

Our Lady's message - 25 Nov. '93:

Dear children, I invite you in this time to prepare yourselves as never before for the coming of Jesus - that little Jesus may reign in your hearts; for you will be happy only when Jesus is your friend.

It will not be difficult for you to pray, or offer sacrifices, or testify to the greatness of Jesus in your lives, for in this time He will give you strength and joy. I am close to you with my prayer and my intercession. I love you and I bless you all. Thank you for having responded to my call.

Friendship with Jesus brings happiness that helps us overcome every difficulty

Our Lady mentions **this time** twice in Her message. Every time is a great opportunity of grace for us that we can't afford to lose. Like each year at Christmas, when the apparition of *the Child born for us, of the Son given to us*, opens hearts to the *goodness and love that God has for men* (Tt 3:4). Our Blessed Mother says we need to **prepare ourselves like never before**, for the times are sad and being distracted by anxiety makes us insensible to heaven's gift. So we need more concentration, a return to prayer, fasting, participation in Holy Mass as much as possible, sincere confession that comes from true conversion, and reconciliation with all.

But perhaps She is saying **now like never before**, because we need to receive a much greater grace, to be able to face much more serious events, in which the Lord will come to purify the earth. Jesus must be our viaticum for the great battle.

Mary does not promise a finish to wars, disagreements, raging hate; but to those who prepare themselves **as never before**, She ensures an enormous help: **little Jesus and His friendship**. She doesn't say that at Christmas we'll see Jesus reign in the world, but that if we really want it, we'll be happy in discovering Him close to us because He reigns in us as **our friend**.

Jesus says his *friends* are those who *listen to His word* (Jn15). The word **friend** has an extraordinary power: it can move a person to the very core. Jesus the friend is not a distant God, but a God that is close to us and eternally faithful. To experience this friendship is to experience how great and powerful He is in us.

Then praying won't be difficult, for we will joyfully make time to stay with a friend. For this Friend it will be easy to offer sacrifices, to renounce, to overcome temptations, to flee from sin. Jesus with us is a **happiness** that can't be compared with any other.

This is heaven's gift to us. To possess it we must give all we have, like we would for a treasure or a precious pearl. For the world, the **Christmas gift of little Jesus** is practi-

Be like Mary, to generate Jesus

cally worthless; but for those who believe, it is the greatest gift we could ever receive. Indeed, what is man without Him?

In the second part, the message doesn't seem to promise easy times, but it does say if we are really His friends, we'll have no difficulty in being His testimonies in this adverse world, even with great sacrifices, because He will give us the strength and joy. A special grace then to make us perseverant in prayer and in testifying to Jesus' greatness before the nothingness of the world. He will make us witnesses of hope for those, who in this chaos, will lose everything because they have lost God.

For all those who have responded to Her call, She says: **I am close to you**, you can always count on my presence. **I pray and intercede** always **for you all**, so you may open yourselves to my eternal gift of Jesus, and Satan's deceit will disappear. *Fr.A.*

Our Lady's feasts in December

Besides the feast of the Immaculate Conception (8 Dec.) we also celebrate:

10 Dec.: Translation of the **House of Nazareth** to Loreto in 1294 - it doesn't matter whether by angels or a family named Angel. At first it was taken to Tersatto near Fiume, then to a laurel wood near Ancona (hence the name Loreto). It is the Marian Shrine we cherish the most for in that house, *the Word became Flesh*.

18 Dec.: A week before Christmas many Churches celebrate Mary's Expected Child-birth. This feast has now been moved to the liturgy of the 4th week of Advent.

Then there's the **Holy Birth of Jesus** - undoubtedly His Mother's greatest feast.

The secret of fertility

The law of spiritual fertility concerns all Christians, who cannot remain in isolation. To become the Mother of God (Mt12:50) though, one needs Mary's disposition - i.e. a virgin heart like Hers: virginity conceived; and in intimate communion of adoration before God, offer space to His creative omnipotence. The Lord says:

"I want you to believe in my omnipotence, not in your doing, so you will try putting Me into action, not yourself or others. Look for my intimacy, fulfil my desire to have you, to enrich you, to love you the way I want. Let yourself be loved, let me find rest in you, let me vent my omnipotence on you continually.

If you remain before Me and depend on My will, without worrying about doing things your way, racing to get things done and say what you've done. you show Me you believe in my omnipotence, and I will work intensely on you when you speak, go, work, pray, sleep; for *I give to my beloved what they need even when they sleep*.

If you stay with Me without rushing, and worrying about your needs, but totally trusting in Me, I will give you all you need according to my eternal plan. I will give you the feelings that I want from you, great compassion for others, I will make you say and do what I want. Then your doing will come from My love. I alone, not you with all your activity, can generate new children that are born from Me. The more you want to be a true child, like my Only Begotten Son, the more children I can make, for you know that if you do my will you are my brother, sister and mother: so as to generate Me in others - for I shall give life to other children by serving myself of true children.

The effort you put into doing things is smoke compared to what I do in the secrecy of the hearts of those who love Me."

Those silvery rays!

2nd apparition to St Catherine Labouré in rue de Lubac, Paris (27.11.1930): Our Lady was holding a small golden globe, representing the world in Her hands. As She held it up lots of golden rings with precious gemstones appeared on Her fingers. Light shone from these all round. When the globe disappeared, She put Her arms down and outwards; curtains of light shone out over the earthly globe beneath Her feet. Some of these rays were golden, others were silvery. St Catherine later explained that the golden rays were the graces that Mary has already showered upon us, and the silver ones were the graces that She holds in reserve for us. She will give them to us if we ask for them.

Let us renew our "alliance" with our Mother: *I am all yours Mary and all that I have is yours! And you, Mother, will give me all that I, in my ignorance, have not asked for, and which is much greater than anything I have so far asked for.*

This alliance, similar to the one God made with His people, is a perfect » pg.2

Refusal of absolute moral law
is mistrust in God's wisdom,
and leads man to self-destruction

Pilate's question: "What is truth?" reflects the distressing perplexity of one who often no longer knows who he is, whence he comes and where he is going. Hence we not infrequently witness the fearful plunging of the human person into situations of gradual self-destruction. For some, it appears that one no longer need acknowledge the enduring absoluteness of any moral value.

All around us we encounter contempt for human life after conception and before birth; the ongoing violation of basic rights of persons; unjust destruction of goods minimally necessary for a human life. But more serious still: man is no longer convinced that only in the truth can he find salvation. The saving power of the truth is contested, and freedom alone is left to decide by itself what is good and what is evil.

This relativism becomes, for theology, a lack of trust in the wisdom of God, who guides man with the moral law. (...) It is no longer maintained that, when all is said and done, the law of God is always the one true good of man." VS, #84

Pope sign of contradiction

Sadly, in the western bloc countries it seems that every word, letter or document of the Pope is object of bitter criticism, dispute and refusal. St Paul's words to Timothy are indeed true today: *The time will come when people will not be happy with sound teaching ... and will be avid for teachers according to their own tastes* (2 Tm 4:3).

