

Echo of Mary Queen of Peace

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Our Lady's message, 25 March 2008:

“Dear Children, I call you to work on your personal conversion. You are still far from encountering God in your heart. Therefore, spend as much time as possible in prayer and adoration of Jesus in the Most Blessed Sacrament of the Altar, that He may change you and place in your hearts a living faith and a desire for eternal life. Everything passes, my Children. Only God remains. I am with you and I encourage you with love. Thank you for responding to my call.”

God in our Heart

My soul yearns and pines for the Lord's courts. My heart and my flesh sing for joy to the living God. These words from Psalm 84 express well the yearning in the heart of a Christian, and would it be that they transpired from his entire being. Our relationship with God cannot be limited to a formality which cannot touch the soul; which cannot warm one's blood. God isn't the miracle worker to turn to in time of need. God is the life; He is our life, and without Him we cannot live.

“Dear Children, I call you to work on your personal conversion,” says Mary. “Conversion makes my heart turn to God; it makes me understand that God deserves first place, because with Him in first place I receive light and discernment for everything else, so that my priorities are given proper order. Our blessed Mother's call to **work on our personal conversion** helps us see how she concerns herself for us.

“You are still far from encountering God in your heart,” she reminds each of us. So more than nurturing good sentiment or fulfilling obligations, we need to look into our heart and ponder: do we want to encounter God? We do, of course, for the yearning every man feels in his heart is precisely for this **encounter with God**. So we might ask ourselves: what do I have to do? A list of the bad things we have not done together with the good things we have done is not sufficient to assure our encounter with God. Mary, who is a provident mother, offers us also the response: **“Spend as much time as possible in prayer and adoration of Jesus in the Most Blessed Sacrament of the Altar, that He may change you and place in your hearts a living faith and a desire for eternal life.”**

This then is the remedy, it is the highway that leads to this encounter our hearts so desire and need. We cannot reach God unless through Jesus, and without Jesus we can't do



**“Where the Church is,
there also is the Spirit of God;
Where the Spirit of God is,
there also is the Church
and every grace”**

(St. Ireneus)

anything. So we must desire and allow Him to act in us. To do this we need to surrender up our lives. This is what we can do in prayer and whilst before Jesus, truly present in the Blessed Sacrament.

The Word of God and a sacramental life are the essential vehicles that can conduct us to communion with Christ, but this can be compromised by our lack of willingness and our closure to Love. Without a **live faith** and the **desire for eternity**, we run the risk of rending sterile God's Love, and making void Christ's Cross (cf. 1 Co 1:17). Eternal life is not only life after death, but is life in Christ, and as such must begin already in this world. *Anyone who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I shall raise him up on the last day* (Jn 6:54), however, *anyone who eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord unworthily will be behaving unworthily towards the body and blood of the Lord* (1 Co 11:27).

“Everything passes, my Children. Only God remains.” So instead of living on scraps and food for swine, let us desire this real food (cf. Lk 15:15-16). Our food is Jesus Christ. Let us anchor our lives in that of Jesus, to remain with Him and in Him for eternity.

Nuccio Quattrocchi

Our Lady's message, 25 April 2008:

“Dear Children, Also today I call you all to grow in God's love, as a flower which feels the warm rays of spring. In a similar way, my children: grow in God's love and carry it to all those who are far from God. Seek God's will and do good to those whom God has put on your path, and be light and joy. Thank you for responding to my call.”

Grow in God's Love

A flower feels the **warm rays of spring-time** and grows and blossoms; and the miracle of nature is renewed. Man, however, isn't so receptive to the warmth of God's love; he doesn't open up to this Love. Man thinks he can do without it; he thinks he can blossom under another sun. Mary is calling us all to **grow in God's love as would a flower that feels the warm rays of the spring sun**. But individuals and nations aspire after a different type of growth; they seek economical well-being. This is true for the majority, but when lawful objectives are not constrained and led by love for neighbour the growth becomes unbalanced, giving rise to the scandal of the many who lack prime necessities and the rich minority which continues to get richer.

Our blessed Mother speaks, calls, urges us to listen. But who listens? Yet the *day will come when the Son of man is revealed* (Lk 17:30), and the castle of cards in which we have barricaded ourselves will fall. *“And if that time had not been shortened, no one would have survived; but shortened that time shall be, for the sake of those who are chosen”* (Mt 24:22).

Mary is working to increase the number of those who are chosen. These souls may not be so many as to make our cities shine with light and joy, but they are not so rare that one cannot meet such souls on our streets. They are as flowers of love cultivated by Mary and offered to the world so that hope may be sown and that the desire to return to the Father might grow. One such flower was the brief existence of a child named Tony. Born in 1998, he died in April of this year after a terrible illness. But Mary helped him to see how his illness became a vehicle to commune ever more closely with Christ and his Church.

“Seek God's will and do good to those whom God has put on your path, and be light and joy.” Tony sought and loved God's Will; he didn't even ask to be healed. Though he walked through the valley of tears, it became for him a fount (cf. Ps. 83) of perennial good for those whom God put on his path, and he was light and joy for all.

We, too, are called to allow ourselves to **grow in God's Love**. Mary continues to visit

Pope, Herald of Hope in USA

This voyage was important to him. He had awaited it, and once there he spared neither energy nor time for the benefit of the American Church. His visit went from the 15th to the 20th April; too brief for the vastness of the country and its peoples. Yet Pope Benedict XVI managed to express his thought to all, with fatherly and pastoral concern, leaving those who heard him enthusiastic and hopeful.

For all he had a precise message, adapting it to each specific audience. The main theme of his pastoral visit was "Christ, our Hope." At all the various encounters that were organized for the Pontiff he spoke on the importance of freedom, truth, peace, and human rights.

Temple of baseball

He spoke of hope at the temple of baseball: the Yankee stadium in New York to 45,000 festive people. Here a votive Holy Mass (dedicated to the Holy Spirit) was celebrated with parts said in English, Spanish and Latin. "The Church in the United States, which has gathered in her womb many emigrant children, has grown thanks also to the vitality of the witness of faith of the Spanish speaking faithful," said the Holy Father. "Only if you remain united to Christ and amongst yourselves, will your evangelizing testimony be credible and bloom in copious fruits of peace and reconciliation in the midst of a world many times marked by division and conflicts."

