary also suffers for all the sorrow and suffering of all God's children; just as she suffered with great strength and dignity as she assisted her Son dying on the Cross. Mary never despaired, for her heart was open to the joy of the Resurrection which Christ had announced.

The Virgin, symbol of the new Jerusalem, thus fulfills the prophet's words: "*I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall exult in my God; for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation, he has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels*" (Is 61:10).

In her closeness to Christ, joy in its full resounds in her. That is why we turn to Mary, *Causa Nostrae leatitiae* (cause of our joy), for it is she to whom we must pray so that our joy might reflect the reality of being redeemed, full of grace, and children of the Most High.

No room for sadness in "sorrowful mysteries"

It is almost paradoxical to think that the sorrowful mysteries of the Rosary impermeate the soul with happiness. Unless you have joy, you cannot love Crucified Jesus. Joy is the grace which God grants when you love His Crucified Son.

The mysteries of Christ's Passion make us sad, as we wonder why it had to happen, and why we too have to bear a cross. What we need do **when we pray the sorrowful mysteries is learn to place all our sadness in Christ's Heart,** and open our own hearts to Him so that He

can touch us with His joy.

* **First mystery:** Jesus' agony in the garden, and the joy of being with His Father

Being with His father was more important than all His tears, than all His bloody sweat, than Judas' betrayal, than the Apostles' abandonment. O Lord Jesus, help us to establish an intimate relationship with the Father; send your Holy Spirit to waken in us joy. We have decided for God the Father; grant us the joy of this choice even when we are being tried.

* **Second mystery:** even while tied to the pillar, Jesus' joy was deep
If we are tied down because of our choice in favour of God, joy will fill our hearts. We feel tied down because God wants to remove from us all that is not perfect. Human activities tie us down; while the state of being in God makes us free. God gives us peace, and incredible strength for the moments when we feel tied down and scourged. Let us open our hearts to His will, because God wants to give us joy in those moments. He allows us to feel tied down so that we can open our hearts and receive even deeper joy.

* **Third mystery:** Jesus is crowned with thorns, and we contemplate in Him the joy of being humbled

Jesus humbled Himself willingly because humility acts as a soothing ointment for the soul. When you are united to Jesus you discover that this medicine heals life's wounds. This is the "happiness" reserved for the afflicted, the persecuted, the lowly.

When, with Jesus, we are deeply humbled we become adorers of God and as such are able to see His glory. Humiliation doesn't hurt us, but are occasions for joy.

* **Fourth mystery:** contemplate the joy of bearing the cross

When you offer yourself to Jesus you gladly bear your cross for the sake of your brethren, for the world's salvation, and you immediately receive joy, grace and strength. If you refuse the cross, you choose something which isn't in God, a joy which doesn't come from God, and this makes you weak, sad and frustrated.

Instead, bearing your cross for the world's salvation, is fount of immense joy. God rewards one hundred fold.

* **Fifth mystery:** contemplate the joy of death

St. Francis called it "sister death." Death is "passing from this world to the Father." When you choose God, even at the moment of death, you rejoice in the knowledge that your life is about to be fulfilled. Only those who experience this joy can console others who die or suffer. Life donated to God, even when our earthly life is about to cease, is victory over death. The joy of death is the definite choice of life in God.

Red.

Holy Water - Using holy water with faith and confidence is of great profit for the soul and body and can assist souls in Purgatory. How many blessings, merits and graces you could gain for yourself, for your family, and for countless people if you put into practice this simple exercise of charity, as well as assuring yourselves a crowd of intercessors!

Each time you leave/enter your room or a Church/chapel, sprinkle 3 drops of holy water: one for yourself and your family; one for the dying, and one for souls in Purgatory.

