

# Echo of Mary Queen of Peace

March-April 2004, Yr 20 # 2 - Echo of Mary, Casella Postale 27, I-31030 Bessica Treviso, Italy.  
Ph/fax 0423-470331 - E-mail: info@ecodimaria.net - A translation of the original Italian: Eco di Maria

174



Our Lady's message, 25 January 2004:

**Dear Children, also today I call you to pray. In particular, my Children, pray for all those who haven't come to know God's love. Pray that their hearts may open and draw close to my heart and to the Heart of my Son Jesus, so that we can transform them into people of peace and love. Thank you for responding to my call.**

## Men of Peace and Love

*"A new century, a new millennium are opening in the light of Christ. But not everyone can see this light. Ours is the wonderful and demanding task of becoming its reflection,"* says the Pope in his document, *Novo Millennio Ineunte* (nr. 54); and Mary tells us precisely how to become this reflection of Christ's light: **Dear Children, also today I invite you to pray.**

How unlike our own methods is Mary's call! Can prayer resolve man's problems? *The heartfelt prayer of a righteous man works very powerfully* (Jm 5:16), and Mary insists on asking us to pray: not to unload, but to bear responsibility with wisdom; not to expect from a distant God the solutions of our problems, but to draw from Him the necessary light.

Praying is letting God reach down to us, so that a vital and concrete relationship is formed and day by day it transforms our life and the life of others. This transformation doesn't only reach out to those who are physically near us, but to all those whom we meet in Christ, even if they should be distant in terms of space and time.

**Pray, my Children, in particular for all those who haven't come to know God's love.** Prayer is the channel which allows God's love to flow, and today we are called to allow this love to reach all those who haven't known It. Who could they be? Those who haven't heard speak about God (and these are a minority), and those who have more or less consciously refused His Love (certainly the majority, but perhaps we too are amongst them).

**Pray, that their hearts may open and draw close to my Heart and to the Heart of my Son, Jesus.** Pray: not to ask for some sort of a grace or heavenly favour, but to ask for an open heart and surrender to God which Mary so desires from us. Pray: for a real and total conversion which shortens the distance between the heart of men and the hearts of Jesus and Mary, thereby allowing Them to transform us into men of peace and love.

*"Our world is entering the new millennium burdened by the contradictions*



*"Not my will, but Thine, be done!"*  
(Lk 22.42)

*of an economic, cultural and technological progress which offers immense possibilities to a fortunate few, while leaving millions of others not only on the margins of progress but in living conditions far below the minimum demanded by human dignity."* (NMI, 50) In this scenario, so realistically described by the Holy Father, it is extremely necessary and urgent that we be men of peace and love. Reciting prayers or participating in prayer vigils isn't enough! We must become reflections of Christ's light in today's world, and let ourselves be transformed by Him. We must let Him live in us so that HIS BEING can transform our saying and doing into deeds.

Be men of peace and love so His Love and Peace might reach out to every man, every woman, every living creature! Be men of peace and love to witness that Christ is alive and present in today's world! Witness that He is ever willing to dry every tear, heal every wound! Tell everyone, more with one's life than with words, that God bends down over those who make themselves little and needy, that He embraces the victim, but He doesn't spurn the persecutor!

Let us hand over our lives to Mary so peace and love may triumph in the world. Peace and joy in Jesus and Mary.

Nuccio Quattrocchi

Our Lady's message, 25 February 2004:

**Dear Children, today also, as never before, I call you to open your hearts up to my messages. Dear Children, be those who draw souls to God and not those who distance them. I am with you and love you all with a special love. This is a time of penance and conversion. From the depths of my heart, I call you to be mine with all your heart and then you will see that your God is great, because He will give you an abundance of blessings and peace. Thank you for responding to my call.**

