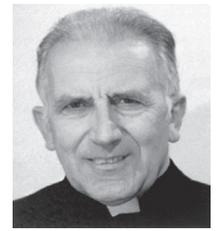




Echo of Medjugorje



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240

Fr. Angelo Mutti, founder
Echo of Medjugorje

Message of 25 July 2015:

“Dear Children, With joy I am with you also today and I call all of you, my children: pray, pray, pray! so as to comprehend the love which I have for you. My love is stronger than evil, my children, therefore draw closer to God so as to feel my joy in God. Without God, my children, you have no future, nor hope, nor salvation; therefore leave evil and choose good. I am with you, and together with you I intercede before God for all of your needs. Thank you for responding to my call.”

Leave Evil, Choose Good!

The inner man and his heart are like an abyss, says the Psalmist (Ps 64) after observing people do a series of evil deeds. Reading this would be enough to make one depressed, if it weren't for the Psalmist's words in Ps 8 which tell us how *God made man little less than a god, crowning him with glory and honour, and giving him power over His work.* Mankind, male and female, is the sole creature made by God in his own likeness and image (Gen 1:27). But this great privilege, belonging to man alone, does not make him immune to the risk of falling into the abyss of his heart!

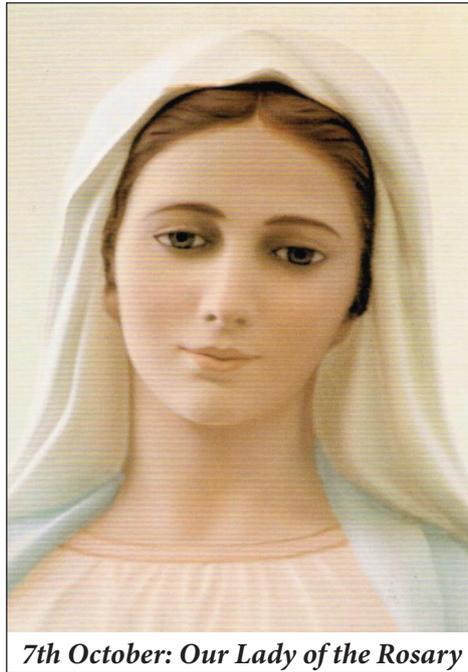
In another version of the same Psalm, it is said that *man is a chasm and his heart an abyss!* Man's greatness lies in him being an image of God, but this image has to be accepted, defended, cultivated and protected. The image must grow. **Man is called to be a child of God, but no man can do this with his own strength.** Man needs God, he needs God's Spirit. *Without God, my children, you have no future, nor hope, nor salvation. Therefore, leave evil and choose good,* warns Mary.

Evil distracts and distances us from God. The good generates life. Evil generates death. The tough battle between good and evil will cease only with the triumph of God's Kingdom. **Mary's work at Medjugorje** is clearly oriented towards speeding up this triumph. So let us take advantage of the help She offers us. Her desire is that we let ourselves be led by the Holy Spirit. All those who are open to the Holy Spirit's guidance are children of God.

The Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit that *we are children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if only we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him.* (Rm 8:16-17).

Peace and joy in Jesus and Mary!

Nuccio Quattrocchi



7th October: Our Lady of the Rosary

Message to Mirjana, 2 July 2015:

“Dear Children, I call you to spread the faith in my Son - your faith. You my children, illuminated by the Holy Spirit, my apostles, transmit it to others - to those who do not believe, who do not know, who do not want to know. But for this you must pray a lot for the gift of love, because love is the mark of true faith - and you will be apostles of my love. Love always revives, anew, the sorrow and the joy of the Eucharist, it revives the sorrow of the Passion of my Son, by which He showed you what it means to love immeasurably; it revives the joy for having left you His Body and Blood to nourish you with Himself, and thereby be one with you.