On human joy, Divine Joy and the Cross

*Human joy and Christian joy: two different realities, both are completed in Christ, true God and true man. Man's natural instinct to rejoice finds fulfilment in Him alone. **Enzo Bianchi and Cardinal Martini**, two pastors of the Church (which is a witness and heir to the evangelical joy) help us understand the meaning of joy in the present moment of history.*

Human Joy

To understand the meaning of 'seal of joy' in Christian life, we need to consider our own experiences of human joy. When we are joyful our daily lives are brighter, our souls lighter, our spirits higher. Joy is an experience of fullness of senses which widens man's horizons, enabling him to hope. It is a time-related sentiment, since there is joy in expectation (for the arrival of a dear one, a birth...), joy for the present and joy related to past memories (joy experienced in the past becomes actual thanks to memory).

Thus, the feeling of joy involves one's whole being, and is derived, in particular, from relationships of love with dear ones. Much more than this, however, the human dimensions of joy are assumed by Christ; and our joy is grafted into His; it derives from His.

It is 'with joy' that a Christian gives thanks (cf. Col 1:12), and this joy culminates in the Eucharistic meal. In fact, the Eucharist is joy because it is the *memory* of the paschal event which we relive today, and which will be fulfilled at the Lord's glorious return.

Enzo Bianchi

Path to Jubilation

Heartfelt joy is both reflection and fruit of God's glory which manifests His loving and saving will for all men. The peace which Christ offers us is fruit of the harmony between God and man, between man and man, and between man and the cosmos. This hope-filled gift invades our hearts, because (in St. Paul's words): "He is the God of hope who fills you with every joy and every peace in the faith, that you might be filled

with hope."

Joy and peace of the heart are closely united, and man needs both. Where are they to be found? The path to jubilation of heart and to inner peace often passes through conversion. It's the dynamics of the Gospel: it is in giving, not receiving, that one experiences greater joy; in loving one's enemy that the heart is freed; from a seed that dies springs forth new life; and salt is scattered so as to add flavour. It might seem contradictory, but instead, it is unmistakably true that **joy inevitably passes through the cross**: a place where estrangement is overcome, life's "panoramic peak" where everything emerges in all truth.

So let's walk on the path to conversion to receive the 'infinite' gift of God's mercy. It is a gift which places us in full communion with God, the fount of all joys, and it is what the Son, Jesus, greatly desires for each of His disciples. "I have told you this so that my joy might be in you, and that your joy might be full."

Card. C.M. Martini

"Return to your primitive fervour"

In the Upper Room with the Queen of Peace

(continuation)

If we examine the words in her messages, we will be given to see what Mary's prayer intentions were in those special days of grace, and that they are the same ones which Our Lady lifts up to God even today.

Mary doesn't ask for special charismas or extraordinary gifts, but quite to the contrary, she asks that we be granted the grace of total self-denial, that we be able to radically renounce our own will and give all the space in our souls to the divine Spouse and that with her we be able to generate, at long last, a new humanity.

This is why the Queen of Peace's calls to pray with the heart are so ardent and impassioned, just as they were in the past at Lourdes and Fatima and with other great Marian apparitions towards the end of the millennium. To be able to pray with love there is only one way, and it is with the Holy Spirit, "Who prays in the faithful," and Who is "a fountain of living water springing up to life eternal" (*Lumen Gentium*, no. 4).

This is the reason why Mary urges us to *"pray to receive the Spirit of*

truth, who will inspire you with the Spirit of prayer" (message 9 June 1984), and: *"don't cease praying to the Holy Spirit (2 Jan. 1984);* and more recently, Our Lady said, citing a well-known biblical verse (Ez 36:26): *"I invite you anew to open yourselves to prayer, that the Holy Spirit might help you pray and your hearts can become of flesh and not of stone"* (25 June 1996).

To Mary's appeals the Pope promptly replies: "Prayer through the power of the Holy Spirit becomes the ever more mature expression of the new man, who by means of this prayer participates in the divine life" (*Dominum et Vivificantem*, no. 65). In fact, Our Lady, with the help of the Holy Spirit, wants to make us true *"instruments of grace in her hands for the world's salvation"* (25 March 1994), and transparent channels for the river of living water which gushes forth from the burning Heart of the Holy Trinity, so that through us this river of grace might finally reach, liberate and heal the souls of our brethren in the world who unknowingly await our 'yes.'