Our Lady, in Her apparitions in Slovenia, said to the priests: *Return to the founts of Christianity ... In the documents emitted by the Church under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, can be found the foundations for the spiritual revival of the Church... Many do not care about knowing what they say. They are works of the Holy Spirit... Ignoring these documents of the Church is impeding a new breath of the Spirit, who desires reviving the Church and protecting Her from the streams of evil and the dark forces that assail Her.* (Sept. '93)

You cannot imagine what danger - with regards to doctrine and morals - the peoples who lived under Communist dominion are now exposed to; like how Satan tries to ruin their priests now that all of a sudden they are exposed to the western theories and deviations, that they had not known before. Too many are "soaking" them up!

This is what one young man said after hearing the Sunday sermon: "The new Catechism and the Encyclical on morals (Ver. Splendor) are examples of abuse of the power of the Church." I fear that many think like him; but not all. Fortunately, some think differently: "It's impressive how the new Encyclical of John Paul II confirms man's dignity and vocation in God's creative plan. Amid all the opposition, he once again makes a point of explaining what man's true freedom is; and in his good and loving manners, he makes us see the true meaning of moral values in the life of man and all society." (Mir 24.11.93)

pg1» consecration to Mary, so She may give us what She wants, as long as we let ourselves be used by Her the way She wants (as in St Louis de Montfort's way).

Advent: for consecrated souls

Oppose paganism of the heart and live Eucharist as gift of self

The worst way to affront Advent is to be sluggish and not search for God's will. This is called paganism of the heart, and comes from voluntarily refusing God, and replacing Him with idols. We can't wait for Lent to **purify ourselves**. Destroying sin in us is a task we must do always. A will for self-purification is undoubtedly accompanied by immense hope that the world will change, for only through personal change can a new humanity be born. If we Christians lose sight of this, we lose all. **When you are rooted in God you also change and transform what is around you.**

Conversion means being totally changed, totally accepting God's will. If a person says he is converted, but keeps his own ideas, opinions and tastes, his conversion is false! Too many cling on to their old and sinful habits for the sake of personal taste or sentimentalism. Like this faith can't grow! Faith can only grow where a free heart says an unconditional yes to a will that is not ours, like in Gethsemane: that's true faith!

Our God speaks, acts, intervenes; and there is only one way of knowing if we have faith in Him: if we accept His manifested will, like for example in Fatima or Medj. And justifications are a waste of time, like saying it's not necessary to believe in apparitions in the Catholic Church. No, you don't have to believe, but it's pride and stupidity that stop you from using gifts of God. You can't believe in the dogma of the Immaculate Conception and not believe that the Immaculate is alive and active!

God's will is manifested in many ways: God is always new and He moves us through signs that we have to accept. That isn't easy because it means taking up something we hadn't planned or even thought about and which often we can't see clearly. St Paul says: *If we already see it, how could we hope for it?* A condition of a mature faith is walking - always - behind the Holy Spirit, and His ways are not ours. Faith is not determined by us; that's why old habits harden the heart. It's like, in good faith, having already planned everything; and so the Spirit does not dare to speak to you any further because you've already predetermined it all.

Our "good" Christian way of living also means having to learn to be turned upside-down every day, for the Holy Spirit can always intervene. Following the Holy Spirit is the first real, great prerogative of our faith. You see, Our Lady had not counted on the announcement, but since She had not planned anything, She was able to let Herself be involved and taken by God. From that moment on Her journey was done with *difficulty of the heart*: in going after things She could see but not completely understand, from Simeon's prophecy to the finding of Jesus in the temple.

It's time every consecrated person was spiritually freer, more energetic in their spiritual lives, and knew how to transmit strength to those searching for something. Priests in particular should start risking their own lives a bit more, and forgive their brothers and thus give the Spirit the chance to speak to them too. We've got to get out of those man-made schemes; otherwise faith dies, and without faith one is unable to

see God's will. There's a blindness (cf. Jn 9) that corresponds to lack of faith and this is the greatest sin for a Christian.

The mystery of Incarnation (Jesus with us: the real discerning point for us all) demands reverence, zeal, respect, and **total adherence to the Blessed Eucharist**. The world needs authentic faith in the Divinity and Humanity of Christ Who is present. Without a return to the Eucharist, paganism will advance in all senses - even if actions not leading to God are justified in His name. Christ is present: a Christian knows that his hope and his happiness, even in times of sorrow, is founded on Christ. If every day our hearts are full of hope it's because Christ, alive and real, offers Himself for us every day. The Eucharist is the live presence of God in His perpetual offering for man's salvation. Indeed, Christ is: **He Who offers Himself eternally to save us.**

Advent is also time for **announcing the Truth**, with all our might. Christians often suffer from an inferiority complex and don't know how to announce. The first task that comes from our consecration is to serve and announce the Truth, which can't be substituted by just serving the poor, for this is just humanism, not Christianity.

To be able to announce, invoke the Holy Spirit, so He can convince us that *our spirit is not a spirit of timidity, but of power* (2 Tm 1:7). **We can't hide the truth in the name of false humility.** The truth has to be announced, always, in every way. **Serving the Eucharist** is constantly bending one's knees, bending down to Christ alive and real because that way truth and hope can reach all corners of the earth. The real possibility of new heavens and a new earth is found in the authentic presence of the mystery of the Incarnation. Everything must return to serving the Eucharist: our actions, thoughts, pastoral work, our announcing and leading hearts to Christ.

The Sacraments are for making known the Eucharist, and it is in the Eucharist that they find their full sense.

Advent is time for conversion to the Most Holy. Mary would say: *Live the Eucharist well.* So: become part of the dynamics of Jesus Who offers Himself eternally.

Niki

Pure chance ... or loving response?

It surprised us that in Her last message (25.10) Mary spoke for the first time about the war in ex-Yugoslavia. It was as if She were replying to that query put by one of our readers in the previous issue of Echo: *«Why does Our Lady not talk about the war, as if She weren't interested in it?»*

She not only talked about the war, She revealed its causes: **You do not live, or you live too little that which I tell you... I cannot help you if you do not live God's Commandments and Holy Mass and if you don't reject sin.**

It seems to confirm what we have been saying for some time about the causes of the horrific tragedy: *Jerusalem, if you had only understood on this day the message of peace! But, alas, it is hidden from your eyes ... truly: you did not recognize your opportunity when God offered it!* (Lk19)

We should not be surprised that Our Lady replies to Her children who ask, and that She confirms their reasoning given by the Spirit. She seems to say: Yes it is so, just as my Son Jesus has said.

SALVATION WILL COME

Letter for Advent to the "victim souls" and all those who wish to be one

Peace to you sister, peace to you brother!

I am writing again, for I wish to travel with you towards salvation, with Mary, in Her Immaculate Heart. We shall read the Scripture for Advent, divide it into 4 weeks, and thus reach Christmas. Our Advent will be one of prayer, adoration, fasts and renunciation. Christmas is before you. It will not delay - for it is certain it will be on 25 Dec. What do you expect for yourself, for your family, for the Church, for the world? What security do you expect?

