

With age-old love I have loved you; so I have kept my mercy toward you. (Jr 31:3)

Our Blessed Mother's message of 25 May 1993:

Dear children, Today I invite you to open yourselves up to God through prayer so the Holy Spirit may begin to work miracles in you and through you. I am with you and I intercede before God for each one of you, because, dear children, each of you are important for my plan of salvation.

I invite you to be bearers of Good and Peace. God can give you peace only if you convert and pray. So, my dear little children: pray - pray - pray, and do all that the Holy Spirit inspires you to do. Thank you for having responded to my call.

Open yourselves up to the Spirit in prayer, so He can do miracles and realize My plan

Mary, Queen of Peace, invites us to open ourselves up to God so the Holy Spirit can work His prodigies in us. Without a doubt this is a reference to the solemnity of Pentecost (30 May), but not limited to this great feast. Prayer and complete openness to the Spirit are definitely related to that dominating phrase: **my plan of salvation.**

One could simply say that Mary, Mother of the Church and all humanity, received the task from God of bringing the plan of salvation and peace, in union with the Holy Spirit (of Whom She is the Bride), to conclusion. In perfect obedience, She has made this plan Hers, and that is why She says **my plan.**

So Her plan will be realized and Her Heart will triumph, like when, with Her *Fiat* under the action of God's Spirit, the mystery of Incarnation was realized. It seems that the realization of this plan has come to a decisive moment. We may even have delayed it through not knowing the power of miracles.

That is why She is again asking **each of Her children** to help and offer ourselves to Her, because each one of us **is important** for the work which will transform the world. But to be bearers of **Good** (that Good that God aims at and that must explode in the world) and of the **Peace** that He calls *His peace*, one must **pray** without respite and **convert.**

Only in opening ourselves up to God through prayer do we permit His Creative Spirit to create in us a new heart, to enter it with His light and power so He may remove all which is not good and fill us with His light and strength to carry out His will. These are the miracles of the Spirit that transform life and make us able to do things normally beyond our strength: *you will do the works that I do and greater ones than these* (Jn 14:12), and you will be like fire of Love, and *nothing escapes its heat* (Ps 18); and prodigies will be done also in others.

Like to the servants in Cana, Our Lady says in the end to **do as the Holy Spirit tells** our hearts which remain docile to His action through being attentive and prayerful.

Mary is with us and She continues the mission She received at the foot of the Cross and in the Upper Room. She continues interceding for us so the Spirit may descend on us to burn the evil in us and we will burn with the fire of love for God and our brothers and sisters.

I am with you, Mary repeats to us, **and I intercede on your behalf before God**, for each of you. Mary is with us and She prays so the Holy Spirit may be the start of divine life in us (Rm 8:1), so He may live **in us**, dwell **in us** (Rm 8:9). Wherever the Groom is, the Bride is also present. So She remains with us, and He in us. * *

The Heart that loved men so much

For the Spirit to work: remain united in the name of Jesus like in the first Church

Easter is the day in which Christ loosened the chains of sin and death - chains with which Satan held us slaves. On this day Christ brought us to being in communion with *my Father and your Father, my God and your God*, so that every man saved by Him may say: *I am risen and I am again with You* - i.e., with that God we had been separated from. In the time following Easter we can see (in Acts 2:42-48, 4) how the disciples were wonderfully united in peace and harmony - which is a visible sign of the effects of the Paschal mystery. Theirs was true communion of children in God. This communion could be seen by others by the way the disciples *loved one another*. This communion was the model for the whole Church, and yeast for the new humanity.

We have to make this model ours if we don't want our Christianity to be just a day-dream. First of all: *repent and be converted to Jesus so you may be saved from this corrupt generation and you will receive the Holy Spirit*. Jesus will continue being present wherever *his disciples are united in His name*. So to be saved, live like in this [first Christian] community with all your heart. Enter this ark of salvation if you don't want to be swept over by the flood.

But in what way can we be part of this community to be saved? Acts 2:42 says: *All the disciples devoted themselves to the teaching of the apostles and to the communal life, to the breaking of the bread and to the prayers... and every day they devoted themselves to meeting together in the temple area and to breaking bread in their homes (the Eucharist)*. All this so they could remain in the same Spirit. *And every day the Lord added to their number those in the same unity* (it reads: *epi tò autòn* in the original Greek version). So the new way of being disciples is in **being united** in heart and [in sharing] goods, through the Holy Spirit. This for first, announced that Jesus was risen and alive among His people.

Without this concrete communion in Jesus through attentiveness, prayer and Eucharist, done with all one's strength, a believer cannot remain in the transforming and unifying Spirit; for we are so surrounded these days by models of worldly living, that it is impossible to believe. Gathering together on Sundays in church is not enough to make strangers become *one heart and one soul*. Where there are *two or more united in my Name, I am there*
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with them: means being united around Jesus, in forgiveness and attentiveness, in confiding in one another, in praise and Eucharistic communion. It doesn't mean an anonymous gathering like what normally happens in our services. So, whatever you ask for will be given you... So for this reason the apostles gave testimony of the Resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. And nothing did they call their own, but everything was in common.

This is all tied to the Eucharist: breaking of the bread. In other words it is the breaking of His life for us and of our life for the others. **We have to make the Eucharist** [celebration] more live; not rush it or make it rote and formal. Like that the Mass is emptied of its greatest value which is the presence of Jesus, and of brotherly communion and the offering of our lives together with His. What's more, the fruits of unity and peace and holiness are not produced. Is this not scandal in our churches?

We have to be converted to this unity with all our might, so we may be kept, through faith, by the power of God. Without this unity that the Holy Spirit works through, Christianity is reduced to doctrine, which doesn't convince anyone, for it lacks God's power, it's like tasteless salt.

Mary came to do a work of charity. She came to liven the Christian communities so they may become yeast of unity for all men. She is calling us to live **this communion** by telling us *daily Mass must become the main part of our day*. She also gives us a model to follow with the **prayer groups** where we can live this unity in one Spirit, and together with our brothers and sisters, work at living a holy life. St Paul also said not to *desert our gatherings and to urge one another on and meet Mass - communion of hearts*. The Didachè (written before the Gospels) says: *try to meet up every day with your brothers in faith and look for comfort in their speech*. St Ignatius said: *when you meet in the Holy Eucharist, the harmony of your faith destroys Satan's powers* (and St Justine in his 1st Apologia said): *let us always remember this in our gatherings and let us always remain united*.

These elements were so necessary that the primitive Church codified the conditions transmitted by the apostles, so they could live together in Christ. They are grouped together in the *Traditio Apostolica* by Hippolytus (200A.D.ca.) and it's surprising to read how many times the Christians prayed in a day (in the family, small communities, or alone) to remain in that Spirit: *7 times a day*, including the Eucharist and prayer at midnight! Now we'd say things have changed: our culture, habits and needs ..., but then, it is easier for us now to get together, and we have more need now than then! That is, if one wants to live in Jesus' same spirit!

So let's start gathering together to read the Acts cited above, and ask the Spirit to teach us how to put this brotherly communion into practice, starting from our prayer group environment. And let's learn to use every chance we have to get together. Christ, Who *always works* with His Spirit where people are gathered in His name, will do the rest.

Fr.A.