Thus, Our Lady asks us to have child-like trust in the Holy Spirit and allow Him to radically transform our ailing hearts, and for us to decide to begin a journey of inner conversion with gladness of heart and in intimate communion with her Immaculate Heart. Such a journey is not without hard trials, of both the moral and spiritual kind, since God in His wisdom lay them before us so we would be able to generate in the Spirit.

This is the wonderful service of love which Mary asks of 'her children' whom she has called in this time, associating them to her own mission of grace: *"Dear Children, today I invite you to prepare yourselves through prayer and sacrifice for the coming of the Holy Spirit. My Children, this is a time of grace, and thus I call you anew to decide for God your Creator. Allow Him to transform and change you, so that your hearts might be ready to listen and live all that the Holy Spirit has in His plan for each of you"* (25 May '98).

To lead all souls to a total participation in the divine life, through total acceptance of the living water from Christ's paschal sacrifice, is the truest and deepest reason for the presence of the Queen of Peace in Medjugorje. It is the great project of grace which the Blessed Virgin, Daughter of Zion, faithfully serves up with her presence in the world in this 'special time.'

It is also the profound reason for which the Queen of Peace tirelessly calls her children to give themselves up totally to her Immaculate Heart so that she can associate them to this wonderful regal service, making them the real companions of the Lamb Who "will be their shepherd and will guide them to springs of living water" (Rev 7:17).

"My Children, allow the Holy Spirit to guide you on the way of Truth and salvation towards eternal life" (25 May 1998).

Giuseppe Ferraro

The climb up *Krizevac*: a page from the Gospel

I was still in seminary when I first heard about Medjugorje. Now I am a priest and finishing my studies in Rome. I have had the grace of accompanying a group of pilgrims to this Shrine. It was a wonderful surprise to see so much fervour in the prayer and participation of the thousands of pilgrims, particularly at Holy Mass and Confession. I'll leave the judgement of the authenticity of the apparitions to others; but I will never forget the **Way of the Cross** along the rocky path up to the top of **Krizevac**!

The climb itself was hard and long, but it was also a wonderful experience, and it gave me the opportunity to **observe and meditate**.

1. One by one, up we go

Fact: The evening before our *Way of the Cross*, a nun advised us to leave at dawn. We did, but when we got there we were surprised to notice that many had preceded us, and some were even on their way back down. We had to wait our turn to pray in front of each Station.

Reflection: Birth and death are life's natural events. In Christian life, when we receive Baptism, or when we marry or take vows, there are always others who preceded us, and others who will come after us. We are neither first nor last; and our respect is due for both these categories. In the Church no one can say he is alone. The Lord welcomes his sheep into the fold at all hours. It is up to each person to respond to His call at the time of his calling.

Prayer: *Mary Dear, daughter of Israel and mother of the Church, teach us to live our faith today, with respect for Church history, and for those who come after us.*

2. Unity and diversity. Peace to all

Fact: I couldn't help but notice the diversity of pilgrims, the many different groups on their way up and down. Different languages, races, ages, origins, cultures.. yet we were together, we were united in prayer in the same place, the destination was the same for us all: *Krizevac*. Each person, each group, took care of those around them. It was wonderful; and all so harmonious!

Reflection: How different the world would be if every man were more aware that he belonged to God's one big family! We would have more peace and harmony if each person loved the others for what they were. No one likes a troubled life. My life is beautiful only when the life of my neighbour is beautiful too.

Prayer: *Mary Dear, daughter of the human race, God's chosen one, teach us to love each other as brothers and sisters belonging to the same family, and to seek each others' good will.*

3. Solidarity and sharing

Fact: The climb was slow, and we stopped a few minutes in front of each Station to reflect, pray and meditate. After the reading everyone was free to express a thought or prayer intention. Contemplation of the Stations, and the reading of the Word of God and of Mary's messages was thus made richer and more beautiful, and our prayer became deeper. No one felt isolated. The time spent in front of the Stations was a time of sharing and of intercession for each other. All were looking up to Him who had saved us by sharing our own earthly condition.