Is there desperation, sadness, obscure thoughts in you, that you are unable to free yourself of? Are tragic prophecies making you feel terrified, nervous or discouraged? Have the liturgical messages of Advent become a reality that no longer move you? Has individualism, coldness, rejoicing for the misfortune of others become your virtues? Or do you even consider these to be your indefeasible rights, and this encloses you in sadness, ire, disrespect, bitterness, and you argue continually? So you have become sick, and without hope. But oh, you only need to be aware of this, and you can start looking out for salvation! I wish to make an announcement of hope to you: SALVATION WILL COME! Open the doors of your heart to it.

God needs your consent, just like He needed Our Lady's. Open yourself from within. Don't go looking for who caused this closure, nor why it came about of your own accord. Just simply start opening yourself from within - because no message that remains outside of you (whether it be from Jesus, Mary, the saints, through you or others) can change you if you do not experience it as a message of salvation. God speaks to every soul in the depth of each person's heart, calling each one by name. The Saviour calls men in every situation and aberration, and man can hear Him, even there where he least expects it.

Pray with Mary! She heard the Lord beyond Her every expectation.

She conceived in a humanly impossible way, She bowed down before the Invisible, the Incomprehensible, but the Almighty. She believed in God and in Her, salvation was realized. Her whole being blossomed with salvation. For you Mary is Guidance, redeemed Reality; She is the Mother who makes salvation come about in you, like for Elizabeth. And like Elizabeth, approach Her with simplicity and sincerity, in prayer. Then you will experience salvation. This is an invitation for you to listen to what in you is not being heard or accepted by you, so you can take another step towards the fullness of life; and allow the sorrow, death and unhappiness still in you to bloom. Proceed along the way to fulfilment of hope. May your offering be complete joy in the Lord.

1. Victim souls are nothing special for the Church!

They are Christians that desire giving all to God, to receive fullness from Him. These faithful are the heart of the Church, because their wish is to do what Jesus wants of His Church, with all their heart. Only Jesus, Head of the Church, completed this "way." If you wish to remain with Him in simplicity, put yourself in communion with Him, like Mary at the foot of the Cross. That is how

Her life with Jesus was, and now She is with Him in the glory, and intercedes for all men. Her invitation to the faithful in Fatima was in this sense. The visionaries in Medj. transmit the same message: «**Offer your lives for the salvation of the world. I am with you and I thank you. In heaven you will receive from the Father the reward He has promised you.**» (25.2.88) If we do not obey Our Lady, by offering our lives to God, Satan will reap lives, like what he is doing now in former Yugoslavia. (25.10.93)

Complete donation to God is fully realizing oneself (cr. Mt 6:24). When man gives himself over to God, he is reborn; so persecutions no longer keep him back, but make him happy. The man who fulfils the divine law of love, experiences full realization of his being, for in doing so he is similar to the Almighty One and transmits to the others divine life. So, a **person who makes this offering of love regenerates and saves the world** with God's grace.

A person who lives this total donation, **can do everything!** (cf. 1Co 13) He sees the invisible in all things; through scientific and mystical knowledge he can understand the most hidden secrets, because he goes as far as the infinite (idem.). Who can you give yourself to totally if not to God? Who wishes to give you so much as God? Who can bring you to such complete fulfilment? He is the only One who will not exploit you, rather, He will multiply everything in you one hundred fold. So get rid of your fears, your narrow-mindedness; reject questions that come from egoism, born in hearts that only care about themselves. Give all to God, so you can receive everything from Him.

2. Decide unconditionally for God!

Don't worry about who you are, how you are, what you do. Poverty, being refused by others, life's failures, past sins and sickness are not obstacles that impede God from manifesting Himself in you! These are obstacles for people who think in a worldly, pharisaic manner. The important thing is that nothing conditions you before God, just like nothing conditions Him in His donation to man, because He loves the good and the bad (cf. Lk15). Your shortcomings should become the conditions whereby you look for Him and desire loving Him unconditionally. In this case, your shortcomings would become your good qualities and salvation would be close at hand.

3. Turn your burden into treasure!

Do you suffer in your family, or marriage; do you feel betrayed by society, not fulfilled in the Church? Are you carrying crosses, wounds? Do you feel crushed by the burden on your shoulder? This is the cause of your illness, your unhappiness. You go to church, pray, you consider yourself to be a good Christian - but your appearance betrays your unhappiness, your state of death.

Beneath that same burden, you can become **happy**. If you carried a treasure over your shoulders of the same weight as your cross, you would be happy. So **TURN YOUR BURDEN INTO TREASURE!** Your cross is the weight of your sins and the sins of your loved ones. Jesus wants you and them happy. Who will help Him carry the cross for you? Can you see He needs you? Offer yourself willingly. Carry this cross out of love for Jesus. This burden will become a treasure.

It's not enough that you, as a Christian, have a cross. That which you did not offer willingly, which you did not carry with complete trust has remained in you like a

weight, because **you were forced. Had you been a mature, redeemed Christian, you would have given yourself over to God out of love.** Then you would be pleasing to God, happy with yourself, and light for others. Give yourself over to God willingly. Present yourself to Him with love, with your cross over your shoulders and say: "Father I willingly carry this for my salvation and for the salvation of those who laid this weight on my shoulders. Forgive me and them. I thank you for enlightening me with Your love, enabling me to see how my sufferings bear fruit. Grant that I may walk to you with serenity and fidelity, like Your Son Jesus."

The darkness in you will gradually be transformed into light which will illuminate your face and your cross will become treasure. Cross and sufferings, reality not redeemed: in you these will be redeemed, they will become a means of salvation for the others. Turn your burden into treasure!

4. Offer yourself for your neighbour!

Your greatest sufferings are caused by those closest to you: family, friends, neighbours. You cannot get away from them, but you are not at peace with them! To some you are bound by family ties, to others by external circumstances. Relations with these people have been torn. You cannot escape! Either you make peace with them in God, or you suffer. Common realities and grace tie you to them. Reconcile yourself with them! But how, if they don't want to, or if they become even worse? Don't let this disturb you!

Hand over to God all that they robbed you of or what you were denied and forgive them. To God hand over your most inner soul - where you accumulate words, thoughts, hate, aggression. Present Him also with your wounds, and starting from them, implore forgiveness for those who hurt you.

Then God's life will enter you: His peace, His joy. Though nude, like Jesus in the cradle, you will be pleasing to the Father and in you the others will be able to find reconciliation; they will find the child of God that reconciles.

Conclusion. Christianity is not a difficult way: it penetrates to the marrow of stones and makes them tender. It is not a dark way: it reaches out to the depths of darkness and mortal desperation and regenerates people back to life. It is not a way that conducts to a pathological state, but life from which we are born. Those who wish to enter this reality must offer themselves totally and simply, like Jesus. So that in Him and through Him, new life is born: a totally divine and totally human life!