To UNO: a common mission

Though a different type of encounter, the meeting with members of the General Assembly of the United Nations Organization was not less welcoming, and despite the official circumstances, the atmosphere was one of friendship and fraternity. "Your Holiness, in many ways our mission is united to yours," began General Secretary Ban Ki-moon. "The United Nations Organization is a lay institute, composed of 192 nations. We have six official languages, but no religion. Nonetheless, if one were to ask any one of us who work here what it is that motivates



us, many would respond with the language of faith. (...) Mission is the word we use the most for the work we do in the world."

The Holy Father spoke, among other things, about the responsibility of protecting the dignity of the human person and his rights.

Pope Benedict's discourses were more explicit with those who live the faith:

In the **Cathedral, to the Religious**: "True life can only be found in the reconciliation, freedom and love which are God's gracious gift. This is the message of hope we are called to proclaim and embody in a world where self-centeredness, greed, violence, and cynicism so often seem to choke the fragile growth of grace in people's hearts."

At the **Synagogue, with the Jewish people**: "I am here to express to the Jewish community of New York my respect and my esteem."

At the **ecumenical meeting**, in the church of St. Joseph with 15 different communities: "By placing our trust in God alone, I am trustful that we shall achieve that 'oneness of hope, oneness of faith, and oneness of love' that alone will convince the world that Jesus Christ is the one sent by the Father for the salvation of all."

To **rectors of Catholic Universities** in Washington: "Once their passion for the fullness and unity of truth has been awakened, young people will surely relish the discovery that the question of what they can know opens up the vast adventure of what they ought to do. Here they will experience 'in what' and 'in whom' it is possible to hope," making "Universities instruments of hope."

YOUTH: be guiding stars for others!

Pope Benedict spoke to 20,000 young people, who participated in the vigil at the sports field of the Seminary of New York. The Pope held up for them six models of life. "In front of you are the images of six ordinary men and women who grew up to lead extraordinary lives. The Church honours them as Venerable, Blessed, or Saint: each responded to the Lord's call to a life of charity and each served him here, in the alleys, streets and suburbs of New York. I am struck by what a remarkably diverse group they are: poor and rich, lay men and women - one a wealthy wife and mother - priests and sisters, immigrants from afar, the daughter of a Mohawk warrior father and Algonquin mother, another a Haitian slave, and a Cuban intellectual."

The Holy Father spoke to the youth about **freedom**: "a delicate value which can be misunderstood or misused so as to lead not to the happiness which we all expect it to

yield, but to a dark arena of manipulation in which our understanding of self and the world becomes confused, or even distorted by those who have an ulterior agenda." ... "In truth's place - or rather its absence - an idea has spread which, in giving value to everything indiscriminately, claims to assure freedom and to liberate conscience. **This we call relativism.** But what purpose has a 'freedom' which, in disregarding truth, pursues what is false or wrong?"

Papa Ratzinger, with fatherly concern, helps us give the right value to these terms that are so often used without being understood: "Dear friends, truth is not an imposition. Nor is it simply a set of rules. It is a discovery of the One who never fails us; the One whom we can always trust.

In seeking truth we come to live by belief because ultimately **truth is a person: Jesus Christ.** That is why authentic freedom is not an *opting out*. It is an *opting in*; nothing less than letting go of self and allowing oneself to be drawn into Christ's very being for others." ... Christ's light beckons you to be guiding stars for others, walking Christ's way of forgiveness, reconciliation, humility, joy and peace."

Personal relationship in prayer

The young people, who will meet with the Pope again this year at the World Youth Day in Sydney, received his invitation with joy: "What matters most is that you develop your personal relationship with God. That relationship is expressed in prayer. God by his very nature speaks, hears, and replies..."

On the lost art of listening, he asks "Do you leave space to hear God's whisper, calling you forth into goodness? Friends, **do not be afraid of silence** or stillness, listen to God, adore him in the Eucharist."

Celebrated at White House

Precisely on the day of his 81st birthday the Holy Father met with President Bush at the White House. "Usually, birthdays are celebrated with close friends, and for this reason the whole country feels moved and honoured for the fact that you chose to spend this day with us," said President Bush to Pope Benedict.

At the farewell ceremony Vice President Cheney thanked Pope Benedict XVI for his visit, saying that the pope had seen "a people of resonating faith who affirm that our nation was founded under God ... a country where the torch of freedom, equality and tolerance ill always be held high," and "a country where you, a herald of the gospel of Jesus Christ and the head of the Roman Catholic Church, will always be welcome." "To our diverse country you have brought a universal message of hope and salvation."

Mr. Cheney concluded: "...In these 57 years your wisdom and your pastoral gifts have been extraordinary blessings to our world. In these six days, you've shared those blessings very directly with the people of the United States. Your presence has honoured our country."

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us for this. We can grow in God's love if we allow Christ to live in us. He is our only chance for redemption and salvation. "**Grow in God's love and carry it to all those who are far from God.**" To carry God's love is to carry Jesus, who is Love incarnate. So we do carry God's love to all whom He places on our path when He is alive in us. There is no need for grand or wise discourses. A smile, a gesture of solidarity or friendship can be worth a thousand words, and these will allow us to carry Jesus to others; He will do the rest. "**Seek God's will...**" We can seek this in Holy Scripture: such as the ten commandments, the beatitudes; Church teachings, and her precepts. If our own lives are good and faithful to the Lord's teachings, we can do and **bring good to those whom God has placed on our path.** N.Q.

DIVINE MERCY

by Andrea Coffa

The Image: faithful to the original

It was the 22nd February 1931 when, in the silence of a convent and of a heart, the Lord Jesus came and spoke to a nun. Sr. Faustina (now Saint Faustina) Kowalska describes the event in her Diary:

"In the evening, when I was in my cell, I saw the Lord Jesus clothed in a white garment. One hand was raised in the gesture of blessing, the other was touching the garment at the breast. From beneath the garment, slightly drawn aside at the breast, there were emanating two large rays, one red, the other pale. In silence I kept my gaze fixed on the Lord; my soul was struck with awe, but also with great joy. After a while, Jesus said to me, 'Paint an image according to the pattern you see, with the signature: Jesus, I trust in You. I desire that this image be venerated, first in your chapel, and then throughout the world. I promise that the soul that will venerate this image will not perish. I also promise victory over (its) enemies already here on earth, especially at the hour of death. I Myself will defend it as My own glory.'" (Diary, 47)

"The two rays denote Blood and Water. The pale ray stands for the Water which makes souls righteous. The red ray stands for the Blood which is the life of souls... These two rays issued forth from the very depths of My tender mercy when My agonized Heart was opened by a lance on the Cross." (Diary, 299)

From Sr. Faustina's Diary we learn that she heard Jesus' voice many times, and that He often spoke to her about the image: *"I want this image, which you will paint with a brush, to be solemnly blessed on the first Sunday after Easter; that Sunday is to be the Feast of Mercy."* (Diary, 47-49)

The entire Diary is an ongoing of revelations that lead her into an ever deeper relationship and progressively unveil a divine plan of unimaginable bearings. The tragedy of WWI was still visible with its devastating effects, and no one, except those who had taken the message of Fatima seriously, could have imagined that two decades later the earth would sink into an even worse state of chaos.