THE POPE USES NO HALF MEASURES FOR CROWDS OF YOUNG PEOPLE

The youth are particularly attracted to the Pope, but he doesn't take advantage of this charisma to gain personal satisfaction. What he aims at is their conversion so they can be saved. In his recent apostolic voyage to Sicily, he celebrated Holy Mass on the 9th May in the stadium of Agrigento. On the 23rd he was in Arezzo. He often abandoned his prepared text to speak from the heart.

In Agrigento : Get up and let yourselves be guided by the Risen One

We live in times of rapid and profound changes. One often asks oneself, whilst looking with apprehension at events, "where are we going?", and "with whom should we go?" The fear of the unknown and of the future has a grasp on many young people. They feel tempted to give in, to give in to doubts and discouragement; as if [they were] too tired to live and keep on fighting for truth and good. **Get up! Here is the Lord's first firm invitation.**

Young people present here today: yes, He is inviting you to get up. What does it mean to get up? Above all it means to break out of the shell of a condition of restraint, to acquire the full measure of being men and women in accordance with the divine plan. It means rejecting the temptation to withdraw into the logic of personal gain that always leads a person away from his true identity to the extent that he becomes unrecognizable and totally oblivious of his name. Which name?

The name that we all bear, that each of us bear: **child of God**. This name is deeply impressed in our hearts; put there by Jesus through His entire Gospel, His presence with us through His own works and His words and above all through His Cross and Resurrection. Getting up means starting on a walk, a walk of searching and liberation, of fighting one's own egoism, to open oneself up to our brothers and sisters. **We can all make this journey of conversion and renewal. It proceeds first and foremost from the inmost conscience of each individual.** Like in St Luke where we read of the wonderful parable of the merciful Father, *the prodigal son came to his senses ... I shall get up* (Lk 15:17). Every believer is called to walk along this same path, to get up within himself, to rise from error and selfishness and to set out without delay towards God and neighbour.

He who says *Get up* does not limit Himself to giving you an order. He Himself takes you by the hand, He remains by your side, walks by your side, He stays with you all the way along, He gives Himself for His brothers and sisters, to the very end. He does not merely give a command. No, no! He takes you by the hand. What is the Gospel, what is the Cross? It is taking each one of us by the hand. And Resurrection is the power of the Holy Spirit. Yes, taking you by the hand, effectively - not just commanding - giving the possibility, donating Himself. Giving Himself in order to give strength to the sinner, the weak, to man always in need of conversion.

After the prayer and meditation you will see more clearly, more fully, the Risen One, the *Lord who was dead but now lives*

forever and ever and has power over death and the nether world (cf. Rv 1:18). It is He who tells you *Get up*. He is asking you to renounce the idols of this world and choose Him, the Love which infuses total meaning into our life and invites you to live your youth like a Spring time of joy.

The Lord is sincere with you. He tells you clearly: *whoever is not with me is against me* (Mt 12:30). He is calling you to a clear choice, one which knows no compromise: either Him or other teachers, other shepherds, who at first seem convincing, but end up being treacherous and false.

Do not think that, while you are young, you are called only to judge and not be converted. No, my dear friends, the *beginning of wisdom is fear of the Lord* (Ps 111:10; Prv 1:7), **it is the beginning of renewal, both social and personal; it is in repentance and a change of mentality.**

One cannot be born young in Christ but becomes so. One becomes a Christian throughout one's whole life. I tell you this from my personal experience. It is not a question of age; but of being *born from above* (Jn 3:7), from His initiative, His love, the love of God that like fire burns the "old" man. Yes, in you young people too, there is a bit of this old man. God's love consumes this old man. **This work, this collaboration with Jesus must start.** God's love infuses in us His eternal youth; it makes us forever young. This is how I explain how I too can be somewhat young.

What can be brighter than a life given generously for reconciliation and justice? For this, however, my young people, you have to be born again from above, from the Spirit, from the Cross, from the Resurrection and finally from the Father who loves us. You should remain in Jesus, loving him and serving him with all your heart, all your mind and all your strength (Dt 6:5).

In Arezzo : turn away from sin and find true freedom

The Pope did not use a prepared talk, but spoke from the heart to reply to the questions of the youth in Arezzo regarding the sense of life, vocations and how to conciliate the joy of Risen Christ with the cross.

John Paul II spoke about conversion, which means going against the stream, and indicated St Francis of Assisi as an example, who thanks to repentance and conversion was able to taste a new joy. "We youth of the 20th century are not to deprive ourselves of this great human and Christian experience which is called conversion. Conversion means penance and absolution." So this is an invitation to recognizing oneself as a sinner, and not *drive out* the category of sin. "We do not want to call it so, whereas this category is profoundly anthropological and realistic. If what we want is find the true sense of life and avoid the risk of being superficial, we must return to Christ who alone is the liberator. Only He can help us go beyond that barrier that so often presents itself in us and that goes by the name of sin.

Freedom? We are not free if we think being free means doing what we want. That is just being stupid; it is the contrary of being free. Faith? Being a Christian these days is not easy: you need to **go against the stream**. Faith is no longer like in other times where it may have been a forced decision. For faith to be real it has to undergo the cross."

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Experience of Spirit builds up unity, but not the type that comes from human science. Poisonous fruits of Gnosticism

When we speak of openness to the Holy Spirit in life of faith, we do not refer to a secondary matter, as without it there is only an abstract knowledge of Christ: Gnosticism. It is the same old Gnosticism, never fought against enough, it is heresy that says once you have knowledge of the Mystery, you're alright. **But spiritual experience is neither a doctrine nor a castle full of ideas. It is the insistent action of the Holy Spirit Who calls you to be similar to living Christ.** Gnosticism renders vain the mystery of Incarnation, i.e., the way the Word manifested itself and manifests itself today, in its body which is the Church with the Pope as her head.

The consequences of this false doctrine are evident. We can see them for example in the common pastoral practice of organizing human proposals and programmes that multiply the infrastructures without leaving space for the Spirit to conduct His Church as He would like, to the fullness of the Truth. And since no one had included in their programme that Our Lady would appear in Medjugorje, it is only now, due also to the war, second thoughts and the nullity of all pastoral programmes, that we are starting to think that perhaps **the Virgin, come straight from heaven, had something to say that was more important** than any human plan: **turn away from sin, return to God, because God exists.**

Another consequence is the continuous dialogue, this type of generalized ecumenicalism, according to which we should make confrontations with everyone. Look what this has brought to Italy: Christians no longer know why they should stand up for life, for the indissolubility of marriage, or for the intangibility of every sacrament and mystery of man made to the image of God. The reason is because many believe in the need of accepting the signs of the times proposed by man. Jesus said to His disciples, however: *Go out and announce.* And for the announcement of this mystery, thanks be to God, we now have the Catechism of the Catholic Church.