As I look at you with tenderness, I feel immeasurable love which strengthens me in my desire to bring you to a firm faith. Firm faith will give you joy and happiness on earth and in the end the encounter with my Son. This is His desire. Therefore, live Him, live love, live the light that always illuminates you in the Eucharist. I implore you to pray very much for your shepherds; to pray for as much love as possible for them, because my Son gave them to you to nourish you with His Body, and to teach you Love. Therefore, love them, you too! But remember, my children, love means to endure and to give, and never, ever to judge. Thank you.”

Message of 25 August 2015:

“Dear Children, Also today I call you to be prayer. May prayer be for you the wings for an encounter with God. The world is in a moment of trial, because it has forgotten and abandoned God. Therefore you, my children: be those who seek and love God above all! I am with you and I lead you to my Son, but you must say your ‘yes’ in the freedom of children of God. I intercede for you and I love you, my children, with endless love. Thank you for responding to my call.”

Seek and Love God!

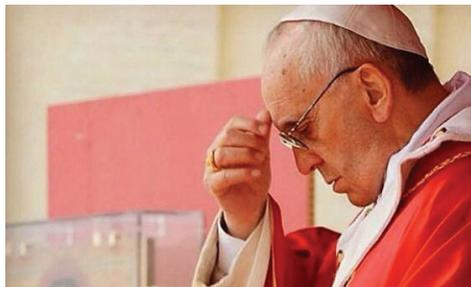
The world is going through a moment of trial because it has *forgotten and abandoned God*, says Mary with great clarity. And we see how the world is troubled by tsunamis, earthquakes, wars, climactic disasters, mass migration of peoples. I like how Mary says the trouble is fruit of man having forgotten and abandoned God, rather than the worldly view of fruit of chaos. Man doesn't gain power or advantage from having excluded God, because man's strength lies in his being made in God's image; in being God's child!

Once again Mary is pointing out the way: *Therefore you, my children: be those who seek and love God above all!* Do not run away from God - Mary is asking us - but remain with Him; seek Him and love Him above all else. This can be possible when we pray - says Our Lady. *Also today I call you to be prayer! May prayer be for you wings for the encounter with God.*

What a lovely image, that prayer should be wings for us to encounter God, wings that lift us to God, that allow us to meet Him and be with Him, thereby enabling a more intimate encounter with our Creator, and making it possible for His Image to be made manifest in us. If prayer is fruit of our “connection” with God, then let us learn to “connect” with Him. It's easy to begin simply by giving the Lord if only just a few moments each day; perhaps by imagining ourselves resting our heads on the Lord's chest, as John the Apostle did (Jn 13:25), and pray that our hearts might become pleasing to God.

The freedom granted us is mostly misunderstood and used badly, and in His name, as human beings, we commit all sorts of violence on others, without

[Continues on page 4]



I desire for the Jubilee Indulgence to reach everyone as a genuine experience of God's mercy, and of His tenderness - said the Pope. [The Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy will run for one year, beginning 8th December 2015.]

"To experience and obtain the Indulgence, the faithful are called to make a brief pilgrimage to the Holy Door, open in every Cathedral or in the churches designated by the Diocesan Bishop, and in the four Papal Basilicas in Rome, as a sign of the deep desire for true conversion. Likewise, I dispose that the Indulgence may be obtained in the Shrines in which the Door of Mercy is open and in the churches which traditionally are identified as Jubilee Churches.

It is important that this moment be linked, first and foremost, to the **Sacrament of Reconciliation** and to the celebration of the **Holy Eucharist** with a reflection on mercy. It will be necessary to accompany these celebrations with the profession of faith and with prayer for me and for the intentions that I bear in my heart for the good of the Church and of the entire world."

Special attention is given to the sick, the elderly, and the incarcerated; and it is possible to obtain indulgence for the deceased.

A novelty for this Jubilee, is that the Pope has conceded to all priests, for the duration of the Jubilee Year, the discretion to absolve of the sin of abortion those who have procured it and who, with contrite heart, seek forgiveness for it.

Msgr Fisichella has pointed out that the Pope's concern is that **we should never forget that God never abandons us**, and that we should therefore never fear to ask forgiveness.