Reflection: Faith is a personal response, but when professed it grows and produces fruit within the community. Friendship brings joy and makes it easier in times of sorrow, but this is greatly increased when friendship has its roots in a common faith.

Prayer: *Mary Dear, who meditated on the passion of your Son with the apostles, teach us to listen to our brethren, and to free ourselves of our egoism.*

4. Humility and Mercy

Fact: The Way of the Cross begins with much enthusiasm and determination. The path is such that you can easily slip over and fall. The effort is great and your energy is easily spent. You suffer thirst and even hunger. The weakest of us are likely to feel sorry they ever started the climb.

Reflection: We are human, after all. Even the strongest of us can fall and get thirsty. The Lord's three falls on Calvary are full of meaning. A Christian life demands strength and courage, faith and perseverance, but also humility and mercy.

Prayer: *Mary Dear, mother of the lowly, receive our efforts, our suffering and our weaknesses. Entrust them to your Son, the humble Servant who walked in our own steps.*

5. When sacrifice produces life

Fact: At the tenth Station we crossed paths with a group of young people on their way back down. With them was a young girl in a

stretcher. When she saw us she waved and smiled broadly. It made me think of the episode in the Gospel of a paralytic being lowered down through the roof. The girl was happy for having been up Krizevac and having encountered God up there. Without friends, however, she could not have done it. If the climb is hard in itself, imagine how much harder it was for those carrying up their sister in Christ!

Reflection: When you love you accept life's sufferings and the happiness of being loved. Jesus' example was the greatest: "Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (Jn 15:13). To love is to have someone to die for.

Prayer: *Mother Dear, who cried at the foot of the Cross, teach us to suffer for love's sake so that our brethren might have life.*

6. God's kingdom belongs to "children"

Fact: It was so nice to see children amongst the pilgrims on Krizevac. Running and jumping and smiling, their innocence was a note of pure joy. The climb was easier for them; the older folk took it more slowly, resting now and again. Seeing the little ones made us think of Jesus' call to become like children.

Reflection: The bigger we think we are the heavier we get and the harder is the climb to "Mount Carmel."

Prayer: *Mother Dear, teach us to prefer the "little way" to prestige and dignity so we can find happiness and serenity.*

7. Joy of advancing - comforting others

Fact: The closer we got to the top, the more effort it required, but the joy of knowing we would soon be there urged us on. At the beginning of the Way of the Cross, and again towards the top, the friendliness of the people coming back down was encouragement for us.

Reflection: Christian life is like a desert that must be crossed before reaching the promised land. The desire to live forever in God's house gives joy and peace even when the journey is hard; and the witness of the Saints, of those who followed and served the Lord before us, gives comfort and encouragement. We constantly need to be supported; and we need to support each other in this journey. So spiritual direction, witnessing, and sharing experiences are a necessary part of this journey.

Prayer: *Mother Dear, teach us to take advantage of your numerous visits so we might have reason to continue hoping.*

8. Our names are written in heaven

Fact: We made it! It took us three hours to get to the top. We noticed

that the base of the big white cross was covered in names, of those who had been or of those in their hearts. There was much more to these than the letters of the alphabet used to write them.

Reflection: Also in heaven, our true homeland, our names are written. God, who knows each of us by name, waits for us, thinks of us and watches over us. He knows how many hairs we have on our head. All those people who came before us, the saints, think of us, intercede for us and protect us. Wherever we are and whatever we do we must keep in mind that we are preparing for our lives in heaven.

Prayer: *Mother Dear, crowned with heavenly pink flowers, teach us to hold our gaze ever upwards.*

9. The descent. The mission

Fact: At the top of Krizevac, we wanted to remain for as long as possible. It felt good up there. Before us was a beautiful view looking out over Medjugorje, the Marian town. We sang. We laughed. But the time came for us to begin the descent. We had to leave the mountain and go back home ... pick up our every day life. And it is precisely there that we must live the wonderful things we experienced in God, knowing that Mary will be with us always.