Divine Mercy, from whom nothing is hidden and whose aim is to bring all to good, whose ways are often unthinkable for us, loves to work via the humblest of instruments, such as an image.

More than one Image

St Faustina's spiritual director, Fr. Michael Sopo ko, commissioned a painting of Merciful Jesus. It was painted according to Sr. Faustina's instructions and in her presence, and is kept in the Shrine of Divine Mercy at Vilnius in Lithuania.

A second image was commissioned, after the death of the Polish nun, by the sisters of her Congregation; meant for the chapel at their house in Krakow. However, it was yet another image that was chosen in its place: this third image was painted by someone as

gratitude for a grace received. The decision was made by the Archbishop of Krakow who happened to be present; and it was his successor, Archbishop Karol Wojtyla (who later became Pope John Paul II), who became the main instrument of confirmation and diffusion of the devotion to Divine Mercy. This image was the one that became the traditional image of Merciful Jesus; a copy of which was blessed by John Paul II in the Church of the Holy Spirit at Sassia on the day the first solemn Mass for the first Sunday of Divine Mercy was celebrated on the 23rd April 1995.

Prodigious Ways

Here we have briefly mentioned the devotion to Divine Mercy as revealed to St. Faustina. I wish to continue with the story of a man and his devotion to Divine Mercy.

Lia Galdiolo, an iconographer from Padova (Italy), felt inspired to write a life-size icon of Merciful Jesus. The work was blessed by John Paul II during his visit to Padova. In 1990 the image was collocated in the shrine of Divine Mercy in the diocese of Trento. And it was here that during a prayer meeting something important happened.

Hugo Festa, not yet 40, was affected by multiple sclerosis and other ailments and was confined to a wheelchair. In April of 1990 he was accompanied to a General Audience before the Holy Father. After having blessed the icon of Merciful Jesus that Hugo had taken with him, the Pope told him to entrust himself to the Heart of Jesus and to the intercession of Sr. Faustina.

Hugo decided to go to the shrine of Divine Mercy in Trento and pray. On the fourth day, while he was praying in front of the icon, he experienced something extraordinary. The figure of Christ **came to life** and stretched out his hands as if to beckon him. Hugo experienced a sensation of warmth throughout his entire body; then he found himself on his feet, with his arms outstretched towards the image of Jesus. Yet, he still doubted, but Jesus called him, and Hugo walked towards Jesus. Hugo could walk again, his fits of epilepsy had ceased, his very poor eyesight greatly improved.

Witness, missionary, martyr

From that moment on Hugo prayed and thanked God continually. On the 19th August he attended another Audience out of a desire to tell the Pope what had happened. The miracle was included in the acts of the process of beatification for Sr. Faustina. It also confirms the mysterious bond between John Paul II and the Polish nun who were united in the mission to let the world know of Divine Mercy.

Hugo Festa's life changed radically, and he became a volunteer at Mother Teresa's missions in India and Africa, whilst back in his home town he dedicated his life to helping especially the migrants from eastern Europe or northern Africa. The seal to this radical and spectacular conversion is the **murder of Hugo** in his home in Vicenza by one of those to whom he had extended a helping hand.

Arrival at Medjugorje!

The story of this icon has not finished here. Upon the request of the then Archbishop

of Split, Mons. Frane Franic, the painting was sent to Split on the occasion of an important peace march with destination Medjugorje. It was later placed in the Adoration Chapel and then transferred to the Chapel of the cemetery at Surmanci where it remained till the new church at Surmanci was blessed in April 2002.

The little town of Surmanci is in the Neretva valley, the **other side of the hill of Apparitions**. Coincidence, perhaps, to suggest a sign of indissoluble union between Divine Mercy and Mary, chosen by God to be the Mother of Mercy?



Symbolism of the Icon

The pictured icon (by Lia Galdiolo) represents Jesus coming to "the place where the disciples of Jesus were gathered and hidden for fear of the Jews" (Jn 20:19) The Risen Lord comes. The signs of Jesus' resurrection are his resplendent clothes, his pierced hands, chest, and feet; the sealed doors represent the fear of the disciples, and the darkness in their hearts. Jesus stands on a dais, the earth, which is a stool for his feet, and is lit up by his presence. With the tip of his toes he touches the outer side of the dais; this means that his journey is finished and He is about to return to the Father. The golden quadrangle within the dais represents the new, eternal earth, Paradise, where every man may finally enter to be with Him (gold stands for light, eternity, regality). On the part in the shade (faith) are the words revealed to Sr. Faustina: *Jesus, I trust in You*, and "My peace be with you".

Jesus dons white and gold clothes (meaning eternal glory): a long tunic (standing for His righteous works); the left shoulder is covered by a mantle (representing the pilgrim, the Messiah); the right shoulder by a golden stole (meaning His mission is fulfilled); on His sides is the priestly band (He is the only, eternal Priest); the black that surrounds His figure represents the divine darkness, the Mystery of God revealed to man without ever being exhausted; the gold represents Christ's eternity.

His left hand indicates His Mercy that gushes forth from his pierced side. His right hand represents His Resurrection on the third day (indicated by the three fingers together) while his pointer and middle finger indicate His two natures: human and divine.

On His forehead is a "tau", symbol of life for all those who adhere to Him. The triangle within the frame of the door is formed by rays which express the gift of the Holy Spirit. It is pointed upwards to indicate our ascension with Christ, or our transfiguration in Him to whom we are called by the Father's will.

Grain of wheat

Our meditation on the Litanies of Loreto continue, and in particular we consider:

ARK OF THE COVENANT

This title of Mary contains two terms that are very dear to the Old Testament: *covenant* and *ark*. There is no other people on the earth with which God has stipulated a pact, making them a chosen people and the heir to His blessing. The ark was the sign of the powerful and elective “presence” of God; it was the great sign that assured the people who were fighting to conquer the promised land. It was kept in the Holy of Holies within the temple and was the object of their veneration; it was the heart of the people of Israel.

