



English 120

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Our Lady's message of 25 April 1995

Dear Children, Today I call you to love. My little children, without love you cannot live - neither with God nor with your brothers. Therefore, I call all of you to open your hearts to the love of God which is so great and open for each of you.

God, out of love for man, sent me among you to show you the path of salvation, the path of love. If you do not first love God you will not be able to love your neighbour, nor the one you hate. Therefore, my children, pray and through prayer you will discover love. Thank you for responding to my call.

"Without Love you can live neither with God nor with your brothers"

In a continuation of the message of the previous month to Mirjana in which Our Lady complained about our *lack of gratitude towards God and our hearts hardened to the suffering of our brothers*, Our Lady now invites us to love, saying in a resolute and unequivocal manner that **without love we can live neither with God nor with our brothers**. So, are we with God or are we with our egos?

1. Many think they LIVE WITH GOD because externally they profess and practise their faith, which sides them with the Church. In reality, they are like the foolish virgins who do not feed the flame of their faith with works of love for God and through choosing His will. For them God is but a word: their mouths are full of *Lord, Lord* but He is not the Lord of their lives. How deceiving to live with a *God who loves so much the spirit he made to dwell in us to the point of being jealous* (cf. Jm 4:5) and not love Him! Even to those who boast of having *prophesied and done miracles in his Name, the Lord will say: I do not know you* (cf. Mt 7:21-23). One cannot *live with a consuming fire* (cf. Is 33:14) without burning up with love.

2. **Nor can we LIVE WITH OUR BROTHERS without God's love.** How hard it is, in fact, to live in this world where man cares only for himself, creating division upon division, placing man against man. Words of love reach our ears from pulpits all over, but often they originate in arid lands since they are not fed with the sap of true love. We seem to be in the times foretold by the Gospel, where *the love of many will grow cold due to the increase of evil-doing* (cf. Mt 24:12).

If you do not first love God, you will not be able to love your neighbour nor the one you hate. This is because *love is of God* and if man does not accept God he cannot love. Man without God's love walks in the dark and is unable to see the others as his brothers. A proud, arrogant person does not have God's love and loves no one, because he only cares about making himself known. Man without God, judges, hates, condemns. When he is concerned about his own pleasure and says he

"I have come to ask you for consecration to my Immaculate Heart" - where we will be protected, as in a virgin garden, from satanic invasion; where we will find the Heart of Jesus which is one with Hers and we will draw upon His Holy Spirit. Feast day: 24 June

loves it is only love of self.

See how Our Mother repeats the Apostle's words using deep yet simple expressions so we will not be led into deceit: *Love is of God and everyone who loves is begotten by God and knows God... in this is love: not that we have loved God, but that he loved us... we love because he first loved us* (1Jn 4:7,10,19).

By looking at those whom we hate through His eyes, from behind His heart, we will see that they are very much in need of love and we'll be able to love them as God loves them. A Christian makes Jesus known to others if Jesus is in his heart. Jesus asked Peter: *Do you love me more than these?* (Jn 21:15). Jesus is asking him to first love Him, then His sheep. If in his heart Peter loves his Lord he will accept and love also His sheep as Jesus loved them, to the point of giving his life for them, of forgiving those who deny him and loving those who hate.

3. **Therefore open your hearts to the love of God which is so great and open for each of us.** This great love is offered to us as a free gift and we receive it in the amount we are open to Him.

4. Our Mother then reveals that because of **God's love for man He sent Her among us to show us the way of salvation which is the way of love.** If it is true then that *when we love our brothers we pass from death to life* (1Jn 3:4), how must we love? Mary's insistence on this point must convince us that prayer is the only door through which the life of God, and thus all the rest, can enter us.

The Paschal feasts and the month of May

Message of 25 May 1995:

Dear children, I invite you, my children, to help me with your prayers to bring as many hearts as possible to my Immaculate Heart. Satan is strong - he wants with all his strength to draw as many people as possible to himself and to sin; thus he lurks in ambush to understand all the more, at every moment.

I beseech you, my children: help me so I can help you. I am your mother and I love you and for this I wish to help you. Thank you for responding to my call.

Take refuge in my Immaculate Heart to be saved from Satan

There exists in the history of salvation a war between the Woman and Satan, and it will continue until Satan is defeated (Gen 3:5). However, in the "last times" (i.e. our times), the battle against the Woman's children has become even more bitter (cf. Rev 12:13-17). People (including we Christians) underestimate the power of seduction (2 Th 2:9-11) and the means at Satan's disposal for his great projects aimed at deceiving men ("even in the smallest of things" 25.03.95) and **drawing them to him and to sin** and thus away from God and salvation.

Neither do we fully appreciate the strength and the power of attraction of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, who is: *fair as the moon, resplendent as the sun and terrible as an army with banners* (Sg 6:10). For this She visits us, speaks to us, illumines us and incessantly declares that She is with us and for us in this battle. Mary wants us to understand how Satan really is, how he works without tiring, as a *roaring lion* (1Pt 5:9) who *lurks in ambush to catch the afflicted and drag them off in his net* (Ps 10:30); but man does not or does not want to see.

Once we are made aware, through Our Lady's help, of our extremely fragile state and of the evil one's power, we are not to let this frighten us, nor concentrate our attention on this. We are, instead, to let ourselves be attracted by our Mother's Immaculate Heart, through prayer and filial love for Her, and in Her embrace and Heart we will be sure of the effectiveness of Christ's redemption and be victorious against the evil forces and Satan's temptations. From within our Mother's Heart, in communion with and by virtue of our consecration to Her, we can collaborate with Mary to subtract as many people as possible from evil and bring them to Her Heart.

Mary wants our relationship with Her to be special, both for us and for Her.

Help me so I can help you, she says, and here we see her humbleness, but also the impassioned appeal of a mother whose heart is calling to her children because of a growing danger.

Fr. Remo

are suitable occasions to return to the fullness of life, which is what God desires for His children; in fact He desires the world's salvation.

Fr. Angelo

Evangelium vitae to counteract culture of death

"How can Cain's hand be stayed? How can power be restored to the good the Creator has put into the human heart? How can the world be healed and saved?" It was to reply to these questions that the **Pope** wrote the Encyclical *Evangelium vitae* (the Gospel of life), so as to affirm the meaning and the sacredness of human life in contrast to all that modern culture has invented which goes against life, such as abortion, contraception, sterilization, genetic manipulation, euthanasia, the trading of arms, drug trafficking and ecological ruin. The Pope reminds us that his "message of hope" intends shaking consciences so they may respond to the dramatic situation in which human life finds itself: "Scenes of death that unfortunately still envelop defenceless peoples remind us that sin continues to devastate the life of man, God's masterpiece."

The Pope's discourse is not just another simple attempt to resolve certain problems that upset life on various levels. **The Church wishes to help us look at the roots of these problems, to find the causes behind them.** In this way, if man makes a terrible error, it is not because "what he is doing" is wrong, but rather that he is wrong in God's eyes. The same can be said when trying to understand the messages of Medjugorje. Mary did not come to tell us to plan great ecclesial or social works to make amends for the evil, but to start up a school where man learns to correct the wrong in him, to be free in his heart and thus at peace and in communion with God and his fellow men.

1. In the first part of the Encyclical (nos. 19-28) the Pope explains that the roots of the many dangers and offences to life are found above all in "the notion of freedom which exalts the isolated individual in an absolute way and gives no place to solidarity, to openness to others and service of them." The Bible for first uncovers this evil of the human heart: "It is precisely in this sense that Cain's answer to the Lord's question: 'Where is Abel your brother?' can be interpreted: 'I do not know. Am I my brother's keeper?' (Gn 4:9).