1 Sept. 2015, www.vatican.va

In the Apostolic Exhortation, *Evangelii Gaudium*, the Pope reminded us all of a principle that belongs to the social doctrine of the Church and that contains a fundamental affirmation for the Christian person. It is: **Realities are more important than ideas**. This is how it is explained: "Ideas disconnected from realities give rise to ineffectual forms of idealism and nominalism, capable at most of classifying and defining, but certainly not calling to action. What calls us to action are realities illuminated by reason" (232).

This principle can also be applied to give us a greater understanding of the **history of Međugorje**. The fruits born during these years are real, and they remain, they can be seen and with time they are even more consolidated. Last June 25th, at the end of the Anniversary Mass, the Parish Priest thanked the Lord and the Virgin Mary for the ecclesial gifts which have marked the history of Međugorje. As a matter of fact, the year 2015 has seen the 26th Youth Festival, the 20th Seminar for Priests, the 16th International Meeting for married couples, the 22nd International Meeting for guides of Peace Centres, prayers groups and pilgrimages; and then there is the Humanitarian Association, *Međugorje Mir*, that has been operating since 1992; the Fra Slavko Barbarić Foundation since 2001; and the many Seminars of prayer and fasting at the Domus Pacis Centre since 1990.

This means that everything born in Međugorje, and which is based on the messages and rooted in the mission spirit of the Church, will continue to grow, even if slowly, as is usual in Marian Catholic Tradition. "This principle [of realities being greater than ideas] has to do with incarnation of the Word and its being put into practice," said the Pope [EG 233]. The evangelisation which Our Lady has been developing **at Međugorje fits into this dimension** of reality being more important than ideas. The Pope puts it this way: "Mystical notions without a solid social and missionary outreach are of no help to evangelisation, nor are dissertations or social or pastoral practices which lack a spirituality which can change hearts" (262).

We see how this principle is very often confirmed in the Međugorje messages which are always **a call to put into practice** the words we hear: "May your prayer be as strong as a living stone, until with your lives you become witnesses" (25-1-2013); a

call to not fill our lives with words, but to glorify God with our works, which recalls the message, "you talk a lot, but you pray little" (25-2-2012). "Listen with the heart, and learn to be submissive" (2-9-2013), "not to lose time in vanities" (2-6-2012).

The principle of reality being superior to the idea depends also on the witness to charity. And this particular element is prominent in the Međugorje message. "You, who live in the love of God and have experienced His gifts, witness them with your words and life that they may be for the joy and encouragement to others in faith" (25-9-2011); "Through prayer, the Most High will give you an abundance of grace and you will become my extended hands in this restless world which longs for peace" (25-1-2012); "Pray that the reflection of your prayer might have an influence on all those you meet" (25-1-2014).

Our Lady speaks realistically because, as she reminded us, she too lived an earthly life and hence knows the fatigue and difficulty that comes with it (2-11-2014; 2-5-2015; 2-9-2015), and the need to face them: "I pray that you may discern everything around you according to God's truth and to strongly resist everything that wants to distance you from my Son" (2-11-2012).

From her words we see how Our Lady wants to help us understand that we ought never seek escape in an imaginary or abstract Christianity, but that we should become "apostles who will pray with their works and not only with words" (2-6-2014), precisely as she herself lived: "I know that you do not understand many things as I also did not understand everything that my Son explained to me while He was growing up alongside me, but I believed Him and followed Him. I ask this of you also, to believe me and to follow me. However, my children, to follow me means to love my Son above everything, to love Him in every person without making differences" (2-8-2014).

And this brings us to fraternal love, that great missionary force upon which the witness and authenticity of the faith depends: "This is how all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another" (Jn 13:35). And it is this that will help us fulfil Our Lady's desire: "the community of a single people which listen to and practise the Word of God" (2-6-2013).

Marco Vignati,
Comunità Casa di Maria, Roma.

