



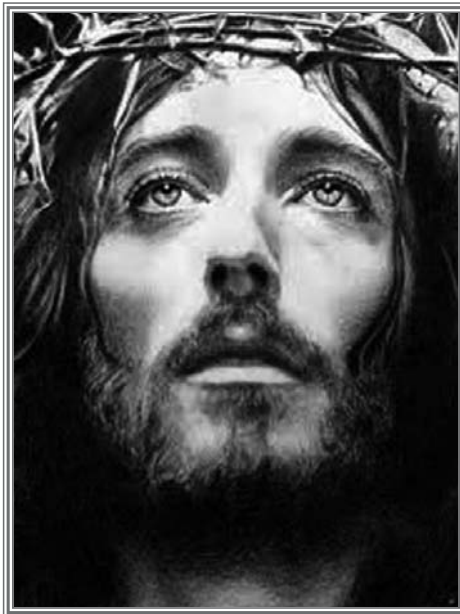
Message of 25th January 2011:

“Dear children! Also today I am with you and I am looking at you and blessing you, and I am not losing hope that this world will change for the good and that peace will reign in the hearts of men. Joy will begin to reign in the world because you have opened yourselves to my call and to God’s love. The Holy Spirit is changing a multitude of those who have said ‘yes’. Therefore I desire to say to you: thank you for having responded to my call”.

Under Mary’s gaze

I feel Mary’s gaze on me, on all of us, on the whole world. She looks at us, blesses us and nourishes the hope that this world will change for the better and that peace will reign in the hearts of men. Her gaze focuses on us with pleasure and She gives us Her blessing and transmits Her hope to us. Her words console us, but they seem to contain something that is not said, something veiled, although not fully concealed; as though the Mother were speaking of a mission that is complete.

The hope regarding the evolution of the world towards good, the peace that will reign in the hearts of men, **the joy that will reign throughout the world because we have opened up to Her call and to God’s love**, everything speaks of the triumph of the Kingdom and it would appear that it is now a triumph that is close to hand. All of this should make us rejoice fully, yet there is something that mitigates this joy. Perhaps it is Mary’s act of taking leave from us which, although veiled, seems to emerge from Her words; perhaps it is the fear of the onset of the time of harvesting (Mt 13,30); perhaps it is also just a sense of agitation owing to the new aspects of this phenomenon that transcend our forecasts and above all, our direct control; we do not know what it is but perhaps we mustn’t reflect on this because it is beyond our control and surpasses our knowledge. What our duty is, what we must do, is publicly manifest that which, for almost thirty years, we have received and learnt from Her. Jesus too started His public work after approximately the same number of years. Is this similarity in terms of timeframe a simple coincidence or is it another sign that *the time of the revelation of the sons of God has come* (cfr Rm 8, 19)? Of course, if we had been more attentive, humbler, more diligent, we would have been able to shorten the days remaining until the return of Christ, but now let us not lose more time recriminating. Mary makes a positive judgement, perhaps more positive than what many of us deserve, but now, let’s roll up our sleeves and quickly prepare ourselves so as not to be taken by surprise.



«God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world».

(Gal 6,14)

“The time is now near”, the entire Message seems to tell us and another sign seems to be contained in the last two phrases: that about the action of the Spirit and that which concludes the Message. **The Holy Spirit is changing a multitude of those who said yes.** Among them there are certainly those **who opened themselves up to His call and to God’s love**, that is, who welcomed Mary and Jesus, Her Messages, and Her beloved Son, Love incarnate. The Holy Spirit will gather up their *yes* and graft it onto Mary’s *Fiat* “Behold, the handmaid of the Lord: let it be done onto me according to your word” (Lk 1, 38) and onto Jesus’ *yes* “Behold, I have come, oh God, to do your will” (Jews 10, 7).

Does this intervention by the Spirit not remind us of that promised by Jesus by way of consolation of the disciples lost and saddened due to his announcement that he was about to leave them (John 16, 1-11)? Is it not the same thing that Mary seems to be doing with us today? And again: doesn’t the **thanksgiving for having answered Her call**, preceded by that **“And so I wish to tell you”** not sound more like an “adieu” rather than “see you soon”?

In any case, whether or not Her Messages from Medjugorje cease or continue, we will all always be under Her loving and maternal gaze, which will accompany us until the end of time and for eternity! Peace and joy in Jesus and Mary.

Nuccio Quattrocchi

Message of 25th February 2011:

“Dear children! Nature is awakening and on the trees the first buds are seen which will bring most beautiful flowers and fruit. I desire that you also, little children, work on your conversion and that you be those who witness with their life, so that your example may be a sign and an incentive for conversion to others. I am with you and before my Son Jesus I intercede for your conversion. Thank you for having responded to my call”.

Bearing witness with our lives

In his goodness and wisdom, God reveals himself to man. With events and words, he reveals Himself and his plan of benevolence, which has been pre-established from eternity in Christ, in favour of humanity. Through the grace of the Holy Spirit, this plan consists of enabling the participation of all men in divine life, as his adoptive sons in his only Son (Compendium to the Catechism of the Catholic Church, thesis 6).

Created in God’s image and likeness (Gen 1, 27) Adam and Eve live in Eden in His presence, they can speak to Him. Separation is the consequence of the first sin, of the allurements to *become like Him, without Him, actually, against Him*, listening to another voice besides His. *Original sin* expresses man’s desire, ably spurred on by the snake, to do without God and the consequence is that man is hunted out of Eden: man can no longer cohabit with God. But God does not forgo His Plan, and given that man can no longer lift himself up to God, it is God who makes himself man! Now it is no longer man who becomes like Him, but He, God, who rises us up to Him in Christ, if man welcomes this action of grace, if he allows himself to convert to Him.

Mary calls us towards this conversion, expressing the desire for our conversion to bloom, like the blooming of the buds that are already appearing on the trees. It is this conversion that will bring forth a beautiful flower and fruit: the life of Jesus in man. The Tree of life, denied to man so that he might live forever (Gen 3, 22-24), is now Jesus who offers himself to us as the *Food of eternal Life*: is this not what occurs in the Most Holy Eucharist? **I desire that you also, little children, work on your conversion and that you be those who witness with their life.** First and foremost, Mary urges us to convert, and therefore to bear witness with our lives. It is not about changing something in our lives; it is not sufficient to do some “good deed”, it is not sufficient to correct some detail. It is not even sufficient to radically change our life if such a change is only our work that

does not leave space for the action of the Holy Spirit. We must not fall into the age-old temptation and replicate original sin. We must make space for Jesus within ourselves, allow ourselves to be inhabited by Him, because it is this habitation that generates true conversion and makes our lives holy and therefore gives some value to our testimony; this is how we can be a **sign of exhortation to others to convert**. “As You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in us, that the world may believe that You sent Me....I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me” (John 17, 21b, 23).

