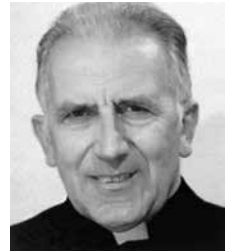




Echo of Medjugorje

March-April 2015 - Edited by: Eco di Maria, Via Cremona, 28 - 46100 Mantova (Italia) - Year 31, no. 2
Poste Italiane s.p.a. - Sped. in A. P. - D.L. 353/2003 (conv. in L. 27/02/2004 n° 46) art. 1, comma 2, DCB Mantova

237



Fr. Angelo Mutti
founder Echo of Medjugorje

Jesus descends to the dead

Message of 25 January 2015:

“Dear Children, also today I call you: live your vocation in prayer! Now, as never before, has Satan desired suffocating man and his soul by his contagious wind of hatred and unrest. Many hearts are without joy because they are without God and without prayer. Hatred and war are growing day by day.

I call you, my Children, to begin anew with enthusiasm along the journey of holiness and love, because this is the reason for my presence among you. Together, let us be love and forgiveness for all those who know and want to love only with a human love and not with that immense love of God to which God calls you. My Children, may hope in a better tomorrow always be in your heart. Thank you for responding to my call.”

Be love and forgiveness!

With the fall of the myths of easy wealth and globalization, the world totters with disorientation; and precisely now, **Satan desires suffocating man and his soul with his contagious wind of hatred and unrest.** The enemy knows only too well how to exploit opportunities to inoculate his venom into the world; and the current political and economic situation is just that: a good opportunity for him, and the results of his work are easily seen, because there are so many hearts which lack joy, and because hatred and war grow day by day.

In this scenario, repeatedly projected by the world's media, Mary offers us a key to understanding the events: She tells us there are **so many hearts without joy because those same hearts are also without God and without prayer; and this is why hatred and war grow day by day!** This is the situation described by Mary. The question is: how much heed do we pay her? Are we citizens of the 21st century humble enough to take what she has said seriously? Despite having seen the Towers of human pride fall, the destructive force of tsunamis, and violence in so many forms - do we still lack this humility?

The old temptation of being masters of our own fate still governs the human heart, making us unable to see how Creation it-



Message to Mirjana,
2 February 2014:

“Dear Children, here I am, in your midst. I look at you, I smile at you and I love you the way only a mother can do. By means of the Holy Spirit that comes through my purity, I see your hearts and I offer them up to my Son. For much time I have been asking you to be my apostles, to pray for those who have not known the love of God. I ask for prayer done with love, prayer capable of works and sacrifices. Do not lose time wondering if you are worthy to be my apostles. The Heavenly Father is the judge of everyone; but you love Him and heed Him! I know that all these things confound you; also my coming in your midst, but accept it with joy and pray to understand that you are worthy to work for heaven. My love is upon you. Pray that my love might win in every heart; that this love that forgives might be given and never cease. Thank you.”

Mirjana says her favourite day is the 2nd of the month, for that is the day in which she prays with Our Lady for the “non-believers”, whom Our Lady calls “those who do not know God’s Love”. Our Lady asks for our help - says Mirjana - and she asks it not only of the visionaries, but also of all those who accept Mary as their mother!

Message, 25 February 2015:

“Dear Children, in this time of grace I call you all: pray more and speak less! In prayer, seek God’s will and live it according to the Commandments to which God calls us. I am with you and I pray with you. Thank you for responding to my call.”

Pray More, Speak Less!

The brevity of this message should not distract from its contents! The words are few, but they are words of **essential, even vital importance.** Perhaps Our Lady is telling us that the time for conversion is getting briefer. ***In this time of grace I call you all: pray more and speak less!***

This is not a call to self-control, but to a conversion of the heart, which Mary has continually asked of us. And that doesn’t mean little adjustments or formal changes. It means living the new life which Jesus brought into the world.

We cannot call ourselves believers if we remain on the margins of this new life, or if we reduce it to something that fits more easily into our pockets, or if we postpone it to a future date. We must make the decision today; now; and Lent is particularly suitable time. The call to pray more and speak less is certainly a call to dedicate more time to God, but also to avoid prayer being reduced to lip service.