The most dramatic consequence of gnosticism, however, is **the dissolution of the experience of communion**; or: the dissolution of the mystery of Christ that made unity in the gift of the Spirit. Cardinal **Ratzinger**, during a retreat for Brazilian bishops, said: *"The assembly of the Eleven, together with some women, with Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers, devoted themselves with one accord to prayer; thus it receives its unity from the Lord. Unity is fruit of this constant search for God,"* [in] prayer, which invokes the Spirit Who gives you indestructible communion. "Essentially, its activity is in the act of turning to the living God, in an openness to [wanting to live] God's will." [This openness] was so great that, as we see from Acts, the Spirit speaks and acts in a concrete manner. The Apostles invoke the Lord with prayer and fasts, so spreading the mystery of communion which is like a spectacle for the others. As Jesus said: *This is how all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.* (Jn 13:35)

The consequence of trying to make this mystery of communion exist through human means is the destruction of the Church's unity, and we know that this is a bitter satanic fruit. When Christ's mystery is

not radically accepted, we have the same thing that St Peter talks of: *That is why many among you are ill and infirm, and a considerable number have died,* (1 Co 11:30) because [they] unworthily eat and drink the body and blood of Christ. Who among us, in fact, has seriously understood that we have been grafted into Christ's body, to become **one body in Christ Jesus?** If this is true, and not just intentionally, **enflamed communities are generated**, live communion is generated, where the Spirit manifests Himself and where missionary dynamics are strictly followed. Without this communion we do not even have mission; all we have is *human activity*.

In the best of cases, even where there is great friendship and esteem, there is still a certain basic coldness, because by now we have been generated by a culture that has nothing to do with the Eucharistic mystery, that is not tuned in with heaven; so that the individual always comes first. This is a great sin that impedes the Spirit from generating that **enflamed communion so visible among the Eleven who came out from the Upper Room.** They started "making sparks" by virtue of that mystery that made them one body in the power of the Spirit; and 5,000 people gathered before that sign, bringing with them their possessions, even though they were not instructed on the greatness of sharing one's goods: it was, in fact, **a requirement of love.**

So the gift of oneself in virginity and celibacy is a requirement of love. Without this love, however, and this enflamed communion in the Spirit, one only "haggles" to one's own advantage. **Thus the extreme consequence of individualism: resistance to the Holy Spirit.** On the other hand, when you actualize a continuous purification, the Spirit enflames your heart, tuning you in profoundly with Christ's anxiety, and thus with His [charitable] love. Christ's first [charitable] love is communion that spills over from you without distinctions, estrangement or coldness.

The people of Jerusalem in seeing the Apostles, clearly understood they were reborn from above and that the mystery that had seized them had also completely transformed them. For the people of Jerusalem, they had become **real testimonies of the power and resurrection of Christ.**

We, however, are often testimonies of the death of Jesus, not of His resurrection. So following a culture instead of one's personal experience with the Risen One, constantly perpetuates a way of "living" the Church that is agreeable with all other *human* experiences.

The openness to the Spirit that was generated in us in our encounter with Our Lady in Medj. and the fact that after that encounter we were not the same as before, means that (beyond all pastoral programmes) the Holy Spirit, like in Pentecost, still has the power to put you back on the way. And so we become better guardians of the fact that Our Lady had permission from the Father to appear to this poor humanity; and we have to try to listen to Her, to imitate Her, in particular try to be a **"living Bible"** like Her, because "before the inspired authors wrote down the Truth of the eternal life revealed in Jesus Christ, that same truth had already been written down and accepted

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Are we so blind as not to see the anti-Christian spirit in the secular press that always misinterprets the Pope's words?

A. Naticchi, a distributor of *Echo*, expresses his disappointment in seeing how the secular press distort the speeches of the Pope and the pastors. *Worse still, many Catholics read and believe, unable to see this subtle campaign against the Church.*

This tendency is by now rather obvious. We can all see how the Magisterium, the discourses of the Pope, even the simplest, are distorted by journalists. What are the reasons? The following are some of the facts that motivate this distortion.

* If the Pope's various discourses, encyclicals and letters are distorted by the secular press, it is clear it arises from ignorance on the part of the writers. This lack of basic knowledge of the Catholic doctrine has often made journalists blunder terribly, particularly in regards to **Christian moral:** the teachings of the Pope in this field are developed from profound meditations on the revelation in the light of lengthy studies on spiritual, anthropological and theological foundations regarding human love; then comes the Magisterium and pedagogic indications for those who desire living their marriage and sexuality in a Christian manner. Many react, founding their *arguments* solely on their own experience.

None of these care the least about the Truth, or the mystery of life and human and divine love reflected in matrimony. They stir up controversies for trifles, and all we can think is that they resemble those who *carefully strain out the gnat, then without batting an eye, they swallow the camel* (Mt 23:24). It cannot be any other way, for St Paul teaches us that man who lives by the flesh does not accept what pertains to the Spirit of God; no, even more so, *he sees it all as nonsense* (1 Co 2:14).

* Often there is hostility arising from preconceived ideas. The Pope's recent trip to **Albania** is an example. One important daily newspaper headed their column with: *The Pope against the Muslims in his conquest of Albania.* No one who had just even skipped through the Pope's discourses to the Albanese or his message to the Islamic community could have possibly entitled a story like that. The only explanation is that the editorial staff had already decided beforehand what to say and what not to say and which image of the Pope they would give. They didn't care less about the real contents of the Pope's words.

* Then there's the comedy arranged by the papers regarding the Holy Father's **letter to the bishop of Sarajevo** where he urged the women of Bosnia & Herzegovina not to kill the new lives (cf. *Echo* 101). Comments flew over the keyboards into the press as fast as possible. And if they were fast, they were also very superficial and far, far from the true content of the letter.

We also note how frivolous their comments were on the new Catechism. We know, in fact, that the teachings of John Paul II, in their most intimate and essential nucleus, cannot be accepted by the world because, as Jesus says, they are an expression of that *Spirit of Truth that the world cannot accept because it neither sees nor knows it.* (Jn 14:17)

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* The secular press normally only care about hunting down signs of division among the Pastors for the sake of gratuitous scandalism. The latest example regards the unity of Catholics in politics. Someone thought they saw contrast between the Pope and the Italian bishops. The *pluralism in unity* that the Pope spoke about to the CEI was a way of expressing the *diversity of gifts* (Ef 4) that make up a body, which is one body and remains one body, while the Italian bishops were discussing their application and choices of methods. The Pope was talking on a magisterial plane, he expressed a word from *above*, according to the Spirit. The journalists, however, wanted to make him sound as if he was talking on a socio-political plane, but to do that they needed to cut and modify and chew over something that is too big for them.

It is a recurring law in the history of the Church that the people sent by the Lord, those who let themselves be guided by Christ through listening and praying, are destined to be attacked, in many ways, by the mob of worldly heroes, by all those who do not pray but want to judge, who do not adore but want to know all, who do not love but want to command. *If you belonged to the world, the world would love its own* (Jn 15:19). These words said by Jesus towards the end of His earthly life are for us light and comfort.

We need to **keep watch and pray**, seriously, to avoid being drawn in by the many judgements of the worldly spirit. When we come across articles written by people who think they can destroy the Church (with its foundations in rock and strengthened by the Holy Spirit), by blowing on her with their tiny lungs, let us remember that their breath is close to coming short.