“I give you a new commandment: that you might love one another. As I have loved you, so love one another”, says Jesus, and he adds: “By this all will know that you are my disciples: if you have love for one another” (John 13, 34-35). It is certainly difficult, actually impossible, to experience this love, but what is impossible for man is possible for God. **Mary is with us and before Her Son Jesus she intercedes for our conversion**; who prevents us from hoping and trying to abandon ourselves to Love?

N.Q.

SIGNS OF THE TIMES

(Truth and lies)

What we are experiencing today is not the triumph of evil. What is happening in our families, in our cities, in the world, is not only evil, it does not indicate the triumph of evil, but rather, it unveils and reveals the struggle between good and evil, between God and *Mammon*, between Truth and lies. A struggle that is ever more open, ever more “global” and so ever nearer to its epilogue, to its end, which cannot be unknown for us Christians.

We know that the Kingdom of God will triumph and this certainty illuminates our minds and our hearts and this faith allows us to fearlessly take sides: “And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell” Jesus says to us (Mt 10, 28), these words call us to appeal to all “men of good will”, that is, to all people whose will is directed towards the Truth, Peace, Justice...towards respect for all those values that are at the basis of civil cohabitation, the foundation of the common good.

The Truth is not the personal prerogative of some man, or this or that political alliance: in both cases it would be a partial truth and therefore it would not be the Truth. We believers in Christ Jesus should know well that the Truth is Him and Him alone, Jesus, the Christ and that in Him we can direct ourselves towards It, while outside of Him we lose ourselves in our little, convenient but insignificant truths.

But my appeal is not directed solely towards Christians, because even those who do not recognise Jesus as the Son of God, even those who actually do not believe in God, have something within themselves that calls them towards the Truth and that leads them to question themselves about it. Do you remember the dramatic conversation between

Jesus and Pilate (John 18, 37-38) in which the Roman Procurator is just one step away from the truth, but renounces it due to his own scepticism? His question “What is the truth?” still resounds today, and still today it induces us to “wash our hands”, withdraw, it makes us lean towards convenient choices!

The Truth calls upon everyone, it calls every person, whatever their role in society. Every man, from the smallest to the greatest, is called to choose between Truth and lies; he cannot remain neutral or indifferent, he cannot limit himself to looking, he must take sides, so as not to make judgements without being competent to do so, so as not to impose his own truth, but to serve the Truth, and this must be done regardless of all interests or personal advantage. It is in overcoming the interests of the individual that the pathway for the common Good is built, that is, for the

good of all and of each person; this is a duty for each man and, in particular, when man holds public office!

The Truth is not a manifesto; it cannot only be announced and not promoted. The Truth must be desired, sought, loved and honoured. The Truth is not a flag, it is not a principle; it is not a characteristic of life but a fundamental need for Life: “For this I was born and for this I came into the world: to bear witness to the truth” Jesus says (loc. cit.) And Saint Giuseppe Moscati echoes him in a letter dated 17 October 1922: “*Love the truth, show yourself as you are, without pretence, without fear and without regard. If the truth costs you persecution, accept it; and if it costs you torment, put up with it. If you should sacrifice yourself and your life for the truth, be strong in sacrifice*”.

Nuccio Quattrocchi

Why evil?

by Francesco Cavagna

Many, actually very many people ask themselves: “Why does evil exist in the world?”. This is a more than legitimate question that has always led to discussions between atheists and believers; how can a good and omnipotent God *cause or fail to prevent* the unjust suffering of so many innocent people?

Atheists seem to strongly believe in their reasons and often, for those who have come to know the love of God, it is not easy to find well-founded arguments. It is true that the problem with evil is that it is and it remains a mystery, but we have a duty to seek answers to the thirst for justice and truth that everyone carries within themselves.

First of all, we need to distinguish between evil and suffering. Evil is the cause, suffering is the consequence. It is a fact that some men deliberately choose to commit evil, damaging themselves and others. Now, so as not to fall into the temptation of dividing the world into good and evil, everyone will recognise that sometimes we are led to make negative choices and unfortunately sometimes we do things that we then regret. I think it is necessary to call this “evil” by its name, condemning it and distancing ourselves from it, because by creating continuous justifications, we risk falling into a sort of relativism that ignores the real weight of all of our actions before God.

Now suffering is always caused by evil and man causes evil. God did not create suffering, he does not want it, it is here that the keystone lies, because God led it back to good, he consecrated it, making it an instrument of expiation and salvation. Yes, Jesus Christ decided to conquer evil “from within”, he conquered it through his death on the cross and his Resurrection.

A crucifix is present in many areas of our lives, it has now become a somewhat customary image for us, which passes before our eyes without even touching

us. Yet, if we were to go back and reflect, we would discover how that image of the Man God hanging from the wood of the cross, is an eloquent answer to the question of evil! But only if we firmly believe that He is risen and if we carry the signs of this hope that is reality in our lives! It therefore truly is a great annunciation of hope entrusted to us Christians: those who have encountered Christ are those who can give an illuminated answer to the questions of the world.

It is not a question of finding whatever philosophical reasons about the origin of evil (evil has no meaning, it is not logical, it is not rational), but of looking beyond. And this interior step should be taken countless times, because suffering always involves us.

The key lies within us. Suffering can lead us to rebellion, to accusing God of being unjust, or it may become a tool of good, of a good that goes well beyond death.

The key lies within us, it all depends on our soul's answer; and everything becomes clear for those who enter into God's logic, from free love that is ready to risk, ready to lose everything, to losing our loved one so as to set him free. Yes, love respecting the freedom of others...only in love do we find answers, only those who love us can fully understand! In his omnipotence God may cancel out all evil, he may *force* every man to be good, but the Lord continues to allow every man to freely choose life or death. If every negative answer has its own sad repercussion, then we believe that every YES said, according to God, has a priceless value, it is like a new beginning in the history of salvation!

Love changes the way we look. And therefore questions remain. Why does God not use his omnipotence to re-establish justice in this world in an instant? Why is he so obstinate in leaving us free? We cannot come up with any easy theoretical answers. But those who live in love understand in their souls that the action

of God-Love is upright, he awaits the free collaboration of men to bring about his plan of salvation. □



The generations will call him blessed



"Straight to sainthood" recited the banners in Saint Peter's Square on the day of the funeral of John Paul II. *Straight to sainthood*,

because a man like this, a priest like this, a pope like this, has never been known to our generation, loved, appreciated and admired for a holiness of life that does not need official proclamations to be such.