Since Mary is a person, she is surely more important than an ark, no matter how precious is might be. Mary gave up her immaculate heart entirely to God and became the fore-chosen dwelling place, the ark, of the upholder of the new and eternal covenant: Jesus Christ. Thus, the blessed Virgin becomes for the new people the living “tabernacle” where the Son of God becomes flesh so He can enter history. This task has been handed on to the Church of which Mary is image.

In the ark of the family bread was kept. Bread is an element that creates communion for the foundation of the family. The Virgin Mary kept Christ within her womb. He is the Bread descended from heaven. She can also be said a casket that keeps the Lord’s every word; she meditates upon it herself, and offers it as a gift to all her children.

GATE OF HEAVEN

This title brings our attention to the dramatic moment for all mankind when because of the original sin the gates to the earthly paradise were closed to Adam and Eve. The gates were guarded by a cherubim with a flaming sword.

Now, with the redemption wrought by Christ, that closed gate has been opened; but not only does it open upon the earthly garden, but onto God’s very heart.

When Mary conceived the Son of the Most High she became the royal gate through which passed the great King and through which passes mankind which has been redeemed so it can enter before the presence of God. Certainly, the gate has a fundamental role, and being able to enter through it is a guarantee of being accepted and not being treated as thieves. When the gate through which we pass is also beautifully decorated, it makes us feel even more welcome.

MORNING STAR

This title is a “must be” in the Litanies, both because of its beauty and because of what it means. Stars are the object of admiration amongst all peoples. Stars are symbolic for various reasons: they live in the sky, they are untouchable, they are pure light, their light does not blind us, they are unchanging, their light is not extinguishable, they are immobile, they are eyes in heaven

Even a normal life, made up of the everyday things, can be lived in a saintly manner. Such was life for Amedeo, husband and father of five children. Though an able and esteemed person, much more important was his love for his wife and family, and for others. It was from love that he drew nourishment which made him always so available for others; always ready to forgive everything and everyone. It was from love that he drew his immense trust in Mary and Jesus, to Whom he entrusted his entire life.

The sickness that struck him when he was at the height of his strength and which accompanied him for nearly thirty years became the occasion for special grace. After several operations on the brain, his life became one of suffering, which he always accepted. He knew how to accept the grace which was granted him through his suffering, and he embarked on a journey of purification, towards a continual deprivation, accepted with generosity. To whomever asked how he was he would respond: *well, very well*. It seems evident that only wisdom would have suggested such a reply; wisdom granted by the Holy Spirit. Through accepting with peace his situation, his life became lighter, less burdensome, till it became such a “little thing”, nearly nothing at all – “nothing”, however, in the sense meant by Chiara Lubich when she said that only a *nothing* can get into heaven.

His life was like a grain of wheat that once it had rotted under the earth it began to bear much fruit, in the imitation of Jesus. Thus, his death bore abundant fruit, even in his wife who had feared greatly for the imminent death of her husband, but who experienced after his death a love so great by God that she said: *Love is truly blind, and God has shown me how blind I was*. God can do such great things with our nothingness! when we let God act in us! As I reflect on Amedeo’s life I have to say that his sickness – which for the world would have seemed a curse – was instead a gift from the Father, and an immense occasion offered to him by Providence, which allowed him to become that nothing so that he could enter Heaven and see God and stay with Him in an eternal happiness.

Here I am!

“Glorious things are spoken of you, o city of God” (Psalm 86)

These words of the Psalm seemed written for Mary... The Spirit has shown us wonderful things of Mary; the Church sings her marvels, such as when she calls her: *glory of Jerusalem, joy of Israel, honour of our people* (She is the glory, happiness and honour of all peoples, all generations). Mary is the city of God, precious and protected. For this, the Church calls her: *house of gold, tower of ivory, fortified city, dwelling place of God*.

How beautiful you are, Mary, and how precious! Thanks to you, thanks to the fruit of your womb, Jesus, we too have become precious, we who in the eyes of God were nothing: “[A]ll the nations are accounted as the dust on the scales... are as nothing before Him, they are accounted by him as less than nothing and emptiness” (Is 40:15-17).

All the nations, with all their capacity and their means, are accounted as nothing by God. But Mary, poor and humble, is precious. How could the young woman of Palestine become so precious, so full of grace? It was no doubt her response: “Behold me!”; the readiness with which she placed herself at the Lord’s service. This made her so beautiful, more than all the fatigue and penance. Almost as if that: “Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord” was what made grace explode within Her. Before such humility God filled her with His love. Her readiness to love and be loved was so pleasing to the Lord that immediately upon the Angel’s announcement, she was made the splendour of grace to become the Mother of God.

The Blessed Virgin is present at Medjugorje perhaps to make us understand how it is important that we too offer to God a prompt response of “behold me!”. She wants to show us the way to God; it is the same way she herself journeyed down, the same one her Son journeyed down. So let us accept the call of our blessed Mother; and perhaps God will work marvels also in us, for the good of many.

that watch down over us. Of all the stars, the “morning star” is most beautiful and intense. In the Greek and Roman world it was called Venus after the goddess of beauty. We know that Venus is not a star, but a planet which shines with reflected light, but this doesn’t matter to us; actually it gives it even more similar to Our Lady who shines with the light of God.

One of the main characteristics of the morning star is that it is the first to appear at dusk and the last to disappear at dawn. It is the star that announces the coming of the day. Similarly, more than anyone else, Mary comes to announce the coming of our day that will not end. She is the morning star who – with her Amen – came to introduce into the world the true Light, Christ the Lord. Mary, the “all beautiful one” does not dim

the beauty of the Word, but translates it into an accessible light which does not blind us. If we compare her beauty to the full moon – as did St. Anthony Abbot – Mary becomes an instrument for the wanderer who walks in life’s darkness. As an instrument, Mary helps us reach our destination. The light that emanates from Mary is a divine light and for this reason it is reflected in a myriad of ways just like the rainbow. St. Anthony helps us see how she is as a bridge between heaven and earth because she is the way chosen by God to descend upon the earth, and through whom man is able to ascend into heaven.

So let us look upon her, so her beauty can transform us and make us beautiful. This is indeed the desire of our most blessed Mother: that we be where she is: in the Heart of God.