Rather than being worried about the future of the Holy Mother Church, **we have to defend ourselves from this worldly spirit**. Our Lady has been telling us for some time that **prayer is our strength**. So defend ourselves through prayer if we do not want to be drawn in by the many wolves in circulation dressed in lambskins. Though these opposers of the Church have good intentions in the line of culture and civilization, Satan is their guide and he knows only too well he is unable to destroy the Church. So what he does is convince as many people as possible to leave her; many pay heed, thanks also to the ample and elaborate collaboration of men. Here Our Lady steps in with a way of responding; so let us respond, hastily, *dressing ourselves in God's armour!* (Eph 6:11)

Let us pray always for the Pope and not be taken in by the worldly brains. More than once Our Lady has told us to renounce the television, so She must have good reason to ask us this! Certain papers are made of the same stuff as the TV, so leave them on the shelves, and our faith will be surely strengthened, our hearts pacified and our minds freed.

We'll still see and hear of more attacks and falsifications of the authentic teachings of the Church, and the surprising part is that the authors are people who live ordinary lives in a total disinterest for things of faith. Without a doubt it's got to do with tactics, that we can't afford to be caught by. *In the world you will have trouble, but take courage, I have conquered the world.* (Jn 16:33)

With this certainty in our hearts, let us offer to the Lord our prayer for the Pope and all good pastors of the Church. * *

Beatification of Sr Faustina - or the triumph of the Divine Mercy

THE CULT OF THE DIVINE MERCY

From Sr Faustina's diary we find various forms of devotion to the **Divine Mercy**: devotion to the image of Merciful Jesus, the Chaplet, the commemoration of Jesus at 3 pm, and the feast of the Divine Mercy.

Image of Merciful Jesus - "One evening in my cell, I became aware of the Lord Jesus clothed in a white garment. One hand was raised in blessing, the other was touching the garment at the height of his breast. From the opening in his garment two large rays came forth; one was red, the other a pale colour. Jesus said to me:

Paint an image of the way you see me now. Underneath write: Jesus, I trust you. It is my wish that this picture be venerated, first in your chapel, then all over the world. I promise that the person who venerates this picture will not perish. I promise that person victory over the enemy now on earth and especially at the moment of his death...

My look in that picture is the same as the way I looked upon humanity from the cross. With this I offer to humanity the vessel by which it may draw graces from the spring of my mercy...

The two rays stand for blood and water. The pale one is the water which makes souls Righteous. The red one is the blood which is the life of souls. These rays issued forth from the depths of my Mercy at that time when my Heart was opened by a lance on the Cross. These rays defend souls from the wrath of my Father. Blessed is he who takes refuge in these, for the just hand of God will not lay hold of him."

Commemoration of Jesus' death at 3 p.m. - *My daughter, each time the clock will strike 3 of an afternoon, immerse yourself in my mercy to adore and glorify it, to invoke its power in favour of the whole world. You will do this in particular for those who live in sin, for in that hour my mercy was flung open for each of you. In it you will obtain everything for yourself and for the others. In that hour grace opened its doors for the whole world and mercy defeated justice.*

The Chaplet of the Divine Mercy - "It was evening and I was in my cell. I saw an angel, the executor of God's wrath... I started pleading God with words I could hear from within myself. The day after an inner voice told me: *This prayer serves at appeasing my scorn. You can say it on ordinary Rosary beads.*

Start with one Our Father, one Hail Mary and the Apostles' Creed. Then on the large beads recite the following prayer: Eternal Father, I offer You the Body, the Blood, the Soul and the Divinity of Your dearly beloved Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ, in atonement for our sins and for those of the whole world. On the ten small beads say once for each bead: For the sake of His sorrowful Passion have mercy on us and on the whole world.

To conclude say the following, three times: Holy God, Holy Mighty One, Holy Immortal One, have mercy on us and on the whole world.

Recite it every day with constance. Whoever recites it will receive great mercy in the hour of their death. Priests should recommend it to sinners as their last hope.

Even the most hardened sinner, if he recites this Chaplet, even just once, will receive grace from my infinite Mercy. I want the whole world to know of it. I will grant unimaginable graces to all those who confide in my Mercy.

The feast of the Divine Mercy - *It is my wish that the Sunday after Easter be declared feast of my Mercy. I ask my faithful servants that on that day they preach about the infinite mercy that I nourish for the entire world.*

For those who will draw near the fountain of life (confession and Holy Communion) on that day, my promise is that they will receive remission of their sins and punishment [due for their sins]. Mankind will not find peace until it turns with confidence to my Mercy.

The prophetic vision - Sr. Faustina had the grace of "seeing" the day of her beatification. "Today, Holy Tuesday, God granted me many graces. I was suddenly overwhelmed by God's presence, then I saw I was in Rome, in a lovely temple where the Holy Father, together with all the clergy, was celebrating this solemnity..."

I looked at the large crowd that was venerating the Divine Mercy and I said to the Lord: Jesus, bless all those who have come here to honour You and Your infinite Mercy. With His hand, Jesus made a sign of the cross, and [I saw] the blessing reflect in the souls like a flash of light. My spirit was immersed in His love, as if I was melting in God and disappearing in Him."

As the Pope celebrated this solemnity, the devotees thanked the Lord for beatifying Sr. Faustina who managed to transform every day life into an extraordinary event, full of significance, by transmitting to the world the wonderful message concerning God's Divine Mercy.

May her example rouse hope in hearts, teach us unlimited trust in God and active love for our neighbour. * *

The Pope: "Woe betide if I were to worry about criticism and incomprehensions"

"It is in one's relation with Christ (the true object of preaching) that we find the explanation for the difficulties and opposition that the Magisterium of the Church has always encountered from the time of Peter to today: *the disciple is not superior to his teacher* (Mt 10:24). *If they persecuted me they will persecute you too* (Jn 15:20).

This battle also took place within the Christian community; St Paul said to Timothy: *proclaim the word; be persistent whether it is convenient or not; convince, reprimand, encourage through all patience and teaching.. (though) people will no longer tolerate sound doctrine* (cf. 1 Tm 4:2).

St Paul's words stand for today's bishops too, especially for the Roman Pontiff, whose mission is to protect the Christian population from error with regards to faith and moral, and whose duty is to keep the faith (cf. 2Tm4:7).

Woe betide if he were to worry about criticism and incomprehensions. His task is to give testimony to Christ, His word, His law, His love.

The Roman Pontiff must also add the commitment of being, like Jesus, *meek and humble of heart* (Mt 11:29). Pray for me, that I may be so, and become ever more so."
(General Audience 10.3.93)

NEWS FROM MEDJUGORJE

An oasis of peace amid the war

* According to **Vicka**, the Gospa seems far more worried about the situation in the world than in Bosnia & Herzegovina. Our prayer for peace is needed by Her now more than ever.

* Like last year, a **Peace March** from Humac to Medj. (15 km) will take place on the 24th June. Departure time 11 a.m. Archbishop Franic' will take part in the march and celebrate Mass upon arrival in Medj.

* The condition of Msgr. **Zanic'** has improved since undergoing a heart operation. He is now in Split.

* **Mostar** is agonizing. Many young men from Medjugorje have also left to take part in the fighting. With the cease-fire on May 18 there was also an exchange of prisoners. Some of these were from Medjugorje and thus were able to return home.

The **youth of the village**, however, are before a big dilemma: emigrate or not? To leave their homeland would be a wound in a Croatian's heart that would never close. To remain would mean a dangerous adventure with no way out. Drugs are becoming more and more available, and Medjugorje has not been left out of this either. The young men are tired of going to the front for this senseless war. Let us pray for them.