Walk on with courage then, you too, through the intercession of Mary. If you keep on like this, despite your poverty, you can make the world rich. Though you are a sinner, a failure, you will be saved. From death-desperation you will be reborn. So to those who robbed you of everything you will be able to give everything. To the earth that moves towards desperation and darkness, you will bring light. **AND YOU WILL EXPERIENCE SALVATION!**

HAPPY CHRISTMAS!

May the Lord bless you and keep you. Amen. May the Lord let his face shine on you and be gracious to you. Amen. May the Lord uncover his face to you and bring you peace. Amen. And the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, and the Son and the Holy Spirit descend on you and remain with you always. Amen.

Fr. Tomislav Vlasic' - Chieti

Academy "rejuvenated" in Lourdes pilgrimage

Thanksgiving for the 15 years of
Pontificate of John Paul II

Card. Andrej Deskur, President of the Pontifical Academy of the Immaculate recently guided a pilgrimage to Lourdes. More than 100 members of the Academy went to thank the Father for the 15 years of Pontificate of John Paul II. The Cardinal, together with the youth from the "House of Mary," the priests and laymen from the Academy, sang the *Magnificat* in front of the Grotto to thank God for the great things He has done in these 15 years of Pontificate. To Mary he offered his *Totus Tuus*; that the Pope and his Magisterium be always stronger than every form of darkness.

The youth from the House of Mary, and the members of the "All Yours" Association, entrusted themselves to the Immaculate Virgin - refuge of sinners and most loving Mother - so as to receive the strength and love needed in putting into practice the task that the Pope entrusted them with: *In a certain way you should be Our Lady herself who speaks, lives and works in the world.*

With the third millenium of Christianity fast approaching, the Cardinal desired placing everything in the hands of Our Lady in the place where She appeared with Her most glorious title. (*Osserv.Rom.* 10.11.93)

So the Immaculate is not just a name

The following comes from a meditation by the Cardinal to the Associates of the Academy in Lourdes. He began by talking about the ties that bind him to the Pope, from when the priestly vocation and devotion to Mary of the youthful Wojtyla took a turn under the influence of Montfort's *Treatise*; of when he was tonsured in the Mass where Karol Wojtyla became a priest; and when he worked as his collaborator when Wojtyla was still Auxiliary Bishop of Cracow. Then that gesture of charity which surprised nearly everyone: Wojtyla had just been elected Pope and the first thing he did was go to the hospital in Rome to visit his seriously ill friend (Deskur).

The Cardinal then asked himself: *The Marian Academy of the Immaculate had been inactive for more than 70 years; why has the Pope chosen to revive it now?*

After Vatican Council II, in an atmosphere of ecumenism not fully understood, devotion to Our Lady was being judged by some as an obstacle for the reunification of the Church. During a meeting on Mariology, some even proposed dividing the most important truths on faith regarding Jesus from others regarded secondary.

This was an attempt to give Mary second place. But this is not possible because the mystery of Jesus also includes that of Mary. By the will of God, the Immaculate became the place where God became visible in the form of man, like in a new earthly paradise, and more again, She became the condition by which humanity was able to meet God.

We need Mary, like every life needs a mother. Neither Christian life, nor evangelization is possible without Mary. At times,

Group photo in front of Grotto. Card. Deskur is in centre; behind him are the priests

under the pretence of *Christocentrism*, there are attempts of putting aside Our Lady, who is the concrete way in which God, in His freedom, chose to be born into the world; and through Whom He still chooses today to enter the lives of souls.

So the creation of a pontifical Academy is to remind us that the truths regarding Mary are of prime importance. Many "broken-away" Churches look for this Marian devotion in Catholics. When some Orthodox patriarchs entered the Basilica of St. Mary Major and saw the mosaic of Mary being crowned they said: "This is where we are united!" But in some German towns there is very little devotion to Mary after the Council - because of the tendency to forget or eliminate Mary's role in the Redemption.

The Academy is dedicated to the Immaculate Conception because this mystery has a message in it which is extraordinarily up-to-date:

1) the **life of man is sacred right from the moment of conception**, because in that moment the creature is donated a soul by the specific creative act of God; 2) the **grace of God is necessary**, without which nothing in man is neither pure nor holy; 3) **sin exists**; men must be reminded of their responsibility before it, so they may purify themselves through prayer and penance.

Our Lady says this also in Medj., but it's as though She were talking to the wall, not to Her children! When I was in Switzerland many children came to me, asking me to confess them because they had no one to confess them anymore.

Consecrated people are a cry of alarm against sin. This is why a revival in Marian devotion is necessary, with stress on the value of the Immaculate, which consists of contempt for sin, the necessity of grace, and purification: the same things that She says in Lourdes, Fatima and Medjugorje.

Also the title, *Academy*, is meaningful. It reminds us of the *Académie Française* which was founded by Richelieu to save the identity of the French language. Here too we have something precious to save.

The Academy of the Immaculate:

1) wants to save the identity of our devotion to Our Lady, also by means of theological research of the dogma of the Immaculate starting from the first centuries of the Church; 2) wants there to be consecrated people free of sin who make themselves available to serve the Church; 3)

wants simple people to be helped in their devotion to Mary, not just on an emotional level, but also effectively; drawing from the treasure of piety that goes back as far as the first centuries - which also requires a certain amount of self denial, eg. the difficulty of a pilgrimage. Our life too is a pilgrimage with Mary following behind Jesus, like She followed Him to the cross. There's too much "mind" in this world, and not enough heart.

The fear of asking Mary too much comes from the Lutheran concept of *Christocentrism*. For Luther, Christ has already done everything, He paid for all, so men have nothing further to do. In the same way they believe that any space given to Mary will compromise Christ's central role. But it's quite to the contrary: placing Mary back in the centre is replacing God and His plan back in the centre. Mary is *Mater in capite ed in membris*, i.e. She is the mother of the Head (Jesus) and of His members (us). Thus She is mother of all Christ's mystical body. It was Jesus' will that Mary be at the foot of the cross, in full acceptance of His offering and of the mission She was entrusted with; and in doing so She collaborates in the spiritual birth of every child of God (*Redemptoris Mater*).

That is why God's children can ask Her for everything with complete confidence and total trust; and this is why they should be docile to Her motherly guidance. *D.M.*

Our friend **Armando Reschini**, a consecrated member of the "All Yours" community and brother of our collaborator Niki, died in a car accident shortly after his return from Lourdes. Let us offer prayers for his family. May this time of trial be a fount of grace for his daughters, Elena and Chiara members of the *House of Mary*, and for his wife, Alma, who was to join him in the Community with little Marco.

Efficacious method for obtaining vocations

When Card. Wojtyla became Archbishop of Cracow in 1964, the seminary was nearly empty. His consecration to Mary (*Totus Tuus*) gave him a certain confidence. He made a vow to Our Lady: "I will go on pilgrimage by foot to as many Marian shrines (small or large, near or far) as the number of vocations you will give me each year." » pg.6

Extraordinary healing

The signs of Mary in Medj. have not stopped, for She continues to work, with or without publicity. All those who go there on pilgrimage tell of graces received, but it does us good to hear also of those extraordinary cases of exterior healing.

