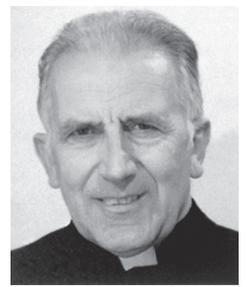




Echo of Medjugorje

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Fr. Angelo Mutti
founder Echo of Medjugorje

Message of 25 July 2012:

"Dear Children, Today I call you to the 'good'. Be bearers of peace and goodness in this world. Pray that God may give you the strength so that hope and boldness may always reign in your heart and life, since you are God's children and bearers of His hope to this world which has neither joy in its heart, nor future, since its heart is not open to God, your salvation. Thank you for responding to my call."

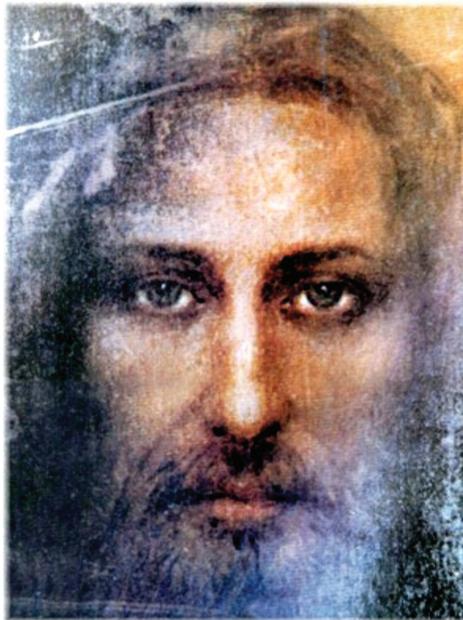
God's Children and Bearers of His Hope

War, hunger, violence, systematic exploitation of human beings and nature, sacrificed to the god of consumerism: stuff of every day we might say; crimes that by now don't even make news. Yet, man refuses to acknowledge his intrinsic inability to solve the great problems of existence, and continues to proceed along ways that are inexorably closed, as he vainly searches for the way of life in the maze of a world that has closed itself to Life.

Forgetting that we are made in the image of God; that we are called to be children of God, can only lead to alienation and a reduction of life to the biological or animal state. However, acknowledging that we are made in the image of God or that we are God's children, is not sufficient if we do not also live - or at least try to live - as such. This is the essence of the Medjugorje message, and it is perfectly in line with the Gospel and Church teaching.

Man is inseparable from God. Once man acknowledges this, he can set out on the way of peace, joy and hope. Jesus is God who came amongst men, and every man is called to accept him as the Son of God, for it is only in Him that man can be fulfilled, and is able to realize the good prepared by God for him and for the world. This is the true essence of man. Only to acknowledge it and accept the consequences would suffice. All the rest is trimmings.

The task that Mary entrusts us with is of paramount importance and involves all our faculties: bodily and spiritually; because **She isn't asking us to "do", but to "be"**. We must be authentic Christians who live by and are surrendered to Christ, till He lives in us. Only then, can we serve as **bearers of peace and goodness in this world**. The same goes for all men, no matter his tongue, race or nation. Every member of the human race is called to bear God to others, because every man is created in His image! Peace and joy in Jesus and Mary. §



My Son!

Message, 2 August 2012 (Mirjana):

"Dear Children, I am with you, and I will not give in. I desire making you know my Son. I desire having my children with me in the eternal life. I desire that you experience the joy of peace and that you have eternal salvation. I pray that you may overcome human weaknesses. I pray to my Son that He might grant you pure hearts.

My dear Children, only pure hearts know how to carry the cross and know how to sacrifice themselves for all those sinners who have offended the Heavenly Father and that even today offend Him, even though they have not known Him. I pray that you might know the light of the true faith that comes only from the prayer of pure hearts. Then, all those who are near to you will experience the love of my Son. Pray for those whom my Son has chosen, that they guide you on the way to salvation. May your lips be sealed against (making) any judgement. Thank you."

Mary doesn't Give In ... Do we?

Three desires and three prayers by Mary, and the revelation of the fruits of eternal life that follow. These are the contents of this beautiful message by Mary, providing us with daily contemplation. **Purity of heart** is a gift from the Lord, but it is also fruit of Mary's prayer, and we need it to know how to carry the cross and how to recognise the light of true faith. Mary promises to all those who are close to her that they will experience her Son's Love. What else could we desire? Her closing request: **pray for priests!** comes with the strict order to refrain from judging them!