Prayer is abandoning oneself to God, knowing you are in His presence; and even if you don’t feel that Presence, even if you don’t feel your heart warmed by that Presence; it is **perseverant prayer accompanied by trust and faith** that will make our prayer fruitful.

In prayer seek God’s will and live it according to God’s commandments to which God calls us, is Mary’s proposal to us today; and it brings to mind the wonderful prayer, the **Our Father**, which our Lord taught us (Mt 6: 7-15). Seeking God’s will and living it according to His commandments is not bowing down to a tyrant, but quite to the contrary, it is the fulfilment of our life as a child of God!

Peace and joy in Jesus and Mary! §

(Comments to messages by Nuccio Quattrocchi)

2 self, violated and betrayed, has perhaps stopped awaiting the revelation of the sons of God (cf. Rm 8:19), and is instead rebelling against us! In this bleak picture, Mary calls us to live our **vocation in prayer**. But which vocation? We presume that of being God's children. We are called to be aware of being God's children rather than just some other animal! And, as God's children, **we are**

called to be people of prayer; to have a vital relationship with God. So rather than ask the Father what our due is (cf. Lk 15: 11-24) only to live far from Him as we squander and waste our lives, let us be sober-minded and **begin anew with enthusiasm the journey of holiness and love**; for this is why Mary came among us; it is the reason why Jesus became man!

We believe in man's salvation and the definitive triumph of God's Kingdom; but why not collaborate with Him starting now? Every delay prolongs and multiplies the suffering in the world. So let us not be tempted to ignore or underestimate our personal responsibility! *Show us mercy, Blessed Mother, and grant us anew the peace and joy of your Son!* §

POPE FRANCIS

Make your hearts firm!

"Flooded with news reports and troubling images of human suffering, we often feel our complete inability to help. What can we do to avoid being caught up in this spiral of distress and powerlessness?"

FIRST, we can pray in communion with the Church on earth and in heaven. Let us not underestimate the power of so many voices united in prayer!

SECOND, we can help by acts of charity, reaching out to both those near and far through the Church's many charitable organisations. Lent is a favourable time for showing this concern for others by small yet concrete signs of our belonging to the one human family.

THIRD, the suffering of others is a call to conversion, since their need reminds me of the uncertainty of my own life and my dependence on God and my brothers and sisters. If we humbly implore God's grace and accept our own limitations, we will trust in the infinite possibilities which God's love holds out to us. We will also be able to resist the diabolical temptation of thinking that by our own efforts we can save the world and ourselves.

As a way of overcoming indifference and our pretensions to self-sufficiency, I would invite everyone to live a formation of the heart (cf. *Deus Caritas Est*, 31). A merciful heart does not mean a weak heart. Anyone who wishes to be merciful must have a strong and steadfast heart, closed to the tempter but open to God. A heart which lets itself be pierced by the Spirit so as to bring love along the roads that lead to our brothers and sisters. And, ultimately, a poor heart, one which realizes its own poverty and gives itself freely for others.

This Lent, brothers and sisters, **I desire praying with you**: "Fac cor nostrum secundum cor tuum": *Make our hearts like yours* (Litany of the Sacred Heart of Jesus). In this way we will receive a heart which is firm and merciful, attentive and generous, a heart which is not closed, indifferent or prey to the globalisation of indifference.

[From the Pope's Lenten message 2015]



The wisdom of accusing self

It is easy to judge others and pass sentences on others - said the Pope - but we can only carry on as Christians if we are **wise** and possess the intellectual honesty to look at ourselves in the mirror first, at our own wrongdoings.

"For example, when I feel envy in my heart and I know that this envy is capable of speaking ill of others and morally assassinating them", this is "the wisdom of judging oneself". If we do not learn this first step in life, we will never, never be able to take other steps on the road of our Christian life, of our spiritual life."

So: **"The first step is to judge ourselves**. Without saying anything out loud. Between you and your conscience. Walking down the street, I pass by a prison and say: "Well, they deserve it" ... "Yet do you know that if it weren't for the grace of God you would be there? **Did you ever think that you are capable of doing the things that they have done, even worse?"** This is what judging yourself means, not hiding from the roots of sin that are in all of us, the many things we are capable of doing, even if we cannot see them."