John Paul II was *already* a saint when he was living on earth. But God wanted that not only our generation, but that *all generations can call him blessed* (cfr Lk 1, 48). For this reason, on the 1st of May next, the Church will celebrate the beatification of Karol Wojtyła, just six years after his death, making the date coincide with the second Sunday of Easter, called the Sunday of *Divine Mercy*, by the Polish pope, and on the eve of which his earthly life came to an end.

The Vatican commission had to work very hard to examine an immense amount of documents and listen to many witnesses, to analyse a pontificate that lasted almost 27 years and the entire life of a person who left his mark on the ecclesiastical history of the 20th century, and not only, as is reported by the press. One of the matters that has been reported is that John Paul II's coffin will be moved from the Vatican Grottos to the upper Basilica of Saint Peter's and positioned in one of the side altars.

Human procedures always involve bureaucracy, but they are necessary here on earth to give body to what the Holy Spirit fulfils in men who give themselves in a very special way to His work, leaving all selfishness and self-reliance behind, to donate themselves as a *living, holy and pleasing sacrifice to God* (Rm 12,1). If we need the testimony of a miracle that occurred through the intercession of a man to establish a trial for beatification, then we should bear in mind that the miracle is the entire existence of he who fully accepted Christ's cross, as it was presented to him. John Paul II did this.

He did not refuse the burden of a Church to be renewed and rejuvenated; he did not fear putting the gaze of the Virgin Mary at the centre, and with Her, the woman who collaborates in the redemption; he did not feel uneasy with the domineering or with political totalitarianism; he did not deny God physical suffering, which consumed him to the point of death – like an Easter lamb – united with his Christ...

All generations will call him blessed, because the All Powerful has done great things within him. The Lord did this in John Paul II. Great things. No more words are needed. Many words will be uttered... In prayer however, we can unite ourselves intimately with the pope who wrote important pages of our history, including our personal history. Let us pray that he might obtain for each of us the same determination to fulfil God's will, as it is presented to us each day, with humble obedience and generosity. Then we will be blessed, like him, because the Almighty will know how to do great things in us, if we give ourselves to him.

S.C.

Contemplative in a full world

by Editorial staff

Our frenetic lifestyle, the rhythms that society imposes on us, the things to do and think about, often occupy not only people's days but also their discourse. People want more time, for themselves and for those dear to them, for their interests or for a greater contact with creation... But Christians have a need that is more than that of others: to have the time necessary to cultivate a living contact with the Lord through space for prayer that guarantees them a dialogue with the Source of his good.

They cannot shirk from this, because the right relationship with their spiritual life is an essential condition for experiencing everything peacefully, departing from the right point of view, that of God.

How exactly? It is right and reasonable to ask ourselves this, given that outside of "external agents" that assault our time, there are also interior "enemies" – distraction, laziness, superficiality...- that attract our attention and distract us from our intention.

A beautiful text by Jean Lafrance - *Learning to pray according to Sister Elizabeth of the Trinity* – may help us to understand what to do in order to succeed in living with continuous inner recollection, constantly remaining united with God, even when we are occupied by other things. Let us take a look at a few extracts from it together.

A movement that leads us to the heart

"There is an inner movement in the spirituality of Elizabeth, a Carmelite nun from the early twentieth century, that makes souls adhere perfectly to God; it is a movement of returning to the centre of ourselves. We must come down into our own heart and recollect...Elizabeth writes: "We must make our whole being the unity of all things, with inner silence, recollect all powers to occupy them solely in the exercise of love, and have that simple eye that enables God's light to irradiate us. A soul that enters into discussions with its I, that deals with its own sensitivity, that follows a useless thought or whatever desire, that soul disperses its strength...How essential this beautiful unity with the soul is, that wants to live the life of the blessed down here, that is, of simple beings, spirits!"

The vehicles of the inner journey

How can we reach a similar recollection when the duty of our status obliges us to be

dispersed, to deal with so many problems and different concrete situations; and how can we implement unity among everything that fights us in daily life or leads us to live on the surface of ourselves?

Let us immediately say that contemplative life can be experienced in the full world, in the fullest human paste... But there are means that we cannot exclude, if we wish to experience intimacy with God in the core of our hearts.

"Recollection" in the sense intended by Sr. Elizabeth is one of the essential means for being united with God. It does not necessarily mean withdrawing into a cell or speaking as little as possible: it is in fact a fundamental form of behaviour for man's heart to find rest only in God, so that external noise and the internal noise of sensitivity never manage to distract man from this unity and his being with God. And so it is possible to see men who have numerous contacts with their brothers and who have many commitments, but remain turned towards God, and their action is so purified that it no longer distracts them from God. These men know the value of exterior silence because it is the condition of interior silence. "It is not a question of external separation from exterior things, but of a solitude of the spirit" the Carmelite writes. We must avoid the opposition between exteriority and interiority. Our contemporaries are quite mistrusting of the expression "interior life", and they are right, because it is often a synonym of escape, for this reason it is preferable to speak of "spiritual life" (...).

Silence that purifies love

This inner silence must extend to the whole being, it has to do with the spirit above all, in the sense that it causes useless thoughts to go silent, along with the subtle reasoning that weakens the will and dries out love. It calms the imagination, attenuating emotions, sadness and the vain noise of thoughts; it purifies the memory, imposing silence on the past with its regrets and bitterness... Silence in the anxiety of the heart, in the pains of the soul, silence of abandonment. The man who stabilizes himself in the midst of this interior silence forgets himself, he no longer complains, he no longer consoles himself: he is detached from himself (...).

The "movement of recollection", therefore, is decisive for prayer, because it establishes the soul in intimacy with God, simplifying it to the extent that it remains silent even as it prays. In a single act that many times does without words, it adores, it offers itself to God and it finds rest in him. It is the silence of eternity... □

A crown of twelve Stars

True peace is a value that is not conquered with a struggle, but with prayer. It is a gift of God's love and, from his Heart it arrives directly at man.

Through various initiatives, the Queen of Peace Community (a Polish association established a few years ago) has set itself the goal of creating a chain of hearts that might embrace the entire Earth through the prayer of adoration, to bring peace to the whole world. For this reason, a prayer centre was established in Jerusalem, which is not only of ecumenical value, but that goes beyond any religious division. And here, in the same spirit, the idea to form **twelve places of prayer** came about – of

Perpetual Adoration – for the intention of peace throughout the world. **Twelve, like the stars in the crown of the Most Blessed Virgin...**

Another centre was established a short time afterwards in Kazakhstan. Recalling the words of Pope John Paul II who used to say: "*Asia is our common duty for the third millennium*", we welcomed the invitation of the metropolitan of the archdiocese of Mary Most Holy in Astana with great joy and interest. It was he who with great hospitality opened the door of the bishop's see to us, along with his priestly heart. We will leave the duty to decide on the other places that will enter the Crown up to Divine Providence, vigilantly listening out to

Mary generates a new people

recognise what the Lord calls us to do.