Message of 25 August 2012:

"Dear Children, Also today, with hope in my heart, I pray for you and I thank the Most High for all of you who live my messages with the heart. Give thanks to God's love that I can love and lead each of you through my Immaculate Heart also towards conversion. Open your hearts and decide for holiness, and hope will give birth to joy in your hearts. Thank you for responding to my call."

Hope Will Give Birth to Joy

Our Blessed Mother calls us yet again to **look at nature** to be inspired to live and grow in God's plan, which doesn't regard mankind generally, but every single person, whatever his race, culture, colour ...

God came into the world to save everyone. For this he assumed our human nature; for this He became a man! No special skills are required. Just open your heart to Him! Allow Him to enter, to purify it and abide in it. All this is at the same time both within and not within our reach. It isn't so much a question of one's physical abilities or scientific and technical knowledge. But neither is it an unattainable mirage. It does take, instead, **our consent and a living desire** to receive God's Spirit which raises us up; it takes our **Yes** to His Project of Life.

No one and nothing can prevent this miracle of Love; **nothing but our own freedom to reject it.** Today, as then, man is free to choose to accept or crucify Jesus. This is true for me, for you, for everyone. And whether priest or lay person, the risk is the same. Yet, perhaps a priest is more at risk because of the greatness of the task to which he is called (is this not the reason Our Lady asks us every 2nd of the month to pray for them?).

We are the arbiters of our own lives, and to a certain degree, even of others' lives; and this responsibility is marvellous and grave at the same time. But we are not left to ourselves! **God is with us; the angels and the saints assist us.** However, ours is the decision in the end.

Decide for God, Our Lady has explicitly said a number of times. Today she is repeating it in substance when she calls us to Love, to conversion, to holiness and to hope. "Today", a metaphor for the Lord's day; the day we all await so that He may wipe away our tears, so our eyes may reflect His Light and His Love. §

(Comments to messages by Nuccio Quattrocchi)

Encounter with Christ is Centre of Existence

To the crowd that asks: "What must we do, to be doing the works of God?" (Jn 6:28), Jesus says: "This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent" (v. 29).

The centre of existence - that which gives meaning and certain hope in the all-too-often difficult journey of life - is faith in Jesus, it is the encounter with Christ. We also ask: "What must we do to have eternal life?", and Jesus replies: "Believe in me." Faith is the fundamental thing. It is not a matter here of following an idea or a project, but of encountering Jesus as a living Person, of letting ourselves be totally involved by him and by his Gospel. Jesus invites us not to stop at the purely human horizon and to open ourselves to the horizon of God, to the horizon of faith. He demands but a single act: to accept God's plan, namely, to "believe in him whom he has sent" (v. 29). Moses had given Israel manna, the bread from heaven with which God himself had nourished his people. **Jesus does not give something, he gives himself:** He is the "true bread which comes down from heaven." He is the living Word of the Father; in the encounter with him we meet the living God.

"What must we do, to be doing the works of God?" (v. 28) asks the crowd, ready to act in order to perpetuate the miracle of the loaves. But Jesus, the true bread of life that satisfies our hunger for meaning and for truth, cannot be "earned" with human work; he comes to us only as a gift of God's love, as a work of God to be asked for and received. *Angelus* 5 Aug. 2012



Ephphatha!

At the centre of today's Gospel (Mk 7:31-37), **there is a small but very important word.** A word that, in its deepest sense, sums up Christ's whole message and all his work. The Evangelist Mark records this word in the very language of Jesus in which Jesus spoke it so that we may hear it even more vividly. **The word is Ephphatha, which means "be opened".**

Let us look at the context in which it is used. Jesus was crossing the region known as Decapolis, between the coast of Tyre and Sidon and Galilee, **hence an area that was not Jewish.** They brought him a deaf-mute to be healed - evidently the Lord's

fame had spread that far. Jesus took him aside and touched his ears and his tongue and then, looking up to heaven, said with a deep sigh: "Ephphatha" which means "be opened". Then the man immediately began to hear and to speak plainly (cf. Mk 7:35).

This, therefore is the historical and literal meaning of this word: thanks to Jesus' intervention, the deaf-mute "was opened"; previously he had been closed, isolated, it had been very difficult for him to communicate.