The Altar, the Lamb and the Cross



Apparitions at KNOCK

There is a little town in the western part of Ireland, and an extraordinary event that not everyone knows about. However, it was not unknown to **John Paul II** who paid a visit in 1979. "I felt a strong desire to come here," he said, "the desire to make yet another pilgrimage to the Shrine of the Mother of Christ, the Mother of the Church, the Queen of Peace. Do not be surprised by this desire of mine. Since I was very young in my own country, it has been a practice of mine to make pilgrimages to Our Lady's Shrines..." His visit marked the centennial of this extraordinary apparition in Ireland, giving the shrine greater importance and an official status.

But let's go back in time. On the 21st August 1879, **rain was battering down** on the tiny village. Mary McLoughlin, the housekeeper to the parish priest of Knock (County Mayo, in Ireland) was astonished to see the outside south wall of the church bathed in a mysterious light; there were three figures standing in front of the wall, which she mistook for replacements of the stone figures destroyed in a storm. She went through the rain to her friend Margaret Byrne's house.

After a half hour Mary decided to leave and Margaret's little sister Mary agreed to walk home with her. As they passed the church they saw an amazing vision very clearly: Standing out from the gable and to the west of it appeared the **Blessed Virgin, St. Joseph and St. John**, next to an **altar upon which were a lamb and a cross**. The young girl remarked: "Oh, look, they are moving!" Mary Byrne ran to tell her family while Mary McLoughlin gazed at the apparition. Soon a small crowd (of 15) gathered and all saw the apparition.

The figure of the Blessed Virgin was life-size, while the others seemed not quite as tall. They (the figures) stood a little away from the gable wall, and a little under two feet from the ground.

The Blessed Virgin Mary was clothed in white robes with a brilliant crown on her head. Over the forehead where the crown fitted the brow, she wore a beautiful full-bloom golden rose. She was in an attitude of prayer with her eyes and hands raised towards Heaven. St. Joseph stood on Our Lady's right. He was turned towards her in an attitude of respect. His robes were also white. St. John was on Our Lady's left.

He was dressed in white vestments and resembled a bishop, with a small mitre. He appeared to be preaching and he held an open book in his left hand.

The witnesses watched the silent Apparition in pouring rain for two hours, reciting the Rosary, until the figures, who never spoke, disappeared. Although the witnesses standing before the gable were drenched, no rain fell on the gable or the ground beneath it. They felt the ground carefully with their hands and it was perfectly dry as was the gable itself.

A Commission was set up within weeks of the Apparition by the Archbishop, and the fifteen witnesses were examined. Inevitably, one might say, the apparition at Knock awoke also hostility and opposition on the part of many. The Commission, however, reported after its enquiry that the evidence of the witnesses was 'trustworthy and satisfactory'. Devotion to the site by the faithful was thus permitted, and with time the little village became a pilgrimage site. Pope John Paul II's pilgrimage in 1979 inspired an even greater devotion to the Shrine. Today one and a half million pilgrims visit the Shrine annually.

Explanation in Revelation

What did the Lord want to tell us with this scene? Fr. James, a Franciscan monk who studied the apparition, wrote: "[St. John] held a book in his hand. However, to discover the message of Knock one must open the Book of Revelation; the book that contains the interpretation of the history of the universe. It is permeated by a great **theme of redemption in three cosmic phases**. In the first place there is the mystery of the Lamb that is slain from the beginning of the world." Such is the description in the thirteenth chapter of Revelation by St. John. It speaks of the eternal plan of redemption, symbolized by the simple and touching image of the lamb that was seen at Knock. In the second place there is the mystery of the woman "dressed in the sun" seen giving birth over the earth. Then, there is the City of God which is said to possess the Glory of God, of which the Lamb is the lamp."

Also David M. Lindsey in his book: *The Woman and the Dragon: Apparitions of Mary*, sees in the apparition at Knock a clear reminder of Revelation: "The apparition at Knock was silent, and seemed to give no message, but in reality, this is not so. At times **silence is more eloquent** than words. One needs to carefully analyze the apparition to uncover its silent and hidden message. Mary appears with her earthly husband, St. Joseph, and with her adoptive son, St. John the Evangelist, and she wore the golden crown of the Queen of Heaven. At the centre of the altar was the immolated Lamb, just as St. John saw in Revelation, over the golden altar of heaven."

"Behold, I stand at the door and knock"

"If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me", writes John in Revelation (Rev 3:20). Scripture tells us that Jesus knocks at the door of our heart, calling us to answer; but if we also look at the times we live in we see how Jesus continues to knock

at the door of our heart, waiting for us to open and invite Him in so that His promises can be fulfilled.

The Knock apparition says the times are mature, **the Mother calls us to unite ourselves to her work as co-redemptrix**. St. John's book tells us how to participate in the final victory over the Dragon. Let us hurry, and not miss the occasion to be among those who have "*conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives even unto death*" (Rev 12:11). Editor

MEDJUGORJE

Apparitions to Mirjana

18 March 2008: "Dear children, today I extend my hands towards you. Do not be afraid to accept them. They desire to give you love and peace and to help you in salvation. Therefore, my children, receive them. Fill my heart with joy and I will lead you towards holiness. The way on which I lead you is difficult and full of temptations and falls. I will be with you and my hands will hold you. Be persevering so that, at the end of the way, we can all together, in joy and love, hold the hands of my Son. Come with me; fear not. Thank you."

2nd April 2008: "Dear Children, Also today as I am here with you in the great love of God, I desire asking you: Are you with me? Is your heart open for me? Do you allow me to purify it with my love, and prepare it for my Son? My Children, you are chosen because in your time a great grace of God is descended onto the earth. Accept it, without hesitation. I thank you."

Our Lady blessed all those present and all the holy objects. She departed amid a beautiful, warm, pale blue light.

2nd May 2008: "Dear Children, It is by God's will that I am here with you in this place. I desire for you to open your hearts and to receive me as your Mother. With my love I shall teach you the simplicity of life and the wealth of Mercy, and I shall lead you to my Son. The way to Him can be difficult and sorrowful, but do not fear, for I shall be with you. My hands will support you to the end, to the eternal joy. Therefore, do not be afraid to open yourselves to me. Thank you. Pray for priests. My Son has granted them to you."