## As Never Before

*"As it was in the days of Noah, so will it be in the days of the Son of man. They ate, they drank, they married, they were given in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. Likewise as it was in the days of Lot - they ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they built, but on the day when Lot went out from Sodom fire and brimstone rained from heaven and destroyed them all - so will it be on the day when the Son of man is revealed."* (Lk 17:26-30). And: *"Those Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices, were not worse sinners than all the others; and those eighteen upon whom the tower of Siloam fell and killed were not worse offenders than all the other inhabitants of Jerusalem. But unless you repent,"* says the Lord, *"you will all likewise perish."* (Lk 13:1-5)

Being immersed in daily chores, we risk being overrun and killed by them. *"Unless you believe that I am he, you will die in your sins,"* says the Lord (Jn 8:24). To believe in Jesus doesn't mean knowing who He is, for even Satan knows better than us who He is. Believing in Him means to live with Him, and by His word.

Mary invites us to this encounter with the Lord, and her call today is more impassioned than ever: **"Today, as never before, I call you to open your hearts up to my messages."** Mary, our Ark of the Covenant, waits for us still. The doors of her Heart are always open, but will we always be given the chance of crossing their threshold? Today we are still in time: **"you are mine"** - but what about tomorrow? **"This is time of penance and conversion"**: a favourable time to mend one's ways and return to the Father's house (Lk 15:11-32). *Repent and turn from all your transgressions.. Cast away from you all the transgressions, and make yourselves a new heart and a new spirit.. Repent, and live* (Ez 18: 30-32).

We too, as never before, desire accepting your call, Mother. **With all our heart we desire belonging to you:** wholly thine, Mary, without reserving anything for ourselves. May the

Holy Spirit pervade us completely, transform us entirely, renew us totally, orient everything in us for the praise and glory of God. **Obtain for us the grace of knowing how to offer our own lives**, joyfully and simply. Obtain for us the Lord's embrace, an embrace so tight that we disappear in Him and thus become one with Him: that the Father might see only one Son before Him.

O Mother, it is not out of desire for personal glory that we pray such, but that we might remain in the presence of the Father and do what is pleasing to Him (Jn 8:29). You also ask us to be those who **draw souls to God and not those who distance them**. How can we possibly be so if Christ does not abide in us? You are **with us and you love us all with a special love**, and this intensifies our hope. Obtain for us the forgiveness of our sins, so our mistrust might be transformed into faith, our every expectation into hope, our life into love (cf. Jn 15:13).

**From the depths of Mary's heart** come an invitation and a promise: **be mine with all your heart and you will see that your God is great, because He will give you an abundance of blessings and peace**. We are witness already to this promise, and we give you thanks for your work of salvation.

N.Q.

## John Paul II : During Lent let us think of the children

"The evocative rite of the imposition of ashes marks the beginning of the holy season of Lent, when the Liturgy once more calls the faithful to radical conversion and trust in God's mercy." Thus begins the Holy Father's message which he wrote for Lent. He chose the **ever-important theme of children**: 'Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me', because: "Today Jesus continues to call them to himself and to set them as an example to all those who wish to be his disciples. Jesus' words **call upon us to see how children are treated in our families, in civil society, and in the Church**. They are also an incentive to rediscover the simplicity and trust which believers must cultivate in imitation of the Son of God, who shared the lot of the little ones and the poor.

**Jesus had a particular love for children** because of 'their simplicity, their joy of life, their spontaneity, and their faith filled with wonder.' For this reason he wishes the community to open its arms and heart to them, even as he did: 'Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me' (Mt 18:5). Alongside children Jesus sets the 'very least of the brethren': the suffering, the needy, the hungry and thirsty, strangers, the naked, the sick, and the imprisoned. In welcoming them and loving them, or in treating them with indifference and contempt, we show our attitude towards Him, for it is in them that the Lord is particularly present.

In the years of his public life Jesus often insisted that **only those who become like**

**children will enter the Kingdom of Heaven**. In his teaching, young children become a striking image of the disciple who is called to follow the divine Master with childlike docility: 'Whoever humbles himself like this child, he is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven' (Mt 18:4). '**To become one of the least and 'to receive' the little ones**: these are two aspects of a single teaching which the Lord repeats to His disciples in our time. Only the one who makes himself one of the 'least' is able to receive with love the 'least' of our brothers and sisters.