Reflection: Many people praying on Krizevac; many more people in the world. The Lord's prayer was above all a request for the strength to carry out His Father's will which was to save the world. The depth and sincerity of our prayer depend on our own acceptance of God's plan of salvation.

Prayer: *Mother Dear, Our Lady of Peace, teach us to say yes to the Lord each day of our lives, that God's kingdom might come!*

Fr. Jean-Basile Mavungu Khoto

Padre Jozo like the Baptist

For many years, in the desert, the forerunner of Jesus announced, shouted, pleaded and beseeched all those who listened to him to convert because the Messiah was coming! Also **Padre Jozo Zovko** over these 21 years of Marian apparitions has tirelessly witnessed to the arrival of the Mother of God in Medjugorje and to the signs she points out to us which lead us to her Son so we can receive His peace.

"Millions of people are ready today to offer their lives to Mary", says the Franciscan who is famous the world round by now. "In just a few years Our Lady changed the face of the earth, and proof is had by the many pilgrims who come to the Shrine of the Queen of Peace; pilgrims from all round the world, and not just Catholics, but from other faiths and confessions too. Lately there have been many Orthodox faithful from

Russia and Greece."

Just like St. John the Baptist, also Padre Jozo gets fiery when he starts talking about God and Our Lady, and he'd like this fire to inflame the souls of all those who listen to him. There were 6,000 people at the stadium in Ancona (Italy) at a recent meeting. It was a day of prayer together with the Franciscan from the Province of Hercegovina, and the theme was: "Behold your Mother!", mystical dawn of the third millennium.

"Medjugorje isn't a children's story," he said. "It means beginning a new life, making a radical change, for each of us. Our Lady continues to call us to prayer, especially in the family, because by now people's homes are filled with darkness, with night.

What can we do for our faith to grow? The answer is simple. Do what millions of people have done already. They changed lives because over these 21 years Our Lady has entered their hearts!" S.C.

A.R.P.A. and Ecumenism

The ecumenical aspect of our pilgrimages of charity in former Yugoslavia (in particular Bosnia) isn't always that obvious. In 1997, at the Youth Festival in Medjugorje, I said my great hope for Medjugorje was for it to become an important ecumenical centre in the spirit of St. Francis; a centre of forgiveness, of reconciliation and of peace for all; and that it become an important charity centre for war-orphans and widows, not only those in the three Catholic dioceses, but also in the Orthodox and Muslim communities. The widespread atheism imposed under Tito's regime was much more successful in the Serb and Muslim communities than in Catholic Croatia. Our aim is to involve the Orthodox leaders in the aid distribution in the hope that the people will understand that what we bring is fruit of Christian charity, and a response to Jesus' new commandment of love. And it feels good being little instruments in God's hands who uses us despite all our limits and faults, to bring a ray of His love also to the many Muslim widows and orphans in the refugee camps.

Alberto Bonifacio, Via. S. Alessandro 26, I-23855 Pescate LC, Italy. Fax 0341 368587

The Family is a Divine Project

(Continuation)

"God created man in His own image and likeness." In matrimony this

reality needs to be accompanied by precise rules. The woman is to man as though she were his rib; in other words, she is part of him, and for this reason man will love his wife as he loves himself. Scripture adds: *"Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves to his wife and they become one flesh;"* and Jesus says of this verse: *"Man will not separate what God has united."*

The stability of the children depends on their parents' love. That is why a wife must first love her husband, not her children. Children are to be loved together, so as not to create a different order. Hence: *"Man will not separate what God has united."*

These are the fundamental rules given by the Lord for the human family. Our inner stability depends a lot on our parents' love. When you see a young boy who doesn't smile much, ask his mother if she desired having him. The reply will often throw light on the matter, and will reveal the boy's inner self, his personal history and behaviour.

Similarly, with a couple in crisis; one needs to find out how they were loved by their parents.

We are all fruit of a story; we didn't just fall out of heaven this way. Jesus, too, wanted a story. He chose to come into the world by entering the story of a woman, the Virgin Mary, but He also wanted that woman to be sided by a man who could act as His father. He wanted a complete story, because a child needs both a mother and a father. It is easy to see Mary's sweetness reflected in Jesus (just think of the way He treats the adultress: not even looking at her so she wouldn't blush). **In much of Jesus' character we see Our Lady's reflection.** but **we also find Joseph's character** in Jesus' resoluteness and determination.