POPE FRANCIS on the Importance and Beauty of the HOLY ROSARY: "Reciting the Hail Mary, we are led to contemplate the mysteries of Jesus, that is, to reflect on the key moments of his life, so that, as with Mary and St Joseph, he is the centre of our thoughts, of our attention and our actions. It would be nice if we could pray the Holy Rosary together in the family, with friends, in the parish, or some prayer to Jesus and the Virgin Mary! Praying together is a precious moment that further strengthens family life, friendship! Let us learn to pray more in the family and as a family!" (1 May 2013).

The Sign of Prayer

It was a hot summer in Medjugorje this year; both because of the searing temperatures, and because of the whirlwind of voices circulating about the presumed restrictive dispositions by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith which so far have not been verified.

The Parish Priest and the Parish community have responded, in any case, with obedience and humility, and with the invitation that we should all be committed to living Our Lady's messages, in particular recalling that she has told us that we "Speak too much, and pray too little"!

This summer saw an extraordinary number of pilgrims, due also to the increased number coming from East European countries, such as Poland, Slovakia, Ukraine, etc.

There have been numerous and important international meetings this year too, which have been source for profound spiritual fruits. These include:

ANNUAL SEMINAR FOR PRIESTS

The 20th Seminar for Priests was held from 6-11 July. More than 400 priests from 23 different countries participated. The theme, *Peace be with you!*, revealed to be prophetic, because the intense spiritual experience of living the renewal of priestly grace at "Mary's School" was joined by reports of war and ferocious persecution against the Church by many of the participants, in particular those from Ukraine (110 priests) and China (28 priests).

Jesuit Father Ike Mandurić, who coordinated the Seminar, led the priests to a reawakening of their **priestly identity**, since it is possible that even after five or ten years of priesthood, some are still not fully aware that they are "priests of Christ", and that "their holiness and faith and experience with God are able to help awaken and convert others."

INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR FOR MARRIED COUPLES

The 16th international Seminar for married couples, held in Medjugorje from 12-15 July 2015, was attended by 34 couples and 3 priests. These came from Slovakia, Ukraine, the USA, France, Italy, Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina. The theme of the Seminar was *Marriage and family: the beginning of a better world*, was coordinated by Fra Marinko Šakota, and included contributions by the married couple Stjepan e Ružica Lice.

MLADIFEST Youth Festival

This year the theme of the Festival

was the same as that of the Seminar for Priests: *Peace be with you* (Jn 20:21). Participants arrived from 75 different countries. The various speakers offered reflections on the theme of peace in its various aspects. Prior to each conference, participants were shown a brief film which introduced the specific theme.

Saturday 1st: Fra Stanko Cosic spoke about the phenomenon of fear in the spiritual life, and how to overcome it, since fear impedes peace.

Monday 3rd: Fr. Damir Pavic's reflection was entitled "From slavery to freedom", because if one is trapped in states of condition, peace is not possible. He compared the wealth of Christian tradition you gun powder, where the experience of a personal encounter with the living God is the fire able to light the gun powder make one's life a "bomb for God."

Tuesday 4th: Fra Ljubo Kurtovic spoke about "prayer and life", because without prayer there is no peace. He said amongst other things? "Many people ask me which is the best prayer, as if it were something magic. I would respond that the best prayer is the one that comes from the heart, that is developed around a real situation. **Many people ask why we have to pray the Rosary**, repeating the Hail Mary 150 times, as if Our Lady were deaf. **I respond that this repetition is not useful for Her, but for us!**, because it helps prayer reach into our hearts. Our soul is not a computer that can be turned on at will. For it to open, it needs time.

Wednesday 5th: Fra Marinko Sakota reflected on "wounds and forgiveness" to address the relationship between forgiveness and pace.

TIME for PRAYER

Since these times are hard and require personal commitment, also the calls by the Queen of Peace have become more direct and demanding. In her latest messages, we have been invited to **become love**; to begin to live Jesus. To respond to Mary's call, it is not enough that we multiply the acts of external piety. What is needed is that *we become prayer*, as Our Lady asked in a recent message (25-08-2015). **Gone are the days of spiritual theories** when one said one thing, and did another! Gone are the days of tepidity! Today, the messages are telling us that it is time to be or not to be; the time to fully embody the proclaimed truths.