Mirjana Dragicvic-Soldo had daily apparitions from 24 June 1981 till when on 25th December 1982 she received her 10th and final secret from Our Lady. After this Our Lady appeared to Mirjana only **once a year on the 18th March**. On 2nd August 1987 Our Lady also started appearing to Mirjana on the **2nd day of each month** to pray with her for all unbelievers. Mirjana's 2nd of the month meetings with Our Lady used to be private until Our Lady told Mirjana that from 2nd February 1997 onwards they would be public. **Our Lady invites all to join them in prayer on this 2nd day of each month for unbelievers**. These 2nd of the month apparitions to Mirjana are usually held at the *Cenacolo Community* in Medjugorje.

Reporting from Medjugorje ...

Spring brings new “flowers”

It's a beautiful, sunny Sunday at the end of winter. On Podbrdo are many small groups of people, praying silently, or softly as they climb up to the place of Our Lady's first apparitions. Most of them are Croatian, but there are some families from Italy and Slovenia, and then there are the persons belonging to the various communities present in Medjugorje. Smiles are often exchanged. A smile isn't a superficial greeting, for a **brief glance sufficiently contains a divine blessing**, and allows one to experience the joy of knowing we are all there as a response to the same call, to exchange the gift of the Sunday sun with some of our own time on this day of the Lord.

We reach the top almost for last, greeting those on their way back down. As we approach the place of Apparitions we stop praying out loud. Silently we kneel around the statue placed up high. It is dusk, and the hill is not lit up by the sun. With discretion, each person expresses an intimate prayer, lifting and lowering his gaze; and Mary looks down upon us with tenderness, reading the whisper upon our lips. United to her motherly heart I begin to experience how the brothers and sisters God placed next to me are a precious gift, and I thank Mary for having called us, choosing us **from every tribe, language, people and nation**. I thank her for having wanted this spiritual family, and for the communion we share.

It all began here, in this place, many years ago. The “star” of Medjugorje is the mark of birth into grace for a multitude of souls. Thus, Medjugorje is our rightful birthplace, our “cradle”, and for this it is right that this Sunday evening we come together in simplicity to give thanks to our Mother.

“The season begins anew”

With the return of the hot season comes the return of the pilgrims; and of business, and traffic, and work. Here in Medjugorje people say “the season begins anew.” This is my third year here in this blessed land, by the grace of God, and by now I am able to pick out the parishioners from the pilgrims. It may be that many locals see the flow of pilgrims as mere business, however, there are also many for whom work is a way to serve God by serving one's neighbour.

So, with the return of the “season” it is not just business that picks up, but there is a **spiritual dynamic** that involves many people seeking help in one way or another, and others who, with their prayer, serenity and decision for God, are called to be vessels of grace. So from an organizational point of view this might be just another summer, but for the life in the Spirit, the season about to begin will be unique and unrepeatable, because to **this cradle of conversions** will come still more people, the lives of whom will change radically, and there will be

special encounters willed by God that will be engraved eternally in the hearts of many. Those who pray and suffer for pilgrims know how many sacrifices it takes to make a small yet precious “yes” arise in a wounded heart.

Living the Encounter

After breakfast, on an errand in the car to Citluk, I gave a lift to a young hitchhiker. “What's your name?” – by now my Croatian is fairly good. “Andrija,” he said. “Oh, this is the first time that I meet someone here with that name. That means you celebrate your patron saint on the 30th November. My name's Francesco and I'm Italian; but I bet you can tell.” Andrew is 25 years old, like me.

Usually, on such an occasion I would think how graced I am to have been called at such a young age into my Community. Instead today I consider how both of us grew up in different environments, yet here we are, both “working” in this place of grace, carrying out “normal” activities of day-to-day living, which Our Lady nonetheless receives and presents to the Lord as a sacrifice of praise.

“Do you like living in Medjugorje, or do you think there are too many pilgrims? When there are many, do they disturb?” He replied: “No, no, I like Medjugorje. I like the way it is, with all the people. The pilgrims don't disturb.”

“Do you believe in Mary's apparitions?” ... Obviously, everyone here believes. “How have the apparitions changed your life?” This is the important question. We ought to ask ourselves how much attention we give to our blessed Mother's voice, and if I care about keeping her last message in my mind and heart, and if I put it into practice, even in a “chance” meeting such as this one I described.

Seasons of the soul

During winter and spring in Medjugorje the weather is determined by two alternating winds: the south wind and the north wind, both commonly known as “bora”. The south wind brings clouds and rain, and diminishes the range of temperatures so that daytime temperatures are more constant and merciful. When the “bora” blows, the air and sky are clean and clear, making mornings crisp, but the midday sun is warm enough to bring hope to hearts. From May onwards into summer the north wind is pleasant, cool and refreshing, whilst the south wind brings hot air, alternated by summer storms



which serve to clean up and refresh the air and nature.

Also in our spiritual journey, the soul has alternating seasons and different currents. Going back home from Medjugorje one knows that life continues with its usual routine and a variety of difficulties. At times the Lord grants the soul signs, graces and consolations, alternated with periods in which our faith is tried and our spiritual journey “verified”... When a soul reaches maturity, the person comes to realize how these periods of trial are useful and fertile, and mature one's relationship with God.

MAY: most beautiful month

May is the month of Mary, and it is perhaps the most beautiful here in Medjugorje. It is when the swallows return to slice the intense blue sky, a sky that takes on glorious hues for the delight of those at evening Mass. The peace of this season is profound, and most enjoyable in summer evenings. Then, the silence becomes more intense, and seems to sink deep into the soul, to transform, heal, and make space for the action of the Spirit which God transmits to us continually.

Francesco Cavagna

Fr. Jozo:

I Believe in Transformation!

Our Lady appears in these difficult times; times in which certain people without scruples manipulate the masses with use of the mass-media, especially the television. They create a public opinion by forcing upon the people their own measure of immorality, and by promoting false freedom, turning egoism and pleasure into slavery.

How can we today change this negative, world-wide situation? How can one bear witness that God became man and redeemed us? How can one offer others His teachings and His way to peace? In her recent messages, the Queen of Peace has underlined our responsibility for this world which is without peace, without God, without faith. In this world, we are with Her. We are sent to be light in the darkness. We are called to be peace amid restlessness, and apostles in this valley of Babel. Our Lady didn't say: write articles, or speak to influence the mass media. She calls us to respond to her call and to be a sign and grace for others.

How can we do all this? Our Lady says that it is possible by giving time to God, so that He can transform us. We need to experience this transformation. I firmly believe in this transformation. For me, Medjugorje means above all a great transformation of the human heart, of life, of family and of the world. I know that conversion is possible.

