



# Echo of MARY

## Queen of Peace

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NEXT ISSUE IN SEPTEMBER

*"Ut unum sint!"*

Call for Christian unity

14th anniversary message - 25 June '95:

Dear children, I am happy to see today that in such great numbers you have responded and come to live the messages. My children, I invite you to be my joyful bearers of peace in this restless world. Pray for peace so that as soon as possible a time of peace may reign, for which my Heart is impatient.

I am close to you my children, and I intercede for each one of you before the Most High and I bless you all with my motherly blessing. Thank you for responding to my call.

### "Be my joyful bearers of peace"

We all experience of little of the joy that the Heart of our Heavenly Mother feels when looking at the great number of people who went to Medj. for the anniversary to live Her messages and not just to listen to them.

Mary teaches about life. Her interventions and messages are a programme for life. For as long as we limit ourselves just to listening or examining or even just enjoying reading the messages, we will never know the real value of Her words nor of Her Motherly Heart which moves Her to intervene on our behalf. Neither will we know the real value of God to Whom She wants to lead us. As St John says: *"The way we may be sure that we know him is to keep his commandments. Whoever says, 'I know him,' but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him"* (1Jn 2:3-4) From this alone comes peace: *the peace I give you, not the one that comes from the world.*

Also in this message the Queen of Peace invites us to be more concrete and committed: to collaborate with Her in Her work for peace. **Pray for peace and be my joyful bearers of peace.** She is inviting us to be disciples of the Lord of the beatitudes who are sent by Jesus to take to all men the Gospel of peace (Mt 5:9). Jesus' good news cannot be taken if not with joy, as when Mary took Jesus to Elizabeth and John the Baptist, to the men of the temple in Jerusalem and to the wedding feast in Cana.

Mary believes in the divine force of the Gospel of Peace. She knows how **restless this world is and Her Heart is impatient for the time of peace.** We must imitate, as much as possible, this motherly concern for Her children, but also Her trust and hope that peace is possible if we remain with Her and do as She says.

Mary is always **close to us and intercedes before the Most High for each of us and blesses us all** with Her Motherly blessing which is ever most loving and effective.

Yes, as a true Mother She never forgets, excludes or accuses anyone, but loves and blesses everyone. *Fr. Remo*

*Help your children Lord, whom you redeemed with your precious Blood*

*Ut unum sint*, published early May, is the first encyclical dedicated entirely to Ecumenism in all of Church history. The Pope indicates to Christians what the Church's destination is for the year 2000: **be once again united** through the action of the Holy Spirit. Ecumenism, he says: "is not a sort of appendix tagged onto the end of the traditional activity of the Church... but is an organic part of her life. In fact, believing in Christ means unity." He reaffirms the words of Pope John XXIII when he says: "This unity cannot mean a return of other Christians to the Catholic Church, but a conversion of the entire Church to Christ."

If this may seem impossible for the ordinary man, the Pope hopes beyond all hope. He is preparing everything so the Lord may unite all His disciples who though they share a common baptism, live in separate Churches and are at times still hostile to one another. The bishop of Rome has made a precise commitment, which he says he "carries out with profound conviction." Who would have thought that all this could come from the Polish Pope who was accused of "wanting to impose his own convictions and of freezing the ecumenical dialogue"?

The Pope has now opened a door upon what has always represented the greatest difficulty for the other Christian Churches: the primacy of the Bishop of Rome. "The memory [of said difficulty] is marked by certain painful recollections and I join my Predecessor Paul VI in asking forgiveness."

Without questioning the substance of the "primacy of the Successor of Peter, visible sign and guarantor of unity ... since this constitutes a difficulty for most other Christians ... I am convinced that I have a particular responsibility in acknowledging the ecumenical aspirations of the majority of the Christian Communities and in heeding the request made of me to find a way of exercising the primacy which is open to a new situation." He continues: "Could not the real but imperfect communion existing between us persuade Church leaders and their theologians to engage with me in a patient and fraternal dialogue on this subject?"

Particular emphasis is given to holiness as a consequence of baptism. "The Orthodox, Protestant, Anglican and Catholic martyrs were witnesses to Christ and they represent, with their sanctity, a pole of attraction towards unity... The fact that one can die for the faith shows that other demands of the faith can also be met."

The new document has met with enthusiasm by the Orthodox, Anglican and Protestant Communities. The hope is to reach the Year 2000, if not united, at least less divided... *that the world may believe* (see Jn 17:20-26).

*Receive the Body and Blood of Christ. You are the members.*

*So you are not scattered, eat this bond of unity.*

*So you are not depreciated, drink the price of your ransom. (St John Chrysostom)*

## "No salvation outside Church" Is working together for unity and asking forgiveness a sign of weakness?

Thanks to the encyclical *Ut unum sint* we now know more fully what real ecumenism is. False ecumenism is falling short of authentic values in an effort to compromise the truth. It is the dispersion of the patrimony acquired by the Catholic Church which is the "column and foundation of the truth" out of a desire to encounter others at all costs, but which ends up damaging both sides and leaving nothing behind but words on paper and confusion among the faithful.

**True ecumenism** is overcoming non-essential positions in the desire to reunite all members in full unity of faith and life without compromising the authentic values or the truth of the faith. And as Paul would say (2Co4:2) the Pope *renounces shameful, hidden things; by not acting deceitfully or falsifying the word of God, but by the open declaration of the truth he commends himself to everyone's conscience in the sight of God.*

Well then, the Pope has been accused by Christian traditionalists and lay people hostile to the Church of not respecting the principle that says "outside the Church is no salvation" (Extra *Ecclesiam nulla salus*) - as if the Pope did not know!

This principle by St Cyprian, which the Council adopted, means this: "For those who know that the Church founded by Jesus is necessary for one's salvation, there is the obligation to enter and persevere in the Church" (LG 14). On the other hand, for those who: "out of no fault of their own ignore the Gospel, salvation can arrive in mysterious ways because divine grace - which comes only from the sacrifice of the cross - can reach also them even though they may not belong to the Church. Nonetheless, it is related to the Church, even if they do not know it or oppose it" (RM).

Yet some see the ecumenical dialogue (and ignoring the fruits which have already been produced) think that the Church has yielded on this principle. These accusations bring to mind the parable of the elder brother who wanted to exclude the prodigal son and that of the pharisees who were scandalized by Jesus because *He receives sinners and dines with them.* What then of those who tear their robes out of despair because the Church, by mouth of the Pope, acknowledges and confesses the sins of her children (sins which have been an impediment to unity)? And both sides are at fault.

However, the best testimonies in favour of the Pope come precisely from the adversaries. Were it true that the Pope had failed in maintaining the Catholic position out of the desire to meet the Protestants [at all costs] he would not have had such a cool reception in Prague by the followers of Hus and he would have abstained from proclaiming Sarkander a saint (and other martyrs will soon be beatified.). Neither would he continue calling Mary the Mother and guide of the Church since he knows this contrasts with the Protestant spirit and could be an obstacle in the ecumenical dialogue.