Many believers strive faithfully to follow these teachings of the Lord. Here I would mention those parents who make every effort to pass on to their children those human and religious values that give true meaning to life.. and all those committed to caring for underprivileged children and those who alleviate the sufferings of children and their families resulting from war and violence, inadequate food and water, forced immigration and the many forms of injustice present in the world.

Together with such great generosity, however, a word must be said about the selfishness of those who do not 'receive' children. **There are young people who have been profoundly hurt by the violence of adults**: sexual abuse, forced prostitution, involvement in the sale and use of drugs; children forced to work or enlisted for combat; young children scarred forever by the break-up of the family; little ones caught up in the obscene trafficking of organs and persons. What too of the tragedy of AIDS and its devastating consequences in Africa? It is said that millions of persons are now afflicted by this scourge, many of whom were infected from birth. **Humanity cannot close its eyes in the face of so appalling a tragedy!**

**What evil have these children done to merit such suffering?** From a human standpoint it is not easy, indeed it may be impossible, to answer this disturbing question. Only faith can make us begin to understand so profound an abyss of suffering. By becoming 'obedient unto death, even death on a Cross' (Phil 2:8), Jesus took human suffering upon Himself and illuminated it with the radiant light of His resurrection. By His death, He conquered death once for all. ...

Let us set out with trust on our Lenten journey," concludes John Paul II, "sustained by a more fervent prayer, by penance and concern for those in need. In particular, may this Lent be a time of ever greater concern for the needs of children, in our own families and in society as a whole: for they are the future of humanity.

With childlike simplicity let us turn to God and call Him, as Jesus taught us in the Lord's Prayer: 'Abba' (Father/Pa). Our Father! **Let us repeat this prayer often during Lent**; let us repeat it with deep emotion. By calling God 'Our Father,' we will better realize that we are His children and feel that we are brothers and sisters of one another. Thus it will be easier for us to open our hearts to the little ones, following Jesus' invitation: 'Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me'."



## Fasting, fruit of Love

I'm no great ascetic. Like many I'm weak when faced with the Lenten fast or the twice-weekly fast on bread and water which the Queen of Peace asks at Medjugorje, and I wonder if I'll ever be capable, and feel discouraged.

**The proposal to fast in our day and age certainly has a different value to what it had in the past.** Certain severities of the past aren't thinkable today, probably because we're all weaker, and because we think that bodily penance ought to be accompanied by a greater attention to man's interior and spiritual dimension, according to God's request made through the prophet Isaiah (Is 58:1-10).

This doesn't mean it's worth less, or that fasting in general or the fast asked by the Queen of Peace at Medjugorje isn't possible; otherwise she wouldn't have asked. We have also seen that when the Holy Father asks the faithful to fast - on certain special occasions - the response to his request is very positive.

**Also for us, in our days, fasting has its values**, such as the need for the essential in today's frenzied consumerism, or the care and respect of the body which is often overfed, or the need for greater freedom for the spirit so bound by worldly things, or being able to share in the lot of the poor, forced to fast because of misery. **But more than this, fasting is really possible.** Perhaps we have all experienced this, for if a person really wants something, he can do it.

There are some things to remember.

The fast proposed by the Queen of Peace is not compulsory; it is an "ardent invitation" to voluntarily unite oneself to the sufferings and to the death of Jesus on the cross for the salvation of mankind, and to check hatred and violence, sin and death. Neither the Lord, nor the Blessed Virgin, will look with disdain upon us if we do not fast, because the problem isn't not having fasted; it is, rather, a case of spiritual immaturity. It means we still haven't matured within our minds the need to unite ourselves to the Cross of Christ, because we aren't sufficiently aware of the gravity of sin present in the world.