For him, healing meant an "opening" to others and to the world, an opening which, starting with the organs of hearing and speech, involved his whole self and his life: he could at last communicate and thus relate in a new way.

However, we all know that a person's closure and isolation do not only depend on the sense organs. There is an inner closure that affects the person's inmost self, which the Bible calls the "heart".

It is this that Jesus came to "open", to liberate, so as to enable us to live to the full our relationship with God and with others.

This is why I said that this small word, "ephphatha — be opened", sums up in itself Christ's entire mission. **He was made man so that man, rendered inwardly deaf and mute by sin, might be able to hear God's voice, the voice of Love that speaks to his heart,** and thus in his turn learn to speak the language of love, to communicate with God and with others.

Angelus, 9 Sept. 2012 www.vatican.va

The YEAR of FAITH and the MESSAGE of MEDJUGORJE

11 October 2012 marks the beginning of the Year of the Faith declared by B.XVI. It ends 24 Nov. 2013. The initial date coincides with the 50th anniversary of the opening of Vatican Council II, and with the 20th anniversary of the publication of the Catechism of the Catholic Church. The letter, *Porta fidei*, presents basic indications according to which the Church shall live this special year.

POPE BENEDICT XVI's desire is that the faithful rediscover "the journey of faith" and "the joy and renewed enthusiasm of the encounter with Christ" [2]: "It often happens that Christians are more concerned for the social, cultural and political consequences of their commitment, continuing to think of the faith as a self-evident presupposition for life in society. In reality, not only can this presupposition no longer be taken for granted, but it is often openly denied.

Whereas in the past it was possible to recognize a unitary cultural matrix, broadly accepted in its appeal to the content of the faith and the values inspired by it, today this no longer seems to be the case in large swathes of society, because of a **profound crisis of faith** that has affected many people." [2]

Thus: "We must **rediscover a taste for feeding ourselves on the word of God**, faithfully handed down by the Church, and on **the bread of life**, offered as sustenance for his disciples (cf. Jn 6:51). Indeed, the teaching of Jesus still resounds in our day with the same power: 'Do not labour for the food which perishes, but for the food which

endures to eternal life' (Jn 6:27)."

A deeper study of the Word of God, the Eucharist and Church teachings will accompany the witness of the faith, because faith grows, "when it is lived as an **experience of love received** and when it is communicated as an experience of grace and joy. It makes us fruitful, because it expands our hearts in hope and enables us to bear life-giving witness: indeed, it opens the hearts and minds of those who listen to respond to the Lord's invitation to adhere to his word and become his disciples. (...)

Only through believing does faith grow and become stronger; there is no other way for possessing certitude with regard to one's life apart from self-abandonment, in a continuous crescendo, into the hands of a love that seems to grow constantly because it has its origin in God." [7]

One of the aims of the Year of the Faith is to offer the opportunity to intensify the witness of charity: "Faith without charity bears no fruit, while charity without faith would be a sentiment constantly at the mercy of doubt. **Faith and charity each require the other**, in a way that each allows the other to set out along its respective path." [14]

The path sketched out by the Holy Father also wants to help us understand the "act by which we choose to entrust ourselves fully to God, in complete freedom." Citing St Paul who refers to his encounter with Lydia: "The Lord opened her heart to give heed to

what was said by Paul' (Acts 16:14), we learn: "There is an important meaning contained within this expression. Saint Luke teaches that knowing the content to be believed is not sufficient **unless the heart, the authentic sacred space within the person, is opened by grace** that allows the eyes to see below the surface and to understand that what has been proclaimed is the word of God." [10]

This is where we find the most significant **point of contact with Our Lady's teaching given through the Messages at Medjugorje.** The journey of the faith, more than acquiring on an intelligent level the contents to believe, requires an open heart. These years of messages received have taught us in many ways the fundamental truth of Christian life. "Today I desire urging you to open your heart to God, just as flowers open up to the sun in spring" (31-01-1985). "**Open yourselves** to God and give over to Him all your difficulties and crosses so that He may transform everything into joy. My children, you cannot open up to God unless you pray" (25-07-1995). "I call you all to **open your hearts** up to God's love which is so great and open for each of you. For the love of man, God sent me into your midst to show you the way of salvation" (25-04-1995). "Allow me, my children, to lead you. **Open your hearts to the Holy Spirit** so that all the good that is in you may flourish and bear fruit a hundredfold" (25-07-2011).