Furthermore, had the spirit of the Catholic missions in the East lost fervour because of

the Pope's evident yearning to embrace the Orthodox brothers, then why does the Synod and the Patriarch of Moscow accuse the Catholic Church of proselytism simply because she established a hierarchy in the former Soviet republics? (besides the old problem to do with the Uniates?) Again, how can he be accused of compromising the faith for having supported the financial assistance scheme for Orthodox priests when it means supporting their families to leave them free to give spiritual formation to people who have had none for the last 70 years?

Then there are certain Catholic environments which accuse the Pope of giving in to the Ostpolitik (aperture to the Communist countries) during the cold-war years, but even the Communists deny this who have always accused the Pope for openly denouncing Marxist totalitarianism. Contrary to the Pope's actions, many ecclesial environments preferred to remain prudently silent.

The Pope is also accused of **syncretism** because he makes dialogue with non-Christian religions and invites representatives of all religions to pray and work for peace, or because he accepts to talk and listen to representatives of non-Christian nations. Did not Peter say to the pagans that *God shows no partiality, but whoever fears him and acts uprightly is acceptable to him* (Act 10:34)? Can the Pope sincerely be accused of syncretism, that is, of trying to combine Christianity and other religions? If that were the case why would he have drawn on himself the reproach of the Buddhists (who refused to meet him during his visit to Sri Lanka because in his book "Crossing the Threshold of Hope" he stressed the negative side of Buddhism)?

Without a doubt the Pope's openness has helped immensely in shredding the age-old closure which hindered the forming of relationships with other religions. Just as the Gospel teaches, he has recognized the seeds of truth which God scatters in all of man's religions. **Living the truth in love** is the Pauline motto (Eph 4:15) which John Paul wears well. A confirmation comes from a message which was given to Msgr. Franic, Bishop of Split, for the Catholic Croats. In it Our Lady said: *Love your Muslim brothers, love your Serb Orthodox brothers, love those who govern you* (who were then Communist atheists). To a priest who was amazed that Our Lady healed an Orthodox gypsy boy, Our Lady, through Marija, said: *Tell that priest and everyone else that you are the ones who are divided on the earth; the Muslims, Orthodox and Catholics are all equal in God's eyes and mine because you are all [His] children.*

The Holy Father does not close the door on anyone; he appeals to everyone to defend the fundamental values of man - common to all religions - to save humanity from self-destruction. This is one of the functions of the Church which was exercised also by the pastors of the early centuries. The Church wants man saved; love embraces all men and all things. The Pope is a *sign of contradiction*, so do not be confused by those who offer free criticism of something they ignore.

Let us be ever more faithful to the Holy Father, firm and sure in our trust in Peter, the unshakable rock, even amid universal upheaval.

Fr.A.

## Some fight against unity Fr. Werenfried tells

### But "God's power is made perfect in weakness" (2Co 12:9)

With regards to aid to the Orthodox, we received the following letter from Fr. Werenfried: "... Misunderstandings have arisen with some of our benefactors because of the help we give to the **Orthodox priests.** Some think I am: 'an apostate who favours heresy and division.' These people forget that the Orthodox priests believe as firmly in Jesus Christ as the Catholic priests do. They have not understood that the move towards reconciliation with the Orthodox is the fruit of Jesus' priestly prayer. In the Last Supper He said: *I pray not only for them* (the apostles), *but also for those who will believe in me through their word* (of both the Catholics and the Orthodox), *so that they may all be one, as you Father are in me and I in you, that they also may be in us, that the world may believe that you sent me* (Jn 17:20-21).

After the joy received from the Pope's approval of the work we do for this reconciliation, I was very disappointed that not all our benefactors think the same as the Holy Father. We have lost dozens, maybe hundreds, of benefactors. There is no need for us to look around too far to see who is behind it all. It is the devil who does not spare anyone in his world-wide offensive waged against the Church, the Pope and the priests. It is obvious that he is trying to impede reconciliation between the Orthodox and the Catholic Churches, and unfortunately he has found allies among the conservative friends who try to demoralize us and make us renounce our plans for the new evangelization of Russia.

All this, however, must not be reason to despair. On the contrary! The more Satan manages to weaken us the more God is made to help us. *He chose the foolish of the world to shame the wise, and the weak of the world to shame the strong... so that no human being might boast before God* (1 Co 1:27-29).

So let us continue on our journey, but with ever more fervent requests to heaven through prayer: in the trust and certainty that they will be answered. Jesus Himself ensured us that we would receive what we ask. He was the one who taught us to keep on knocking till we receive what we want, even if only because of our persistence (Lk 11).

God searches our hearts. He knows how much we trust in Him. He sees exactly what it is that we want from Him, the world or from ourselves and He does not want to share our trust with the world. That's why He often removes from us our every worldly hope to demand that we trust Him totally. According to worldly wisdom, abandoning ourselves to Him is a risk. According to God's wisdom it leads us instead to a trustful surrender in He Who is omnipotent and infinitely good..." (From the Echo of Love, June 1995)

If you wish to help the Catholic and Orthodox priests of the East, personal cheques may be sent to: "Aid to the Church in Need," Casella Postale 5049, I-00100 Roma Ostiense, Italy, or contact: Surrey UK ph 081-6428668; Dublin Ireland ph.013-77516; POB 576, Deer Park NY; POB 250, Montreal Quebec; Sydney Australia ph. 02-6791929

## **Bishop denounces: Satan brings division into Church**

### **Keep watch and pray with Mary!**

The annual meeting for Marian (Medj.) groups in the USA was recently held in Notre Dame (Indiana). **Bishop Paul Hnilica** took the message of Fatima to the four thousand participants on Pentecost day.

At Pentecost, Peter and the rest of the Apostles joined with Mary, the Mother of Jesus in the Upper Room to pray. This was the first Church; it is the first and original identity of the Church sealed by the descent of the Holy Spirit.

We must admit that this harmony and perseverance in prayer is lacking in the Church of today, therefore also the presence of Mary is lacking. We must ask forgiveness for this omission. Satan is waging his greatest attack against the Church and if Mary is not with us we have no defence. That is why the Holy Spirit desires bringing back into the Church a renewed awareness of Her presence.

The dramatic consequences of this satanic attack are the lack of unity and harmony in the Church for which Jesus invoked unity, that same unity that comes from the Blessed Trinity. The Holy Spirit came upon the Apostles and Mary at Pentecost precisely to seal that unity.