Yes, every man is his "brother's keeper," because God entrusts us to one another. And it is also in view of this entrusting that God gives everyone freedom which possesses an inherently relational dimension. This is a great gift of the Creator, placed as it is at the service of the person and of his fulfilment through the gift of self and openness to others; but when freedom is made absolute in an individualistic way it is emptied of its original content, and its very meaning and dignity are contradicted." It is an ailing freedom which becomes so because it no longer desires obeying the truth, or God, but follows selfish interests and whims.

With sense of God lost, man loses sense of self - After having spoken about the fatal consequences that arise from this erroneous way of interpreting man's freedom (20), the Pope goes to the heart of all these evils: "In seeking the deepest roots of the struggle between the 'culture of life' and the 'culture of death,' we have to go to the **heart of the tragedy being experienced by modern man: the eclipse of the sense of God and of man**, typical of a social and cultural climate dominated by secularism, which, with its ubiquitous tentacles, succeeds at times in putting Christian communities themselves to the test. When the sense of God is lost, there

is also a tendency to lose the sense of man, of his dignity and his life. In turn, the systematic violation of the moral law, especially in the serious matter of respect for human life and its dignity, produces a kind of progressive darkening of the capacity to discern God's living and saving presence."

When no longer able to remain in God's presence with sincerity, man becomes an enemy of his own brothers and himself, he loses all hope and is reduced to considering himself as one of the many living beings, an animal slightly more complex than the others! "Thus, in relation to life at birth or at death, man is no longer capable of posing the question of the truest meaning of his own existence, nor can he assimilate with genuine freedom these crucial moments of his own history. He is concerned only with 'doing' and using all kinds of technology, he **busies himself with programming**, controlling and dominating birth and death, which instead of being primary experiences demanding to be 'lived,' become **things to be merely 'possessed'** or 'rejected.' "

How similar is this Encyclical with the message of Medj! In fact, it is the proposal of a doctrine that the Church has been teaching for centuries. The real battle for life, then, is played out in the depths of man's conscience: "It is at the heart of the moral conscience that the eclipse of the sense of God and of man, with all its various and deadly consequences for life, is taking place. It is a question, above all, of the individual conscience, as it stands before God in its singleness and uniqueness." This helps us understand the urgency for penance and purification which the Queen of Peace is asking us to take upon ourselves. **The most important thing is to work on the purification of one's heart and conscience.**

The Pope continues: "It is also a question of the 'moral conscience' of society... The moral conscience, both individual and social, is today subjected, also as a result of the penetrating influence of the media, to an extremely serious and mortal danger: that of **confusion between good and evil**, precisely in relation to the fundamental right to life. A large part of contemporary society looks sadly like that humanity which Paul describes in his Letter to the Romans: *It is composed of men who by their wickedness suppress the truth (1:18); having denied God and believing that they can build the earthly city without him, they became futile in their thinking so that their senseless minds were darkened (1:21); claiming to be wise, they became fools (1:22), carrying out works deserving of death, and they not only do them but approve those who practise them (1:32).* When conscience, this bright lamp of the soul (cf. Mt 6:22-23), calls evil good and good evil (Is 5:20) it is already on the path to the most alarming corruption and the darkest moral blindness.

2. Christ is life's victory - The blood of Christ, while it reveals the grandeur of the Father's love, shows how precious man is in God's eyes and how priceless is the value of his life. "How precious must man be in the eyes of the Creator, if he gained so great a Redeemer!" How can we, though, react and respond to the dominating culture of death? The Pope tells us: "It is from the blood of Christ that all draw the strength to commit themselves to promoting life. This blood is the most powerful source of hope, indeed it is the foundation of the absolute certitude that in

God's plan life will be victorious. *And death shall be no more (Rev 21:4).*"

The Encyclical continues with the presentation of the great wealth which is contained in the Gospel of life (29-51). That which Christ revealed and realized is the greatest value and meaning of man's life. This message has its core in the divine commandment *Thou shalt not kill*, on which the Pope reflects (52-77). From Christ's teachings come also man's responsibilities as Christian people who are "people of life and for life because God has given us the Gospel of life, and we were ransomed by the Author of life," given us for the construction of the culture of life and the destruction of evil (78-101).

3. Mary, mother of life - The conclusion, is dedicated to Mary who fought the supreme battle for life against Satan, the author of death and assassin right from the start. It is history repeating itself: *the dragon wants to devour the baby upon its birth (Rev 12:4).* But the fight is marked by God's victory: "The angel's Annunciation to Mary is framed by these reassuring words: Do not be afraid Mary, and: with God nothing will be impossible (Lk 1:30, 37). The whole of the Virgin Mother's life is in fact pervaded by the certainty that God is near to her and that he accompanies her with his providential care. The same is true of the Church, which finds a *place prepared by God (Rev 12:6)* in the desert, the place of trial but also of the manifestation of God's love for his people (cf. Hos 2:16).

Mary is living word of comfort for the Church in her struggle against death. Showing us the Son, the Church assures us that in him the forces of death have already been defeated: *Death with life contended: combat strangely ended! Life's own Champion, slain, yet lives to reign.'*

The Lamb who was slain is alive, bearing the marks of his Passion in the splendour of the Resurrection. He alone is master of all the events of history: *he opens its seals (cf. Rev 5:1-10)* and proclaims, in time and beyond, the power of life over death. In the 'new Jerusalem,' that new world towards which human history is travelling, *death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain, for the former things have passed away (Rev 21:4).* As we, the pilgrim people, the people of life and for life, make our way in confidence towards a *new heaven and a new earth (Rev 21:1),* we look to her who is for us a sign of sure hope and solace."

He who lets himself be led by the Immaculate Heart of Mary and is instructed at Her school knows how to read and discern the meaning of the events of the present time; and also the Pope seems to have been inspired by her in this luminous document.

As we had expected, many from the lay world criticized the Pope's Letter. Rarely, though, were the criticisms serious or backed up by facts. Neither can we expect things to change, for the world of the mass media where atheism and libertinage abound will always try to suffocate the voice of the truth.

What grieves us is that this criticism will sow much confusion in people's souls! For this reason it is important, vital, that we **pray much, obey the Pope in all and accept Mary's messages**, who has now expressed her sorrow with tears of blood; sign of intolerable sorrow for the evil in the world.

All this is as necessary for our souls as is oxygen for our blood if we wish to be saved from the grave confusion and disorientation which Satan is sowing all over. *edit. team*

One sheep-fold one shepherd

Revolutionary letter: one Church which breathes with two lungs

It is known that the **Pope** looks to the complete reconciliation with the Orthodox Church as his last and greatest task as Pontiff. Now, in the Apostolic Letter *Oriente Lumen* the Pope states with frankness and courage that: "The *one Church* is not the western Church, but the Church united, East and West!"

In the first part of the letter he stresses the need to know the East, in particular its monasticism (to which he dedicates a large part of the letter). John Paul says: "Monasticism shows in a special way that life is suspended between two poles: the Word of God and the Eucharist.. making men more Christ-like... Sometimes one tradition has come nearer to a full appreciation of some aspects of a mystery of revelation than the other, or has expressed them better," which is why we need to "listen together to the cry of those who want to hear God's entire Word. The words of the West need the words of the East so that God's Word may ever more clearly reveal its unfathomable riches. The holy nostalgia for the centuries lived in the full communion of faith and charity urges us and reproaches us for our sins and our mutual misunderstandings."

The Holy Father, disappointing all those concerned for the catholic honour, declares that: "The sin of our separation is very serious; amends must be made for it and earnestly to beseech Christ's forgiveness. We have deprived the world of a joint witness that could perhaps have avoided so many tragedies and even changed the course of history. How can we now scandalize anew the peoples who are seeking the God of Love with our wounds and conflicts?"