Either the love and the life that gush from God's Spirit expressed in profound prayer of the heart become part of us, or we simply will not be, because the world will swallow us up! The victory over evil will be given us, if we begin to live

truthfully Our Lady's calls.

To finish, I quote Our Lady's words to Ivan on the 13th August 2015: *Pray, pray, and persevere in prayer. In particular, I call call you to pray for families, for the holiness of families. Pray for the family because it is only with prayer in the family that new religious vocations, new priests are born.*

So then, let us pray!

Paula Tomić

CARDINAL SCHÖNBORN

The Archbishop of Vienna sent a message to Medjugorje for the young people present at the Youth Festival (held during the first week of August each year). The Cardinal, who is a friend of Medjugorje, was in California at the time and desired making his participation known with the letter which he wrote for them.

"Dear young people who are gathered in Medjugorje again in great numbers, I am intensely united with you in heart and in prayer. Today we celebrate the memorial of St. Ignatius of Loyola. He had only one desire: to completely place himself at God's disposal to spread His Kingdom! That readiness brought so many great fruits, the most recent of which is our dear Holy Father Francis, the first pope from the Jesuit order. Let us entrust him and his service to the Gospa! Jesus asks us to say to Him the words which St. Ignatius put into practice: Here I am! I want my life to be in communion with You!

May the Lord bless you, and may He bless the days you spend with Him and His Mother here at Medjugorje! Please pray for the Synod on the Family!

Yours, Card Christoph Schönborn."

COME AND SEE!

Journalists from *Famiglia Cristiana* [an Italian weekly] joined a pilgrimage departing from Milan at the beginning of August 2015 to go with young people to the annual Youth Festival which draws thousands of youth from all around the world. **Why do they go?** - asked the journalists. Amongst the reasons given, there was a constant that came forth over and over again. It was the FAITH that drove them to **GO AND SEE**.

One pilgrim, Daniela, said she was *in need of some light*; Roberto *needed some spiritual recharging*; Cinzia *needed discernment*. On the other hand, Michela said that since her parents first returned from a pilgrimage there, and they had begun reciting the Rosary and organising

Continued on page 4, column 2:

4 *From page 1, column 3:*

thinking that we have offended God, and debased man by making him a mere brute. *We were not made to live like brutes, but to follow virtue and understanding* - Dante warns (Inferno, XXVI, vv. 119-120).

We have Mary with us. She is here to lead us to her Son Jesus. We must, on our part, allow her to work in us, and for this we must say our **YES** in the freedom granted to us as children of God. Thank you Mary for your encouragement in this message. Obtain for us peace and joy!

Nuccio Quattrocchi

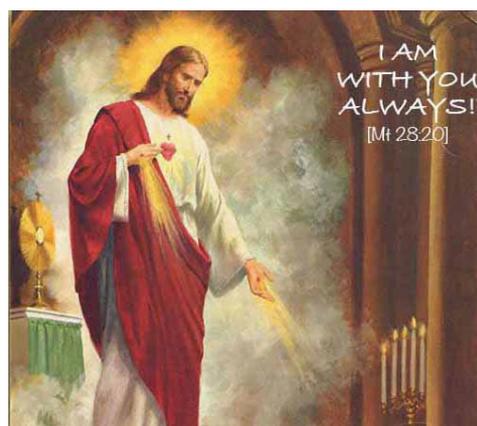
Message to Mirjana 2 AUGOSTO 2015

“Dear Children, As a mother who loves her children, I see how difficult the time in which you live is. I see your suffering, but you need to know that you are not alone. My Son is with you! He is everywhere, He is invisible, but you can see Him if you live Him. He is the light which illuminates your soul and gives you peace. He is the Church which you need to love and to always pray and fight for; not just with words, but with acts of love.

My children, make it so everyone can come to know my Son; make it so He might be loved, because the truth is in my Son, born of God, the Son of God. Do not waste time thinking it over too much; you will distance yourselves from the truth.