The opening of the heart is the beginning

In the Sign of the Cross!

by *Giuseppe Ferraro*

We have always been cautious before the manifestation of signs, which at Medjugorje have however abounded. They are a sure expression of God's love, but at times - due to man's weakness and limits - it happens that the signs themselves end up occupying the place which belongs only to God.

Nonetheless, **the great cross of light that appeared in the evening sky at Medjugorje on the feastday of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, during the celebration of Mass**, speaks to us of spiritual truths that need to be recalled. As a matter of fact, the cross expresses the spiritual core of Mary's message and call at Medjugorje, and the ultimate significance of Her presence in our midst.

Christ's Paschal Mystery, which is beautifully summed up in the sign of the glorious Cross, is at the very heart of our faith. Mary unceasingly calls us, as baptized faithful and her children, to live the mystery of the Cross and Resurrection in union with her Son. **"Jesus bore the Cross for the sake of the whole world, and He was full of peace and love. He rose and ascended into heaven. So, my children, carry the cross with love! The cross is salvation, and after the cross comes the Resurrection"** (message to prayer group, 20.03.90).

This is Mary's request, so we can obtain, in Christ, the grace of salvation for the multitude of brothers *"who haven't known God's love."* Says Mary: **"Today I call you to offer up your crosses and suffering for my intentions. My children, offer up your suffering as a gift to God so they can become a most beautiful flower of joy. Pray, my children, to understand that suffering can become joy, and the cross the way to joy"** (25-09-1996).

This is also the **"fulfilment of the secrets begun in Fatima"** which Mary announced in Medjugorje (25 Aug. 1981); the importance of which Blessed John Paul II had perceived when he said, **"Medjugorje is today the spiritual centre of the world"** (cf. p. 174, "Perché è santo", by S. Oder, postulator of the Cause for Beatification).

Photo credit: A.R.PA.



Peace is everywhere," said Fr. Charbel who added that many Lebanese people come to Medjugorje. "Many come out of curiosity, but there are also those with many troubles. When they come here,

their life changes. When they return to Lebanon they are very different; the way they see life changes because here they have encountered God and Our Lady."

Fr. Charbel spoke of how many find their vocation at Medjugorje: "My spiritual guide and another Maronite priest I know both received their vocation here. Medjugorje has indeed changed the lives of many," he said. www.medjugorje.hr

MARIJA:

Our Lady smiles at us!

Medjugorje seer, Marija, was present for a **prayer meeting** held at Cassola (N.E. Italy) on 22 Sept. 2012. The meeting began at 3 pm with the recitation of the Divine Mercy Chaplet, followed by the Rosary, Holy Mass and Adoration. Marija received her apparition at the usual time (6.40 pm) after which she spoke to the crowd: **"When Our Lady appears**, she always says Praised be Jesus Christ, and I respond: Always may Jesus and Mary be praised! **Our Blessed Mother then responds with a smile.** After that, we usually remain silent, and wait for her to speak to us. If she doesn't say anything we begin to commend people to her. Also today Our Lady remained in silence and looked at us. **Something I like to say** after an apparition is that we seers have seen Our Lady (through no merit of our own!) but it is also true that **She has seen all of you!** and even today, She looked at you, and blessed you!"

Marija said that through Our Lady's intercession, healings from physical illnesses, spiritual conversions and deliverance from substance abuse, etc., still continue. Marija particularly stressed Our Lady's request to pray: "This evening too, **when you go back home to your families, remember to pray**, because without God there is no future." *BK*

"Pray for Priests"

Fr. Justo Antonio Lo Feudo

At Medjugorje, our Blessed Mother has repeatedly asked that we pray for priests, and that we do not criticize them.

It's not that we priests aren't reprehensible, or that we hold a some sort of green card against impunity. That's not the point. I would say it's quite

the opposite; for in the same person one usually finds a mix of good grain and weed. So, commendable pastoral actions abide in us alongside indifference. Thus, we aren't blameless, for we do things that

of conversion. Then, for the faith to be strengthened, one must begin to proceed along a journey, because without the decision to do so, the opening of the heart cannot lead to new life. The messages of Medjugorje are particularly rich in this **image of making progress, of deciding to advance.** "Dear children, you do not desire moving forward in this time when the Holy Spirit is working in a special way. Your hearts are turned to earthly things, and this is holding you back" (09-05-1985). "My children, you talk much about God, but you witness little with your life. For this reason, my children, **decide for conversion**, that your life may be true before God and so that in the truth of your life you can witness to the beauty that God has granted you" (25-07-1996). "**Repent**, and begin to live my messages, not with words, but with your life. That way you'll have the strength, my children, to decide for the true conversion of heart" (25-09-1998).