With vigour and passion John Paul II says how he is convinced that: "there can be no second thoughts about pursuing the path of unity, which is irreversible as the Lord's appeal for unity is irreversible. The East and West are asked not to empty the Cross of Christ of its power. This is the cry of the end of the 20th century. It is the cry of Rome, of Moscow, of Constantinople. It is the cry of all Christendom... of the new evangelization."

At the end he invokes the Holy Spirit for true conversion and he prays to the Lord to: "inspire first in myself and in the Bishops of the Catholic Church concrete actions that lead to communion... such as meeting one another, getting to know one another and working together..."

* **Celebrating 450 years of Council of Trent** - the Pope asked the Church of the Reformation to walk together towards unity. "The dogmatic statements of the Council of Trent naturally retain all their value. However, a calm reflection on revealed truth, in obedience to the Spirit of God, and with an attitude of listening to one another, will bring us closer together, turning misunderstandings of the past into opportunities for growth in faith and love."

* **Pope asks Czechs to forgive**

To the crowd which gathered in Prague to greet him on May 20 he said: "I am filled with joy." The day after he was in Olomouc for a canonization ceremony. On this occasion, before a crowd of twenty one thousand, he said: "Today I, the Pope of the Church of

Rome, in the name of all Catholics, ask forgiveness for the wrongs inflicted on non-Catholics during the turbulent history of these peoples, at the same time I pledge the Catholic Church's forgiveness for whatever harm her sons and daughters suffered." He was referring to the war of religion that raged for more than 200 years. "This canonization" - of Jan Sarkander, whom the Protestants tortured till death - "must in no way re-open painful wounds... May this day mark a new beginning in the common effort to follow Christ, his Gospel, his law of love, his supreme desire for the unity of those who believe in him."

400 years of Ukrainian Catholic Church - Next year the Greek-Catholic Church of Ukraine will celebrate the 400 years of the Synod of Brest (1596) during which ecclesial communion was re-established between the Churches of Kiev and Rome; and the Ruthenian Church shall commemorate the 350th anniversary of their union with the see of Peter.

"The gift of the unity achieved must not be the occasion for a break and still less for new opposition, but a time of reconciliation within the Catholic Church and with the other Churches, a time for forgiveness and repentance, for gratitude for the fidelity preserved in spite of persecution," the Pope wrote to the Archbishop of Kiev, Card. Lubachivsky and to Bishop Semedi of Uzhorod in two separate letters which complete the apostolic letter *Oriente Lumen*.

Relations with the Orthodox Church is still not easy, due to disagreement over Church property given to the Orthodox by Stalin and to accusations of proselytizing made against the Catholic Church. The Pope fervently invites the pastors of the Ukrainian Church: "May this celebration give your Church a new impetus in its specific vocation as a witness and artisan of the unity of all Christians among the Slav peoples."

Starting off again from Mary's "Miraculous fount" - Celebrations will be opened on 20th May 1995 by Card. Lubachivsky with a pilgrimage to the Shrine of **Zarvanitzya**, the first apparitions of which go back to the XIII century.

While under Communist dominion this Shrine was destroyed, the Chapel of Graces was blown up and the church turned into a store house. The faithful, though, did not forget this holy place with a miraculous fount and during the Marian months Mass was secretly celebrated in the woods surrounding the Shrine, while an "iron curtain" of secret police and ferocious dogs impeded people from going to the fount. Zarvanitzya, however, remained the spiritual centre of the faithful and in 1988, when celebrations were held to commemorate the 1,000 years of Christianity in Russia, crowds of faithful made pilgrimages to the Shrine. This was the first visible demonstration that the Church had survived the 40 years of persecution. Now the Shrine has been renovated and the Chapel of the Graces rebuilt through aid received from "Help to the Church in Need."

* **Fr. Werenfried** has begun work again in Königstein four months after his heart attack. In the *Echo of Love* (April 1995) he writes: "I think God called me back from death because my work for the reconciliation of the Orthodox and Catholic Churches has not yet been completed. I wish to continue living for this sole purpose..."

The mystery of Loreto:

house of Nazareth brought here seven centuries ago

Three walls, a roof and a grotto in the place of the fourth wall: this was the Virgin's house in Nazareth where the Annunciation took place 2000 years ago. Those walls witnessed Mary's yes which made the Word of God descend into her womb. The grotto is treasured inside a great basilica in Nazareth. The modest room in stonework which was built in front of the grotto has been treasured instead for centuries inside the Shrine of Loreto, [near Ancona, central Italy on Adriatic coast]. An ancient tradition said those walls had been transported to the laurel wood (hence the name Loreto) by the angels in 1294 after having remained for a while in Trsat near Rijeka. The opposers, however, were quick to affirm that the house had been built on the spot during the Middle Ages, calling the belief that it had been carried by the angels a simple legend.

The archeological discoveries by Mr. Nanni Morelli, architect and president of the Engineers' Federation of Marche (Marche is the region of Italy where Loreto is), who dedicated his life to the study of that precious house, plus the decades of impassioned work by Fr. Guiseppe Santarelli have thrown new light on age-old problems. The most significant of these discoveries are:

1. By comparing the house in Loreto with buildings of the Middle Ages in the area, and also with the site of the grotto in Nazareth, one comes to the conclusion that buildings in Marche were all brick since there were no quarries in that region, while the houses in Nazareth were nearly all built with stones.

2. The Holy House is located on an ancient road; it should have been destroyed, yet it had been preserved.

3. The Holy House had been safeguarded from sophisticated building operations which could have damaged it by a protective wall. If it had not been such an important structure - such as a country church - it would have been destroyed.

4. The Holy House has no foundations, because there was no need for them since it had been built directly onto rock.

5. The only large original door in the centre of the long western wall and the small window on the eastern wall make no sense for our churches; however it does demonstrate that in Nazareth the house was built so as to provide protection from the hot midday sun.

6. The finish of the stones in the House of Loreto is had from a technique belonging to the galilean culture and was totally unknown to crusaders and Italians. Morelli says: "If the House was a building done on Italian grounds, it could represent nothing but irrationality. On the other hand, the abundance of galilean elements is such that leaves no doubt as to its origin."

But how and when did the House arrive in Italy? The Palestinian stones of the house were brought from Nazareth together with the other goods that made up the wedding dowry of Margherita Angeli, bride of Filippod' Angiò, **by the Angeli family.** This is confirmed by sheet no. 181 of the notarial deed (Chartularium Culsanense) listing all the articles in the dowry of Margherita, daughter of Niceforo, despot of Epirus. This marriage was celebrated

in October 1294; according to tradition, the Holy House arrived in Loreto on the 10th December 1294; and this was how over the centuries it was said that the house had been brought "by the angels," instead of "by the Angelifamily" (angeli in Italian means angels). Two coins from the same period, plus fabric crosses belonging to the crusaders were found in the underground of the house to confirm this date. Some sources confirm that up to 1289 the house (the "cell") was still present in Nazareth in front of the grotto, whereas from 1291 - when the voyage by sea began - these sources speak only of the grotto.

The translation of the house by the Angeli family began precisely when the crusaders lost control of the Holy Land, and thus the house - which had been venerated in Nazareth since the early centuries - risked being destroyed. In the Vatican archives, under the heading *Lauretum* (*Indice Garampi 644*) one reads of the existence of documents regarding the translation of the house, but these documents can no longer be found. The Prefect wrote on 10 January 1983: "could they have been removed by overzealous supporters of the miraculous translation?" A significant xylograph, dating back to the XV century, illustrates the translation on two planes. In the centre is the house being carried by angels, to the side is a ship at sea loaded with stones being escorted by the Virgin.