We look at the Church and see an ever-more perfect organization, but its perfection is on a human level, while she should be a living organism full of God's Spirit. God, though, cannot abandon His Church: as He promised He will send the Holy Spirit to strengthen and renew her. The Holy Spirit is sending His Spouse, the Virgin Mary and He speaks through Her in many places, such as Fatima, Medjugorje, Amsterdam and Kibeho in Rwanda, just as He has always made use of Her to bring His universal design of sanctification for all mankind, beginning with Christ's Precursor, John the Baptist. Mary is especially present when Christianity is most in danger, for instance at Lepanto. Thus the Church justifiably calls Her: "She who triumphs in all God's battles."

**Internal crisis of Church** - The Popes in our century have been denouncing the great crisis of faith and truth that exists in the Church. Paul VI said that the smoke of Satan had entered the very temple of God and that we are witnessing a process of self-destruction which began in the Church. Also our present Pope has spoken of this internal crisis which we see with our own eyes.

I travel a great deal and I've noticed how the persecution of the faith in the West is more dangerous and more powerful than the one we Christians experienced in the East under the Communists. I've lived in Rome for the past 40 years and I've seen how the Pope is often attacked. It's a question of

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**Common radio for Catholics and Orthodox in Russia** - It once seemed a dream, but now it is a reality. It is the best possible answer to the Holy Father's yearning for unity which he expressed in his letter *Oriente Lumen* on reconciliation. The radio station began transmitting from Moscow on Sunday 18th June, transmitting 20 hours per day. (News from Italian national TV)

Cardinals against Cardinals and Bishops against Bishops when it comes to being unconditionally faithful to Peter (John Paul II) and devoted to Mary's Immaculate Heart through the act of consecration. This is the sorry truth of the third secret of Fatima where Mary announced a terrible crisis in the Church if the Bishops did not heed Her requests. It is indeed a terrible crisis which affects even the highest members of the hierarchy and has touched also the Pope with open attacks upon his person which are ever more evident to all. What a great sorrow to know that even Cardinals and Bishops desire this Pope to retire. Some even talk about who will be his next successor while he is still alive. The Holy Father suffers not only because the Medjugorje message has not been accepted and because of the war in that country, but above all for the division among Bishops and the "crisis of the supernatural. This is why people go to Medjugorje to find the supernatural in prayer and the sacraments which is missing in the Church of today."

One must not overlook the special remedies donated by the Holy Spirit for these extraordinary times. Our Lady was chosen in the beginning of the Scriptures: *She will crush your head* (Gen 3:5) and at the end: *the fall of the Dragon who fights against the Woman and against Her descendants* (Rev 12), and we are those descendants consecrated to Her Immaculate Heart.

The Marian apparitions are pleas by the Holy Spirit Who uses His Spouse Mary to renew both the Church and the world. When Pope Paul VI went to Fatima for the 50th anniversary, he wrote an encyclical to explain the message of Fatima in relation to the apocalypse, explaining that with Fatima we entered into this decisive apocalyptic battle which is unfolding before our very eyes.

**Necessity of consecration to Immaculate Heart** - The promise at Fatima was that through consecration to Mary's Immaculate Heart we would receive all the necessary cure for our spiritual and temporal needs. Thus, in Fatima, Mary Co-Redemptrix invites us to be co-redeemers with Her.

Once, when I was talking to Sr. Lucia, she stressed how Our Lady's first request was to accept all the crosses God would send them for the salvation of sinners. Our Lady then showed them a vision of hell with the souls of the poor sinners and She reproached Christians, saying: "too few pray and offer sacrifices for them." "To save them," said Our Lady in Fatima, "God wishes to establish in the world devotion to my Immaculate Heart." The Immaculate Heart of Mary is the Heart of the Co-Redemptrix. She gave all of Herself for the service of redemption. This is why She came to Fatima as the Co-Redemptrix.

Pope John Paul II responded to the request of consecration of the world to Her Heart in union with all the bishops, though the consecration came a little late, as Our Lady had foretold. Furthermore, since all the Bishops were not with the Pope the consecration was not complete, but Sr. Lucia said: "The Pope did everything possible and Our Lady accepted this act of consecration," of 25 March 1984. It was after this consecration that the Communist persecution came to an end. The Pope has asked me though: "How many Bishops truly did the consecration?"

This lack of unity of the Bishops with the Pope is the main cause of the profound crisis within the Church, and I mean lack of harmony, not an administrative problem.

Another of the extraordinary manifestations of the Holy Spirit in our times are the apparitions of Amsterdam in 1945 when Our Lady came as "The Lady of All Nations." She appeared to a simple-hearted woman and spoke to her of the crisis that would come into the Church in Holland, Germany, England, Rome and the whole world. The wars in the Gulf and the Balkans were also prophesied. Above all, the message of Amsterdam is a message of hope that promises for the entire Church a new era of the Holy Spirit. The new effusion of the Holy Spirit is tied, however, to the proclamation of the dogma of *Mary, Co-Redemptrix, Mediatrix of All Graces and Advocate*. We must pray that the Holy Spirit will encourage and convince also all the bishops.

Fatima, Medjugorje and Amsterdam are connected to one other. It is the same Mother who calls to us and comes to help us. Those who have accepted and live the consecration according to the Fatima message accept and live the Medjugorje message and are thus prepared to understand the Amsterdam message, where the final and Apocalyptic battle is announced of the forces of good over evil by the woman clothed in the sun, who is the 'Co-Redemptrix, Mediatrix of All Graces and Advocate.'

In 1982 John Paul said in Fatima: 'Dear brothers and sisters, this is a decisive moment in the life of the Church and of this generation. We are all invited to approach this throne of grace with faith in order to obtain mercy. We are all invited to go to Jesus through Mary.' "

### **Mary, safeguard of the faith**

**Messori: "I too was prejudiced;** I did not like the sugary aspect of Marian devotion and I fell into the same error the Protestant Reformation fell into, that is, that dedicating oneself to the Mother would detract something from the Son."

*Q. What about now?*

*Messori:* It is indispensable that the Church rediscover Mary's role. Christianity's suffering today is not to do with the Church the institution, but with its faith. The Church must start off from the foundation of the faith, certainly not support the gay movement as some would like!

*Q. What has Mary got to do with this?*

*Messori:* History teaches that Mary is the safe-keeper of the faith. At every crisis the Church has turned to Mary. Protestantism exploded and broke up into a thousand different Churches precisely because it redimensioned Mary's role which they considered to be casual. They thought of Mary as a "uterus on hire," to be used for the Incarnation and nothing else. Instead, Mary is Mother for ever; then, to accept Jesus in Her womb, now to defend the faith.

(From *Corriere della Sera*)

\* **Messori's** latest book *Patì sotto Pontio Pilato* (And He suffered under Pontius Pilate) has been translated into seven languages. Another book entitled *Ipotesi su Maria* will be published in the near future and talks about Mary's true role in the Church.

## Every apostolic work is vain if prayer not given first place

Fr. Valinho, Salesian priest, uncle and confidant of Sr. Lucia of Fatima, received the following letter from her. We propose it to all those involved in apostolic work.