No one is perfect in this world. We all inherit both positive and negative aspects which can either enrich or impoverish our character. I often find that couples going through a crisis are able to start loving each other after they have forgiven their fathers and mothers and have made peace with them. Why is this? The Lord, in His infinite greatness, gave man a dimension that makes him superior to all other beings. He gave man a spiritual dimension. **By forgiving and asking forgiveness we can recuperate the love that we didn't receive.**

We have to start by giving to our parents the love that we didn't receive from them, and by forgiving them in the Lord's name. God lay before man the path of forgiveness and reconciliation so that he could recuperate the good he didn't receive or didn't want either through his own fault or of others. And we must take this same path into our families.

Unfortunately, the virtue of honesty is losing ground in today's families; sincerity has become old fashioned; and fidelity has become something

to be ashamed of. Without realizing it, certain errors have become 'canonized and baptized' even in our own homes. The Lord is asking the Church to rediscover the beautiful reality of matrimony and family which is where the Trinity lives. Father, mother and children, all together, are reflected in the Trinity, and God manifests Himself in the family; and when the family is harmonious, it superabounds in blessings and goods.

Today the Lord is asking particularly for conversion, and a return to His Word which is "a lamp for our steps and light for our journey." Disorder in matrimony is the cause of division. Love comes from God, but His love unites, it creates communion. Children are the fruit of this communion. May this communion be full and holy, just as Christ's is with His Church.

Fr. Fulvio di Fulvio

News from the blessed land 21 years of apparitions!

There were more than **100,000 faithful** present in Medjugorje for the 21st anniversary, and there were so many linguistic groups present that Holy Mass was celebrated in 16 different languages.

On the evening of the Anniversary (25 June) about 35,000 people attended Mass, and 200 priests concelebrated with the main celebrant, Fra Branimir Musa.

These are the **numbers** that tell us that Mary's message has reached every corner of the earth. For the many that come in response to our Blessed Mother's call she has an endless reserve of new gifts. Indeed, many have to face enormous sacrifices to come to this 'blessed land.' Over and beyond the number of pilgrims, the most important aspect was the **way** in which they participated in the various liturgical meetings, and the spirit of acceptance and prayer which impregnated Medjugorje.

It has become obvious that the fruits of the spiritual journey traced out by Mary over the years are maturing; and that Her 'children' are becoming more aware of the divine plan that through Mary is being actuated in Medjugorje, and also in the world thanks to the many Children who have opened their hearts to her. *Red.**

Peace March

The eleventh traditional Peace March was held on the 24th June, which is the eve of the anniversary of Our Lady's apparitions. About 4,000

pilgrims participated in the March which started at 6 am. Upon their arrival in Medjugorje, pilgrims gathered in front of the parish church for a short common prayer. The Peace March was first started by Medjugorje pilgrims and friends during the war in 1992. Although the years of war are behind us, Our Lady reminds us in her messages that there are wars "in our hearts". This 13 km long March is a response to the trouble, violence and hatred in the world, as well as an appeal for real peace and reconciliation.

* **Our Lady to Ivan on Podbrdo**

On Sunday 23 June, at 11 pm, Our Lady gave a message through the seer Ivan in which she urges us all to continue to pray for peace:

"Dear Children, at the beginning of the apparitions I said, 'Peace! Peace! Peace!' Also today, my Children, I invite you to peace. Together with the Mother, pray for peace: for peace in your families, and for peace in the world. If you do not have peace, then pray! Pray in your families. I thank you, my Children, because you responded to my call."

Our Lady went in the sign of the luminous Cross, while saying: *"Go in peace, my dear Children."*

* **Annual apparition to Ivanka**

The seer, Ivanka Ivankovic-Elez, had her regular annual apparition on 25 June. At her last daily apparition (7 May 1985) Our Lady confided to Ivanka the 10th secret and told her that she would have an apparition once a year on the anniversary date. This year's apparition lasted 6 minutes, in the home of Ivanka in the presence of her husband and three children and other family members.