The first place is already there: Jerusalem, where the entire altarpiece – the so-called triptych – and not only the monstrance was offered (the story of this event was published in issue 204 of the Echo of Mary). **The second place is Oziornoje,** the Small Asian Medjugorje, where the Marian Year announced on 12th September 2010 is still underway.



And now the time has come for....Medjugorje. Yes, it's Medjugorje's turn, the place where the Holy Spirit inspired the founder of the Association with the idea of Perpetual Adoration; and the occasion seems to have been suggested by the Heavens themselves: the thirtieth anniversary of Mary's presence among us...

We wish to honour and give thanks to God the Father for the presence of Mary among us in a concrete and visible manner, so that a trace of ours might remain, having a monstrance forged in the form of the Woman dressed in... amber and diamonds, the Woman of Jerusalem, the Queen of Peace... We want this to be a gift from the pilgrims from all over the world, not only Poles, because Mary came for everyone.

The various structures that make up the Parish of Medjugorje will certainly be extended and the future will reveal where the most suitable site for the perennial exhibition of the monstrance should be. For now, we joyfully welcome the willingness of the Franciscan fathers to accept this votive offering, and in the words of Abraham, we trust that: "God will provide for himself the lamb for a burnt offering" (Gen 22, 8).

As it was at that time for the triptych of Jerusalem, we would ask everyone to pray for this work so that – as the artist M. Drapikowski points out (the creator of the amber dress and the Votive Offering of the Nation to Our Lady of Czestochowa) – not only the material work (although it is beautiful) but especially the prayer of an ever greater number of people might be drawn to Medjugorje and to other places.

The main element in the work of the Crown will be the monstrance, which will be identical to the one already in Jerusalem. As for the individual sites that it will be destined for, we propose that some element that is characteristic of each place be taken into consideration. Therefore, in the case of Oziornoje, it is a net with fish; we are still contemplating what it should be for Medjugorje.

All the people linked to Medjugorje are invited to come together to build this work of art spiritually, through prayer, and materially, by lodging their donation to the account of the Association:

Comunità Regina della Pace,
ul. Kaszubska 6 lok 1, 26-600 Radom;

For PLN: 80 9115 0002 0010 0006 4060 0001
For EUR: PL 53 9115 0002 0010 0006 4060 0002
SWIFT CODE: POLUPLPR
For US\$: PL 26 9115 0002 0010 0006 4060 0003
SWIFT CODE: POLUPLPR
For further information:
<http://www.tryptykjerozolimski.pl>
<http://www.drapikowski.pl/index.php?p=sakralia&aid=1>

To all of you, we say from the heart: May God reward you!

Ewa Jurasz (director of the Echo of Mary in Poland)

As we all know, this year marks the thirtieth anniversary of the apparitions of the Queen of Peace in Medjugorje. During this lengthy period, the Lord gave us his Mother to live with Her, and through Her, a new and living relationship with the Triune God. We will never be grateful enough and aware enough of the gift of being regenerated in faith by a Mother who is perfect and integral in grace and in nature. All of God's omnipotence flows through this perfection, which is capable of enabling us to go from death to life.

If welcomed with sincerity of heart and mind, the entire Medjugorje event leads to a radical change, because welcoming Mary into our hearts means also welcoming God's life which pulsates in the spirit. In fact, the experience of many people who underwent inner rebirth in Medjugorje bears witness to the fact that man is truly born when he feels God, when he experiences his infinite love.

THE ACTION OF THE SPIRIT.

The occasion of this anniversary offers us the possibility of taking a closer look at the action of the Holy Spirit during this era. In reality, what is being generated through the Virgin Mary is a *new people*, that the biblical prophecies define as the "remnant", as expressed by the prophet Zephaniah: "But I will leave within you **the meek and humble. The remnant of Israel will trust in the name of the LORD.** They will do no wrong; they will tell no lies. A deceitful tongue will not be found in their mouths. They will eat and lie down and no one will make them afraid." (*Zeph 3,12*).

According to the prophet, those who truly trust in the name of the Lord are those who walk with a living faith. All the rest is a false faith that is well camouflaged under subtle devotionism consisting of spiritless practices of piety.

The Virgin Mary knows that the risk for us Christians is this, in fact, through the message to Mirjana dated 2nd February 2011, the Virgin warns us against such behaviour: "...*your lips pronounce countless words, but your spirit does not feel anything*".

Usually those who are empty in spirit feel the need to multiply words in prayer, almost in an attempt to force God with prayer. Those on the other hand who perceive the life of God in spirit, always seek silence more, so as to grasp that life and experience it in fullness.

SHE TEACHES US TO PRAY

The Queen of Peace did not come to guide her children through a *system* of prayers, but to prepare a population of redeemed people who might "know and love" the true God. A population ready to choose God above all else, washing its clothes in the blood of the Lamb.

If we want to be living members of the new people, we must learn to pray to the Holy

Spirit so that he might help us to recognise all the forms of lies that dwell in our souls. Praying for this means being ready to pass through the crucible of trial.

From reading the bible we know that when God wants to renew a people or a soul, he puts them to the test. He strips them of everything. He must take everything away from them! In this nakedness, God allows all false security to crumble, but also all false faith, built on forms of religiousness.

A FALSE IMAGE OF GOD

Mary is the immaculate one who wants to lead us to profound cleanliness on all levels, beginning from our relationship with God and therefore from the mistaken image of Him that we have contrived. Again in the message given to Mirjana, Our Lady opens our eyes regarding a form of behaviour that we often adopt as regards God: "*Wandering in the shadows, you also imagine God according to your own way of thinking and not how he truly is in his Love*".

This leads us to adore the image of God that we have built and to replace the image of the living God. It is a subtle idolatry that all prophets have reported. We must on the other hand have the courage to denounce that idolatry in our spirit and rediscover the true face of God through Christ's cross. Until such time as man adores the image of God that has been created in his spirit, he will "feel" nothing if not emptiness, and God will eternally be *far away*.

TRANSFORM CROSSES INTO RESURRECTION

When do we wander in the shadows within ourselves? When faith, understood as a living and trusting relationship with God, is lacking. If, as souls, we have offered our life to God through Mary, giving him everything, then the trials that God allows will be based on our rebirth as new creatures.