"I see from your letter that you are worried about the confusion and disorientation of our present times. It truly is sad that so many let themselves be dominated by the diabolic wave that is enveloping the world, and that they are so blind as not to see their error. The **greatest error, however, is that they have abandoned prayer**; [and the lack of prayer] takes them away from God and without God they lack everything because *without Me you can do nothing* (Jn 15:5).

What I especially recommend is that you embrace the Tabernacle and pray. With fervent prayer you will receive the light, the strength and the grace you need to nourish yourself and transmit to the others. In your guidance of those who have been entrusted to you be humble and kind, but also firm, since **Superiors** are called to guard the truth so it is not removed from its place of prime importance, though it must be done with serenity, justice and charity. For this reason they need to pray all the more, to remain close to God and to talk to Him about their affairs and problems before discussing them with their fellow brothers. Follow this way and you will see how in prayer you will find more science, light, grace and virtue than what you could find by reading many books or by dedicating your life to study.

**Never think that time spent in prayer is lost time.** You will discover that in prayer God will communicate to you the light, strength and grace you need to do what He expects of you. The only important thing for us is to do God's will, to be where He wants us to be, to do all that He wants us to do, and always with humbleness in the knowledge that on our own we are nothing, that it is God who works in us and through us to complete His works. Therefore, we all need to intensify our lives of intimate union with the Lord and the only way to do this is through prayer.

It is in prayer that a person's soul directly encounters God who is our strength and source of every good. **Let yourself have no time for any other thing, however, you must always make time for prayer - and you will see how much you can do in so little time.** A person (especially a Superior) who does not pray or habitually sacrifices prayer for material things, is like a hollow, lifeless reed... Thus Jesus said: *You are the salt of the earth, but if salt loses its taste it is no longer good for anything but to be thrown out* (Mt 5:13).

We can receive strength only from God. We must hold on tight to Him so He can communicate it to us. The necessary intimate relationship with God can only be realized through prayer, for it is in prayer that a soul comes into direct contact with God. I would like you to transmit these recommendations to your fellow brothers; let them experience what I have said and then you can tell me if I was wrong.

I am convinced that the **main cause of evil in the world and of the failed vocations is the lack of union with God in prayer.**

The devil is very astute; he knows our weak points, where to attack us. If we are not cautious and attentive about obtaining the strength from God, we will fall because **the times are treacherous and we are weak.** Only God's strength can sustain us. Be careful to take everything calmly and with great trust in God. He will do for us what we cannot do alone. He will make up for our insufficiency.

United to the Lord in prayer and sacrifice, Sr. Lucia dos Santos" (Coimbra, 13.4.71)

*(Letter sent to us together with 140 others by Fr. Umberto M. Pasquale, confidant of Sr. Lucia for 40 years. He was also Spiritual Father of Alexandrina da Costa, the great mystic of our times soon to be beatified.)*

## So much wasted energy! Fruits come only from Jesus in Eucharist

*We laboured all night and caught nothing* (Lk 5:5). *Without me you can do nothing* (Jn 15:5).

A lot more energy is spent by the Church on works which are not necessary for the salvation of souls than on those which are. The reason is that the root of the problem of salvation is not considered enough, and people resort to means indicated by Jesus, applying them for other purposes.

Jesus centred His work of salvation on His Eucharistic presence: *I am with you always till the end of time* (Mt 28:20). The leaps ahead on the way of holiness are not given by conferences or sermons or spiritual readings, even though these are useful and necessary. That special touch of God's grace in people's hearts is tied to the Eucharist.

The one and only Fount is Jesus, Who is present day and night in the Eucharist to "transform us in He Whom we adore." It is Jesus received daily (with due disposition), Jesus Whom we visit and adore during the day in His house: as we pass by the church stop and say hello, but if this is not possible send your heart often to greet Jesus in the Tabernacle. Our Friend ever faithful awaits us in that silent presence, the only Fount which nourishes and transforms the world.

There is too much waste in Church life when Christians are not led to the Eucharist. The same goes for our personal lives when we do not centre them around the Eucharist. Our lives will be transformed in the amount we let the Eucharist take possession of our hearts, letting them gravitate towards Him.

The Queen of Peace appeared on Podbrdo the first time, but then She began appearing in the church, thereby making it clear that Her function is to spiritually guide souls to the Eucharist. The Eucharist is the Emmanuel, the *God with us*, and the Queen of Peace is calling us to the Fount, to the centre of the world, which is the Eucharist. *Come. let us adore Him!*

*"So let us depart then from this meal like fire-breathing lions, terrible before the devil, and think what great love our Head shows us.*

*Which shepherd feeds his sheep with his own blood? Mothers feed their little ones with milk, He feeds us with His own flesh and His own blood and is united to us in everything."* (St John Chrysostom)

## Secret for Our Times: Mary's Immaculate Heart Must pass through it to enter God's Plan

At the Medj. Conference (11-14 May, article in Echo 120), Fr. Tomislav's first reflection was based on the forthcoming Jubilee celebration - the year 2000 is in fact centred around the Trinity and the Eucharist.

He said: "The Trinity is the beginning and the end of the universe. We were born from the Trinitarian love and to there we shall return. That which is found in the eternal God, one and trine in heaven, is lived out in the Eucharist now on the earth. The Pope sees Our Lady as the maternal figure not able to be substituted in this time of advent, of happenings and of special graces. So we have lived these years with our heavenly Mother; and this explains Her presence in these times through so many apparitions and signs.

This is not a casual event, nor is it a fact of private piety. It is, instead, God's plan in view of the next millennium. Through Mary's presence God is preparing hearts for world events. We have often heard Our Lady call us to consecration to Her Immaculate Heart; also the Pope made this consecration for the world, and we are all called to make this consecration every day, in particular those people who make a total offering of themselves.

Why all this? Some theologians and priests see it as being a private thing, that Mary is too central. This is not true. We must understand that Mary Immaculate is a new creation: God created an immaculate soul as a gift for us, and we are called to take possession of that gift. What happened in Mary will be take place in the entire Church, to which the Revelation testifies.

So, passing through the Immaculate Heart is compulsory. It is a gift, a way offered to us by God and part of His plan; and we should feel proud about it because it was made for each of us. Through immersing ourselves in the Blessed Mother - in Her Immaculate Heart - each of us will »»

**Fr. Alberione's example: more prayer than work!** - Fr. James Alberione (Founder of the St Paul Society) had ten "families" to think about, founded by him. He obviously led a very active life, yet he replied personally to all the mail, even if only with a few words. He also prayed seven hours a day!

We do the contrary; we have so much to do and so we cut back on our prayer time. The saints do not! They think just the opposite to the way we think.