Our Lady gave the following message: *"Dear Children, do not tire of prayer. Pray for peace, for peace, for peace."*

Our Lady, who gave Ivanka some new details about her life, was joyful, and gave her motherly blessing to all.

* **Maltese Order in Medjugorje**

The medical services of the Maltese Order from Germany came for the fifth time to Medjugorje to be at the service of the pilgrims. From 1 June to 1 Nov., **the Maltesers will be on duty near the parish church** and will offer **first-aid assistance at the ambulance clinic in a house on the way to Krizevac** every day from 9 am to 9 pm, and during night for urgent cases. The Maltese Order has existed for 900 years. Its slogan is "keep the faith and help the needy, witness faith with love and be at the service of peace in the world".

* **Russian / Ukrainian groups in Medjugorje**

In the month of May, a "Prayer and Fasting" seminar for Russian/Ukrainian groups was held at the *Domus Pacis* house of prayer. Pilgrims from Russia and Ukraine have to face enormous sacrifices to come to Medjugorje. They must first apply for a visa which is not always granted, and the journey itself takes three days and three nights via Romania. For Orthodox Christians, Medjugorje is a place where they feel the unity of the Church. They feel the presence of Our Lady and of Jesus in a special way. The Eucharistic adoration is a new and special experience for them, which they do not know in their tradition. In adoration, they feel that God is near in a very special way. After Medjugorje, they always become apostles of Our Lady's messages. The journey, which extends far beyond their material possibilities, is always realised with the help of donations from West European groups. (*Press Bulletin*)

Jelena chose the Heart of Jesus as the theme for this issue, and in doing so she uses expressions from the Church document on the subject. These words of a Pope and of the Church will help us comprehend the Lord's love for us all.

*In these 21 years of apparitions, Our Lady has helped the Church by explaining theological matters in a simple language which everyone can understand. On 29 December 1988, through the then very young Jelena, the Blessed Virgin said: "**Dear Children, I desire that you understand that Jesus greatly needs your hearts; but your hearts must be full of love and peace...**"*

*Often, in the messages to the prayer group, Mary would point out the importance of an open heart and of surrendering one's heart to God so that, in contact with His, it would be purified, because His love is pure. Our Lady said: "**I desire that you be ever closer to my Heart and to Jesus' Heart**" (20 Aug. 1988) .. "My Children, don't be afraid to follow me, to follow Jesus; and don't linger in front of our Hearts, but enter, for they are completely open for you. Come, because I know that you desire being happy" (3 Dec. 1987).*

"**Cor Iesu**"

by Jelena Vasilj

In 1956, on the feast of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus (instituted by Pius IX), Pope Pius XII wrote a **marvellous encyclical on Devotion to the Sacred Heart**. Its Latin title is *Haurietis aquas*. The title itself has its origin in the prophet Isaiah's book, where he prophesied that Jesus'

Heart would become a fount of love: *"With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation"* (Is 12:3).

The prophet uses highly significant imagery. The water he talks of is symbolic for the Holy Spirit, or Christ's love within the Trinity. At the same time, this Charity (Love) is poured out onto mankind. In other words, God's Holy Spirit is given as a gift to the Church. St. Paul says: *"God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us"* (Rm 5:5). Therefore, given the twofold nature of Christ, his love is both human and divine, and it is also the pivot of the feast of the Sacred Heart.

The Encyclical stresses that divine love is real love, and that it has always accompanied the history of that people within whom God wrote His laws. It was with this people that God established numerous covenants of love, even if this same people quite often broke them with their infidelity. Nonetheless, the people would only need to repent, and God would renew His covenant with them in an even stronger bond of love which is made clear by the prophet Hosea: *"When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son. I taught Ephraim to walk, I took them up in my arms; but they did not know that I healed them. I led them with cords of compassion, with the bands of love... I will heal their faithlessness; I will love them freely. I will be as the dew to Israel; he shall blossom as the lily, he shall strike root as the poplar"* (Hos 11:1, 3-4; 14:5-6).