Through my sincere and unconditional offering, God takes situations to hand, along with problems, passages in faith and he leads me to *his* rest; which is not the absence of suffering, but that ability to transform all crosses into resurrection. Although he is suffering, on the cross Jesus rests in the love of the Father, and in that repose, he transforms stupidity into wisdom, weakness into strength. Christ wanted this experience to be accessible to every man, and so it is important to give him our life through Mary, so that we might not live by theories but by truth.

A RENEWED PEOPLE

I think that every one of us wishes to experience interior renewal, a rebirth from the depths, to run like Saint Paul towards the destination, towards God's infinite love and in that love, immerse all of humanity so that it might be saved and become God's people, that reigns with Christ throughout the universe. For Saint Paul however, the destination is not an idea or an ideal, it is a living meeting with the living God.

Antonio Gacioppo

Reflections of light from Mary's land

by Stefania Consoli

Where is my place?

The preparations are feverishly underway. Medjugorje is getting ready to celebrate an important event, the thirty-year anniversary of the apparitions. This is a significant number of years, if we think of the duration of Marian apparitions in the past centuries. This event is therefore unprecedented, it involves everyone, those who will have to welcome the enormous flow of pilgrims expected and those who are planning their journey from all parts of the world, and are perhaps already setting out.

Medjugorje will be "packed". But if each of us takes responsibility for our own behaviour and treats that blessed place like a great open-air shrine – without pointing out differences between the various sites, if each of us respects the sacredness of the grace present in Medjugorje, wherever we are – there will be a more recollected atmosphere, that is less rowdy and distracting. It will be a positive thing for everyone.



This is fundamental, it is not optional. Because God's voice should be listened to in silence. Because prayer is a whisper within the soul. Because immersion in Mary's heart is an intimate movement, it is discreet and it cannot come about if we experience our pilgrimage running from one place to the next and, if rather than remaining quiet so as to be able to listen better, we continue to fill the air with our discourse and chatter. Often with futility.

It is a great gift to be able to experience this time of grace with Mary, who has already reserved a place especially for those who go to Medjugorje. Like in a banquet, while awaiting the invitees, we position the name of each guest on the table near their dish... "Where is my place?" we should ask Her as soon as we get to Her. And then we should remain in silence to understand the answer within ourselves.

Where is my place in your plan, Mary? Why have you called me here, what are you thinking for me? These are the questions that we should take with us in our baggage to Medjugorje.

We do not go there to participate in something that happens on the outside. We are not there to do things or to feel enthusiastic because we feel well in that place. We are not there because we need favours from God or graces that might solve the problems that we brought with us from home. We go to Medjugorje to be able to better identify our place in God's plan: "*Dear Children! Today I invite you to open yourselves to God by means of prayer.....each one of you is important in my plan of salvation.....pray and do that which the Holy Spirit inspires you*". (25th May 1993) "...*Dear children, you are forgetting, that you are all important...I beseech you, begin to change through prayer and you will know what you need to do*" (Message 24th April 1986).

These are very eloquent words from the Mother who invited us to Medjugorje. The only thing that we should truly do once we are with Her, is pray to the Holy Spirit, who will communicate the duty that the Heavens have assigned to each of us, as occurred in Nazareth when Mary listened to the words of the Angel who spoke to Her of Her mission.

It is not only others who "make History". God creates every man so that he might be an original protagonist of facts and situations that have an influence on everyone's life and remain like an imprint on the terrain of time that passes and history is made, experience comes about for the benefit of each generation. It is not only others who must become holy. It is a shared fate; it is a calling that is written in our baptism.

Holiness is not something optional, to be chosen or declined; holiness is the essential condition for being able to enter into Paradise. And so we must not waste the grace that Medjugorje offers us when it comes to understanding the pathway that leads us to our personal holiness. Let us prepare our journey carefully, not only our suitcases, not only the appointments and the schedule of our pilgrimage, but above all our hearts, that they might be ready to understand what the Lord wants from us, and to answer with Mary: "Behold, let it be done onto me according to the Word". □

A desire, a proposal, a promise

It creeps into your life when perhaps you're expecting it the least, like a seed that having fallen to the ploughed earth, starts its hidden process of germination. It is the seed of the **desire** for a more real and cleaner life; for a life that is not only subject to the ferrous laws of precariousness and that is free to draw the water to quench its thirst from the Heavens, along with the food to feed it, the air to allow it to breathe: "And do not be conformed to this world, but be

transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God" (Rm 12, 2).

It enters your thoughts and makes them fertile, pushing you to imagine possible a journey towards that land visited by millions of people within a few years and that has unfaithfully produced peace, serenity, and a desire for good. It is the desire for a meeting with He who can confirm us in love, making us feel like desired and awaited children.

The **proposal** comes sooner or later, like rain onto a seed nestled between the clods, and it makes it open up. The desire takes form and transforms itself into a veritable invitation:

Crystals, before you

Standing before you Lord, like crystals obscured by shadows of sin, allowing ourselves to be purified in our thoughts and in our expectations, in our desires and in our plans, in our fears and in our uncertainties, in mistrust and in the will of faith, love and justice. Lord, may your presence penetrate the thickened layers of our old man, to shatter the obstinacy and pride that act as a shield to grace, to the point that it often bounces off us.

Standing before you Lord, to enable the power of your love, the rays of your warmth, to melt the ice of our rebellion, of defence and resistance, to make space for you, to allow you to clean up the foundations of our existence.

Standing before you Lord, immobile in adoration, free from all scum of wounded humanity, of human illness. Only in this way will we be able to reflect your light, far away, like lights positioned on the top of a mountain. The mountain of faith and fidelity, certain that in our immobility offered to you, open to your action, we can be effective apostles, announcers of your Kingdom, tools of conversion for those who are far away and of salvation for those who are near.

Standing before you, Lord, with the heart of lambs to crush the wolves of our display of efficiency, of our need to do things in your place, because deep down we do not believe that You are the one who moves all things, if we allow You to do things. Like crystals, still before you to reflect your omnipotence and your glory. Only in this manner will we be able to reach the extreme confines of the universe that awaits to see your saving face.

Lord, you pass through us, through our limbs that are given, through our life that is offered. Use us, Lord, without us...what a paradox! This is the foolishness of a cross that always saves: apparent uselessness, folly for men, failure in our eyes yet at the same time a mysterious work of God that is infinitely released.

Keep us Lord, still before you, obedient and calm, because like crystals you purify us and you use us, apostles in contemplation of your action in the world that awaits you. Let it be so. □

"Come to meet me in Medjugorje, come to me!". How this proposal progresses within us is a secret that we all know, but what really counts is whether or not the invitation is seriously accepted...