* A few days ago on the front at Stolac', some soldiers from Medj. made contact with some Serbian soldiers (via radio). They were stationed only just 300 metres apart. The Serbs told them: "You come here and kill our leaders, then we'll come there and kill yours. Then we'll be able to live in peace again like before." This episode is meaningful, from it we can see what sort of state the soldiers are in on both parts.

* **The Croats** are disheartened because the Muslim refugees, taken in as friends in Herzegovina, are now against them. They were given food to survive and weapons to defend themselves from the Serbs. Now they are using them against the Croats. **Fr. Slavko** says this conflict between Croats and Muslims can be attributed to the extremist parties operating on both sides, and also the fact that the Muslim soldiers, forced out of East Bosnia, (now under Serbian control) are trying to get even in West Bosnia (Croatian territory).

20 thousand soldiers in Lourdes ovation for the Croats

The 35th international military pilgrimage was held in Lourdes from 14 to 16 May. About 19,500 soldiers were present and represented 24 nations and were accompanied by 12 bishops. This year the following delegations (not normally represented) were present: Albania, Argentina, Korea, the Czech Republic and Lithuania. The sixty-odd Croatian soldiers, accompanied by the auxiliary bishop of Zagreb, Msgr. Jezerniac', were applauded by the large crowd of pilgrims present in the month dedicated to Our Lady. The Hungarian delegation was led by a priest who served 19 years in prison. The Echo staff that were present spiritually united all our readers to this international prayer.

The homily by the **bishop of Sarajevo, Msgr. Puljic'**, was addressed to all the pilgrims present in that moment: "I come from a country that cries tears and blood every day without respite. One and a half years of war has cost us 200 thousand

human victims, 100 thousand homes destroyed, a million refugees. These are the consequences of many years lived without God. After 13 months of war, Sarajevo has become a concentration camp. (...) I would like to stress that the political world has reacted in an indecisive manner and too slowly. This has encouraged the aggressor. Now we watch a second period [of this war], characterized by hate that knows no limits. (...)

The soldiers of Bosnia could not come because of a communications block. I am here to pray to the Immaculate Conception, so this atrocious war may be stopped, so hearts will convert and be freed from hate, [to pray] for all the populations of Bosnia. To Our Lady of Lourdes I consecrate my Archdiocese and my faithful..."

The war in figures: 3 thousand children have died in Sarajevo, where nearly half a million inhabitants (Muslims, Croats and Serbs) once lived peacefully together. The bombings continue and hit those areas most densely populated. 39% of children have lost at least one member of their family; 48% have had to abandon their homes; 72% have had their home bombed or destroyed; 51% have seen someone die before their very eyes; 81% believed that the time had come for them to die.

The war and Mary's messages

The following is taken from an interview of Fr. Slavko by A. Bonifacio. (23.3.93)

"(...) We can say that Medjugorje, during this war, has really gained ground almost everywhere. Many have opened their eyes; not everyone, but there truly is an incredible interest now for Medjugorje (and cites the example of *New Zealand and Australia*).

I believe that, because of the war, many now give more authority to Our Lady's messages. Before the war which began exactly 10 years after the start of Our Lady's apparitions, one would have said: But what war! Against who! What does it mean that prayer and fasts can stop wars?! Now we cannot say: What war, for it is here. This war is our cross. We can say, without accusing anyone, that **in 11 years we have not done what Our Lady asked us to do** and the war came. She asked for conversion and reconciliation so peace could reign. We did not do this so war came. We don't want to accuse, these are just the facts.

So this cross of ours should be for the world, for you all, a message: i.e. **take Our Lady's messages seriously** - first off, on an individual, personal plane, together as a family, and so on. Listen to Our Lady's messages, it is not too late!

From speaking with the people and the soldiers, I believe that **Our Lady's presence has given them courage**, consolation and even made people's hearts more sensitive. Many times I have heard this temptation in confession: *I am now tempted to hate, but I fight against it.* I asked how a young engineer now fighting in the war was and he replied: "Not well, because we are tempted to become like them. We're in danger. In war a person even loses his head. Everything is so degenerating, and even if you defend yourself, you can still become a violent, revengeful person. It is a big danger..., even though many carry rosary beads on them."

Everyone wants rosary beads - by their own personal decision. Perhaps this

too is a sign that people have not lost hope: "Our Lady is with us." they say, but I say: "We too have to be with Our Lady."

How many times do we hear people, particularly journalists from poor countries where social injustice reigns, like in Brazil etc., say: What do you want? Pray? Fast? Why doesn't She talk about justice?! I replied: Look, I don't know. Ask Our Lady. But there's one thing I do know, and that's that those people who prayed here with us were the first to see our needs and started helping. Perhaps you will say that this is not because of the prayer, but I can say that those who prayed in Medjugorje are now helping us.

The thing that struck me the most was when I saw 4 vans arrive from Poland to bring us flour and some blankets for our refugees, yet they are in need too. **So from this faith, this prayer, love is born.** It is a concrete love that sees brothers and sisters in need and then helps them." **

The tragedy of former Yugoslavia eternal shame on the West

This tragedy fills us every day with horror, for though it has touched rock bottom, an end is still not in sight. The whole world should feel guilt for this barbarism, with so much contempt for life, in the unborn and the most vulnerable, with no respect for anyone. These brothers and sisters of ours have been left to themselves with nothing around them but hate, injustice and endless suffering, and it has all turned into a macabre custom where the remains of Communism is destroying an entire nation and getting away with it.

We are all guilty and Europe is materially responsible for this ruin by not intervening. It has never had the courage nor the will to admit who the aggressor is, or to do something to put a stop to this progressive massacre that has been going on for two years. It could have imposed tighter, more effective sanctions, striking out at the arms industries, arms trafficking, airports and military bases. This could have been done, but wasn't, for obvious though masked connivance, not only on the part of Russia, but other western nations too, [in favour of] Serbia. Europe's incapability of being united is obvious, and Serbia, with its proverbial double-dealing, knows how to take advantage of this.

The Bosnian Serbs continue raising the price for peace, without having the least intention of making peace. In the meantime they keep on taking by force the remaining territory that belongs to the Muslims and keep besieging their fortresses (Srebrenica, Zepa, Goradze, Foca, etc.), threatening to destroy them if the people don't give in. And in many cases they have had to accept being disarmed, so remaining helpless.

The Bosnian Serbs rejected the Vance-Owen peace plan after Karadzic's feigned positive response, because they would have had to give up 50% of the territory they occupied. The threatened military interventions by the USA were quickly withdrawn, unlike with Iraq, because human rights are worth less than petroleum.

The United Nations now consider returning to their plan for protected areas, firmer embargoes, humanitarian convoys,

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Marija Pavlovic' to marry in Sept.

She herself made the announcement on a local TV station, and said, among other things, that after having had various experiences with convent life, she felt "her vocation was to form a family. Marriage also is a way to holiness."

Marija met her future husband (Paul Lunetti, 31 years old from Monza, Italy) on Podbrdo some years ago and they remained friends. Paul's father, Dino, has prepared a small apartment for them in Monza. Marija said she will probably divide her life between Monza and Medjugorje. She continues to receive Our Lady's apparition every day at the same hour, wherever she is, and receives the monthly message for the world on the 25th of every month.