In the institutions of our St Paul Society we have an hour of adoration every day. Once, one of my fellow brothers, the father superior of a house in Argentina, wrote saying that he had too much work: "formation, education, apostolate, chaplain of the nuns," etc., asking for another priest to help him. Well, instead of sending him a helper, Fr. Alberione wrote to him, telling him to remain in adoration an extra quarter of an hour! He did and he later confessed: "That extra quarter of an hour did not really take any more of my time, but the wonderful thing is that I now get more done than before!" This is the reasoning of the saints. Fr. Amorth

because they do not immerse themselves in the Immaculate Heart and are not open to this grace. Therefore, they leave many doors open to Satan because the Spirit of the Immaculate is not in them. This is very important for our faith walk, both on a personal and on a community level.

It also includes our mission of the present times. God wants to send each of us as He sent the apostles,

*Fr. Tomislav blesses the first stone of the house in Medjugorje.  
To the right is Fr. Angelo and other friends (14 May 1995)*

become a new creature; it is the only way.

All the saints can tell us that going to God through Mary's Immaculate Heart is much easier than going direct. There are gradual steps in this passage and the first is Mary's Immaculate Heart. Just as we have experienced here in the prayer groups in Medjugorje, the encounter with the Blessed Mother leads us to the Son; the Son leads us to the Holy Spirit and in the Holy Spirit Jesus directs us to the Father. Passing first through Mary is compulsory, and we should be proud of God's gift to us. Let us try to immerse ourselves in this gift and live this gift so we can truly make a total offering of ourselves.

I have noticed that if in a Shrine or community people do not immerse their souls in Her Immaculate Heart, they either come to a halt or remain on a superficial level. Why is this? Because our hearts remain vulnerable, the wounds in them remain open, and unless we immerse ourselves in Her Immaculate Heart many doors in our hearts remain open for Satan to enter and he can make our *faith fall short even for little things* (see message of 25 March).

I have seen that wherever people do not immerse themselves in Mary's Immaculate Heart they do not advance, their faith walk stops and the gifts of the Holy Spirit stop, making it impossible for Him to progressively transform souls.

The same thing goes for movements. According to Jelena, Our Lady said: "My task is to purify all spiritual movements in the world." So these too, unless they have placed themselves in Her Immaculate Heart are vulnerable and open to negative forces.

We must understand that God, in His plan of salvation, provided the ideal reality for man: the love of a mother for her son; and no one can love the Son more than Our Lady and no one in us can love Him as Mary can. So then, immersing ourselves in the love of the Virgin means immersing ourselves in the deepest possible manner of loving Jesus where we can be guided to the Father.

I've also noticed that in various movements, both within and outside the Church and in various communities, there is a type of crust around people's souls. It is a crust made up of laws and human and personal experiences which impede the outburst of divine love. In my opinion it is

because each of us is important in God's plan, Mary tells us. By immersing ourselves in Her Immaculate Heart, in prayer and Holy Communion (as frequent as possible), we become capable of understanding the plan God has for each of us. Let us try then to live immersed in Her Immaculate Heart, with our souls, hearts, senses, gestures and words, and we will be able to make Our Lady manifest.

Talking about ecstasy or whether or not She appears brings no good to anyone. The scope of the apparitions is this: that the Mother of God live in us and become manifest in each of us. That is why in the beginning Our Lady wanted priests who spent time not so much with the pilgrims, but with the parishioners, so that She could reveal Herself to the pilgrims through the parishioners.

I am profoundly convinced that in these days we should be living this mystery in us (there's no need to talk about it), and make Mary manifest through our behaviour, joy, silence and humbleness to this entire nation, to the priests and the people, and I am certain that also this conference of ours will be a sign for many here and in the world. \* \*

### Fr. Pandin's obedience rewarded

We mentioned his passage to the eternal life in Echo 120, page 8 and how he followed the Marian groups, founded a Community and a Christian radio station among other things. It should also be noted that his obedience to his Bishop did not go unnoticed in heaven. Fr. René Laurentin wrote about this episode in his book *"The Virgin's Apparitions Multiply"*: "The parish priest was embarrassed, not knowing what to do, because his Bishop had asked him not to read the messages of the Virgin anymore. So he prayed and then obeyed.

He asked Rossana (the visionary), though, to ask Our Lady how he could obey Her without being disobedient to the Bishop. In the apparition of the following Monday Our Lady told Rossana: "Tell Fr. Angelo (Pandin) that he did the right thing by obeying the Bishop. It was a test for him which he passed." With time, the Bishop also gave his support.

\* **Insistent call: "Pray for the Pope**, the Bishops, the priests. Pray for priestly and religious vocations." These are the most frequent messages that I find when translating Vicka's talks to the pilgrims. Before departing for the US to tell people about the messages I asked Vicka what might Our Lady recommend to me. Vicka replied: "Speak from your heart. Make sure prayer is in first place. It's okay to talk, but words aren't enough. Many useless words are added and so time is robbed from prayer. The Gospa would say: fervent prayer and few words."

\* **Clever apostolate** - A woman went to the market; one of the stalls had a lucky dip. The woman pulled out her present and found an audio cassette on Medj. She had never heard of Medj., but she listened to the cassette at home and changed life.

\* **Bishop of Banja Luka**, Msgr. Komarica (President of the Episcopal Commission for Medjugorje) was kept prisoner in his own home. He began a hunger strike so the authorities of the world would hear about the persecution of the Catholics in his diocese, who are victims of terrible violence and deportation; the few that remain live in impossible conditions. A further three churches were destroyed in May, making a total of forty-three. He interrupted his hunger strike after seven days because the Orthodox population of his city offered its help.

\* **The visionaries** will probably not go to France for the **further tests** requested by Prof. Joyeux. Vicka asked Our Lady about it who gave no reply. Ivan said he will not go. The others have said nothing. Our Lady's silence shows Her prudence and discretion.

On a similar subject, people often ask the visionaries of Medj. about some other visionary, to see if they are good or not, but the Virgin usually says nothing, or will say: "you must pray for them." Our Lady is careful not to brand anyone or anything (and does not wish to invade a field belonging to the Church). Often the people concerned may not be totally right, nor totally wrong: sometimes all it takes is time which clears up so many things. Let us learn from Her.

*(From Sr. Emmanuel's diary)*

\* **Two Cardinals in Medjugorje** - Cardinal Wamala from Uganda and Cardinal Margeot visited Medjugorje in May. During his stay of one week, **Card. Wamala** said: "When I see the troubles in your and my country, in the whole world, I feel the need to say to everyone to keep on praying for world peace. This morning, here in Medjugorje, I understood that peace is found within each of us... I like it here; the climate is pleasant, the people are friendly. Here I have discovered a way of praying and of talking to others and a special love."

Upon his departure, **Card. Jean Margeot** said he was happy to have come to Medjugorje.