Yet another significant finding: fragments of ostrich eggs beneath the house. It was a custom in the Holy Land to place these eggs in churches: at the time they represented the Word of God fecundated directly in the Virgin's womb by the Holy Spirit.

In union with the thousands of pilgrims, great and small, of saints and sinners, on this occasion of the 700th anniversary, we also adore the Word within those same walls where Mary adored He who became flesh in Her womb and where still today She, as Mother, offers Him to the world.

*The Holy Father has granted plenary indulgence at the usual conditions (confession, holy communion, Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be for his intentions and the Creed) to whomever shall visit the Holy House of Loreto during the 700th anniversary (9 December '94 - 10 December '95) * **

Love and charity needed to solve tense situation - Regrettable episode in Mostar. A group of several thousand faithful asked the Bishop, Msgr. Peric, to meet them and give explanations as to why the Franciscan monks had been substituted by diocesan priests in four parishes. The bishop went, but on seeing the angry crowd did not alight from his car, but asked permission of the Franciscan abbot to enter his convent; and there he remained for eight hours until the group dispersed.

The episode, which was reported also by the *Osservatore Romano*, has been strongly disapproved of by Cardinal Kuharic, and by all those who care not about "winning" but about keeping the peace and harmony by subjecting self to one's legitimate superiors and authorities.

Msgr. Franic has said more than once that a certain hostility towards Medjugorje would have been minimized had the Franciscan monks promptly renounced the seven parishes when they were asked to over 10 years ago by Msgr. Zanic, who was Bishop at the time.

Festive Retreat for "totally surrendered" souls

Three hundred members of the Italian fraternities, together with various priests, participated in a three-day retreat in Medjugorje: the place where their offering for the Church and the world was born. A further 150 members from the Croatian fraternities joined them. It was a union of hearts in the celebration of Mary's Immaculate Heart on the anniversary of Fatima (13 May). The retreat was led by **Fr. Tomislav** who was assisted by 20 members from his community. They poured out to the guests the love, joy and peace of Mary who abides in the hearts of those who "totally surrender" their lives to Her.

The venue was the large green tent. The programme included silent meditation, hymns of praise and moments of instruction. The Eucharist was the strong point around which everything rotated. The prayer was particularly intensive on Podbrdo (meditated Rosary) and Krizevac (Way of the Cross). While still on Krizevac it poured rain, as if to represent the grace descending upon them. During the conclusive Mass Fr. Tomislav spoke of the spirit which animates those who make the "total offering" of themselves for the sake of their fellow men. The following is an extract.

Real newness is God's love It creates new sky and new earth

"At the end of this meeting what can we say? *Sing to the Lord a new song*. This in fact is the refrain of today's liturgy in which we pass from the new song to the *new earth and the new heaven* of Revelation, to the new commandment in the Gospel. But why new if it was already written in the Old Testament? Precisely because love alone is new, and from it everything is born new again. When a person is open to God's love his soul develops to the point of knowing that even if his faith can move mountains and he follows all the precepts, without God's love he has done nothing.

For us today the newness consists in the way we relate ourselves to God's love, in examining ourselves with this in mind. We usually only confront ourselves with the precepts and the many things to do. God's love starves for souls. How many confront themselves with or relate themselves to His love, asking themselves if they have loved, if there is newness in them, if God's love in us has broadened? How many? Yet this is essential.

Let us not forget that the pharisees followed all the precepts, fasted twice weekly - just as Our Lady asks us to do - and prayed five times a day, yet Jesus told them: "I see that God's love is not in you." The newness is being open to the essential, that is, that every day you advance in your faith walk to be open to this newness. It is easy to superficially follow the precepts, but like this nothing is moved in us, it gives nothing new to us or to the world. Satan fears this newness because he is the prince of death and darkness. Death is contradictory to newness. God's newness does not consist in neurotically racing around trying to do something on a personal level, neither is it the multiplication of communities or forms. It is a state of life;

A dove over the Pope's head during a recent Sunday Angelus in St Peter's Square

Pope's 75 Marian years - It is as though his ministry is still at its beginning - it is said - given that his action radiates so far out and ahead into the third millennium to which he is guiding the Church. May God grant him to reach that threshold. For this let us all pray that *the Lord keep him, give him full life, make him happy on the earth and not abandon him into the hands of the enemy* as it is expressed in the "prayer for the Pope."

For his birthday on 18th May crowds of people filled St Peter's square, and he invited all to give thanks to God for his parents, for his baptism in the parish of Wadowice, for his Christian, priestly and episcopal vocation: *"conscious of my human weaknesses, but with immense trust in the greatness of the Divine Mercy, I renew before Christ the offer of my readiness to serve the Church as long as he wants, in total abandonment to his holy will. I leave to him the decision as to how and when he will relieve me of this service to the Church which I entrust to Mary, today as in the future: Totus tuus ego sum!"*

Bishop Hnilica made a fervent appeal to all Marian groups to remain close to the Pope in the recognition that none other has confirmed as he has their Marian vocation. He asks that we pray so Mary's mission in these times may conclude with Christ's triumph, and John Paul II will go down in history as the Pope of *Mary, Co-Redemptrix, Mediatrix of All Graces and Advocate*.

Survived Hiroshima thanks to Rosary!

- When in 1945 the atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima, a small community of 8 Jesuit fathers only eight blocks from the epicentre remained unharmed (their persons and their buildings) while everyone else in a radius of 1.5 km from the centre was killed.

Fr. Schiffer told the Eucharistic Congress of Philadelphia in 1976 when all 8 members were alive and well, that 200 scientists had carried out investigations for several years in search of a scientific explanation. He told them that there was only one thing that made their house different to the others: they recited the Rosary together every day. (*Divine Love*, 3.04.83)

it is yeast that penetrates all existing forms.

Revelation speaks of a new heaven and a new earth. It says all is ended, but I would say that it is the beginning of the infinite. When you enter into God, it is the beginning of the infinity of love. Prophecies that close off God's creativity into certain schemes, or provisions that limit His love are poor indeed.

So, when we are open to this newness is in us we are open to God's creativity; and God creates, not only in us, but through us. The world ends with the new creation in us, where everything is clean, orderly and illumined, and where there is no time, nor solar light because God and the Lamb are the light and the time (cf. Rev 21:22). So it is important to open ourselves up to God's love every day. It is from this love that the new creation begins. As Mary has said, you can carry out your mission from wherever you are, for the sake of all mankind. What a great mission!

There are many wrong forms in our pastoral activities and prayer. You see, we always end up sliding into human activism. The real activity begins when we are immersed in God's love. You are waiting for Jesus' coming; the Church announces it every day in the Holy Mass. You are waiting for the new heaven and the new earth, but I tell you: do not wait for them, [instead] immerse yourselves in this reality which exists in you and you will then reveal the new heaven and the new earth, thereby allowing God to create in you and through you. Do not look at prophecies that lead to the clouds. All prophecies and messages must develop within you, they must lead to purification of the cross and the Eucharist and then blossom in the power of the Holy Spirit, as with the Apostles. Do not be conceived, or be led into the clouds of interpretation. Everything is already within you, everything is already close at hand. What we must do is open ourselves to the sun that warms.

Depart today with this openness of heart to God's love. This is the only activity expected of you. All the rest is created by God, done by God. Here are the new heaven and the new earth and the new precept: *Love one another as I have love you...*

Laying of first brick - A deserving conclusion to what the Kraljica Mira Community and fraternities have done so far: the laying of the first brick of a large convent on the left side of Podbrdo next to a wood amid peaceful silence. It will include rooms for meetings, for which a type of natural amphitheatre has been planned. There will be a chapel and a convent in the shape of a Tau.