When the seers' choices clash with our expectations

It seems that some of our Medjugorje friends are rather surprised and even disappointed by certain choices the seers have made. These friends were of the idea that they should have joined a convent of some sort; and then again the seers too in the early days, except for Mirjana and perhaps Ivanka, had also talked of becoming religious or priests. Ivan had tried twice and his experience with the Franciscans of Dubrovnik was unfortunate. Marija finished her experience with the "Kraljice Mira" community led by Fr. Tomislav earlier than planned. At a later date she was heard to say: "As soon as the apparitions finish I will enter a convent."

Now three of the seers are married and last April a fourth one, Marija, announced she will soon marry.

What should we say? It is not up to us to choose for others and neither can a person let themselves be conditioned by others' expectations in such a delicate and personal business as one's vocation. Virginity is certainly a wonderful gift, "but if one cannot exercise self-control they should marry." (1Co7:8-9) When a person is certain he/she is not being called by the Lord, that

person should not follow the way of virginity, as the commitment may one day be broken and rather than reflect God's pure love he/she would be cause for scandal. On the other hand, said persons could sanctify themselves in family life through marriage: great sacrament in Christ and the Church (St Paul). So let us not judge, nor be surprised by the choices of the seers. There is no doubt that before they chose, they reflected much. Perhaps the Lord has also asked some of us to give up everything and follow Him, like the young rich man in the Gospel. What did we do with His proposal?

The Word of God tells us

While we're on the subject let us take a look at the problems regarding vocations. Looking at the history of salvation we see that God chooses people from all walks of life, but it is also true that for His great works God generally prefers people free from family obligations. In these cases God's call requires total commitment. Take the two sons of Zebedee; they left their father and the fishing nets to follow Jesus, and in their wake we have the many ranks of people who gave up everything to dedicate themselves totally to God's kingdom. To these Jesus promises: "Those who give up house or brothers or sisters or mother or father (and St Luke adds wife - 18:29) will receive a hundred times more now in this present age, and eternal life in the age to come." Jesus also says: "Not all can accept this word," (i.e. become eunuchs, or virgins)," but only those to whom that is granted." In 1 Co 7:7-9 St Paul says he would like everyone to be as he is (virgin) ... "to be united to the Lord without distraction ... but each has a particular gift from God, one of one kind and one of another.... It is better to marry than be on fire!" And full of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, Paul recommends that it is better for a person to remain as he is - at the moment of his conversion. "Are you bound to a wife? Do not seek a separation. Are you free of a wife? Then do not look for a wife. If you marry, however, you do not sin ... but such people will experience affliction in their earthly life and I would like to spare you that." (1 Co 7:26-28) This might happen to those who seek marriage as a refuge from the cross of religious life; but would only end up finding a bigger one in family life.

Are we not all at fault, a little?

God's greatest gifts, like virginity for a Church mission, have to be particularly **safe-guarded** so as not to be lost. So without a defence from the worldly spirit that ruins everything, and without a spiritual guide, **even the best of intentions in a consecrated life can become like a dead letter or wasted gifts.**

What would have happened to Bernadette from Lourdes, or Lucy from Fatima if they had not been protected by a community and the walls of a monastery? If we read the story of their lives, we see that they refused invitations from all parts of the world, asking them to remain in the world and testify and spread the messages. The girls, however, were steadfast in their decisions and they won. And how they served the cause!

Visionaries have to be carefully protected if they are to remain true testimonies to the things of heaven and not

just repeaters of the messages. In our case, however, was it not the pilgrims that disturbed their concentration, scattering their way and their homes with incense and gold, creating comfortable lives for them? That is certainly not suited to the call of the Poor and Humble. We wanted them all with us and for us always. We cannot now complain about their choices.

The rest is true even if humans fail

The message of Medjugorje, however, **does not depend just on the seers and neither on the parish that must incarnate it, the same way the Gospel does not depend on those who announce it.** A holy life of the former would certainly benefit the message, making it more credible when accompanied by a true testimony, but this is not essential. In the same way, the message would not lose its strength if the seers led a life that was not edifying and the parish could not be recognized when compared to the early days. In fact Jesus says: "do what they tell you to do, do not do what they do." (Mt 23:3)

We have always said that, "the charismas in themselves do not make the persons holy," like the gift of being an Apostle did not make Judas holy. The Gospel would still be valid even if bad behaviour of Christians in general denied it. Even in the end "people will say: did we not prophesy in your name, cast out demons in your name, work many miracles in your name? But Jesus will tell them: I have never known you; away from me, you evil men!" (Mt 7:22-23)

Perhaps we expect too much from the visionaries and confuse Mary with those who see Her. Without realizing it, we could end up making the same error as the Bishop who denied the reality of the apparitions because of certain behaviour of the seers (they smoked or because they contradicted one another in something unimportant). **The truth of Medjugorje, as we have seen and heard right from the beginning, has not changed.** The real signs that testify to the message are the prodigies of true conversions, real fruit from the divine tree, that call out: "here can be seen the hand of God." Fr. Angelo

Fr. Jozo in Germany

Medj. for the first time in Frankfurt.

On the 28th April, Fr. Jozo participated in a programme of prayer in that city with 9 celebrants and a thousand participants. Singular blessings followed the 4 hour meeting, which was held during the week - after a hard day's work.

The joy was immense; like my first trip to Medjugorje. There was a feeling of openness, and joy in praying with the others, and for the others, then and always.

(MD)

*** Daily bus service to Medjugorje** from Trieste - every evening at 6.00 pm. Arrival in Medj. 9 a.m. next day. Departure from Medj. 6 p.m. with arrival in Trieste 9 a.m. next morning. Cost: 68,200 lire one way. **Where:** the bus depot, adjacent to the train station. The other safe way of getting to Medj. is by **ferry from Ancona to Split.** For Trieste bus service phone: 040-360300

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but Serbia will not accept controls on their Bosnian border. Now the Muslim government of Bosnia and all the Muslim countries belonging to the UN have rejected this plan which would apply sanctions to the *status quo* of ethnic cleansing. The situation is a blind-alley one.

So it looks as though it pays to be violent; it is tolerated on an international level. And the Muslims and Croats, once allied in the fight against the Serbs, now fight one another over the remaining area. Thus the spilling of blood and the sowing of terror in the streets of Mostar, already half destroyed.

It seems that the meeting held in Medj. on the 18th May between President Tudjman (Croatian) and Itzebegovic' (Muslim) and other leaders has put an end to this new conflict between these two peoples, leaving a spiral of hope for future peace. There have already been surprising evolutions in this war. The Holy Spirit knows how to find new unimaginable ways of pulling men out of any situation. In fact, Our Lady teaches us to turn to Him. * *

Prepare ourselves for the 10th anniversary of the consecration of the world to Mary's Immaculate Heart

Bishop **Paul Hnilica** reminds us that 9 months are missing till the 10th anniversary of the consecration of humanity to Mary's Immaculate Heart, done by John Paul II on the 25th March 1984. He proposes a *novena* of 9 months to prepare ourselves properly for this event. This novena began at Pentecost with a big meeting in the *Notre Dame* university in Indiana (USA) (28 to 30 May). Ivan, Ivanka and Mirjana were to be present.

"Let us not forget," he said, "that Our Lady said she came to Medjugorje to complete Her work began in Fatima.