This decision needs constant checking and purification: **"When something is good one needs to persevere in the good, and not think: God doesn't see me, listen to me or help me"** (25-03-1992). "With an open heart, ask yourselves sincerely if you desire the living God or if you desire setting Him aside to live according to your own will" (02-06-2011).

For the heart to continue to open, it **requires the strength and grace of the Sacraments**, the Word of God and communion with the Church. All are crucial points in the teachings of Benedict XVI, and all are repeated in the messages. **"The Mass is the highest form of prayer. You will never understand how great it is. Therefore, be humble and respectful during the celebration, and prepare yourselves for it with great care"** (13-01-1984). "Spend as much time as possible in **prayer and adoration** of Jesus in the most blessed Sacrament, so He can change you and place in your hearts a living faith, together with the desire for eternal life" (25-03-2008). "Children, you do not know how to live in the grace of God, therefore I call you all anew to carry the Word of God in your hearts and in your thoughts. **My children, place the Holy Scripture in a visible place** in your families; and read it and live it" (25-08-1996).

The journey of the faith has its own space, which is within the community, within the Church, for it is she who gives us the Sacraments, who leads us to the light of the Word of God, who safeguards the gift of communion. **The Church is the great family of God.** It is one of the cornerstones of the Pope's magisterium, and also of Mary's teachings at Medjugorje. "In discovering the Father, your life will be directed to carrying out God's will and the realisation of **God's family** in the way that my Son desires" (02-01-2011). "Prayer will lead you to the fulfilment of my desire, of my mission here with you, to the unity of **God's family**" (02-02-2011). "I call you to gather into **God's family** and be strengthened with the Father's strength. As individuals, my children, you cannot stop the evil that wants to reign in this world, nor destroy it" (02-08-2011).

The above messages clearly show us the ecclesial dimension of the messages of Medjugorje. Mary, Mother of the Church, desires gathering together **God's family** which was entrusted to her (Jn 19:27) in the unity of faith, as at Pentecost which overcame the dispersion of Babel that not only divided men, but made them "dangerous for one another", as Benedict XVI has put it. *Marco Vignati*



News from Medjugorje

Lebanese priest, Fr. Charbel Zgheib was in Medjugorje with a group of young people. It was his first time here. "One can truly feel the faith here, and also God's presence.

aren't good. Without mentioning the great scandals which are always deplorable, but which do not stain the majority of priests, there are always reasons and situations that aren't what they ought to be. For example, giving more importance to some people rather than others; doing things out of habit; not being as spiritual as we ought; appearing worldly; having bouts of anger or impatience; not always being available to those in need; keeping the church shut for worship; neglecting the liturgy, etc.

However and this applies to anyone, not just priests - criticism isn't good for anyone; neither to those on the giving end or the receiving end. Priests, however, more than common mortals, bear a treasure in jars of clay. What does this mean? That together with their human fragility, there is also the priestly dignity that makes him, a man, another Christ.

A priest does not belong to himself; he belongs to God. From the moment of his ordination, it is not him who lives, but Christ who lives in him. The priest is responsible for the proclamation of the faith in its integrity; he must help the people to know and love God. The dignity of a priest is unique. He works through Christ to realize that which man cannot do, which is the consecration of the bread and wine so they become the real presence of the Lord, and the forgiveness of sins.

Priests are a wonderful gift for the Church and the world. Without them there could not be the Eucharist, and without the Eucharist the Lord could not be present as He is; there could not be the Church. Through the priestly ministry, the Lord continues to save men; He continues being present; He continues sanctifying. He brings light to our darkness through His Word.

The faithful are called to support their priests; to be close to them with prayer, especially in difficult times, so that they can be pastors according to God's heart. Finally, even if God - when judging His priests - will be demanding, because "to whom much is given, much is expected", at the same time God is jealous of his chosen ones [1]. That is why Our Lady says to us to keep our mouths shut, i.e., not to judge priests, but to open our hearts and pray for them.