You book the trip and Medjugorje becomes a decided stop-off, an appointment that leaves much to the imagination, because the stories that you have heard and admired before now are numerous, but above all because in your soul you begin to create an anxious awaiting that we cannot even define, because it is only the fruit of the spirit that urges us to set out from within.

By now the seed has reached the deeper layers of our being, it has put down roots there

and now it is ready to come out...

Once you arrive in Medjugorje it suddenly starts to bloom and transform, as though by enchantment, into an authentic **promise**. A promise of peace and forgiveness. A promise of truth and justice. A promise of healing. A promise that will soon be translated into life for the pilgrim, who knows how to open his hands and welcome what the Queen of Peace has decided to give him, so that his life might be transformed completely:

“...you are not conscious of how God loves you with such a great love because He permits me to be with you so I can instruct you and help you to find the way of peace. This way, however, you cannot discover if you do not pray. Therefore, dear children, forsake everything and consecrate your time to God and God will bestow gifts upon you and bless you. Little children, don't forget that your life is fleeting like a spring flower, which today is wondrously beautiful, but tomorrow has vanished. Therefore, pray in such a way that your prayer, your surrender to God, may become like a road sign. That way, your witness will not only have value for yourselves but for all eternity”. (Message 25th March 1988).

What is the kingdom of God like? And to what shall I compare it? It is like a mustard seed, which a man took and put in his garden; and it grew and became a large tree, and the birds of the air nested in its branches.” (Lk 13, 18-19). Grace does this. It is up to us however to become a powerful tree in will and in faith, where many others will be able to find shelter and nourishment. It is up to us and our yes.

FASTING, a remedy for the spirit

by the Editorial staff

Words, words, words...often empty and superficial chatter. This is what makes men feel important in a society that focuses on appearance, on the affirmation of others, on being winners at all costs.

But in Medjugorje Our Lady proposes a very different pathway with respect to the ostentatious and well-articulated discourse that aim at satisfying our vanity and pride: fasting. Fasting, giving up an excess of words through silence; fasting, giving up self-sufficiency, through a form of prayer that puts us into the right relationship of dependency on God and on his grace; fasting, giving up food, to purify those excesses that disorderly passions often push us to choose, in order to fill the sense of emptiness and uselessness that floats around in the air.

A week of fasting, silence and prayer has been organized in Medjugorje for years to attain this aim, to help people to enter into themselves and find a space that is appropriate for meeting God, a tidy space, that is harmonious and above all silent, so that the Word incarnate might communicate with the soul and its discourse of salvation and peace.

“God's kingdom is established in a heart that knows how to experience concealment”, says Anna Fasano, the organiser of the week of fasting in Medjugorje for Italians. “Only those who are capable of remaining in silence can bear witness to the living presence of Jesus in their lives, as Mary did, without any great

proclamations, without too much uproar. For this reason I believe that this appointment in Medjugorje, which allows us to experience the gift of fasting together, is a valid form of help in re-establishing contact with our depths, and remaining there as adorers of the Word in Spirit and truth”.

“*Dear children, fast and pray with the heart!*” Mary invited us in Medjugorje (20th September 1984), and over the years she has repeated the same words many times. We however are weak and inconstant...In the beginning many of us “took off in fourth gear” but then, as we know, enthusiasm lessens and we quickly abandon our good intentions. This is why the initiative, which is guided by brother Danko Perutina, aims to create an atmosphere of communion between the participants, so that everyone might be an example to and urge on others. Sharing the same commitment in fact, we reciprocally transmit strength of will to each other, to face the fatigue of renunciation and to coherently experience the choice of fasting.

“Mary asks us to experience our adhesion to her messages with facts, not with words” continues Anna Fasano, “if after thirty years, Medjugorje is finally starting to *make news* through the Mass Media (there is always, nevertheless, the risk of emphasising it too much and generalising the true sense of the apparitions), the most reliable testimony will be the people capable of praying in silence and with a sobriety of life that is such that it makes the true *Good News* visible”.

Regarding this, Father Slavko commented: “Mary invites us to pray and fast lovingly. Love for God and men is the only true motivation for prayer and fasting. From a biblical point of view, no other motivation is satisfactory...”.

For love and with love, therefore, from the **1st to the 5th of May**, a meeting will take place, entitled: “My soul longs, yes, even faints for the courts of the LORD; for a day in your courts is better than a thousand” (Psalm 83).

A title and an invocation together, that expresses the deepest desire to belong to God forever, preferring his home to one thousand other refuges that the world proposes to us. A week *in his courts* to discover the power of fasting, immersed in silence and articulated by prayer and experiencing the dimension of eternity today, on earth.

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LENT

to come to know ourselves in truth

Although the invitation to fast is constant in Medjugorje (weekly), it is generally especially foreseen and advised by the Church during the Lenten period, a *strong time*, in particular for our soul, which, by fasting, has the possibility of feeling less suffocated by material things and as such, has more time to “cleanse itself” and prepare itself for the great event of Easter.

In a report to priests in 1988, Father Slavko dealt with the subject of fasting in a very concrete manner, highlighting its beneficial effects for inner life and in coming to an ever-truer knowledge of ourselves, with a view to establishing a healthy relationship with God.

It strips us

“*Be serious and watchful in your prayers*” (1 Pt 4,7). When we start fasting we also start to pray well, and vice-versa. If our prayer becomes a personal meeting with the Lord, then many things are solved. To those who say that they are more agitated when they fast, I would give an ironic answer: you are not agitated because you are fasting, fasting shows you that you are agitated! On many occasions we eat, drink and smoke, to suffocate, to hide; when we fast and pray everything comes out.

We are totally influenced by food, to the extent that depriving ourselves of it reveals the concealed disorder or passions that lie within us. Food, lots of food, acts like a drug, that is, it camouflages our weakness. Therefore fasting causes our defects to emerge, it strip us, and this is a positive thing. By fasting I discover myself for what I am. Before a little difficulty, I contest, I attack, and I am impatient: it is already a good step for me to discover what I am. And so it is easy to discover that we depend on food more than food depends on us.

Fasting and prayer are like two legs for spiritual life. There is the risk of us falling asleep after having eaten abundantly, or of at least feeling heavy and drowsy, our ideas are no longer clear; but with fasting, faith is reawakened, and we start to experience this “waiting for the Lord”. With the help of a light body, our soul can keep watch over and *feel* the Lord”.

(Fr. Slavko – from a report to the priests)

LITTLE MEMORIES

We've published short comments from the participants in the previous editions of the seminar in Medjugorje, as a testimony that God is capable of doing great things in those who entrust themselves to Him:

Maria Rita: “For me this seminar meant succeeding in finally opening a crack for Jesus in the little stone door of my heart...”