Now more than ever, the Church of America, like the Church from all parts of the world, is **in need of Mary's motherly presence...** We, like the first apostles and disciples of the Lord, have to be in communion with Her if we wish to find that unity of faith and charity that attracts the Holy Spirit to our hearts. After that consecration, the Pope himself told me that apart from that solemn liturgical act, each Christian should have consecrated himself to Mary, each parish priest his parish, each bishop his diocese, parents their families. This personal consecration is needed for the triumph of Her Immaculate Heart.

Nine months is the time needed to form, through prayer and charity, a great spiritual family with the Eucharist at its centre and the Holy Father as its guide - to help the peoples of the East find God, through evangelical charity and the reconciliation of the two sister Churches (Orthodox and Catholic). **But how can we find this unity, if not in Mary's Immaculate Heart?** We are apostles of this consecration; trust will help us become children, humbleness to be stripped of our merits, charity to be generous and hope to be filled with joy.

Brothers and sisters of America, we need to look to Her and Her Son in the person of the White Pontiff and the White Eucharistic Host, to be truly a "new world."

The Lord has entrusted you with a big responsibility. Your brothers in Russia, whom you once considered as being your worst enemies, must today become your most beloved brothers. Our Lady in Fatima looked upon them with love and predilection.

My heartfelt blessing is upon you. I hope you will experiment a renewed effusion of the Holy Spirit in these days. The power of this consecration will embrace all peoples and nations and will surpass all evil that the spirit of darkness awakens in men. * *

"If you are questioning us today about an act of kindness to a cripple, and asking us how he was healed, then I am glad to tell you all ... that it was by the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, ... by this name and by no other that this man is able to stand up perfectly healthy today. This is the stone rejected by you the builders, but which has proved to be the keystone. **For of all the names in the world given to men, this is the only one by which we can be saved.** (Acts 4)

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Brazil : from theology of liberation to Marian apostolate

When Marija Pavlovic' and Fr. Leonard visited Brazil, their trip was cut short by Marija's ill health, but Fr. Jojo at a later date was able to conclude on their behalf.

Manfred Göbol writes: "The Brazilian population has entered Mary's Immaculate Heart." Manfred left Germany for Brazil in 1979 to help those suffering from leprosy, and he confesses: "I was only Christian by name. At the sight of the terrible social contrasts in that country, I backed the theology of liberation and for years I worked with this spirit of protest, in particular, against the Church. In 1986 I happened to hear about Medjugorje. I went out of pure, but irresistible curiosity and I came back totally changed. I started spreading the message and helping others go. I lost many friends, some of whom were bishops and priests, but I gained many others who wanted me to talk about Our Lady to their people.

In 1989 Our Lady invited me to start spreading Fr. Gobbi's **Family Cenacles** wherever I went for my work. I made a deal with Her: You help me in my work and I'll help You with the Cenacles. The results were stupendous. My work was highly appreciated and as a consequence I was asked to visit even more towns - for me that meant more chances to start up Cenacles.

These started spreading wide and far and producing wonderful fruits among the poor and rich and even the ecclesiastics. This is how it goes: I go to a town, the town authorities invite the people to the talk about leprosy ... and then I talk about Our Lady!

It's true, in Medjugorje we receive a seed, then in other places Our Lady develops it, organizes it and structures it. She wins over a person in Medjugorje then sends him to work in the Marian Movement for priests. It's like Mary is creating a new unity or communion among Her movements that are often divided because of man's limits.

(...) Our Blessed Mother's messages are always in accordance with the Word. In Her message of 25 April She says: "Observe how nature..."; and Jesus tells us: Observe the flowers in the field, the Father clothes them and the birds - they have no storehouses, yet the Father feeds them (cf. Lk 12). For years She has been telling us to meditate on this passage of the Gospel (that teaches us to have this trust in God). And we are all called to this total trust, even those who have lost everything and may be tempted to abandon the *search for God's kingdom* and start worrying about how to survive.

Only the Mother could "dare" to propose such a solution as a way out. Let us examine our consciences: do we really believe Mary knows what She is saying? *Lord, I believe, but heal my unbelief.* (MD)

Pope to participate in Loreto march

The bishop of Macerata has announced that the Holy Father will participate in this year's pilgrimage on foot to the Sanctuary of Loreto - to be held Saturday, 19 June. This pilgrimage started in the year of John Paul's election and has been repeated each year since.

Fr. Thaddeus writes from Fatima : Radio Maria by satellite!

Dear Fr. Angelo and all brothers and sisters belonging to Mary's family,

I was invited by friends in Germany to be their spiritual guide during their pilgrimage to Fatima. Despite my busy schedule, I accepted this invitation for various reasons.

My heart is exploding with joy. Our dear Mother made it possible for us to have the Echo of Medjugorje in Poland, then the books: *Open your hearts to Mary, Queen of Peace*, and last, Her own radio!

Soon we will have 35 stations. One is in Warsaw on top of the former Cultural Hall dedicated to Stalin! **And a month ago we started transmitting via satellite**, so that we can link up to other Polish stations and all of Russia as far as the Urals.

The first thing I did today was go before Our Lady's statue to thank Her. I spoke to Her about you Fr. Angelo, and all the people I have met and will meet. I asked Jesus for a greater love. She loves Him so much - and I?

During the procession I passed beside the statue and I asked Her to look upon me and on each person that make up Her family of helpers, so the world may recognize the only Saviour. All was dark; only Her statue was lit up, and Her children with the candles in their hands, plus the moon and a few stars. My eyes were full of tears for the joy for all Her wonderful miracles; and today's story is one of those miracles.

First She lights the hearts of Her beloved children, those who say: *yes, I love you*. Then She invites them to help Her and She does miracles through them for the whole world, for the glory of the Lord. I looked at the stars, and up there was Her star, the satellite by which Her voice goes from Europe to the Urals. What we need are many receiving stations for Radio Maria. Everyone asks us, but it isn't easy and Satan disturbs us greatly.

I ask for your prayers. I always remember you and I thank you for your help, which has enabled us to do so much. So many listen in to the Word of the Lord and Mary. Forgive me if I cannot thank you all one by one. I'm truly exhausted, but here I find spiritual rest.

God bless you and each and every one in Mary's family.

Fr. Thaddeus
(Fatima, 28 April 1993)

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in the heart of His Mother," (the Pope in Czestochowa 1991).

Let us then imitate Her, the woman who said *yes*. Let us imitate Her in Her faith, that live faith that was part of Her, and as an example of enflamed communion, let us follow Her, the bride of the Spirit and thus star of all evangelization. If we are unable to imitate Her in Her Immaculateness, at least let us try to follow Her in that method of constant purification taught to us by Her. **For, in purifying the heart, you can become temples of the Spirit and be His instruments so to be taken by grace to this love.**

In the April message, the Virgin said: *I invite you all to awaken your hearts to love*. And what is this love if not the presence of the Holy Spirit in those who are reborn from above?

(Notes from a spiritual retreat for priests - 3 May 1993)

Fr. Giacomo (James)

SOLIDARITY

There is more happiness in giving than in receiving (Acts 20)

Despite the increasing fatigue and difficulties, the various Medjugorje centres etc., continue organizing convoys of aid for refugees in Bosnia & Herzegovina.