The Pope stressed also the **virtue of shame** before God, in a kind of dialogue where we recognise the shame of our sin and the greatness of God's mercy: **To You, Lord, our God, mercy and forgiveness. Shame on me and to You mercy and forgiveness.**

"Let us ask for mercy. In the Gospel Jesus is clear: **"Be merciful as your Father is merciful"**. When one learns to accuse oneself first then we are merciful to others: "But, who am I to judge, if I am able to do things that are worse?"

[2 March 2015, Casa Santa Marta]

Don't pretend to be holy!

How can I convert?

Learn to work for the good!

Conversion: The filth of the heart cannot be removed as one removes a stain. We cannot take ourselves to the dry cleaner's and come out clean! The heart can be purified by "doing" - explains the Pope in his daily homily.

Learn to do good! is the answer - which comes from the Scriptures - to the question, "How can I convert?" And how can I do good? That is simple! Seek to do justice, help the oppressed, defend the orphans, plead for the widows!

Forgiveness above all!: If you do this, if you take this path, upon which I call you - says the Lord - even if your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow.

"It's an exaggeration!" the Pontiff noticed. "The Lord exaggerates; but it's the truth", because God, seeing our conversion, "gives us the gift of his forgiveness" and "forgives generously". God does not say: "I'll forgive you up to here, then we'll see the rest...". On the contrary, "the Lord always forgives everything, everything". However, Francis emphasised, "if you want to be forgiven" you have to set out on the "path of doing good".

The trap of appearance: There are those who say the right things, but who do the opposite of what they say. We are all clever enough to find a way which is not right but which makes us seem more righteous. It is the way of hypocrisy - said the Pope - where one pretends to convert, but the heart is false, and so one is a liar! Indeed, "their heart does not belong to the Lord; it belongs to the father of all lies, Satan. And this is the 'pretence' of holiness."

Jesus preferred sinners to these hypocrites, a thousand times over. Why? Sinners told the truth about themselves: "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord" (Lk 5:8), as Peter once said.

Casa Santa Marta, 3 March 2015

www.vatican.va

3. The Prophetic Dimension

The message of Medjugorje contributes to the edification of the Church, and for this we can also find the prophetic dimension which is necessary - according to the Apostle Paul - to complete the wealth of gifts of the Spirit to the Church. "God has placed in the church first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, of helping, of guidance, and of different kinds of tongues (1 Co 12: 28).

The prophecy of the New Testament is developed within the Church; it is a gift for the community, for the good of the community, to be communicated and transmitted with faith. The prophet receives from God a task which involves the transmission of God's message to the people, to draw them back, to correct their errors; but this gift has, above all, a positive finality which is expressed in the Catechism of the Catholic Church: "Through the prophets, God forms his people in the hope of salvation, in the expectation of a new and everlasting Covenant intended for all, to be written on their hearts" (64). Our Lady has mentioned several times that her special aim is to "form her people" and it is a universal call - meant for all men and women - who are asked to receive and accepted it.

If the Medjugorje message has a founding ecclesial dimension, then it cannot lack the prophetic element which is expressed as a universal call to respond with the heart, personally and knowingly. The universality of the call can be seen after that the weekly messages intended for the Parish and its parishioners became monthly messages given for all. This happened in January 1987. "I want you to comprehend that God has chosen each of you for His plan of salvation for mankind. You cannot understand how great your person is in God's plan" (25-1-87); "I call all of you to open your hearts to God's love which is very big and open to each of you. God, out of love for man, sent me in your midst to show you the way of salvation" (25-4-95); "meditate on Holy Scripture and learn how God loves His people. He shows His love also in these times because He has sent me to call you to journey on the way of salvation" (25-1-99).

The prophetic aspect of the messages consists in proclaiming to everyone God's will that we all be saved: "pray with the heart, my Children, and do not lose hope, because God loves His

creatures. He wants to save each one of you through my coming here" (25-3-2003); "Dear Children, the Father has not abandoned you to yourselves. His love is immense; [it is] the love that brings me to you to help you know Him so that all of you - through my Son - can call Him 'Father' with all your heart, and so that you can be a people in the family of God" (2-11-2011).

The expressions 'people' and 'universal call' in the language of the Catholic faith are not generic, but specific, because a prophet has the task of urging the individuals who belong to this people to receive the message.