The highest expression of divine love is the amorous incarnation and passion of the Son of God by which it also becomes perfectly human - that is to say, it is endowed with every human sentiment. This way, the Heart of Jesus becomes the highest example of love and consolation towards men. St. Augustine says on the matter: "These affections of human infirmity, even as the human body itself and death, the Lord Jesus put on not out of necessity, but freely out of compassion so that He might transform in Himself His Body, which is the Church of which He deigned to be the Head. So that if any of His members who are among the faithful and the saints, should be saddened and afflicted they should not think that they are deprived of His grace. Nor should they consider this sorrow a sin, but a sign of human weakness."

This tender love culminates in the Cross where Jesus' Heart is pierced by a sword and thus becomes the greatest example of His invisible wound of love. The Pope speaks of another aspect of love "with which Christ loves the Father and humanity, and is the symbol of that burning love which, infused into His soul, enriches the human will of Christ and enlightens and governs its acts by the most perfect knowledge derived both from the beatific vision and that which is directly infused" (cf. Col 2:3). Jesus' Heart is for us a fount of all

knowledge, the mystical stairway which takes us to God's embrace so richly endowed with His greatest gifts: Himself in the Sacrament of the Eucharist, His Passion and Death, His most holy Mother, the office of the priesthood, the institution of the Church, and the mission of the Holy Spirit on the Apostles and the faithful.

Says the Pope, "Likewise we ought to meditate most lovingly on the beating of His Sacred Heart by which He seemed, as it were, to measure the time of His sojourn on earth until that final moment when He said, *'It is finished.'* Then it was that His heart ceased to beat and His sensible love was interrupted until the time when, triumphing over death, He rose from the tomb. But after His glorified body had been reunited to the soul of the divine Redeemer, conqueror of death, His most Sacred Heart never ceased, and never will cease, to beat with calm and imperturbable pulsations. Likewise, it will never cease to symbolize the threefold love with which He is bound to His heavenly Father and the entire human race, of which He has every claim to be the mystical Head." (60-61)

Let's entrust ourselves, then, to Mary's Immaculate Heart. From the time when He was in Mary's womb, Jesus' Heart and Hers beat as one. May ours, too, beat in tune with Theirs in the eternal inspirations of the Holy Spirit, and our love be united to Jesus' Love within the Holy Trinity. (J.V.)

Jelena to marry!

With joy we announce the marriage of **Jelena Vasilj** to **Massimiliano Valente** in Medjugorje on 24 August 2002.

Jelena generously and readily shares with us the fruits of the gift received in Medjugorje. Her kindness and sense of responsibility and the profound sentiments with which she helps others deepen their spiritual life have made her dear to all those who meet her. In particular, we of the *Echo* are grateful to her for her regular reflections and prayers.

Our wish for her is that she may live the sacrament of marriage to the full and continue to glorify God in the holiness of the family.

* **"Study the Word of God** and let it enlighten your minds and hearts. Draw strength from the sacramental grace of Reconciliation and the Eucharist. Visit the Lord in that "heart to heart" contact that is Eucharistic Adoration.

Day after day, you will receive new energy to help you to bring comfort to the suffering and peace to the world."

(JP II, Message to young people for WYD, 2002)

* **Echo is a free publication. We rely on your prayers and donations.** At the request of many, a suggested donation for a year's subscription abroad is: 8 for a single copy; 35 for 14 copies, 80 for 63 copies, 140 for 130 copies. Please contact us for larger packets since costs vary according to country of destination.

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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 intentions.

Medjugorje pilgrims die in road accident - Last 1 July, nineteen Polish pilgrims died after a bus crashed on a highway in Hungary on its way to Medjugorje. May God grant eternal rest to those whose earthly lives ceased so suddenly, and consolation to their families!

Might we heed the teachings which the Lord gives us today.

Even when we can't see anything, our Blessed Mother is with us, and her presence supports us.

May God bless us.

Villanova, 10 July 2002