"The foundation of the house is Jesus," Fr. Tomislav said as he entrusted it to Mary and consecrated it to the Holy Trinity, "so that people will easily find their way to God." He added: "In the foundation we have placed our offering, the living Church, both present and glorious, together with various relics, such as a piece of Mary's veil from Epheso, a relic of the Holy Land, of St Michael's grotto, of Sts Francis and Clare, of St Thomas, St Anthony of Padua, St Benedict and Padre Pio, together with the prayer that God may never let anything dirty, heretic or satanic enter this place, but only divine love. Let us remain open to one another in love and offering. God will complete his work." * *

* **Poetry**, reflection of God's creativity and His love for man: "Collected Poems" by Rosemary Wilkinson, ISBN 0-9642261-3-8

Medjugorje extreme offering of mercy

"God is waiting to show you favour" (Is 30:18)

Melting of hearts - In the beginning there were the signs, the visionaries and the sensational; today things have changed, but in Medj. there is an outpouring of grace upon all. All one has to do is go there, hand over all he has (the importance of confession) and be caught up in the flow of grace. There is no need to do anything particular besides participating in the prayer, in the Eucharist and the visits to the holy mountains, to listen and let oneself be penetrated by the grace. The power of prayer is immense there; we may not see it, but it moves you like in no other place. Is there any other place where the youth find it so easy to encounter God and His renewing grace?

The grace of Medjugorje is above all the **melting of hardened hearts**. Here **fall the barriers we build around us** to defend us from God. This hardness (a state which we should fear the most) can easily be represented by the sharp, cutting stones one finds there. They seem to indicate the rebellion in men's hearts, the barrier in us that closes us off from God to the point of not being able to recognize sin, of recognizing the gift of God-Love. When you let yourself be taken by this grace you see the stones melting: something humanly impossible. If this does not happen, you may feel momentarily moved, but then you stay the same as before. The grace in Medj. is part of God's plan for mankind and through the power He gave to Mary for these times hearts are melted so they may then accept Jesus, His grace and His merciful Love, thereby finding true brotherhood.

Offering of God's mercy for world in ruin is discovered - The grace of Medjugorje, however, is offered for all mankind, it is a call to all men, starting from these peoples who are living amid unheard-of hatred and destruction. God does not abandon man, even if in seemingly desperate situations things appear otherwise. In today's world we witness the closure of people's hearts to God, the refusal of the God of life - in fact, humanity has never been so fratricidal, it has never refused to such a degree being the image of God. Medj., then, is the sign of the superabundance of grace which God, out of His mercy, offers through Mary to this self-destructive humanity. *Where sin increased grace overflowed all the more* (Rm 5:20). It represents a great hope, the only one at the moment, and that is why it is continuing for so long: to give time and a possibility to this humanity to mend its ways.

Peace and joy in he who discovers gift of God: the new Church - Human means cannot even scratch the surface of the evil in the world, nor can suggestions on a pastoral level do much. As Mary teaches us, there is need of prayer, of prayerful concentration, humbleness and inner awareness of God so as to recognize His gift and live it in the joy and peace which do not belong to this world. This is what is found in Medj.; for example in the many youth that have accepted the Queen of Peace after a life of dissipation and who now live a life of grace: this is incredible if we think of the general tolerance of sin in today's world.

One can follow the way shown by the Queen of Peace without going to Medjugorje.

It is this: forget about discussing programmes, about working with human means; instead, entrust yourself solely to the merciful love of God, to His grace, in silence and surrender; in a return to pure Gospel (the new evangelization), in presenting the good news that Jesus is the only Teacher, the only author of salvation.

Placing self at service of Mercy - Consecrated people live out their consecration; they are the new religious who will make up the *new Church*: the poor, the humble, the unpretentious, with a total aperture to their fellow men. They may not be without failings, but they do let themselves be moved by the Grace to understand that the heart of the Gospel is the Heart of Mary, of Jesus; in one word it is love. They put themselves at the service of the Lord's mercy to bring hearts to this love. It is a radical, profound conversion which takes one to loving God, to knowing Jesus-Love, and not only to increasing one's outer religious practice. The war can be won with love; no other weapon is needed. Love, love, love, beginning from the family, from the Church. The Pope says that the web of the ecclesial community needs renewing before the web of the Christian society can be renewed. Renewing these webs means building them around love, not only on laws. *From this they will see that you are my disciples...* it is from here that society can be renewed. * *

Terror for Catholics in Bosnia

The treaty is over (it gave the contending parties time to replenish their supplies) and the fighting continues. The Croats have gained back some of their territory in Slavonia and they certainly aim at freeing both parts of Krajne occupied by the Serbs. Out of retaliation the Bosnian Serbs are more furious than ever in their attack against the Catholics of the Banja Luka area where Bishop Komarica has been imprisoned in his home and where religious have been tortured and driven out. A further 3 churches and other convents (making a total of 40) have been destroyed. The bodies of Fr. Filip and Sr. Cecilia were found under the ruins.

The Bishop weeps in his cathedral where the people come to ask for help, not wanting to return home, saying: "Everyone has abandoned us!" Also the Muslim mosques have been destroyed. Terror reigns once again in Sarajevo and people are being killed in the bombings and by snipers, and no aid is reaching them. The UN air force has replied with attacks; what will the future hold?

To aid deliverers: Do not abandon us! Archbishop of Sarajevo, Puljic, appeals to the Catholic organizations: "The world's indifference is slowly killing us. We have cried out in vain. We have lost our faith in the UN and in Europe. Our only hope are those who work in silence and humility and bring us aid."

It is wonderful how **friends of Medjugorje** continue in their efforts to assist our brothers in need. Let us not tire of organizing aid delivery to them. They count on us. Contact the centre nearest you to see how you can help.

Sponsorship of war orphans - Fr. Jozo intends building an orphanage in Siroki Brijeg for these children. Donations can be forwarded to: Matteo Rossi, Via delle Grazie 9, I-54100 Massa, Italy (ph. 0585-43653) To date 3,200 people have sponsored a child.

News from the blessed land

* **Pope desires going to Medjugorje** - On 6th April the Croatian President, Tudjman, together with the Vice President, Radic, and Cardinal Kuharic from Zagreb, went to the Pope to invite him to Split for the 1700th anniversary of the foundation of that diocese to be held in September. During the conversation that followed the official discourse, the Pope expressed the desire of going not only to Split but also to Maria Bistrica (national Shrine) and to Medjugorje.

The news was published by *Slobodan Dalmacija* of Split (8 April) and was confirmed by Bishop Franic. Sr. Emmanuel personally asked Mons. Franic about the news and he encouraged her to publish it. The news brought joy to the parish, however, Fr. Slavko said: "If the Virgin comes to Medjugorje in person, why should the Pope not come? The conversion of hearts will not be provoked by official acknowledgement, though, but only by prayer and fasting." Let us pray that obstacles should not exceed desires and that the Pope may realize that which God wishes.

* **Pope's witty reply** - In February some Croatian bishops met with the Holy Father in the Vatican. During the conversation Mons. Zanic, bishop emeritus of Mostar, asked when he would visit Sarajevo. The Pope looked him in the eye and said: "Oh, I thought you were going to ask me when I'd come to Medjugorje." We leave it up to the reader to interpret this as he would, but it is clear that the problem of Medjugorje is not absent from his heart.