The hospital of Mostar is in urgent need of medical material. A clinic in Milan was recently put up for auction, and the Queen of Peace won. All the material is ready to leave for Mostar, but a further 20 million lire is still needed to pay the court costs, etc.

Sister Josipa wrote to thank us for all our help, and sent us some lovely pictures drawn by children in the hospital of Mostar as a thank you for their benefactors.

Doctors in the Red Cross are also in difficulty for the lack of medical and sanitary material, which arrive too slowly to keep their supply up. In fact, the convoys are "filtered" by the occupying Serb troops.

In the meantime, the medical teams are starting to notice grave psychological consequences, especially in the children, because of the traumas of the war. In fact, tens of thousands have lost both their parents, and suffered personal injury as well.

Contact your nearest Medjugorje or Caritas centre. If you wish to send donations through us, please indicate who we should send the money to. Make cheques payable to Echo of Medjugorje and mail to us at Casella Postale 149, 46100 Mantova, Italy.

"Take care of your kin"

Medj. in the East: Lit.3,500,000; *Bosnia-Herzegovina:* Lit.6,434,000; *Radio Maria Poland:* Lit.2,100,000; *Other:* Lit.1,200,000.

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Yes, the cross, but not just with words. It is one's behaviour that makes it alive. Infact, immediately after the Pope entered the church and the youth were bubbling over with enthusiasm, he knelt down before the magnificent crucifix by P. Della Francesca and remained in prayer, almost as if to show the youth *the way, the truth and the life*. "In the name of Jesus Christ, here before this crucifix, I repeat to you: if you want to know what **being free means**, then remember **confession and penance**. St Francis' gesture of embracing Christ's feet tells us: friend, it is here that you will find the answer to your deepest anxieties."

And his final appeal: "Each one of you is a project, a great divine project. This project is one that you need to study right to its core if you do not want to get lost, if you do not want to lose the way." * *

The Pope said: Italy is in need of a great prayer

"In difficult times people always turn to the Church; not so much when all seems to go well. I now see this in my home country too. but when times are critical people look upon the Church with a certain trust, for counselling and help. What can we do to offer this help?"

During my episcopate Cardinal Wyszyński was my great beacon. The help he offered in particular was with **prayer, intense and great prayer. Italy now needs great and intense prayer.**" (13 May '93)

Echo is free, but lives on your donations.

If you would like to contribute, you may send personal cheques to: Echo of Medjugorje, Casella Postale 149, 46100 Mantova, Italy. If you prefer, you can send your donation to your local distributor who will see to sending it on to us.

Thank you and God bless.

IN THE FAMILY

We are thankful to the many friends who inform us of how Echo continues to spread abroad.

From Colombia, Capuchin Fr. Querubin, wrote to say how he reproduces his copy of **Spanish Echo** and makes 2,000 copies: "Our Lady always sees to covering my costs. So Echo in Spanish reaches the 11,000 mark each month."

From Crakow, Martha Mirkiewicz writes to say that she is now printing 30,000 copies each month in Polish, and new requests keep coming in.

The **English Echo** has reached the 15,000 mark, **French** the 25,000 mark and **Portuguese** the 88,000 mark. Requests for the **Italian Echo** have started growing once again, with 384,000 copies being printed per month.

New edition of Echo in Dutch! For the first number, Frank Strijthagen asked Fr. Angelo to give a presentation. This is what he said:

"For the last nine years, Echo has wanted to echo Our Lady's messages, or Her motherly call to all men to return to the Gospel, and also to echo the response they find in the world and of the conversions and wonderful works that are fruit of Her presence on the earth.

Now our brothers and sisters from the Netherlands desire spreading Her messages to their fellow countrymen, through this small instrument, in their own language. Right there, where the propaganda of the antichrist tried so hard to make God's children abandon Mary and the Mother Church, Our Lady wants to gather them up in a peaceful army to counter the enemy's work and realize with this army her plan of Mercy, so Holland may once again become land of missionaries and holy men.

May this small paper be a blessing for you all, as it has been for us. The fruits prove it is Mary's work: the inspiration we receive, the editing, the way it is so excellently spread to the whole world; Echo is free and donations never fail to cover the costs; and more again.

We invoke the blessing of Jesus and Mary on Frank and our friends from Bolzano who have offered to print the Dutch edition free - a sign of God's work. And may the grace that comes from accepting the Mother's teachings be abundant on all the readers."

We rejoice with Alberto Lanzani, our legal director, and his wife Maria Teresa for the birth of their first child who bears Our Blessed Mother's same name: **Miriam.**

In Mary we bless you all so you may open your hearts to the works of the Holy Spirit.

"Peace and God be with you": one of the pictures sent by the children in the hospital of Mostar for our readers. The names around the cross are the martyred cities

ECHO IN OTHER LANGUAGES

English: Echo of Medj., Casella Postale 27, 31030 Bessica (TV), Italy. fax 0423-470331

French: Echo de Medjugorje, 18 Allée Thévenot, 39100 Dole, France.

German: Medjugorje Komitee, Postfach 272, 39100 Bolzano, Italy.

Spanish: Roger Watson, Via Fulda 2, 22100 Como, Italy. Ph # 031.543082.

Catalan: Amics de Medj., c.Carme 11 baixos, 08700 Igualada-Catalugna, Spain.

Portuguese: Servos da Rainha, Caixa p.02576, 70279-970 Brasilia DF, Brazil.

Polish: Czeslawa Mirkiewicz, ul.Krasickiego 21/3, 30-515 Krakow-Podgorze, Poland;

Dutch: Frank Strijthagen, Misericordplein 12C, 62111-HK Maastricht, Holland.

Czech: Medzugorské ozveny, Ilbenstädter, Str 6, DW-6000 Frankfurt, Germany.

Magyar: Fraternitas, 1399 Budapest, p.f. 701/85, Hungary. fax: 36-12176183

Romanian: Anca Dragos, str N.Pamfil 53, Bl 29, Ap 49, 72124 Bucharest, Romania.

Greek: Soeur Despina de la St Croix, 69 Rue Epirou, Agia Paraskave, 15341 Athens Greece

Distributors: USA: Peter Miller, POB 2720-230, Huntington Beach CA 92647. Ph 714-9637240. Fax 9631432; Giovanna Ellis: 9809 Stonybrook Dr, Kensington MD 20895. Ph. 301-5883198; **Canada:** Giuseppe Bozzo, 8324 Nicolas Leblanc, Montreal Que H1E 3W5, Ph: 648-3420. **Philippines:** Raquel D. De Leon, POB 789, 1099 Manila.

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The sacrifice of a bishop - friend of Medjugorje

Msgr. Tonino Bello, bishop of Molfetta, Giovinazzo, Terlizzi and Rovalo, president of *Pax Christi*, has returned to God. He was a man of great sincerity, a poor man among the poor, a man of peace. When he was already ill, he confronted the peace march to Sarajevo, in the trust that "only through prayer and the intercession of Mary could the massacre in former Yugoslavia be really stopped."

He was a friend of Medjugorje and went there with some of the priests from his united dioceses, recommending them to spread the messages of the Queen of Peace and Echo in particular. On the 8th December 1992 he wrote in *Manifesto*: "Why don't you go to Medjugorje?" His last Mass was celebrated on a cloth woven by Bosnian women as he made a grief-stricken appeal for peace in former Yugoslavia. * *