Luciano Bossi from Varese (Italy) is a 45 year old, thin and shy man with two daughters (10 and 5). His malignant tumour had reached its last stage; the doctors gave him a further 30 days. In spite of this he decided to go to Medj. with a group of aid workers. It was early August (1993), right when the Youth Festival was being held.

Though he was exhausted and in pain, his wife encouraged him to take part in the evening functions; and he'd mumble: «If I died now I'd be happy.» On the 6th August, Feast of the Transfiguration, he was taken to the feet of Mt Krizevac at 3 a.m. to begin the climb and so reach the cross in time for the Conclusive Mass at 5 a.m.

In front of him there were 6 youth from Sr. Elvira's Community carrying up a person with cerebral palsy, while Luciano was being helped up with great effort because of the lack of light and the people in movement. Stephen, the young man in charge of the Community, noticed when they were half way up and started clearing the way for him.

From that moment on the fatigue left him. He practically flew up and rapidly reached the top, even before the others. He was asked to sit down, but he made it clear that something extraordinary had happened. After the Mass he made his way back down on his own and went with the others to Fr. Jozo. He felt well and had started eating.

Back at home he says little and is easily moved. He shuns publicity. He returned to Medj. to thank Our Lady at the wheel of an aid vehicle. He is now in good health, while the doctors are unable to give an explanation. They are waiting on the results of a final blood test: the doctors say the tumour cells are the last to disappear. *CD*

Fr. Jozo: like in the first days

(...) Our Lady says we need to *accept prayer with enthusiasm like in the first days* (25 Sept. '93). I remember how we used to pray day and night in the church. We were so anxious to understand what Mary wanted from us. We told the visionaries to tell us everything that She asked, for we wanted to do everything She wanted.

When She said *Pray*, we prayed as one big family. Our people were already used to praying, but in the beginning of the Apparitions there was a special enthusiasm in us all. Many worried about finishing the prayer and said: "Let's stay a bit more, it's not nice to finish praying."

New groups would keep on coming, even during the night. Midnight and midday were the same: the church was never closed. People prayed everywhere: on Podbrdo, Krizevac, in the village ... the homes had become like houses of prayer. When Our Lady asked us to pray the 7 Our Fathers,

Hail Marys, Glory Be's and the Creed, we began straight away and we still say them. The same with *fasts*; She asked on a Wednesday and we began that same day, and we still fast on bread and water on Wednesdays and Fridays.

When our Blessed Mother said we should reconcile, we prayed for as much as half an hour before each Mass to renounce Satan and his evil ways. Our Lady wanted this reconciliation for it is only when we see each other as brothers that we can pray together and understand His word. Hate makes us unable to understand anything. Grudges and worries that come from harm done to us impede us from praying.

That is why Our Lady repeats: *pray before the cross* (...) *A. Bonifacio - Siroki Brijeg, 16.10.93*

News from the Blessed Land

(from Sr. Emmanuel's diary)

* **The bridge of Mostar**, which gave the city its name (Stari Most = old bridge) has been destroyed. It was the last of 17 bridges that united the Muslim part to the Croatian part of the city. It fell piece after piece into the Neretva River under a storm of grenades on the 9th November. Built 4 centuries ago, it was a work of art of Turkish architecture and a symbol of the history of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Now the city has been cut in two. Some families took refuge in their cellars months ago out of fear: stepping out while the Croats and Muslims fight could be fatal. But there are also magnificent examples of enemies helping one another out, despite the hate that hangs so heavily in the air.

* **Croatian refugees** continue to pour in. The number of camps which receive them is increasing. Winter is upon us and we can't imagine the suffering of these mutilated families, of these people torn from their land. They have nothing left, but the Kingdom of God is theirs!

* **Vicka's arm causes her to suffer** from time to time, but she is not preoccupied about it. Some friends from abroad, worried about the mysterious illness, had suggested she have it examined by specialists, but after having discussed it with the Gospa, Vicka told them it was not necessary. We are therefore relieved. It is all in the hands of Our Lady.

* **Prayer for non-believers in France - Marija** was here in Medj. for a few days. Her trip to France moved her a great deal. She felt an urgent need to pray for this country. Every day she and Paolo would go to a different church to pray and receive the apparition. She said: "The faith is almost dead, the churches are neglected, empty, lifeless. What a tragedy!"

There is good news too, however, for precisely in France **Mirjana's** invitation to pray for non-believers is spreading. On the 2nd of every month, in communion with the Mother of God and Mirjana, people are gathering in small groups and praying for atheists. These small groups are multiplying and the many signs seem to confirm that the Virgin is happy for this.

* During a brief visit by **Jelena** to her family, She was asked about **Satan's role in the world today**. She told us she's had

quite a few experiences, allowed by God, to better understand the fight against the devil. One day Our Lady showed her how he was intent at preparing some perverse plans to destroy God's plans and so have access to the whole world. His great power was evident. On another time Jelena was aware of his extremely violent desire to destroy Medj., her prayer group and all that is good in the world.

* **Love is the scope of spiritual life** - Our Lady is looking for our love; it is Her wish to renew the world through us. Infact to **Ivan**, She taught a basic point for the growth of prayer groups. The visionary says that in prayer groups love should circulate liberally, that it must never allow prayer to become monotonous. Even a walk or an excursion can help us to grow in our spiritual life. Love in a prayer group is more important than prayer itself. To Jelena too, Our Lady said that the purpose of life is not prayer, but the love of God, and prayer is a means to reach that.

* **Resurrection of a drug addict** - Sr. Elvira's Cenacle Community in Medj. is a place of constant victory over death. An example: A young man with Aids at the last stage, arrives and asks to die there with them. In that environment of prayer, brotherly love and total trust in God (Who can do anything), his health starts improving in an extraordinary way and he is now living praise to Mary's mercy. When he arrived he weighed 40 kg, he now weighs 80 and is able to work 8 hours a day like the others. Medical tests show the virus is still present, but not active.

In Medjugorje Mary donates peace to refugees. Philippe, a member of the French aid association has been in Medj. for quite some months to help the many victims of the war. He started up a new form of apostolate by organizing weekly pilgrimages for refugees. He has already brought many buses from various places. He arrives with them early in the morning, then someone from the parish takes them up Podbrdo. They are given breakfast and lunch and in the afternoon they have time to relax (see a film, confess). In the evening they participate in the Rosary and Holy Mass. Listening to them we learn that inner healing is taking place, that they start hoping again and find a new serenity; and this tells us what a great gift Medj. is for the suffering soul of the Croats.

Justice for 2 (suspended) Franciscan monks has finally arrived. Ivan Prusina and Ivica Vego were suspended by Bishop Zanic'. Vicka had asked Our Lady about this at the time, and now 10 years later the Supreme Court of the Apostolic Seal, on March 27, 1993 said the penalty inflicted upon them by the Bishop on 7 Jan. '83 is in contrast with Canon Law. Their expulsion from the order and reduction to a lay state is thus not valid. Unfortunately, Ivica Vego, unable to stand the state of inactivity forced upon him, had in the meantime married.