* **Vicka at General Audience** - On 22nd March Vicka accompanied 350 pilgrims (wounded and war invalids) to Rome. At the audience Vicka translated for the pilgrims she accompanied and the Pope recognized her: "Aren't you Vicka?" he asked. She offered him some rosary beads, saying: "Holy Father, I'm sure you have many, however these are special ones because they were blessed by Our Lady during an apparition." The Pope replied: "Pray to Our Lady for me and I shall pray for you," then he blessed her.

* We were happy to have **Card. Wamala** from Uganda pay us a visit and **Bishop Lagrange** from France. The latter said how he was glad that the faithful from his city had sent him here on pilgrimage. "At times it is the people who follow the Bishop, and other times the Bishop who follows the people," the Holy Father once said to Bishop Flores from Texas (Echo 68).

* **Four youths re-born at Easter** - It was a moving Easter in Medj. In the crowded church four young men (ex-drug addicts) from Sr. Elvira's "Upper Room Community" received Baptism. These young men know only too well the meaning of resurrection: "We were dead, now we have found life." [On Easter Monday the chapel of this Community was blessed by Fr. Slavko, thus allowing the Eucharist to be present in it.]

* **Vicka substitutes Ivan for night prayer on Podbrdo** - At the end of April **Marija** left for Mexico where she remained for 10 days. **Ivan**, who had to go to America, entrusted his group to Vicka, allowing the pilgrims to participate in the prayer on Tuesday and Friday nights. There were thousands of pilgrims over the Easter period - similar to the 1980's - which must have

pleased the Virgin, who appeared for 10-15 minutes. Our Mother said how she has more messages for us, except that we are still far from her and that our hearts are closed. *Pray more and offer sacrifices*, she said. On the evening of the 28th, Vicka said how Our Lady prayed lengthily over those present in a foreign language, "probably her mother tongue."

* During **Prof. Joyeux's** visit in the first week of May he told pilgrims about the tests done on the visionaries in 1984 and 1985 and how he intends doing further tests on them with even more sophisticated equipment in France. He said: "In many cases the tests have revealed instances of mystification, but in others (such as Medjugorje) they revealed that the people in question were living an authentic experience."

* **Fr. Jozo** does not tire of telling the words of truth to the many pilgrims he meets. "With the Rosary I am covered by the Virgin's mantle. He who prays places under this mantle all those he loves, the entire world, all those in need. He who prays is more active than any other person because by doing so he is protecting the whole world."

(From the diary of Sr. Emmanuel)

* **Number of pilgrims on increase** - The feast of the Annunciation, Easter, and the month of May have seen thousands of pilgrims in Medj., from Croatia, Hungary, Poland and Slovenia, France, north America, Italy, Germany and Austria, Belgium and Holland. The work on the church is proceeding well.

* **Fr. Jozo's missionary travels** - He met with pilgrims and friends of Medjugorje in various **cities of Germany** including Munich and Cologne, with many faithful attending. Then from 18-27 April he was in Italy where he visited Padua (3,500 attended), Bologna, Ferrara and Reggio Emilia. In **Ferrara** he was received by the **Bishop** who invited the priests of his diocese to attend the prayer meeting in the cathedral. The Bishop himself was unable to attend due to bad health.

The President of Italian Caritas was at the meeting in **Terni** (thousands participated). He and Fr. Jozo spoke of building a school in Sarajevo. In **Lugano** in Switzerland the prayer meeting was attended by thousands of faithful who were moved by a recorded message of their recently-deceased bishop. All the priests took part in the Rosary and the Holy Mass.

Fr. Jozo visited 13 towns in the **USA** from 30 April-26 May. From 8-10 June he will hold a three-day prayer meeting in St Anthony's Basilican Padua. He will then go to Pordenone and Turin.

* **Fr. Leonard Orec** was in Fulda, Germany from 7-9 April for a three-day retreat organized by the prayer groups. 115 people attended. **Fr. Ivan Landeka**, parish priest of Medjugorje, visited Innsbruck and other cities during his five-day tour of Austria and met with many faithful to pray together and talk to them of the messages of peace.

* **Sr. Elvira invited by the Croatian bishops** - Sr. Elvira Petrozzi, foundress of the *Comunità Cenacolo* (Upper Room Community), was invited by the Croatian Episcopal Conference on 16th March to speak about the problem of drug addiction. She spoke for one and a half hours about the persuasive witness of life in the community and among other things said: "The salvation

of young drug addicts is in your hands. You must dedicate yourselves to them totally, but it won't be you who will succeed, but Christ through you. You must let yourselves be guided by the Holy Spirit and do all you can to save the youth, leaving aside any personal interests or ambitions and without expecting gratitude from anyone, otherwise you will have no result." It must be said that this community is the one with the highest percentage of success. In fact, 85% of the youth leave the community healed, thanks to the life-style practised there.

* **Youth Festival** - Also this year it will be held from 31 July to 6 August. The theme: "The youth with Our Lady for life and peace." All invited. Bring Bible. For song festival on afternoon of 5 August (for Our Lady's birthday) prepare song for groups in own language. Those able to play instrument advise Agostino (fax. 387-88-642339). Priests are invited to make themselves available to the youth for confession/talk. Simultaneous translation: any radio with head-phones set on 88-108 MHz.

* **American physicist, Jim Doyle**, declared during his latest visit to Croatia: "I have been to Medjugorje 6 times, I fell in love with Our Lady and consequently with the Croatian people. This is why I feel obliged to do something for them. I am here now to donate to Croatia my latest invention called the **technical ear** which will enable the deaf-mute to hear." Fr. Jozo accompanied him to the ceremony where he presented the invention to scientists and doctors in Zagreb. The Vice President of the Academy of Arts and Sciences said: "Our thanks goes to you and to Fr. Jozo because all this would not have been possible without Medjugorje."

* **Seminar of prayer and information** in Baska Voda (2-6 April) was attended by 70 people. They were prayer group leaders and people in charge of peace centres from 15 different countries. Four of the visionaries and the priests from Medj. were also present. It concluded with a joint declaration in which it was said that the apparitions of Medjugorje, with their fruitful outcome, are God's gift to the Church for these times... an indication for the new ways of evangelization... a help to understanding the revelation and a concrete answer to the Holy Father's recent documents. An invitation was made to all prayer groups:

1. See *Our Lady's messages as an invitation and an indication, that lead only to our Saviour Christ Jesus.*

2. *Have in one's heart the good of the Church of which Mary is Mother, archetype and example.*

3. *Do all that is possible so that through the groups the local Churches may experience the fruits of conversion and peace.*

4. *Be open to the signs of our present civilization to be a sign of hope and security for all men who live in these times of anxiety and insecurity.*

5. *Do all that is possible to overcome divisions with love and comprehension so that all of us together may be able to serve the cause of peace.*

(From the Press Bulletin, Medjugorje)

* **A Special Invitation** - The Medjugorje Network in England suggests **15 September** (the feast of Our Lady of Sorrows) as a **day of prayer and fasting** to seek God's help in bringing peace to former Yugoslavia.

Those tears of blood

The small statue of Our Lady of Medj. in Civitavecchia (Rome) continues to make news. Tears of blood flowed from its eyes on 15th March while the Bishop, Msgr. Grillo was holding it in his hands after Mass. Five people were present. Local authorities called it a prank and confiscated the statue. It was later handed back and an episcopal commission opened investigations.

In the meantime, in response to the tearful appeal, many prayed. In particular, prayer meetings were held in the cathedral. One of these was led by the *House of Mary* fraternity in Rome. Card. Andrea Deskur on this occasion said: *Mary is calling us to understand and become part of those tears of blood, not just to speak about them, discuss them or laugh at them.* The following conversation between a man with an open heart and the Bishop will also help us understand.