With a simple heart accept His word and live it. If you live His word, you will pray. If you live His word, you will love with a merciful love; you will love one another. The more you love, the further away you are from death. For those who live the word of my Son and who love, death will be life. Thank you.

Pray to be able to see my Son in your shepherds. Pray to be able to embrace Him in them.” §



prayer groups; she thought they were victims of a big hoax, and wanted to uncover it for the sake of her parents. Her own experience convinced her of her error.

Immediately upon arrival the journalists note a village “grown too quickly, without order or organised urban planning, with its heart the parish church dedicated to St. James the Apostle, and behind it, a large esplanade circled by flags from every part of the globe;” and then their surprise at seeing: “either side of the church two long lines of people, especially young people, waiting in line for confession beneath the scorching sun. Far from being an old widows’ devotion, here there are people of all ages, all social conditions and cultural levels!”

The world’s confessional: During the week, “the 553 priests and religious took turns in the confessionals. Apart from the classical languages of English, French, Italian, etc. confessions were being heard also in Arab, Hungarian, Korean, Slovak and Chinese. The penitents kneel down on the ground. Many weep.

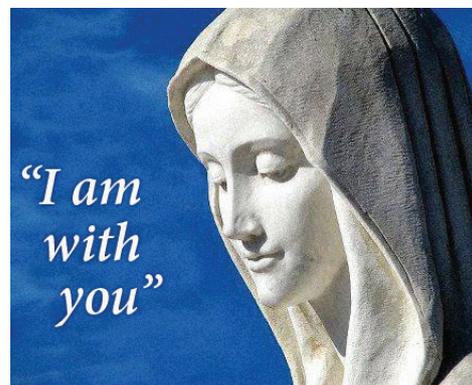
“It is a river of grace,” says a Franciscan friar from Lebanon, Fr. Roberto Panizzo, who spends six months of the year here. “I always say to doubtful priests to come here and remain two hours in the confessional, and they will change their ideas about Medjugorje! In the many years that I’ve been coming here I’ve never seen the sun spin or other signs. But I have seen many real conversions!”

World Youth Day in the air: “Parish priest, Fra Marinko, is not surprised: “Really, there’s nothing particular about what happens here.” Explaining, he says: “The Eucharist is celebrated, the Most Blessed Sacrament is adored, confessions are heard. It is the way in which all this is done. Here at Medjugorje, Our Lady’s call to pray and to convert reach into people’s hearts. I have witnessed people’s broken lives blossom as if from nothing. To understand Medjugorje one must come and see.”

And if it were all false?, the journalists asked. On the bottom line, the most important and fascinating thing about Medjugorje is that people are experiencing and responding to a call that they feel in the secret of their hearts. Can it be ignored, calling it stuff for sceptics? And if so, one would only end up denying that the faith reaches us in many and mysterious ways, and that individuals respond accordingly.

Where’s the miracle? For the journalists, the miracle is the faith, the joy, and the certainty of the young people that they are loved by the Lord!”

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Dear Friends of the Echo of Medjugorje,

Mirjana has told us several times that during some apparitions Our Lady’s eyes were full of tears. The visionaries of Medjugorje tell us that at times Our Lady appears visibly sad, whereas most of the time her appearance is one of heavenly joy. At La Salette, Our Lady appeared in tears, and so much so that the children were upset. At the beautiful apparition of Pontmain Our Lady alternated comforting smiles with attitudes of great sadness, and tears. I did not think that Our Lady in Heaven could cry, but instead Our Lady has confirmed that she does cry.

But if we give it thought, it is those who suffer that cry, and those who love that suffer. Our Lady loves us. We do not behave well with God, therefore we hurt ourselves and Our Lady suffers. I had never thought that it were possible to make Paradise suffer, but it is possible. Our Lady says: Do not be discouraged. Pray and love one another, and surrender to God the Father. Believe in His Love, and surrender yourselves to me.

This is what I wished telling you. Our Lady is asking this; so let us not argue. Let us rather work at what Our Lady asks of us.

I bless you in the Name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit!

Padre Massimo Rastrelli, S.J.

Mantua, September 2015

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