Mafalda: “Fasting from the world, hunger and thirst for you, my Lord! A hunger that is satisfied. Thank you Mary for having called us”.

Francesco: “Here where prayers flow forth like rivers, where solitude doesn't

exist, my thoughts go to all the powerful of the earth with a cry: peace, peace, peace!”

Anareja: “During this seminar I understood that God made me good like all other men, because man is made in God's image. I understood that Jesus is love and that the most important thing is to become love”.

Maria: “Why did you come?” my mother asked me six years ago when my sister and I went to find her in Canada. We hadn't seen her in 50 years. I was six and my sister was two when she left. We stayed with her for just a few days, it was all very formal. “Don't hug me” she said to me when we left – I wanted to forgive her. I came to Medjugorje to have that hug. I had it. I experienced great love”.



I am your mother...

My own testimony about Medjugorje cannot but require a total emptying of myself and my thoughts, to experience a maternal presence that does not try to possess you, but surrounds you lovingly, to give itself and make itself known.

I am a mother, I'm of a good age, and I was also a daughter and I know how sometimes in calling your children you must ensure that you are heard insistently, especially when giving advice or an exhortation that may lead them to reflect.

For me, the calling came not to increase my faith in the Mother of Jesus, which has been well-rooted in my heart since the time I was a child, but through a true, almost physical and embracing encounter with a love that was exclusive in a first instance, that I then see, in reality, as an immense embrace for all the children who have flocked to experience that blessed land.

The first calling came to me in '82: a postcard "Do you want to come to Medjugorje with us?" I ask myself: "How can you ask a mother of so many children to leave home?", and then I didn't know what it was. But having come to know the event, I understand that that was only the first calling, that is repeated in the invitation to frequent the Roman group of the Queen of Peace, guided by Lilli and Father Amorth.

Then comes the departure for the pilgrimage, repeated several times after that, to come to a true, personal knowledge of She who has been beside you throughout your whole life, so as to silently insert you into God's plan. How much resistance! But finally she reveals herself to you: "I am here for you, to be accepted beyond devotion, as a person, as the child of Nazareth who conceived Jesus, but you too. I am your mother and, if you want, I will bring you Home".

Leda Motta

Grace goes before us

This phrase, that I listened to during a spiritual retreat a few years ago, marked out the route of my life, of my inner journey and of my marriage. Over the past years, in fact, when cancer was at home in my body, when I repeated these words to myself I found solace in understanding that when God permits suffering in our lives, He is present, He goes before us with his grace, which is translated into moral strength, inner strength, hope and trust. I also understood that such grace acts especially when suffering is offered to God through Christ's sacrifice in Mass, and completed by the offering of life to Jesus through the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

I was first diagnosed with breast cancer in 1999, this was followed by a surgical intervention and radiotherapy; a year later the same procedure for my other breast. Given the strong doses of chemotherapy I had to undergo, other organs were completely compromised and therefore subsequently removed. In short, it is a battle against the disease that is still ongoing today.

But what I would like to underline here is not so much a succession of clinical events, but rather, what they meant for me on a spiritual level, beginning from the discovery of the true value of marriage in God, in the highest aspects of this sacrament.

What was initially a *single flesh* with my husband – and which, for physiological reasons, is now no longer possible – has been transformed into a *union in God*. I experienced this especially when I was on the operating table, or during those check-ups in sophisticated machinery that reads your cells. Like the time when my husband

was waiting for me in the waiting room, praying, united with my prayer, and I had the clear sensation that Mary was physically beside me, with her loving and comforting embrace!

Being transformed in Spirit, even in situations that leave no choice humanly – especially as spouses in Christ – I believe means welcoming God's will as it is presented to us moment by moment, because it is preceded by his grace!

And so I make a prayer my own: "Holy Spirit, give me the gift of a vital relationship with the three Persons of the Most Blessed Trinity and grant me the grace of living this relationship responsibly...." I am convinced, in fact, that entering into an ever more living and solid relationship with God is the only way to never give in to despair; a relationship that is nourished on profound, spontaneous prayer that reaches the Heart of Jesus and his Mother. Only in this way can we repeat our "here I am", in the tiredness of everyday life, while the crosses will no longer crush us, but rather, they will be lifted up to the Father.

The pathway that Mary points out to us in Medjugorje is that of holiness. The trials on this pathway are therefore "precious pearls", because if they are experienced with trust and abandonment, they open up interior spaces within us, that only God knows and where He Himself wishes to dwell.

Let every trial, every cross be an occasion of grace for everyone, to the advantage of many souls who wish to be transformed in love, for eternity. For this I pray, for this I offer myself. I know that the Lord rarely transforms sick cells into healthy cells, but I am certain that God continuously transforms us into new creatures.

Maria R.

Like a crash

I don't know what urged me to go to Medjugorje. I remember well what I no longer wanted to experience in life, what led me to accept *any* invitation to go to a place that then radically changed the course of my years.

Emptiness, nonsense, the cold greyness of an existence aimed at seeking happiness in places and situations where selfishness reigns, because in certain environments, happiness is only sought to feel a little better, to gratify our own needs and not because it is the fruit of a healthy, authentic life, rooted in the truth.

Leaving an abyss behind, to take a leap into the unknown, into the abyss of a dimension that you didn't know before and that now stands before you without you even having sought it. A "blind" jump, trusting out of intuition, or out of despair.

You go there without illusions, because life has eaten them all up on you, those

times when you believed that friends may have been veiled behind the mask of simple acquaintances. But that wasn't the case. Betrayal or a minimal benefit took the upper hand in the majority of cases.

You go there and that's it. Whatever happens, happens. After all, you've nothing to lose, you tell yourself. Then the impact comes. As strong as a crash, in your heart.

Medjugorje is not a joke. Medjugorje is grace in its purest state, that shatters every possible barrier and explodes within your soul. It is God's life that passes through the veins of a Mother who welcomes you and changes your existence in an instant. Because you feel that She is alive, clinging to your fast-beating chest, moved, confused and perhaps embarrassed because She is clean, immaculate, and you on the other hand have carried around a clump of sins that now weigh down on you and make you feel ashamed.

But the burden of sin soon passes in

Medjugorje, because you feel that someone is literally pushing you to "come clean" in a confession box that seems to have been built specifically for you, at that moment.



Your eyes suddenly start to lose the "scales" that covered them and your sight returns to innocence. You see things for the first time and you look at them with the gaze of a child, thoughtlessly, without neither before nor after...

You feel as though you are being reborn. A new chance. A new opportunity. Everything to start over. But now you're no longer alone. Now She's there, Mary. She who came into my dusty life like the wind, bringing with her some fresh spring air.