Fr. Jozo and Bishop of Civitavecchia

- Fr. Jozo visited Msgr. Grillo to bring him comfort in a moment of suffering. The following is taken from that conversation.

Msgr.: I have suffered terribly... It isn't nice to hear someone call you a liar. I say again what I have already said - I don't care what people say - for I can't deny what happened before my own eyes... I knew from the tests that it was human blood, but if the blood that was shed before my own eyes had been different to the first lot I feared for what might have come of it. However, the tests showed it was the same! Thank you Lord!

The same thing that happened in Lourdes and Fatima is happening here. Here they put Our Lady in jail, they confiscated Her and closed Her up. They came with the excuse of wanting to make more tests which had already been done and I refused, so they took the statue and I was left here all alone.

Fr. Jozo: Do you think we didn't have problems? (*Fr. Jozo explained to the Bishop all about the persecutions he and the visionaries went through first by the authorities then by the Bishop of Mostar. Then he said:*) I think that every move Our Lady makes, Her every "sign" involves great suffering. In these cases it takes much prayer and friendship!

Msgr.: Our Lady of tears of Syracuse would not have been recognized today, because it can't be scientifically proved that a solution of water and salt is actually tears. But blood is blood and perhaps that is why Our Lady's tears are blood, because it leaves no doubt.

Fr. Jozo: If Our Lady is weeping then let us go and console Her, without worrying about finding reasons to say She is not. We must stay with open hearts, nothing else.

Msgr. I was sceptic at first and rather perplexed about it all, but Our Lady gave me a "sign." In that moment, my relatives and the nuns who saw me said I turned as white as a sheet. One can't invent blood; it's either there or it isn't. My sister touched the blood with her finger, but the blood on her finger disappeared immediately. Also with the Gregori family who used a handkerchief to wipe the blood, no stains remained on it.

Fr. Jozo: We need to reflect a lot on the message that these tears leave us. Why does the Church not believe a Bishop? In Kibeho (Rwanda) the Bishop believed but his voice went unheeded, people did not convert, and a catastrophe came ten years later. The same in Medj.; Our Lady had foreseen the tragedy...

A lot of false prophets have come forth to confound the messages and the apparitions...

Msgr.: Yes, in Lourdes, besides the real apparitions, there were another 50 presumed ones. Satan must intervene to create confusion. Also in Italy there are many supposed lachrymations by Our Lady, but while news of the others doesn't last more than a day, here in Civitavecchia the whole world is talking about it, even the television; and it hasn't finished yet...

Fr. Jozo: Soon in Medjugorje we will celebrate the 14th anniversary. The scope of the apparitions is evident: prepare the Church for the third millennium. The Pope has understood this and he follows the events of Medjugorje closely and always talks well about it. Not long ago he even said he'd like to go there.

Msgr.: If you hadn't come to console me I'd be so lonely. These days, with all the talk of ecumenism, one can't mention Our Lady. They say She doesn't need this type of thing.

Fr. Jozo: Our Lady has no need, but we do. People need signs...

Msgr.: You know they did X-rays and tests to examine every inch of the statue. Science responds: it is human blood. At first they said it was female, then male blood.

Fr. Jozo: The blood is an appeal, a loud voice which we must hear and which not everyone can hear. This sign of Civitavecchia has become known the world over. Science says that plaster can't cry and that it is blood. So why wait? Let us kneel before it and pray. The problem is this, that we are not brave enough to take a decisive step.

Msgr.: Do the visionaries of Medjugorje know about this sign? Is this the "sign" which was announced?

Fr. Jozo: The visionaries know but have said nothing; because the "sign" shall be bigger. This too is big: a small, cheap, plaster statue that weeps blood. You did well by not wanting to hand over the statue. It was what I did when they wanted to close up the church and I wouldn't allow it. It's the same story.

Msgr.: I complained with a superior once of being abandoned.

Fr. Jozo: I too was alone and I was accused of wanting it. My duty is to defend what I saw. So, your excellence, when times get hard remember that people are praying for you and that Our Lady is with you and will help you. She chose you as Her bishop; it's important to remember this.

Msgr. Grillo and Fr. Jozo then went to get the statue, they kneeled before it and prayed. (27 April '95 - Matteo and Angela Rossi)

Fr. Amorth says: Is official recognition necessary?

Fr. Amorth was asked what the Church thinks of the lachrymations and if he thinks our prelates are too reserved.

Fr. Amorth: I do not think it necessary for the Church authority to intervene. Card. Ratzinger is right when he says that these facts add nothing to our faith, for it is not based on weeping statues of Our Lady, but on the Word of God. This is the truth. It is also true, however, that miracles exist; Jesus has always done them in the course of Church history, and this is confirmed by the Word of God. Saints are canonized today too because of the miracles they do.

I agree with the stance taken by the early Church when Marian apparitions and miraculous events received no official recognition. The people themselves gave

value to these events through worship. For example, the apparitions in Monte Berico (Vicenza, north Italy) never received official approval, yet people have been going there to pray for centuries. The same thing in Caravaggio (Bergamo, north Italy): many people go there to pray. Neither with Tre Fontane in Rome (apparitions of 1947) did the diocese institute a commission to establish what happened. They never worried about that, but they did see people were going there to pray and so provided priests for them. Many Bishops and Cardinals have been there to celebrate Mass, and so approval comes on its own. I think this is a good system. We are too used to wanting official approval. In my opinion it is not necessary...

Similarly, at the shrine of Divine Love where a man was saved from rabid dogs through Our Lady's intercession, people starting going there to pray and it became one of the better known Marian shrines in Rome. So you see, the sensitivity of God's people is not without importance.

What about the images of Our Lady that weep? Should we be afraid? Our Mother only ever calls us to conversion.

Is it a forewarning of sad events? No, it is a warning for us to avoid them...

Faith of God's people proof of infallibility. We are too rational - Another question: Why do our prelates not think this?

Fr. Amorth: Well, let us not be too general. Msgr. Grillo for instance practically authenticated the tears of blood by wanting to protect the statue and expose it for the people who came to pray (then impeded by local authorities who confiscated it)... I think it right to give importance to the people's initiative because this too is a way of infallibility, the Council reminds us. Naturally, when I say God's people, I mean everyone, including priests and Bishops. This is a way used by the Holy Spirit to talk to us.

It is said that rationalism has entered the higher spheres of the Church. Unfortunately it is so, but we must shake it off and return to the simplicity of the Gospel and the first Christians who prayed like this: *Lord, stretch forth your hand so healings, miracles and wonders are done in the name of Jesus so people may believe* (cf. Acts 4:29-30). That is how they prayed. They were not afraid of miracles or apparitions; now people seemed to be annoyed by them! The people asked for them as confirmation, though, of the Word of God. These days the Church is prudent, perhaps too much so, because she fears that people (who tend towards sensationalism) will look upon such facts out of curiosity and not with a spirit of conversion and prayer. (Rome, 25.3.95)

Openness, not scepticism - "I feel that the popular piety and devotions of the faithful must be taken into consideration. The people are scandalized by wide-spread scepticism, noted also in some theologians. If God sends us his Mother and we turn our backs on Her, it is contempt for God's loving attention towards man. If we close ourselves off from these signs we show insensitivity to a possible revelation by God..."

We must think that Mary desires correcting in the Church something which is unacceptable; the consciences of Christians must be moved.

(Fr. Stefan De Flores, President, Marian Association) *Avvenire*, 28 March 1995) * *

Exorcism of Leo XIII

Can it be recited by individuals? By groups? - Many ask this. It would be easier for me to tell the complete story, but I shall limit myself to giving you its conclusion. [In general, exorcism is the maledictory rite with which the devil is ordered to leave a person in virtue of the power possessed by the Church - ed. note.] In 1985 the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith ratified how exorcisms may be administered only by priests authorized by their Bishops to do so. From this rule it was decided that also Leo XIII's exorcism cannot be used by the faithful, neither in a reduced form taken from that exorcism, nor, of course, in its entire form.