\* **Domus Pacis Prayer House** - A five-day course organized by the parish pilgrim guides association was recently held for 50 young people desirous of becoming pilgrimage guides. From 4-10 June there was a course based on the theme "Profoundly

## Pope says: women have right to make own decisions and deserve same dignity as men

At the Angelus of 18 June, the Pope spoke of the forthcoming **World Conference** on women proclaimed by the UNO, to be held in Beijing in September. The Pope said: "woman is a creature gifted with subjectivity from which comes **responsible autonomy** for the management of her own life." His is a strong declaration and an invitation to women's consciences that they might make their weight be felt in decisions that regard them. "Unfortunately," added the Pope, "the conscience of women's identity and value has been and still is obscured by multiple conditioning and violence, including psychological violence... All this is truly intolerable at the dawn of the third millennium." He concluded by declaring that the Church unites her voice to all those who denounce the injustices that weigh down on the female condition, and that she intends promoting a respectful culture of femininity.

At the Angelus of 25 June the Holy Father stated: "Respect of **full equality between man and woman** in every environment is one of civilization's immense achievements to which women themselves contributed through their suffered and generous witness, but also with organized movements which drew universal attention [e.g. feminism]... It is urgent that a culture of equality be matured which will be long lasting and constructive to the degree that it will respect God's plan and is not detrimental to maternity.

This state of equality between men and women is affirmed right from the first page of the Bible where it is said: *male and female he created them*, but which became all the more evident with Jesus' words and gestures... If over the centuries and under the weights of the times some sons of the Church did not know how to live this message with coherence, it is reason for deep regret. The evangelical message concerning women has not, though, lost any of its actuality."

Many shadows **already obscure** the Conference in Beijing. The West wants to force upon women all over the world one of

its social philosophies, where so much is said about sex and so little about maternity, where minors are given so much responsibility in public programmes and services for contraception and abortion, where attempts are made to suppress the affirmation: "in no case shall abortion be promoted as a means of family planning", where no support is given to the opposition of systematic planning for sterilization especially in under-developed countries, and where women's rights are affirmed only generically.

The **Vatican** will be sending to Beijing a delegation headed by a woman and will do all it can to impede that the key problems which were thrown out the door in Cairo are not let in through the window in Beijing. But what can the world expect of so many minds obscured by prejudices and uncontrolled passions if the light of God and the warmth of love is unable to reach their hearts? \*\*

## Mother opens heart to life, "dead son given back to her"

*A mother writes:* I planned with my husband to have just one more child... When I was three months pregnant I enquired about being permanently sterilized. All during the pregnancy our thoughts were "this is the last time." After the birth the doctor suggested I have the operation while still in hospital, but I wanted to go home so I put it off till later. After only 21 days my child died of cot-death. I couldn't accept it. "Why?" I asked, "You can't die at 21 days - he didn't do anything wrong." I pleaded with Our Lady: "Give me my baby back! You got yours back!" I began reading the Gospel. I read and re-read it, and all the time I kept pleading: "Give me my baby back," and the more I read the Gospel the more I became aware that God wanted my happiness.

I fell pregnant again and during those nine months I thanked Our Lady for the grace received. Then, on 9th January, "I got my son back," and at Easter he became a child of God.

What have I learnt from this experience? That we cannot decide to have or not to have a child. We parents are nothing but a door through which life comes into the world. There is nothing God cannot do, but how can we hope to be on His side if we close that door? During the pain I asked myself: "Why is God so cruel to let an innocent child die?" But then I asked myself: "Who am I to stop an innocent child from coming into the world?"

The most important thing that I have learnt is that you are never alone. When your problems weigh down on you and you think you're alone, you are not. If only we would stop trying to resolve our own problems, and let God resolve them for us we would find true peace and serenity. We would remove a weight from our shoulders. That is what happened to me and I praise and thank God.

Now my life is much more serene than before and nothing worries me. If I have a problem I recite a Hail Mary and hand over the problem to our Blessed Mother and go about things the best I can. (11 April 1995)

\* Copies of the **Echo of Mary** in the various languages are available in Medjugorje in the souvenir shop adjacent to the church, at the Comunità Cenacolo (Upper Room Community) and the MIR Info Centre close to the bridge.

*The Bishop di Banja Luka Msgr. Komarica*

wounded" concerning problems derived from abortion and child abuse.

In preparation of the 14th anniversary of Our Lady's apparitions, a week of prayer and fasting was held in the Domus Pacis house, guided by Fr. Slavko Barbaric. Anyone interested in these retreats can book by fax at the number: 387-88-642339

\* **Fr. Jozo in USA** - Fr. Jozo took Our Lady's messages to about 50 different centres in the US. Between 1,000 to 2,000 people were present for each meeting. During his visit to New York on 25th May, Fr. Jozo spoke about the disasters which have struck the population of the former Yugoslavia to members of the UN Council of Security, handing over to them written messages from Cardinal Franjo Kuharic and Vinko Puljic. He met with various politicians on that occasion. From 8-15 June Fr. Jozo was in Italy where he met with pilgrims in Udine, Turin and Cuneo.

**Fr. Slavko** was in Rome on 28th May. He will be in Prague from 3-8 July.

\* **Military pilgrimage** - Also this year on the 27th May various military formations from Bosnia and Herzegovina came on pilgrimage. The soldiers prayed the Rosary on Podbrdo and then participated in Mass in the parish church. Most of them confessed and received Communion.

(From the *Press Bulletin* of Medjugorje)

## LATEST NEWS

A very large crowd of pilgrims was present for the **14th anniversary** on the 25th June, similar to pre-war times. In particular, pilgrims from Croatia and the East were very numerous with 20 buses from Poland alone and another 20 from Hungary, Slovenia and Romania. The number of Italian pilgrims is again on the increase. There were also many French and English-speaking pilgrims. Only Our Lady is capable of calling together so many friends to bring aid to those in need.

The evening Mass was celebrated by an Australian Bishop and concelebrated by 120 priests. At the end of the Mass Fr. Jozo prayed over the sick.

**Ivanka received her annual apparition** on the anniversary day at 6.35 pm. It lasted 6 minutes. The visionary said Our Lady was very happy and invited people to pray for families, because there is much need since Satan is trying to destroy them. Our Lady repeated that we must be bearers of peace; She spoke of the secrets and blessed all those present.

*Fr. Slavko*

**War and slaughter continue** - "The war in Bosnia risks becoming the shipwreck of Europe," said the Pope. By now, a piece of Europe has become a desert of death. The war lords consolidate their dominions while the experts are immobilized.

The situation in Sarajevo is tragic. The air bridge for aid delivery has been cut off for months. Now the Muslim offensive from the north and south is attacking the Serbo-Bosnian troops which are in difficulty. The latter take revenge by bombing the civilians lining up for water and the children out to play.

The Muslim troops are attacking elsewhere too: their numbers are superior, but they have less armoured vehicles. The population is fleeing before the attacking enemies at Bihac. The weak attempt by the UN to bomb Pale quickly finished in a retreat when more than 300 UN soldiers were taken hostage. For many the UNO is looking rather ridiculous.