No, I don't know what pushed me to go there. But now I know what I must do. I must bloom.

Tania di Bigio

How to understand each other

"Now the whole earth had one language" (Gen 11, 1) At one time, men understood each other because they spoke a single language: they used God's "language" which is one language, because God spoke in them. Their words were formed in God and God "translated" them into His unique language, for everyone to understand. But then they rebelled against God and they no longer listened to His word, and so they built the "tower" in Babylon in opposition to their Lord. And then they no longer understood each other: everyone spoke a language that was incomprehensible to the other...

This is how things are today also. Today too we do not always understand each other, without perhaps knowing the reason why, because we use our own language, which is different from His. Today too God enables us to understand – with the facts of life – that the more we allow Him to speak within us, the more our words are comprehensible to our brother. Today too our speaking risks becoming a form of speaking among the deaf, if not among hostile people.

Mary and Joseph are examples of this. No dialogues between them are reported in the Gospel, only their conversation with the Angel. And from these conversations with the Angel, that is, with God, a perfect comprehension comes forth between the spouses, who do not even need to speak to each other; a great communion between the two, that overcomes all possible misunderstandings, along with all trials.

And so, let the Lord be our "interpreter". Let us speak to him. Let us speak to Him about others and about ourselves; about their needs and ours. And so relations with our neighbour will not be our own, but His. And they will be marvellous and comprehensible relations, because God has an accessible and marvellous way of relating to us! Let's try. Perhaps we will experience a new language that we will understand together; a new beauty in our relations with others, that we probably didn't know before. Perhaps there will no longer be misunderstandings, divisions. Let Mary and Joseph be an example and a form of help for us. Let us invoke them!

God's "measuring stick"

Can you tell me what "measuring stick" God uses when judging men's behaviour? Certainly the one that Jesus revealed one day to the people who were near Him: "for the same measure that you see, it will be measured back to you" (Luke 6, 38).

This "measure" that Jesus speaks of, mostly has to do with the little things that we do, those that are less striking, those everyday things, those that others do not always see and perhaps we don't see them either, because the Spirit examines the depths, he does not neglect what is hidden and small.

In saying this, Jesus does not impose a burden on us, he offers us a gift. It is not a threat from Jesus in fact, but a form of encouragement that reveals a secret: for love of man, God's heart assesses our actions, using our same "measure", without imposing His.

Does this not perhaps reveal His immense goodness? Does this not tell us that His humility extends to the point that the Creator bends down to using the same measures of the creature to save it? And so, if we receive an insult or an offence from those who stand beside us and we forgive it, if we use mercy unreservedly, God will forgive us unreservedly, he will adopt limitless mercy with us, even for the greatest sins.

This is what Jesus reveals to us: if we do not refuse the sufferings life offers us (those of every day, even the smallest ones) and if we use mercy with those who procure those sufferings for us, (we know that our punishment often passes through those who stand beside us), then every fault of ours is forgiven, for our joy and that of others, because where there is forgiveness, it is there that joy builds its home. Otherwise, our shortcoming remains....

Jesus was very concerned with ensuring that the importance of what he was saying was understood. And so he told the parable of that man who, despite the fact that he had been forgiven for an enormous debt that he had with his employer, did not use clemency towards a man similar to him who owed him very little. The parable concludes with the employer coming to know of this behaviour and throwing the man who was forgiven in prison, until such time as he paid off all of his debt. And what's more, when teaching his friends the "Our Father", with the words: *...forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us...* he reminds us once again of the "measure" that God uses as regards man.

And so, thank you Jesus because you have revealed God's "measure" to us, for our salvation. Thank you because you have taught us to use the "measuring stick" of compassion and mercy, like You. Thank you because you gave us Mary, Mother of Compassion and Mercy. □

Our readers write...

Father Stanislao from Pula (Croatia): "May the Queen of Peace reward you abundantly. In the Echo I often find uplifting information and examples. Be brave!"

Maria Calcagno from Uruguay: "Heartfelt thanks. The Echo is like fresh water for the soul. May the Lord fill you with blessings".

Carla Bucciarelli from Italy: "Thank you for your work". The Echo that I download from the Internet is of great help to me in remaining in Medjugorje...When I read it my heart is encouraged and I set out on my journey once again! I am sending you a little contribution, which is all I can afford to send, never leave us. Thank you"

R. Evans from Manjimup (Australia): "Thank

you for the copies of the Echo that you send me. I am sending you a small contribution that might help you to continue!"

Louise M. Dunn from Stanford (U.S.A.): "Your writings are marvellous and stimulating from a spiritual point of view. I am sending you a small contribution...."

Echo fully relies on readers' donations.

To all who have been instruments of Providence for Echo, enabling us to continue to help Mary reach her children, goes our heartfelt thanks, whom we remember especially in prayer and at Holy Mass.

If you desire a written response for your donation, please kindly request it. May God reward you and your loved ones onehundredfold!

"God loves a cheerful giver", writes Saint Paul to the Corinthians (2 Cor 9, 7). It is true, the Lord's love is bestowed on those who share their goods with others, in the certainty that they will never be lacking anything because they know that God himself will see to filling the granaries of their lives in the manners and times that He knows.

It is this fullness of love that we invoke on all of those who have given to the Echo during this time, because **only through your offerings has this magazine managed to continue its existence.**

The significant increase in postal charges that we informed you of last year unfortunately remains definitive and therefore the costs of dispatch have quadrupled with respect to past years. **This urges us to continue our appeal to your generosity**, also because in many parts of the world that are much poorer than our western countries, the Echo brightens up the lives of many, who nevertheless cannot support it financially for obvious reasons.

These readers however always send us letters confirming their pleasure and above all guaranteeing their prayers for all those who act as tools of Providence in their place. In this way, the good becomes "circular", in the sense that, those who do not have the financial means, offer their spiritual contribution for those who can afford to send a contribution to the Echo. In particular, the missionaries express their thanks because the Echo helps them in their apostolate, and therefore they commit to celebrating the Eucharist for the magazine's benefactors and send them all their special blessing.

We would also remind you that the Echo is published on a website from which you can download its full version. We would therefore invite those who can, to do so; so as to enable us to make some savings on printing and postal expenses.

It is not always easy to hold out our hand to ask for financial aid, especially in this period of general crisis. But we do so with humility and simplicity, as Saint Francis did, in the awareness that for our part there must always be a responsible heart at the service of this magazine, a heart that is free from any interest, a heart willing to sacrifice, so that the Echo, so desired by Mary, might continue to "circulate" and reach its children scattered throughout the world. To her we entrust the future steps and all the needs of this little, but always eagerly awaited magazine. Heartfelt thanks.

The Echo team

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