In my heart I know that the Queen of Peace, during the moment of the apparitions, comes to touch all our problems, giving answers to all our questions. Our Lady asks us to live her messages, in practical ways, in our day-to-day lives, so that our apostolate confirms the experience of the Church, because our transformation begins when we kneel down in front of our Lord in prayer.

(excerpt, letter to Couples)

Grace Upon Grace

by Stefania Consoli

What does our journey behind the Lord of history reserve for us; our journey behind the One who alone challenged and annihilated death through the offering of Himself? What did the Crucified One procure for us when out of love and with his last breath He breathed over His own to give life to the Church, as the Father breathed over Adam and gave origin to mankind? What did we obtain from that stone that rolled back from the sepulchre, emptying it from corruption, allowing the entrance of hope in an endless day?

Grace upon grace is what we receive in this springtime, a time in which buds give way to blossoms then to fruits in a myriad of hues, perfumes, and tastes. A river of grace is given us, a continual flow of celestial news that gushes forth from a sequence of liturgical feasts ever more intense with light and splendour.

Easter has already played its part: fifty long days loaded with new, risen, life; days in which the special power works to bring light to the darkest corners of our hearts which are closed in upon themselves and enslaved to one's own love. It is a strength able to plough deeply into the hardened clumps of our soul to bring its contents to the surface – things we thought long dead, but which though hidden work in veiled and sordid ways: old rancour, frustration, open wounds...

In the days following *that* Passover, at Jerusalem, the Teacher instructed His disciples to prepare them for the mission. Jesus does the same with us, each year, in a Paschal time that is imbued with His presence. The journey to the Father demands a continual exodus from ourselves and own way of thinking that would prefer worldly gratification, from a false justice that rises to defend one's ego, from the logic of power that would call us to stand up against even those near us to dominate.

The Resurrection, thanks to which death has been conquered, shows us that a life made up of even some accommodating and compromising blocks the possibility of a profound inner renewal which comes with every *Passover*. In fact, for fear of making a mistake, or of not daring too much we often close ourselves up, being content with doing the indispensable in a "tiny existence" made of up "tiny" things, all the time kidding ourselves that we're tranquil. However, when we reduce to the minimum all our actions in this manner we also reduce the oxygen to our soul which is nourished on the creative initiatives of the Holy Spirit.

This basic standstill, fruit of our uncertainties and fears, risks stopping the dynamic process of Christian life which is a continual cycle of offering, death and resurrection, able to lift us each time beyond human horizons and draw us into a relationship with the Most High. Let us admit: how many times do we call our passivity a state of *tranquillity*? Instead of flying high we advance along hopping.

If we convinced ourselves to turn our gaze away from ourselves, and from our

own needs, expectations and claims, and let the Holy Spirit work, who in this time is poured forth with great generosity, we would see that the reality is far greater than our own little vision. Many problems would disintegrate into the nothing that they are; needs would be sized down because everything will be given at the opportune moment and in ways we could never have imagined; doubts would go up in smoke and make room for trustful surrender; sentiments would receive peace, not the peace the world gives, but the peace of the Risen One (cf. Jn 14:27): a peace that is without worries because these have been entrusted to God; a peace that generates joy in hearts in the certainty that evil has no power over us when Jesus reigns as King in the centre of our beings (cf. Jn 14:30).

God draws us out of the confines of our micro-world to make us taste the beauty of His own. But we need to allow ourselves to be led, and we need especially to trust! We shall go from *grace to grace* through the mystery of the Ascension, then of Pentecost. We shall live the fullness of the feast of the Most Holy Trinity, and then encounter Jesus alone, who gives Himself entirely to us in the feasts of *Corpus Domini* and of the Sacred Heart.

And as a woven fabric that connects various fibres, the mantle of Mary, which in **May** is laid out in a special way for all her children to protect the grace that God is distributing in this our time.

A profound silence envelops our soul, enabling us to receive the pearls that God wants to give us. This way they are not scattered, and our thanks rises up to the Father, our Father, provident Father.

In Your Womb ...

*In your womb is rekindled the love
whose warmth, in eternal peace,
thus germinated this flower ...*

These are words by Dante Alighieri, 13th century Italian poet, author of the famous "The Divine Comedy." The words are part of an extraordinary prayer to the Virgin Mary (in the third book: Paradise), which the author puts into the mouth of St. Bernard.

Other, not so famous words in a song by singer-songwriter Fr. Giosy Cento, go something like this: "In your house, Mary, I perceived your yes. A proposal of love God thrust into your heart. And the infinite became flesh. The Mystery descends in silence..."

This makes us ask ourselves: what happens when we make our souls available as Mary did? What was it that the Most High found in Her? And what must He find in us?

A womb aflame with love! A heart, prepared by the very Word of God, is what He must find in us. God prepares the creature to receive Himself. A womb aflame is what He wants; as the hearts of the disciples of Emmaus were aflame after Jesus had explained the Scriptures to them and then they recognized Him when He broke the

bread.

A warm womb that bears peace! St. Augustine dares to say that Mary's greatness was in receiving the Word especially into her heart, more than into her womb. In her heart was peace, because her heart was impregnated with the Word. Her peace was fruit of her obedience to God's will. One's freedom is not annulled through obedience but is exalted. Peace comes from being faithful to God's project, which is based alone on love of and for the soul. Peace is a gift for others. Besides being in one's heart, peace is transmitted to others. "*You can easily forget a person with whom you've laughed, but not one with whom you've cried*" (Gibran).

Germinate a flower! "... *He hath regarded the humility of his handmaid*" sings Mary in the Magnificat. Precisely! Your womb, o Mary, is as a flowering garden, because every virtue is contained therein: simplicity, humility, silence, prayer, surrender, love, faithfulness, trust... thus blossoms the Flower that alone supersedes time and seasons, is always full of beauty and perfume. Mary, your life is as rich soil, which is tilled and made ready for the sowing by the Holy Spirit. And the Son of God finds His dwelling place, and ... the Infinite becomes flesh!

Fr. Orazio Renzetti ofm cap



"The laity, dedicated as they are to Christ and anointed by the Holy Spirit, are marvellously called and prepared so that even richer fruits of the Spirit may be produced in them... and so, worshipping everywhere by their holy actions, the laity consecrate the world itself to God, everywhere offering worship by the holiness of their lives."

(Catechism of the Catholic Church, 901)

"Spiritual adoption" of priests

In a letter Benedict XVI expressed his satisfaction for the campaign for Eucharistic adoration and spiritual "maternity" for the sanctification of the world's priests. The campaign calls especially for "women consecrated" to "spiritually adopt priests to help them, through their self-offering, prayer, and penance."