\* *Contact the Caritas or Medj. centre near you to see how you can best help.*

## Fr. Amorth on New Age and reincarnation

*Question:* I often hear about the New Age and reincarnation. What does the Church say about this?

*Answer:* New Age is an abominable syncretist movement which has already triumphed in the US and is spreading fast in Europe (with the help of financing from economical powers). New Age teaches its followers to believe in reincarnation.

For this movement, Buddha, Sai Baba and Jesus Christ are all okay, they are all praised. New Age, however, is based on Oriental religions, theories and philosophies. Because it is spreading fast we must guard ourselves from its influence. How?

The cure for all errors is religious instruction. Said again in the Pope's words: new evangelization. And I take advantage of this space to recommend you to read in particular the Bible, the new Catechism of the Catholic Church, and the Pope's book *Crossing the Threshold of Hope*. The latter is a true modernized catechism and the more you read it the more you understand. To the provocative questions of Vittorio Messori the Pope gives such profound answers that one needs to read them more than once to understand fully. In his answers he also combats these false doctrines.

**Reincarnation** is believing that after death our soul is reincarnated in another body, more or less noble than the one just left, depending on how one lived. It is believed by all the Oriental religions and has spread also to the West because of its [the West's] lack of faith and ignorance and its consequential interest in the Eastern religions. In Italy alone it is thought that one quarter of the population believes in reincarnation.

You all know that reincarnation is against biblical teachings and is absolutely incompatible with God's judgement and resurrection. In reality, reincarnation is a human invention, perhaps suggested by the desire of or intuition that the soul is immortal. We, however, know with certainty from the Divine Revelation that after death people's souls go either to Heaven or Hell or Purgatory, depending on how they lived. Jesus says: *The hour is coming in which all who are in the tombs will hear the voice of the Son of Man and will come out, those who have done good deeds to the resurrection of life, but those who have done wicked deeds to the resurrection of condemnation* (Jn 5:28).

We know that thanks to the resurrection of Christ the flesh, that is our bodies, will be resurrected at the end of the world. Therefore, reincarnation is totally incompatible with Christian doctrine. One either believes in resurrection or in reincarnation. Those people who think they can be Christians and believe in reincarnation at the same time are terribly wrong.

Fr. Gabriel Amorth

**Safe travel to Medj.- Via the Adriatic coast:** bus service from Trieste train station 6 pm every evening. Arrival in Medj. 8 am. With departure at 6 pm every evening. **By sea:** from Ancona, Italy Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays with arrival in Split 8 am. Departures from Split Sundays, Tuesdays, Thursdays. **By air** via Zagreb to Split.

## The Battle of Prayer

Prayer is both a gift of grace and a determined response on our part. The great figures of prayer of the Old Covenant before Christ, as well as the Mother of God, the saints, and He himself, all teach us this: prayer is a battle. Against whom? Against ourselves and the wiles of the Tempter who does all he can to turn man away from prayer, away from union with God. We pray as we live, because we live as we pray. If we do not want to act habitually according to the Spirit of Christ, neither can we pray habitually in his name. The "spiritual battle" of the Christian's new life is inseparable from the battle of prayer.

The usual difficulty in prayer is distraction. To set about hunting down distractions would be to fall into their trap, when all that is necessary is to turn back to our heart: for distraction reveals to us what we are attached to, and this humble awareness before the Lord should awaken our preferential love for him and lead us resolutely to offer him our heart to be purified. Therein lies the battle, the choice of which master to serve.

Another difficulty, especially for those who sincerely want to pray, is *dryness*. Dryness belongs to contemplative prayer when the heart is separated from God, with no taste for thoughts, memories and feelings, even spiritual ones. This is the moment of sheer faith clinging faithfully to Jesus in his agony and in his tomb. *Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit*. If dryness is due to lack of roots, because the Word has fallen on rocky soil, the battle requires conversion.

The most common yet most hidden temptation is our *lack of faith*. It expresses itself less by declared incredulity than by our actual preferences. When we begin to pray a thousand labours or cares thought to be urgent vie for priority; once again, it is the moment of truth for the heart: what is its real love? Sometimes we turn to the Lord as a last resort, but do we really believe he is? Sometimes we enlist the Lord as an ally, but our heart remains presumptuous. In each case, our lack of faith reveals that we do not yet share in the disposition of a humble heart. *Without me you can do nothing*.

Another temptation, to which presumption opens the gate, is *acedia* (spiritual sloth). The spiritual writers understand by this a form of depression due to lax ascetical practice, decreasing vigilance, carelessness of heart. *The spirit indeed is willing but the flesh is weak*. The greater the height the harder the fall. Painful as discouragement is, it is the reverse of presumption. The humble are not surprised by their distress; it leads them to trust more, to hold fast in constancy.

*Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2725-2733*

**ECHO IS FREE - It lives on readers' donations.** Echo has no other source of income. It is your donations that make possible its publication and distribution also to those people not in a position to donate any sum of money.

Forgive us if we remind you to consider the burdensome postal expenses when making a donation.

Thank you for all you can do.

## He asked Mary for a "tailor-made" bride

*A young German man searched in vain for a suitable bride. He even tried the discos. In the end he asked Our Lady to find her for him, even specifying the type of girl he'd prefer. Here is his testimony:*

"I was feeling lonely, I had doubts about myself and lacked self-confidence. A prayer rose from the depths of my heart and I asked Mary to find a girl for me. Some time after I decided to entrust my future to God. In vain I spent two weeks of my holiday in a convent in an attempt to find spiritual detachment. However, 'by chance' I heard about a pilgrimage to Medj. for youth. I went. On the way there I didn't have much luck in striking up a conversation with the girl sitting next to me, so I resigned myself to thinking it would be a solitary journey and that if I wasn't going to receive the grace I had prayed for I would at least receive some other graces.

At about 1 am we stopped at a hotel for a brief rest, but I returned to the bus nearly straight away. There was a different girl sitting in the place next to mine this time trying to sleep. I greeted her and we talked for two hours! During our stay in Medj. we spent as much time as possible together and on the 31st December 1994, in front of the statue of Our Lady outside the church, we decided we wanted to marry.

Now, despite the 550 km that separate us, our relationship has flourished in just the few weekends that we have been able to spend together. It is obvious that the Lord is preparing us both. I only just learnt that she too had been praying to find her vocation and had made a vow not to search for a husband for one year. That year ended on the 31st December, the day we met. So we were able to begin the first year together. We received Holy Communion and entrusted our relationship to God. She also joined the pilgrimage to Medj. "by chance." (G.K.)

### ECHO IN OTHER LANGUAGES

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## FROM THE MAIL

**From Genoa:** I admire the clarity of Echo and the way you consider the needs of the Holy Spirit before considering human convenience... I fear you do not, though, give enough consideration to those just beginning their faith walk and who may be frightened by the constant mention of suffering... Thank you for your complete and precise account of Church life which embraces the most important spiritual problems of the moment, the Pope's teachings and all the noteworthy events. It consoles me to find in Echo the same feeling that I have towards universal communion with the Church, making my gratitude and love for the Holy Spirit grow. (Cristina M.)