This connection between universality and heart comes to light very well in a recent message: "The heavenly Father is in every person, He loves each person, and He calls each person by name. Therefore, my children, listen to the will of the Heavenly Father through prayer, speak with Him, have a personal relationship with Him, and He will strengthen the relationship amongst yourselves, you the community of my children" (2-11-2013).

Each of us must exercise our free will in choosing. "God gave each person freedom, and I respect [that freedom] with all my love and in my humility I submit myself to your freedom" (25-11-87). This freedom is crucial for the performance of the prophetic task: "I need your prayers and your 'yes' (25-2-1992); "I call you because I need you; I need hearts that are ready to love as my Son loved" (2-7-2009).

Our Lady, however, warns that our freedom "is our weakness" (25-2-2007) and that to make up for this weakness we need to receive the prophetic teaching of the Medjugorje message: "Dear Children, I your Mother am with you for your own good, for your needs and for your personal instruction. The Heavenly Father has given you the freedom to choose on your own and to know on your own. I desire helping you. I desire being Mother for you, the teacher of the truth, so that with the simplicity of an open heart, you might know the immense purity and the light which issues forth from it to disperse the darkness; the light that brings hope" (2-5-2014).

Marco Vignati,
Com. Casa di Maria Roma

Spring is here; you can feel it in the air! Medjugorje at the end of February, though, is still grey with clouded skies and rain, and for this reason it is still relatively quiet here with few pilgrims. Also because many of the activities are silent ones; such as the **seminars of prayer and fasting** held in various languages by the Parish Priest, Fra Marinko Šakota, at the Parish **Domus Pacis** house. It is odd, though, that this year there should be no Italians enrolled. But for anyone interested in joining, please go to the relevant link on the official web page of the parish www.medjugorje.hr

There has been great improvement in the **pastoral care of official guides** of the Shrine. Last year, Mrs. Jela Odak was voted in as new President of the Association, and she has been working hard to improve the quality and the spiritual level of the guides. **The Parish would like every pilgrim group to make use of an official guide**, since these can competently impart information on the history of Medjugorje and of the Shrine, on important spiritual events and on any novelty and programming being organised by the Parish. For the Parish, it is important that groups of pilgrims, **immediately upon their arrival, signal their presence** at the Information Office. This would also assist the Parish in its programming.

At the beginning of Lent, the church of St. James was full of pilgrims who had come to receive the **Ashes**.



The following day, 19 February, **Padre Jozo Zovko**, who is presently serving at the Franciscan Convent of Zagreb, **received an official invitation from the newly elected Croatian President, KOLINDA GRABAR KITAROVIC**, to bless her office (see photo). Numerous portals reported this news which was joyfully received by all Croatian Catholics, and made us here at Medjugorje particularly proud.

Ivan has been present in Medjugorje this last period, and Our Lady has appeared to him at the Blue Cross area at the foot of Krijevac, and has spoken to him about peace.

ADORATION - Numerous pilgrims affirm that one of the most powerful

Message given through Mirjana 2nd MARCH 2015

“Dear Children, You are my strength. You, my apostles, who with your love, humility and silence of prayer make it possible for my Son to be known. You live in me. You carry me in your heart. You know that you have a mother who loves you and who has come to bring love. I look at you in the Heavenly Father - I see your thoughts, your pains, your sufferings - and I bring them to my Son.

Do not be afraid and do not lose hope, because my Son listens to his mother. He has loved since He was born, and I desire for all of my children to come to know this love; that all those who left Him because of their pain and misunderstanding may return to Him and that all those who have never known Him may come to know Him. That is why you are here, my apostles, and I as a mother with you.

Pray for the firmness of faith, because love and mercy come from firm faith. Through love and mercy you will help all those who are not aware that they are choosing darkness instead of light.

Pray for your pastors because they are the strength of the Church which My Son has left to you. By means of my Son, they are the shepherds of souls. Thank you.”

The image of pilgrims gathered in prayer around Mirjana as she herself prays and waits for Our Lady's visit, I think represents the greater image of Mary's Children around the world who, though physically distant, are joined spiritually to the Mother. I think with nostalgia of the Holy Land which I have visited and loved so much, where the Heavens are open and the Supernatural is near at hand, and where one feels so much at home. And Mary's words confirm this feeling, this sensation of miracle, this reality of miracle: *You live in me. You carry me in your heart. You know that you have a mother who loves you and who has come to bring love.* There does not, and never will exist an insurance policy better than this! Which insurance company can guarantee a life with Mary, a heart that contains Mary?