**Therefore, fasting is not fruit of a brief voluntary effort** that makes us sad. It has its times and ways, and in the tradition of the First Testament (Dt 9:9-18) and in Jesus' time (Mt 4:1-2) they were well-known, just as they were in Christian ascetical practice (Acts 13:3), and which we should re-discover if we wish to live well. Otherwise, our fast and our righteousness are not much different to that of the Pharisees to whom Jesus said: "*When you fast do not put on a gloomy look as the hypocrites do so that men know they are fasting... When you fast, anoint your head and wash your face... and your Father who sees all that is done in secret will reward you*" (Mt 6:16-18).

**Fasting is a gift of grace which comes with new life in Christ**, which we receive with our Baptism. It is an expression of "life according to the Spirit," operated by the new creature generated in us that makes the old man and all his needs and pretences die so that the new man is born, and this new man is able to live not by bread alone, but by every word which comes from the mouth of God.

In another passage of the Bible the Pharisees reproach Jesus' disciples for not

fasting. Jesus responds that it isn't the right moment; that they are still in the stage when one feels the need to have the "Groom" (Jesus) near them and to enjoy the feast of the kingdom which is to come. He says that afterwards they will know what it is to bear the cross (the Groom will be removed from them), and then they will fast. It is as if Jesus is telling us that to fast one must be made ready, and that there are different degrees to it. The Lord adds: "No one sews a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old cloak.. And nobody puts new wine into old wineskins.. but new wine into new skins." (Mk 2:18-22).

**Fasting is part of the new life as a Christian and is fruit of love.** If you have still not matured, you cannot pretend to give what you don't have. You can't pretend to jump two metres if you're still not able to jump 20 cm. You can fast when you know how to love, for it is only through truly loving that you can sacrifice yourself for a loved one. You can love when you have truly understood the love of Jesus Christ who allowed Himself to be crucified for you, and when you have true love for your brothers and sisters. But this takes pure love, not "commercial love" whereby one gives according to what one receives; and not even a love that is afraid of God is pure love.

**The Gospel tells us of a Pharisee who fasts twice weekly** and lives according to the Law, but he isn't "justified" before God because he uses the fast to brag about his merits, and to treat others with disdain (Lk 18:9-14). God doesn't need our sacrifices. We need them as they help us open ourselves up to Him and to His Life in us. God doesn't impose anything on us; He doesn't control us. Therefore, he who fasts must do it out of love, not out of fear of not pleasing God, or of losing His favours and grace.

**God knows how to wait, and He loves and respects those who still aren't able to fast.** Then again, the Church - which reflects God's merciful countenance - demands very little of us officially: only twice a year are we obliged to fast (Ash Wednesday and Good Friday), but at the same time she never tires of asking her children to choose a life which is sober and detached from worldly things.

**Therefore, fasting is a gift of Grace.** It is for this reason that there can't be fast without prayer. This Grace doesn't come from ourselves, but is a gift that we must ask for insistently in prayer. If it were possible, fasting without prayer would only be a biological fact: there are plenty who make lots of sacrifices to become slimmer and to keep fit, but this has nothing to do with Christian fasting, for even an atheist can do this type of fast.

**Christian fasting demands that it be accompanied by prayer;** not only because through this we obtain from the Lord the strength to renounce food, but especially because it expresses the love which urges us to fast. The exercise of meditating on Christ's Passion is enough to lessen our appetite. If we contemplate on Mary's sorrows, and like her we take upon ourselves the ruin that Satan causes in souls, in families and in the world, we see how our hunger takes second place, because other things become more important, and we become aware of an inner freedom that dilates the heart, and though we stay without food, we feel well and at

peace with ourselves and with others.

That's another important point "the others": for when you feel closer to God's Heart, and you become aware of the sentiments of Mary's Immaculate Heart, you want to do something for the others, as they become more important than yourself, your worries and your needs. You feel that you want to do something, even everything, especially for those who are dearest to you or who suffer the most. And even in this case, the Word of the Lord comes to our aid: "**This kind of demon can only be driven out by prayer and fasting.**"

Take courage then! Let us ask the Lord, through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, for the grace of Christian fast, and it will be granted to us (cf. Mt 7:7-11).

*Fr. Nicolino Mori*

## The Sorrowful Mysteries

### His Hands Steeped in Passion

Hands nailed to the cross, wounded and contracted as they agonize in indescribable pain as the nails pierce His flesh.