The wife of Arafat, (a Christian) visited Fatima "to thank the Virgin for the holy peace between Palistinians and Israelis." The Palestinian leader had planned to accompany his wife, but had to cancel prior to departure.

Anguished Appeal

Fr. Leonard Orec', who has taken care of refugees since the beginning of the war, has broken his silence to say: "Evil has gone beyond all bounds. A few days ago the Muslims occupied Vares which they had been holding under siege for some time. More than 15,000 Croats have now been turned out of their own homes. After Jajce, Travnik, Kakanj, Bugojno, Fojnica, Konjic', etc., another city is without a Croatian population. Don't you find it sad that after having defended their own Catholic faith and national identity for 530 years, they are now turned out of their own homes while the whole world just sits back and watches?! These people will engross the stream of refugees who have no where to go - now at the end of the 20th century! The same thing will probably happen to many other Croatian towns, from Kiseljak to Prozor, bound to be ethnically cleansed by Muslim forces who feel freer and stronger, now that the hostilities with the Serbs in central Bosnia have come to an end.

From the start of the war we have always helped the Muslim refugees who came to us for help, and we'll keep on helping them. But it hurts to see that they who were once our friends are now persecuting the Croatian peoples. Like we protested before against the genocide of Muslims by the Serbs and for all the crimes committed in whatever part of the country, we will now protest much more firmly against the genocide and damage done to the Croatian Catholic population of Bosnia."

Fr. Orec' asks us to make appeals to our governments and organizations; and to send aid to these exhausted and abandoned peoples. (Split, Nov.'93)

News regarding Bosnia-Herzegovina has unfortunately not changed. In spite of all the agreements, the **UN humanitarian convoys** are not getting through to the peoples most in need. The lives of nearly 3 million civilians, already suffering from glacial temperatures, depend on this aid that is not arriving. The Muslim offensive continues to tear away territories and towns from the Croats in central Bosnia. A new diplomatic initiative proposes compensating the Muslims with territory that had been occupied by the Serbs, and in exchange the sanctions imposed on Serbia will be reduced. A miracle is needed here though for an agreement to be reached.

SOLIDARITY

We are our brothers' keepers!

It is now very difficult to get into Mostar and many other centres in Bosnia and Herzegovina that were previously receiving aid; but it is **urgent that we help the refugees**, spread all over from Herzegovina to the coast. The UN and other int'l aid agencies are able to deliver to the peoples of central Bosnia. Let us pray that they can do so without danger.

Urgent appeal from the hospital of Mostar: medical and sanitary material desperately needed!

Contact your nearest Medj., or other collection centre. If you wish to send in donations through us, please say what the money is for and make cheques out to: »

Francic: a personal miraculous experience made me certain about Medj.

Archbishop emeritus of Split, Franjo Francic, is one of the most respected bishops in Croatia and one of the most authoritative in the Church. A good and wise bishop, he opposed Marxist atheism with wisdom and loyalty; he foresaw the end of Communism well before it could have been imagined; and he has fully accepted the messages of Medj., as we can see also in this interview by Stipe Pudja in *Glas Mira*, Nov. issue:

Q. Father Bishop, what is Medjugorje for you, and how has it effected your life?

A. The phenomenon of Medj. is to me a continuation of the messages of Lourdes and Fatima. These messages invite people today to convert to God through prayer, penance (especially fasts) and **reconciliation** of persons, populations, religions and cultures through daily forgiveness and brotherly love. This is the same thing as Christ's warning: *Unless you convert, you will all perish in the same way!*

Q. Does your opinion on the messages coincide with what many pilgrims say about having experienced a change in Medj. too difficult to explain in words?

A. I personally experienced a profound inner invitation in Medj. that made me understand that I too had to convert. The **same thing** has been felt in this holy place by many pilgrims from all over the world. We know God is present everywhere with His mercy and that He can distribute His graces wherever He wants. Nonetheless, we know since the beginning of the Church that there are places where God grants graces and spiritual and bodily healings more than in others. I became aware of this also because of the many **healings** that have happened in Medj., and which continue to happen.

Besides this, I had my own personal experience, which I consider miraculous, and this convinced me that the messages of Our Lady in Medj. are authentic. I have never seen Our Lady, and I prefer not to talk about my particular experience because it involves other people. I have written it all down and keep it as a secret in my files. It can be revealed only 30 years after my death, if anyone will be interested in it then. It regards a prophecy that has come true.

Since then Jesus' rule: *you can see what the tree is from its fruit*, is my guide. * *

» Eco di Medj. Mail same to us at: Casella Postale 149, 46100 Mantova, Italy.

In **GB the Medj. Appeal** accepts donations and material. Contact them at Unit J Lambs Bus. Park, Tilburstow Hill Rd., South Godstone, Surrey RH9 8JZ, England.

The **Medj. Appeal** advises: "we have opened up a **warehouse** in Medj. with full approval and support of the Franciscans and the local community. It is being manned by two men and is a joint Anglo-American initiative. Already deliveries on a daily basis are being made to various refugee camps.

The plight of the thousands of refugees is desperate. No report can describe the fear, the desperation and the horrendous situation which confronts these human beings. They are people, not just refugees, and if we can we must help them."

Hushing those who lie

The Church has **not** "warned against Medj." as some have said. To put us and these people at peace, the following is what the Bishop of Mostar, Ratko Peric, declared during a Confirmation celebration last June, when he brought up the three points established by the last declaration of the Bishops' Commission (11 April 1991):

Medj. has been officially accepted as a place of prayer and cult. A liturgical/pastoral team has taken upon itself to ensure the correct form of cult to Mary is maintained in the celebrations of the parish.

The Commission declared a NON CONSTAT DE SUPERNATURALITATE.

This Latin expression means that in the actual study phase it is still not possible to affirm a supernatural presence in the apparitions, but that the question remains open. There is another expression that the Church uses to express a negative (definite) judgement: *constat de non supernaturalitate*, but the Commission did not use it.

The two Latin expressions are similar, and that's why many misinterpreted the former with superficiality, thinking it was negative and forbidden to go to Medj. The contrary is the case: i.e. that the ways are still open to a recognition of the supernatural in the events. Of course, the Church cannot make a definite declaration while the events are still going on.

(cf. *Stella Maris*, Sept. '93)

Sound advice by St Francis De Sales:

«Our Lord loves with a most tender love those who are so fortunate as to abandon themselves totally to his fatherly care, letting themselves be governed by his divine providence, without amusing themselves in considering whether the effects of his providence will be useful, profitable, or harmful to them. They are well assured that nothing will be sent from his fatherly and most loving heart, nothing allowed to happen to them from which he does not draw good and profit for them. All that is required is that they place their confidence in him and say from their heart: "I commend my spirit, my soul, my body, and all that I have into your blessed hands to act in accordance with your will."»

pg.4» From that year the seminary started being populated with young men. In some years as many as 50 entered the seminary. When he was elected Pope, there were nearly 500. He of course kept his promise with joy; and so his life as Archbishop was a continual pilgrimage... which continues!