We have a Mother who sees us in the Heavenly Father; She sees what causes us sorrow, anxiety and concern, and she hands it over to her Son Jesus, ensuring us that He will heed His mother, just as He did at the wedding feast in Cana of Galilee, and just as He changed water into wine then, He has changed us from mere creatures into children of God. As such, we have the same feelings as Christ, and

things at Medjugorje is Adoration of **Jesus in the Most Blessed Sacrament.** This is organised by the Parish on Tuesdays and Saturdays from 9-10 pm; and on Thursdays after the evening Mass. On the 25th of every month night-long Adoration is held, starting at 9 pm with an hour of communal Adoration. The rest of the night, till 7 am, is silent Adoration.

ASSISTANCE to the Needy - A new initiative in and by the Parish to offer help to the needy came into being thanks especially to JAKOV who worked personally to promote it widely also among pilgrims and organisations, and by means of concerts as a way of financing aide for the needy. Some needy inhabitants of the local area have already been able to have their roofs fixed, and other aide has been used for those who suffered the recent floods in Bosnia.

RETREATS: At the end of February and early March the 22nd annual international retreat for organisers of pilgrimages and prayer groups was held in Medjugorje. **Said retreats are centred on scripture, prayer and Our Lady's messages.** This year's retreat was conducted by the Parish Priest of Medjugorje, Padre Marinko Šakota.

NOTICES:

1) Change of dates: Summer schedule begins 1 June (instead of 1 May), and the winter schedule begins 1 September (instead of 14 September).

2) The International Spiritual seminar for **medical and paramedical personnel** will be held at Medjugorje from 13 to 16 May 2015. The theme is: *Peace to you! (Jn 20: 21), spiritual renewal for the body and soul;* and will be conducted by Padre Ljubo Kurtović.

3) The next International Pilgrimage for the **disabled** will be held at Medjugorje from 11-14 June 2015. Bookings accepted till 15 May 2015. Contact: gospina.skola@gmail.com

Paula Tomić

we can work to help others come to know His Love. *That is why you are here, my apostles, and I as a mother with you. Pray for the firmness of faith, because love and mercy come from firm faith.* No one should feel they are safe and immune to the devil's temptations. This is why we must always pray for the gift of firm faith.

By means of love and mercy we can help all those who are in the darkness. It is clear, therefore, that we must continually draw from the Source of that love and mercy, and not trust in ourselves, since without God we err. [The Source of love and mercy, Jesus Christ, can be reached through prayer and the Sacraments.]

So, courage! Mary is with us, and if we surrender ourselves to her, we will perfume of her humility which the devil and his followers find so stifling!

Peace and joy in Jesus and Mary! NQ

Echo fully relies on donations.

TO SUPPORT US:

We accept **Personal cheques,**

BANK Transfer:

Assoc. Eco di Maria
Bank: Monte dei Paschi di Siena
Agenzia Belfiore - Mantua, Italy

IBAN IT 45 M 01030 11506

000004754021

BIC PASCITM1185

THANK YOU AND GOD BLESS YOU!

Eco di Maria, Italy
E-mail: eco-segreteria@ecodimaria.net
Webpage: www.ecodimaria.net



My Dear Friends

My dear friends of the Echo of Medjugorje,

Did you hear what an **affectionate** message the the Queen of Peace has given us? She has told us that we are her strength! But shouldn't it be that she is our strength?

We are asked to understand clearly this statement of hers. Our Lady says that it must be clear to us: we are her strength! because the Queen of Peace **honours our freedom**, just as God does. And that freedom of ours gives strength to his divine freedom and will. Attention: Our freedom, if loyal, makes everything strengthened and loyal. It is the Queen of Peace who asks it of us.

So, together, let us pray for the firmness of faith that Our Lady speaks of, in the certainty that God will grant it to us, and that we must be thankful to Him!

I bless you all: in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

Fr. Massimo Rastrelli, S.J.

Mantua, March 2015

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