It is hoped that through this initiative there will rise up to God from every corner of the earth an incessant prayer of adoration, thanksgiving, praise, supplication and reparation, so as to give rise to a sufficient number of holy vocations to the priesthood.

(www.clerus.org/pregate)

Confession is Medicinal

In the course of my practice as a medical doctor, patients entrust me with a lot of their intimate concerns. I have thus come to realize how the Church is right in defining man as a trinitarian creature; the three parts of whom – body, soul (psyche) and spirit – are closely connected. The illness of one of these parts always effects the others. Therefore, a true healing of the person can come only by acting on all three levels.

Up to a few decades ago only the cure of the body was important, then Psychosomatic Medicine pointed out the value of the psyche. However, man is still not well, and his health – seen as the perfect balance of the entire individual (made manifest through a strong sensation of inner peace), seems still a distant goal. **There is only one solution:** to have the courage to admit that also the spiritual side of man has necessities which cannot be neglected.

When I ask my patients what it is that they desire most, most of them respond that they desire to live at peace and with serenity, both externally (family and society) and internally (within oneself). Even though this need is felt very strongly, very few come to experience it, and the reason is that instead of seeking out and correcting one's errors (there are always errors), one tends to blame others for every negative event in their life.

Experience has taught me that **the only people who find peace are those who find God** and His love and forgiveness. These days many people talk about God, but it is often about a god that we use to our own advantage: an inanimate, personified god or one who is very distant from our own world. This god is not the God of peace, but an illusory placebo that many create to try and tranquilize one's conscience.

The God of peace is Jesus Christ. It is that Jesus who was obedient to the Father's will to the point of dying on a cross for our sake. It is that Jesus who loved everyone, even his persecutors; that Jesus that instituted the sacraments and fulfilled everything so that we could see, believe and imitate Him, to reach the state of "*perfect man*" (Eph 4:13).

When man lost sight of this Jesus, he also lost his health, his inner balance, his peace. There is only one way to return to Jesus and find oneself: it is to ask Him forgiveness with all one's heart, and promise Him – with the help of Grace that He continually grants us – to offend Him no longer. It is the echo of the voice of John the Baptist that repeats down the centuries to warn us: "*Repent, for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand!*" (Mt 3:2).

As a doctor, I have in many cases asked patients to be reconciled with Christ if they wish to resolve their physical problems. Those who have done it, and have retained the habit of confessing frequently, have experienced the joy of living, and have gradually, and marvellously been healed.

Confession is a medicine for man and for society on a whole. Today's society has a special need to be healed. Let us not let this call by the Holy Father go unheeded!

Dr. Roberto Gava

(excerpt "Il sacramento della confessione")

Lord, Teach me to ...

... suffer

You turned suffering into the punishment for blame and the price of redemption. As a participant in the chastising suffering, [I ask you to] teach me to participate in the redemptive suffering. Lord, that I may comprehend, and love and praise your plan!

You left man to run his own course, to do his will instead of yours; but you did not abandon him to his lot. You inflicted the punishment because you are justice, but you promised him liberation because you are merciful. You wanted the ills of punishment to become the merit for liberation so that justice could become an instrument of mercy.

Admirable is your plan, Lord! You fulfilled it in your Son by willing Him to take upon Himself – He also willed it – the condition of the suffering and mortal man, so that through His suffering and death, our own suffering and death could be destroyed, and where blame abounded, grace could superabound.

Teach me to be united to You with love; and I ask you most ardently, if it is possible – but nothing is impossible to your omnipotence – to unite me with joy to the suffering of your Son and His Mother, Mary. Teach me to comprehend that for the sake of my salvation, I must complete what is lacking in Christ's suffering. Not that my suffering can add merit to Christ's merits, but because it is part of the indispensable condition of participation. Lord, teach me to bear my suffering. I say to bear it, because You do not command us to love it. Teach us at least to bear our suffering as a means of expiation, as proof of our love, as an instrument of salvation, a means of apostolate, and of the great hope of the promised reward.

How many reasons there are, Lord, to accept suffering, not only with resignation – too little for a true disciple of Christ – but with love and joy! Help us to accept it with joy, as Your Son did who was anxious to receive the baptism He was meant to receive (Lk 12:50), or as his Apostle did who was overjoyed with all his affliction (2 Cor 7:4).

Lord, grant that I may comprehend the great mystery of suffering!

Fr. Agostino Trapè, o.s.a.

(to be continued)

WORLD YOUTH DAY

Sydney 15-20 July 2008

"In a World Youth Day first, Pope Benedict XVI will send text messages of hope and inspiration directly to pilgrims, reaching young people in their social space. (...) We wanted to make WYD08 a unique experience by using new ways to connect with today's tech-savvy youth," said WYD08 Coordinator, Bishop Anthony Fisher OP.

(News from www.wyd2008.org)

The EUCHARIST IS ALIVE!

"The Eucharist is *alive*. If a stranger who knew nothing about the Eucharist were to watch the way we receive, would he know this? When you and I approach the Eucharist, does it look like we believe we are about to take into our bodies the *living person*, Jesus Christ, true God and true man?"

Author **Vinny Flynn** of "**7 Secrets of the Eucharist**"* compares the way we often treat God when we receive Holy Communion – as little more than "a dead object" – to a very strong contrast drawn from the story of Fatima. "*An angel prostrates himself on the ground! We stand in line with our minds filled with distractions...*"

The suggestion isn't that we throw ourselves face down on the ground before receiving, but that we can be prostrate *interiorly*, and "in our hearts, minds and souls adore the living God in the Eucharist."

"More and more people, feeling a need to express reverence for Jesus in a concrete way as they go to receive, while also trying to avoid calling attention to themselves or disrupt the order of Communion, make a slight bow just before they receive."

*This excellent booklet to help you understand and love Holy Mass, is a Mercy Song Ignatius publication, and is available at: www.mercysong.com

Echo fully relies on readers' donations. To all who become instruments of Providence for Echo, thus enabling us to continue to help Mary reach her children, goes our heartfelt thanks, whom we remember especially in prayer and at Holy Mass. May God reward you and your loved ones onehundredfold!

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"If you wish to go to extremes, let it be in sweetness, patience, charity, and humility." (St. Philip Neri)

*The Lord bless thee and keep thee. May He show His face to thee, and have mercy on thee.
May He give thee peace.*

don Alberto

Italy, 11 May 2008