(Deskur)

URGENT APPEAL - Pressing appeals reach us from friends involved in **aid delivery to the refugees**. Fr. Orec' says what they need the most, besides **food supplies, medicinals and detergents** is **wood stoves** (for heating and cooking), **woollen hosiery**, underwear and footwear.

An appeal for Europe; if you own a **van** or **truck**: your help is needed! Contact a collection centre near you.

Fr. Jozo's initiative for sponsorship of Croatian and Bosnian orphans - contact: Matteo Rossi, Casella Postale 54, 54100 Massa, Italy. (phone: 0585-43653).

MODERN SPIRITUALISM

Bible speaks clearly:
abomination to the Lord

Many write to ask about the practice of communicating with the dead - which seems to be spreading. It is done in various forms: at times messages are given through automatic scripture, or recorded on cassette recorders, or other ways again, like asking "visionaries" for answers, who receive surprising replies from their "spirit guides." There's even a movement (going under the name of *hope*) for parents whose children have died a sudden or tragic death. It shows these parents how to communicate with their children. Some say they've found their faith through the messages received, having found comfort, joy to live and help in prayer. So what can we say about all this?

I'll try to be as clear as possible, even if the space is limited. It must be said straight away that the desire to communicate with the dead is as old as man has lived; because of emotional ties, or to ask for counselling, or enquire about the future.

These days, besides the traditional method of asking mediums who give messages when in a trance, other methods have become popular: like the use of a glass or coin and lettered cards ("Ouija" board), automatic scripture, psychophony or psychovision (with recorders, TV sets, radios, computers, telephones etc.). According to Mons. Casale, archbishop of Foggia and president of the Study Centre on New Religions, 36% of high school children (in Italy) have participated in seances, and 17% of these believe they truly made contact with spirits.

What does the Church say? All the forms [of invoking the dead] listed above are **a sin against the first Commandment**. The Bible, i.e. God Himself, says that those who invoke the dead, practise divination or magic **are abominations to the Lord**. In Deut. (18:10-12) there is a complete list of these aberrations which all depend on lack of faith, and consequently from searching for truth outside of God. The [new] Catechism of the Catholic Church (no. 2116) confirms this condemnation.

Let us also take a look at what two Ecumenical Councils (those of Lyons and Florence) say: that the souls of the dead, immediately upon their death, go either to heaven, to purgatory or to hell. Spiritualism makes people fall quite easily into various errors that are totally incompatible with our faith. For example, the belief that after death, souls are given other chances of being able to save themselves. The Bible clearly tells us that only in this life does man have the possibility of choosing his eternal destiny, which in God's plan is eternal happiness for all.

Another common error is believing in reincarnation. **Let it be clear to all that it is not possible to believe in reincarnation and in resurrection**. They are utterly incompatible! Christians believe in resurrection. If a Christian believes in reincarnation then his faith is vain, like St Paul strongly says. Yet these days it is calculated that one quarter of the Italians believe in reincarnation, though they call themselves Christian.

"I've rediscovered my faith ... they've done me good ... they pray and they teach me to pray ..." All these statements are based on error, because the objective goodness of a message is not enough to say its origin is good. When the devil speaks in the NT (eg. when he calls Jesus the Son of God, or when he invites others to go and listen to St Paul's teachings) he is saying things that are true and good. The devil is crafty - like those magicians who fill their studios with sacred pictures even though they are connected with the devil.

The Lord wants our faith to be founded on His word (the Bible) and on the teachings of the Magisterium of the Church. That is why Jesus founded the Church, and gave the Apostles and his successors that commitment to: "Go ... preach ... baptise ...; listening to you means listening to me." This alone is the way of God for Christ's followers. God can also reveal Himself through other "supplementary" ways so as to reach all those people to whom the evangelical message does not arrive direct - and this is because salvation is offered to all men, even those who lived before Christ.

The dead live in another dimension and have other interests. They can intercede on our behalf and receive our prayers (of praise of God and of intercession). Trying to make them become involved in our problems is just pure egoism - and the devil takes advantage of this tendency, even in a direct manner. Real apparitions are something entirely different. They are permitted by God; they are a free and unexpected gift; and they are never provoked by human means.

Fr. Gabriel Amorth

Silent love makes impression in young woman's cheated heart

The many accounts of personal stories involving Medj. show how *only* the hand of God can get to the bottom of a person's heart and radically change it.

This is the story of a young woman who lives in a religious community in Medj. She was born in a Catholic family; her parents practised their faith, but from when she was a little girl, she felt nauseated by everything they did. At first, out of respect, she hid these feelings from them, but when she was only 13, her heart was already distant from them, from prayer and from God.

One day she took flight, as it were to say. She started going out with her friends till late at night, drinking and smoking. Drugs became an ordinary part of her life; she left school, and gave herself, soul and body, to "free thinking programmes," which her friends offered her. She quickly sank into the muddy stream of immoral life.

Her dream had come true: no one could tell her what to do. For her the others were all cowards, failures or just ignorant. Nonetheless, she was tormented by a constant empty feeling, which contributed in making her more nervous and aggressive. She had everything she had ever dreamed of, but she was neither happy nor satisfied, and she threw herself all the more into drink and drugs; but things just got worse. In front of her friends she feigned happiness, but her soul was in anguish for something she

couldn't find. She feared everything and everyone and didn't have the strength or the will to return to her family; though she did try once but was met with a few harsh, arrogant words of accusation.

"It was another time though," she tells, "that I felt things were different. My parents were calmer and there was something in them that attracted me. It was then that they spoke about Medj., Our Lady, the messages, prayer, fasts and peace. And my heart had almost reached out to it, but I closed it up with a sense of contempt and profound hate. After that meeting, with all those radiant faces, talks of prayer and monthly confession, I was just irate. I went back to my old friends, but my parents were being more patient with me, they didn't get as angry; and this made me furious. The emptiness in me was frightening, it dried up every drop of joy still in me and reflected on my face mutilated by ire.

My parents decided to return to Medj for Easter. Dad, Mum and my brother were so happy; and I was out of myself with anger. As much as my mother had tried to persuade me, with all her patience and love, I refused to go with them. I stayed home on my own, but I felt so tormented: where to go, what to do? Thinking of my friends, the drinks and amorous meetings didn't help. I felt totally lost, and amid this confusion I decided to go to Medj. I got there after a 30 hour trip and found my family with the help of a priest. I told him that I didn't really know why I was there, but he smiled and said: "The important thing is that you're here. Our Lady will do the rest."

That sounded wonderful, but the first days weren't good. I went up the hills, but I thought it was all crap and thought the others were so naive. Then it was Holy Thursday - but I didn't even know what it meant anymore - and my mother invited me to the evening functions. "How long and boring," I thought.