[1] the episode with Aaron, Myriam and Moses (cf. Numbers, 12)

YEAR OF THE FAITH Suggestions from Medjugorje

To coincide with the opening of the Year of Faith (11 Oct. 2012 - 24 Nov. 2013) we offer this small **window of reflection** to help readers revisit some of the messages given at Medjugorje in which our Blessed Mother refers specifically to our faith. We are grateful for her work of evangelizing the world over these past 31 years, and to her Immaculate Heart we offer up this initiative in the hope it will reach those who do not know, or who have neglected her messages. We also wish to confirm Mary's unique role in this Year of Faith as Mother of the Church.
(Editorial Team)

"Dear children, Also today I am with you in prayer, that God may give you an even stronger faith. My children, your faith is small and you are not even aware how much. Despite this, you are not ready to seek the gift of faith from God. That is why I am with you, my children, to help you comprehend my messages and put them into practice. Pray, pray, pray. In faith and through prayer your soul will find peace and the world will find joy to be with God. Thank you for responding to my call." (25/08/02)

The message is of ten years ago. How has our faith changed since then? Perhaps we have regrets, but discouragement is lawful for a Christian only if it helps strengthen the will and the desire to start anew, to convert to Christ with greater earnestness and determination. What we have not done in ten years can be achieved in a month, a day, even a moment: if only we allow ourselves to be captured by the love of God, if we allow the Spirit to give us new life (cfr Jn 3:3). So, take courage! This is a good year and it will produce good fruits!
Editorial Team



MIRJANA on Radio Maria

Q) How can we live the messages without going to Medjugorje?

A) Live them with the heart. When Our Lady gives a message, my suggestion is to pray the Rosary, to

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read over the message again slowly, to see what God has to say to me - personally to me - with this message, and all the time looking into the heart. For example, when Our Lady had given the message in May - and it was a bit sad - I had stopped to speak with some pilgrims, and many asked me questions like, when will the world change? when will the world understand? Very few asked themselves: what should I do? When will I change?

That hurt me, because we must begin with ourselves. Afterwards we will be able to change also the others. 25 June 2009

Jesus, Mary, I love You! Save priestly souls, save souls. We beseech you: Grant us to repeat this Act of Love a thousand times, with our every breath, our every heartbeat. (Justine Klotz) botschaftderliebe-gottsprichtzurseele.org/en

The MONTH OF OCTOBER is dedicated to the Holy Rosary. To be truthful, the Roman Missal speaks of Mary of the Most Holy Rosary, which underlines its great value. I often think of a message given in the early years of the apparitions. It was the 25th June 1985 and Marija had asked Our Lady if there was something she wanted to say to priests. After calling all of us to pray the Rosary, because, "With the Rosary you can overcome all the obstacles that Satan is presently causing in the catholic Church," Mary then added that all priests should "pray the Rosary, to give space to the prayer of the Rosary."

Praying always means to humble oneself. Humility is the first virtue needed to pray. The prayer of the Rosary immediately humbles us. When the Rosary is prayed together, it unites hearts and minds. A family that prays the daily Rosary will remain together. The Rosary - we learn from the above message - overcomes all obstacles; it sustains us in trials; it grants peace to hearts. With Mary, Queen of Peace, I bless you all.

J. Remo

Mantua, July 2012

Resp. Ing. Lanzani - Tip. DIPRO (Roncade TV)

Message to MIRJANA, 2 Sept. 2012

"Dear Children, While my eyes look at you, my soul seeks souls with which to be one; souls which have understood the importance of prayer for those of my children who haven't come to know the Heavenly Father's love. I call you because I need you. Accept the mission and do not be afraid, I will strengthen you. I will fill you with my graces. With my love I will protect you from the evil spirit. I will be with you. With my presence I will console you in difficult moments. Thank you for your open hearts. Pray for priests. Pray that the unity between my Son and them be as strong as possible, that they may be one. Thank you."

Mary admirably summarizes the work of 31 years in this message. "While my eyes look at you, my soul seeks souls with which to be one; souls which have understood the importance of prayer for those of my children who have not come to know the heavenly Father's love." Her gaze is on us to trigger the communion between souls: Hers and ours; till we become as one in prayer. So let us try to be aware of the moment (Rm 13:11-12) and accept the mission without fear! "I will strengthen you", our Blessed Mother encourages us! *Nuccio Quattrocchi*