*Praised be God for the way He unites us. With regards to the cross, men are easily led away by false joy, but Jesus endured the cross for the sake of joy that lay before him (Heb 12:2). To find this joy that comes from Jesus one must first suffer the "labour pains," to be purified. Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and enter into his glory? (Lk 24:26) The Holy Spirit teaches the same way to all the little ones who are well disposed to follow Him, just like you. Otherwise we are false Christians.*

**From El Salvador:** I receive Echo regularly and practically "swallow it up in one gulp" then re-read it for a more profound meditation. Our Lady's love transpires from every page and line. The pages are so faith, devotion and fire filled. I use them for my apostolate: 78 years old and still the school principal of 1,700 students. The real principal, however, is Our Lady and I must say She does Her job very well! (Fr. Miguel De Marchi)

**From Nuailé** (France): Keep Echo poor, the way it is. It brings so much hope to confused souls in this materialistic and secularized world... Do not give publicity to the visionaries. Our Lady did not say to go and see the visionaries of Medj., but to pray and listen to the Word of God. The priests need to invite the faithful to read the Bible above all because the Gospa said: *You have forgotten the Bible.* (Anne Marie)

**From Kinshasa** (Zaire): During our monthly meetings we read and meditate upon your bulletin. All the members of our community show much interest in it because it allows them to be in communion with the Church. (Claude Tsimba, ofm)

*\* We receive letters from all over the world confirming that Echo takes the Pope's words and news of the Church to where it otherwise does not arrive: reason for joy.*

**From Semonzo del Grappa** (Nth Italy): Echo is a wonderful fount of meditation, joy and stimulus. This is the third consecutive year that together with the annual blessing I take to all the 650 families of my parish a copy of the Echo which is received very well. Don't give in! Together with you, Fr. Angelo and your helpers, there is a multitude of devoted friends, headed by Mary! (Fr. Giovanni Bellò)

**From Middlesex, GB:** Many thanks for Echo of Medjurgorje which I see is now appropriately called *Echo of Mary Queen of Peace*. I thank Mary for having chosen you for this special mission of spreading Her messages to the world. May She continue to inspire you and your staff and cover you with graces and blessings so that Her plan of peace and the triumph of Her Immaculate Heart may be realized. (Dr. Gottfried Pillai)

**From Carbonia, Sth Italy:** The message of February - "**be missionaries of my messages**" - bore deep into my heart. I went to the neighbouring towns to distribute old copies of Echo. After 45 days I received requests from people who desired receiving it regularly and three people offered to distribute it. (B. Paolini) *We are certain that Our Lady blesses all the missionaries of Echo, however we refer readers to the comment to the message in Echo 118, pg 1.*

**From Turin:** God be blessed for the precious and tiring work you do for the glory of God and Mary. I came across a copy of Eco 21 - typewritten! [There is no English version for the early editions.] I desire telling you that I like very much the new title: Echo of Mary Queen of Peace. [Many readers, in particular from the English-speaking countries, write to confirm this.] Echo is always wonderful, essential, formative and anxiously awaited by the people I distribute to. (Sr. Franca Paola)

**From Burundi:** Fr. Victorio Blasi writes from his desolate land: "After the massacres, many despair; they say there is no forgiveness for those who have killed, raped and plundered. Satanic hatred broods in others. Some have begun reflecting and say that only God can save us. Where God is present life begins anew, people beat their chests and their hearts find peace... We went to the refugees in the camp of Kibimba after the fratricidal events. The confessions and Holy Mass we celebrated helped us to invoke peace... In the sole parish of Murayi there are 727 war orphans. The Blessed Mother helped us find a house in a quiet area of Bujumbura for the little children... Radio Maria will be present in Burundi! I propose that all the priests celebrate a MASS FOR PEACE IN BURUNDI during the month of the Most Precious Blood in reparation of the blood that has been spilt here."

We thought to publish these letters this month as they **reflect the thoughts of many** readers. Thanks to God and His Mother for the love of the many brothers and sisters whose support is consolation for the anguish and toil which at times is almost unbearable. We are happy to support it, though, for it is our desire to continue donating the bread Mary gives for these times to all those tuned in to the same wavelength as the Evangelical Spirit which is both Marian and Ecclesial.

We think it will console you to know that **God continues to bless our little Echo**. In fact, the foreign editions we publish (French, German, English and Spanish) continue to grow, as do the other editions published elsewhere such as the Portuguese in Brazil and the English and French editions printed in Canada for direct distribution. For the moment, the growth of the [original] Italian edition is stable. All together we are now producing 720,000 copies per issue, without counting the various reduced editions and all the photocopies produced by single recipients.

**We bless you**, dear readers, in the Immaculate Heart of Mary Who gave us the precious Blood of our Redeemer. Though our daily living is influenced to a certain extent by the easier going life-style of the summer holidays, let us not let our guard down on our spiritual life since true rest is only found in God.

Villanova M, Mantova - 26 June 1995

Anniversary Mass 1994

### Civitavecchia: not a Shrine of bricks, but of souls!

"Welcome back Mother!" The church of St Augustine greeted the statue of Our Lady of Medjurgorje with a quiet but joyful celebration and Mass on the 17th June. Three thousand faithful were present.

During his homily, *Msgr. Grillo* said: "More than a Shrine of bricks, a great Shrine of souls must be erected here, of people desirous of following the way of the Gospel. We don't want any speculations, but rather, we would hope that this event will create more love in us all towards the homeless and the poor. Above all, I would like to see an orphanage be built here for the little war orphans of Bosnia, where also this statue comes from. Whatever the Church may say, Civitavecchia must cry out to the whole world to dry the tears Our Mother sheds for all the violence, depravity and corruption on all levels, for the blind race to suppress brothers with unheard-of brutality, for the disappearance of sin from people's consciences and for the millions of people killed by war and abortion..."

For all the din created by journalists all we can do is thank God Who permitted it for a mysterious design of His."

At the end of the Mass the statue was placed in a niche in the church, protected by glass, and like in Medj., groups of people said the Rosary out loud in front of it.

The people are convinced of the miracle, that the statue really wept, and care little about the blood and other tests. They are convinced: *Vox populi*. In the meantime hundreds of people are sending letters to the Curia to say they have been healed, but the real miracle is that hundreds have found God and have begun praying and so the tears of the Blessed Mother are being dried. \* \*

*Canticle of Love*, Fr. Peter Mary Rookey O.S.M. leads The Dolours Rosary and the The Miracle Prayer. Music by D & C Wichman. This beautiful audio cassette is available from Marian Spring Centre, Unit J, Lambs Business Park, Tilburstow Hill Road, South Godstone, Surrey RH9 8JZ, England.