After the Mass there was adoration, so I went to the chapel too and knelt down. Then all of a sudden I understood: God exists, love exists, life is a gift. And after the bitterness and the anxiety, my heart experienced serenity, peace and tenderness. And I understood: parents are wonderful, prayer is meeting God, the Church is our mother, Our Lady is the Mother of pureness, goodness, love and consolation, She is the woman who wins. Everything was new; and now I live in a community. I pray, fast, adore, and act as interpreter for the youth." (From *Glas Mira*, Sept. '93)

Excellent spiritual guidance, thanks to our Blessed Mother, is found in the books we mentioned in Echo 106 (page 3). The meditations of Frs. Slavko and Tomislav are sent free to whoever writes asking for copies. Available in the principal languages. Address your enquiries to: Amici di Medj., Via Nirone 9, 20123 Milan, Italy.

Donations for October-November:

Medj. in the East	US\$ 4,555.00
Bosnia-Croatia	4,280.00
Radio Maria Poland ...	970.00
Mother Theresa	606.00
Other	100.00

Satanism in the world of pop music

At the Youth Festival we met twin sisters, Anna and Maria Barrett, who told us of their incredible experience. We say incredible because they both work next to the stars of pop music; one as a wardrobe mistress, the other in the editing of records and cassettes. Their sound faith is indeed a pleasant surprise.

Anna says: "We've worked for 10 years and by now we really are tired. It's hard, especially because of the heavy satanic presence that we've discovered exists in this world. We've had lots of strange experiences with the negative, with Satan and the people consecrated to him."

Q. What type of experiences?

Anna: Well for me I thought it was strange that when the various companies ordered the costumes they always wanted satanic symbols, or something that mocks the Church, priesthood and Our Lady.

At first I thought it was just a fashion that didn't mean much, but then I found out it was done on purpose to glorify Satan. Of course I didn't have anything to do with it, but it made me feel anxious about the youth who are so enthusiastic about their concerts. It saddens me to see them so infatuated by the "stars" while these are surrounded by darkness and deceit.

These singers are so full of satanic symbols, and they participate in such horrific rites, it would make your skin creep. If only the youth knew what they're being captured by when they buy their concert tickets!

Maria: There's little attention given in the Church to the role of Satan. The young people in particular still think of him as a cute little angel with horns; and yet thousands of youth celebrate the devil, without knowing it, in the words and notes of songs. The editors of these songs know only too well though what they're doing, for their job is to multiply souls for Lucifer. Did you know that last week a self-declared satanic group appeared in Denver, right when the Pope was there? I was amazed and asked the organizer why? He replied: "The Pope's there; it'll be interesting ..." His tone was decidedly sarcastic and evil.

We often go to the priests and tell them to help the youth open their eyes on this satanic presence; but not to frighten them, only to teach them how to defend themselves. Our Lady teaches us that the best means are prayer and the sacraments (confession, Mass and communion) and blessings. Not all priests are ready though to accept us. Some don't seem to believe that Satan even exists. Denying him and his works is like a sleeping drug and allows him greater success.

Here in Medj. Our Lady keeps on warning us about the devil who is very strong. But She's on our side; She protects us and we have nothing to fear if we pray. We too have decided to stay by Her and fight Satan.

(From *Glas Mira*, Oct. '93)

* **Trieste-Medjugorje bus service** continues. Departure from bus station (adjacent to train station) in Trieste 6 p.m. every evening. Ring Italy 040-360300. Return from Medj. every evening 6 p.m. Return price Lit. 86,200 - valid 10 days.

The picture of the Pope in Our Lady's arms (Echo 105) is not a miraculous photo come out of who knows whose camera. It is a painting from Cracow in Poland.

Running around after the "fantastic" stories of miraculous photos **impedes our conversion**. Enjoy the photos; don't worry about the whys and wherefores of them!

Off the Bookshelf: *Marija and the Mother of God*, by Heather Parsons. Available in Ireland, UK, Australia, USA. Contact: Robert Andrew Press, 2 Herbert Cr, Blanchardstown, Dublin 15, Ireland for details.

ATTENTION - Echo is free!

If you would like to make a donation, send your cheques to Echo of Medj. at our address in Italy, or through a local distributor who will forward it on to us.

For material other than Echo please do not ask us for we are unable to satisfy your requests. Medjugorje centres usually carry other material or know where to obtain it, so please contact the one nearest you.

Please remember: **when writing to us** pop an address label into the envelope as well. That way we won't get confused and end up making double entries in our file. On the other hand, if you receive your copy of Echo from a distributor, you might like to mention this fact when you communicate with us. Thank you for helping us! And remember, if you want extra copies, just let us know.

FAMILY NEWS

Thank you to our readers for all the support. Our needs are always greater. May the good Lord bless you one hundred fold.

Our immense gratitude to the Blessed Mother, for Echo continues to reach out in the **Eastern bloc countries**, which are so dear to Her Immaculate Heart. The **Russian** edition is received with great enthusiasm. The requests are many, both from Catholics and our Orthodox brothers who look upon Medj. as a beacon. The **very nice Romanian** edition (20,000 copies) of Echo is very popular. It is requested also by many priests in Orthodox parishes.

The complete **Hungarian** edition has also made much way. It is translated by Elisabeth Varga who doesn't worry about suffering (post-operative chemo-therapy): «working for Echo relieves the suffering, and Our heavenly Mother always helps the two Elisabeths and Catherine» (translator and helpers).

Though Martha Mirkiewicz, a living miracle, is bed-ridden, she continues to prepare the 30,000 copies of Polish Echo every month, with the valid help of friends. With regards to the **Portuguese** edition, our friends from the *Servos da Rainha* group in Brazil are extremely quick at producing 112,000 copies. Another near-complete edition, also in Portuguese, is prepared by Gilberto da Cunha from Vila Praia de Ancora in Portugal.

For all of you indeed, we give thanks to God our Father Almighty. Through Mary, He sends us His Son; it is Their desire that He be born in us, and for this They grant us grace upon grace and blessing upon blessing.

The Holy Father with his Cross

Church not afraid to say no ...

Not even to international organizations that she supports when fundamental laws of life are at stake. So, though she supports UNICEF, the Church observes: "It is with deep regret that the Holy See takes notice that ... the original positive thrust of the agency for the well-being of mothers and children and the nurturing of life has shifted ambiguously but significantly."

Thus the Church openly dissociates herself from "involvement of UNICEF in the areas of family planning which could include methods of family planning considered morally unacceptable to the Catholic Church and a broad representation of people throughout the world. (...)" (*Osservatore Romano*, 10 Nov. '93)

These could be methods of contraception and sterilization with world-wide support to limit population growth in certain poor countries: but this is contrary to the dignity of women and to the gift of life.

"God is Father" - (English translation), introduced by Fr. Andrea D'Ascanio. Write to: I Nidi di Preghiera, Cas.Post. 135, 67100 L'Aquila, Italy

ECHO IN OTHER LANGUAGES

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