Hands of a God, wanted by Him to bless, to caress, to heal, to show the way. Christ's consecrated hands, anointed by the Father to serve the Priest who would bring it salvation and redemption. He alone can throw back the doors of the Kingdom, through His own sacrifice at a wooden altar: a wooden cross driven into the ground atop Calvary.

***In the first sorrowful mystery we contemplate Jesus' hands joined together, imploring as He prays***

He had just used His hands to fulfil a solemn gesture, one which would go down in perennial memory. He had broken the bread, blessed it and shared it out amongst His table companions, who were starving for love and truth. Yet, before consecrating the supper, those same hands had washed and dried their feet: an extremely humble gesture of submission and service.

The cold night air has made His hands cold; they are clasped as He implores: "*My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass by me!*" (Mt 26:39).

In the dark, long night in Gethsemane, His hands are steeped in pain and passion, suffered for the sake of all humanity, of every single person of all times, from the very beginning to the very end.

His surrender is His victory: ***In the second sorrowful mystery we contemplate how God gives up His hands to men so they can be tied to a pillar***

With simple gestures of blessing, His hands had freed so many from their illnesses, unclean spirits and from sin. They had opened the eyes of the blind, and the ears of the deaf, granting freedom and dignity. They absolved adulteresses, condemned those who accused, writing their sins in the sand.

With His hands now bound together and tied to a pillar, the Lamb offers His back for

the scourging. Victim of man's over-bearing arrogance, He accepts the blows which tear His flesh away.

***In the third sorrowful mystery we contemplate the defenceless hands of Jesus before His offenders***

A storm of other hands thunder down upon Him: pushing, slapping, stripping... Mad hands, violent hands, restless hands. Hands of pagans, deceived by their own ignorance. But what is all this din for the Lamb on His way to the slaughter? He can make no objection; this is the hour of meekness. He doesn't try to defend Himself; He doesn't use His hands to offend, and not even to remove the twisted crown of thorns, so cruelly placed on His head, as if it could kill His holy thoughts. His hands are inert, surrendered, disarmed; yet still so steeped in passion.

***In the fourth sorrowful mystery we contemplate the hands of the carpenter from Nazareth carrying the Cross***

His hands knew the feel of wood; He could tell a tree by the texture and colour of its bark and pulp. The smell of it would tell Him whether it was a maple, a walnut, an ash, or else. An expert carpenter; he learnt the trade from His father, Joseph.

Who knows which tree the Cross, now oppressing His shoulders, belonged to! Perhaps Jesus had understood. For us it was an unknown tree, planted by an unknown person, destined to become the banner and throne of a King, whose Name would resound from one end of the earth to the other. Upon that wood was placed a plaque with His initials: I.N.R.I. (Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews)

"*When I shall be raised above the ground, I will draw everyone to me,*" He had said one day, but now this has become harsh reality. A voice whispers in His heart: one more step, you've nearly made it; hold on to this blessed wood which sprouted from the earth for You, Son of David. Your hands suffer for the hardness of the wood, and Your Heart for the hardness of hearts. As a tree trunk ripped out of the ground, let Yourself be consumed for their sake and the warmth of Your Love will save them.

He has reached the top. It is nearly over. ***In the fifth sorrowful mystery we contemplate the hands of Jesus nailed to the Cross***

Stretched out, bleeding, nailed to the Cross... It is done. Man, in his arrogance, has managed to immobilize God, and he hasn't understood that God-Jesus was born to give him freedom. Yet man did not want to understand it that day when he thought his thirst for power was being threatened; threatened by the One whose only proposal was to don the weapons of humility: *No, we can't run the risk. There's no time to lose.. We must stop those hands!*

And man still doesn't understand. Poor man, still he doesn't know that **all mankind is being lifted up to the Father** by those open Hands of the High Priest, by the Immolated Lamb, the spotless Lamb. With His blood He washes our sin; and Mary, directly beneath Him, receives every drop.