The problem exists for the forms in Italian printed in booklets or leaflets, which often include an ecclesial approval (to be verified!). In reality they are no longer Leo XIII's exorcism, but distant relatives of it. In these cases, to be exact, said prayers can be used because they no longer regard the exorcism of Leo XIII: the rules are interpreted in a strict sense. In my opinion said prayers can be used by individuals or families. I would suggest that they not be recited in prayer groups so as not to appear disobedient to the Church.

Fr. Gabriel Amorth

* **Zagreb to Medjugorje, 113 days in prison** - the book by Ivica Relkovic describes a pilgrimage to Medj. on foot across the lands occupied by the Serbs during which the author was caught and imprisoned in a camp in Vojnic. Ivica set out on foot on 29th Sept. 1991. He crossed territory occupied by the Serbs including Knin, aware that he could have lost his life as a pledge for peace. He soon ended up in prison and was kept 113 days. Death seemed to lurk constantly over his head, but in the 4 months he was there he was not hurt. Moreover, when he refused to curse Card. Kuharic, the Pope and the Catholic Church, he was ensured that none of the prisoners would be treated badly. After 2 months the prisoners were used in an exchange and the camp was closed. Ivica was simply freed and on 25th January 1992 he reached Medjugorje. His testimony of faith, Christian hope and evangelical love in the book will do much good to the souls who read it.

* **Polish Radio Maria in Vatican** - A large family of 10,000 workers and listeners of Radio Maria accompanied by Bishops was greeted by the Pope in St Peter's Square. The Pope exalted "the great and magnificent work that the lay faithful are called to do in union with the pastors, in the spreading of the divine message of salvation and the new evangelization which has been entrusted to the Church as we near the third millennium.

4th UK YOUTH 2000 Int'l Prayer Festival at Beechwood School - Sacred Heart, Tunbridge Wells, Kent from **9-13 August**. Contact Youth 2000, P.O.B. 119, London SW7 5RH (Fax 0170 370 1679) also for info on other Youth 2000 events in UK, Ireland, USA, Australia, Germany, Trinidad, Colombia, Mexico.

The **Medj. Network Handbook** contains information about groups and individuals in England and Wales who are working to spread Our Blessed Mother's messages given in Medj., with a suggestion to encourage every country to produce such a handbook. For information contact "Queen of Peace", 30 Flaxman Road, London SE5 9DH, England.

The visionaries Marija, Mirjana, Jakov and Ivan in the Seminary at Basca Voda

ECHO IN OTHER LANGUAGES

Italian: Eco di Maria, C.P. 149, 46100 Mantova, Italy. **English:** Echo of Mary, Cas.Post. 27, I-31030 Bessica (TV), Italy. **French:** Echo de Marie, 18 Allée Thévenot, F-39100 Dole, France. **German:** Echo Mariens., C.P. 149, 46100 Mantova, Italy. **Spanish:** Roger Watson, c/o Antonucci, Via Verrotti 1, I-47100 Aquila, Italy. **Catalan:** Amics de Medj., c.Carme 11 baixos, E-08700 Igualada-Catalonia, Spain. **Portuguese:** a) Gilberto Correia, rua de Brito 24, 4915 Vila Praia de Ancora, (ph.911181), Portugal; b) Servos da Rainha, Caixa p. 02576, 70279-970 Brasilia DF, Brazil. **Dutch:** Int. Medj. Comitéafd. Nederland-Belgie. Misericordeplein 12C, NL-6211 XK Maastricht, Holland. **Polish:** Czesława Mirkiewicz, ul. Ign. Krasickiego 21a/3, PL 30-515 Krakow-Podgorze, Poland. **Russian:** Dom Marii, Plotnikov 3, 121003 Moscow, Russian Federation - fax 007095-2415057. **Hungarian:** Fraternitas, 1399 Budapest, p.f. 701/85 Hungary - fax 36-2176183. **Romanian:** Ecou din Medj., P.O.B. 41-132, Bucharest, Romania; **Albanese:** Jehonae Medjugorje, L.1 p.10, LAC, Albania. **Greek:** Soeur Despina de la St Croix, 69 Rue Epirou, Agia Paraskave, 15341 Athens, Greece. **Czech:** Medzugorské ozveny, Ilbenstädter, Str.6, D-60385 Frankfurt, Germany. **Distributors:** **USA:** Peter Miller, POB 2720-230, Huntington Beach CA 92647 - ph. 714-374 0530, fax 374 9490. Mrs. Joanna Clark, 17503 Applewood Lane, Rockville, MD 20855. **Canada:** Giuseppe Bozzo, 8324 Nicolas Leblanc, Montreal Que H1E 3W5 - ph. 648-3420. **Spain:** Josè L. Lopez de S. Roman, Ap.246, Palencia, Spain. **Australasia** (all editions): Medjugorje Sentinel, P.O.B. 746, Pennant Hills NSW 2120

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

Forgive us if we remind you to consider the burdensome postal expenses when making a donation. Thank you for all you can do.

By road to Medj. - The road along the Adriatic coast is safe. The bus from Trieste (bus station adjacent to train station) leaves regularly every evening at 6pm and arrives in Medj. at 8am. For reservations ring Italy 040-425001. **By sea to Medj.** - From Ancona Italy to Split. Departures from Ancona: Mondays and Wednesdays 9pm, Fridays 8pm. Arrival in Split 7am. Departure from Split: Sundays 9.30pm, Tuesdays and Thursdays 9pm. For reservations ring Italy 071-202033. **By air** via Zagreb to Split - at Split take bus to Medj.

IN THE FAMILY

Fr. Angelo Pandin returned home to the Lord on 15th March at the age of 66. Fruit of his apostolic soul are the *Mondays of prayer*: true spiritual baths of grace for the hundreds of faithful that participate. They were born 10 years ago out of the need to help the Marian prayer groups, especially those tied to Medj. Another fruit is the radio station *Voice in the Desert* which transmits 24 hours a day; and yet another is the Association of faithful called *Followers of Jesus*. It is made up of about 40 young people on their way to consecration and priesthood, who live in community and help the diocese.

Our Lady seems to have rewarded her faithful servant with apparitions to a young girl from the parish each first Monday of the month. Fr. Laurentin participated in a recent prayer evening and consoled the faithful by telling them that now they have someone in heaven to protect them and who prays for them. So the story continues with the communion of Saints. (Maurice)

Also our friend **Fr. Roberto Cona** from the Combonian fathers of Verona returned to the Father on 23rd April - feast day of Merciful Jesus - at the age of 60 after a lengthy illness. He had worked in Portugal, Brazil and Spain and when he returned to Verona he animated Eucharistic adoration in the central church and though he was sick he worked non-stop to bring hearts to Jesus and Mary. He was enthusiastic about Radio Maria and our Echo. *May you rejoice for ever in her embrace.*

Condolences to our untiring helper **Dr. Pierantonio Gottardi** for the death of his father Emilio, a model father and Christian.

We thank everyone, for the help, the approvals, the generous donations that make it possible for us to send Echo free (despite increased prices of paper and postal services) to the many without means. Thank you to all those readers who drop a line to say hello.

Echo is still in precarious conditions due to recurring difficulties, however, we entrust it to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and Mary: a single heart that all can do; and we entrust it to your prayers. And we bless you with God's blessing, that you may be filled with His Holy Spirit.

Villanova, 26 May 1995