*Stefania Consoli*

## “Extraordinary” gifts

by Fr. Tomislav Vlasic



**If you wish to advance in the spirit** it is important that you keep in mind what is **essential** to your journey, and to its unfolding. Each of us has been created in the image and likeness of God, and it is this particular

identity of ours that the Lord desires maturing so we can enter into a living relationship with Him. We are similar to a flower bud which, irrigated with the Grace of God's Love, develops according to His plans. Each of us grows and matures at his own rate, to his own degree, but the important thing is that we know how to journey with security towards the essential so that our lives (and God's plans for our lives) reach fulfilment.

**In a spiritual journey it often happens that people place importance on extraordinary experiences.** What is extraordinary for man, however, is not necessarily extraordinary for God. And, indeed, an extraordinary experience does not imply that one will automatically go to heaven. Instead, it can even be an obstacle. Thus, we must be careful not to allow what we think is extraordinary to dim what is extraordinary for God; and keep in mind that for God the most extraordinary thing is the life of the Holy Trinity in us.

Giving ourselves over to **extraordinary experiences can easily turn faith into “cheap devoutness.”** Chasing after extraordinary experiences is a bit like donning a spiritual mask which hides immature and unfulfilled people, and even people who don't really desire converting. And this is all very risky.

**In his first letter to the Corinthians, St. Paul writes to tell us of “the excellent way.”** the Way of God's Love, of a Love which is greater than any human love. And whilst it is made up of many “extraordinary things,” we can't forget that divine love is pure harmony, perfection, omnipotence. Paul writes: *“Love is patient and kind, love is not jealous or boastful; it is not arrogant or rude. Love does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrong, but rejoices in the right. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends”* (1 Co 13:4-8).

**In St. Paul's description of love** we see a harmonious and fulfilled person, one who is immersed in God's Spirit. All these expressions of love are nothing more than the fruits of the Holy Spirit which in us become grace. I recall an experience which was very meaningful for me. Jelena was little at the time, and she had had an encounter with Our Lady. In an inner vision, Jelena saw a flower. All its petals were fresh, sound and intact; the flower was beautiful. Our Lady then said to her: *“See, when a soul is like this flower, when all the virtues within the soul are fresh, sound and intact, Satan cannot pick that flower; no one can, because that flower belongs entirely to Jesus.”*

**If a person allows God to be the only**

**essential “thing” within his soul,** then God is free to direct any experience according to need and to the rhythm and mission of the individual. The person need only remain open, like Mary, to accept all that God grants, and take part in His initiative by allowing God to promote in him His will and action.

**Instead, concentrating too much on extraordinary experiences** (according to human criteria) it easily happens that our faculties get locked into that direction and we use them to satisfy our desires. It thus happens that Satan steals into our ego and he bites at the flower of our life, removing from it freshness and harmony, and making it wither. **Holy Scripture helps us understand even better.** In St. Peter's second letter we read: *“His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us to His own glory and excellence, by which He has granted to us His precious and very great promises, that through these you may escape from the corruption that is in the world because of passion, and become partakers of the divine nature.”*

**God, then, has foreseen that each of us should enter to take part in His divine nature.**

St. Peter, continues: *“For this very reason make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love. For if these things are yours and abound, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For whoever lacks these things is blind and shortsighted and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins. Therefore, brethren, be ever more zealous to confirm your call and election, for if you do this you will never fall; so there will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord.”* (2 Pt 3-11)

**What is extraordinary?** The Resurrection of Jesus Christ is extraordinary, and His Ascension, through which He took up to the Father our human nature. Extraordinary is the Assumption into Heaven of the Blessed Virgin Mary, which immersed Her - body and soul - into the life of the Holy Trinity.

This is the way for us all to take. **On this way, our greatest ideal is Mary Most Holy.** In the Gospel, in apparitions, and in mystical experiences, Mary's manifestations are never “extraordinary” contrary to what men would expect, but are marked by simplicity, and she is ever humble and obedient. At the heart of her manifestations there is always God, and Mary is forever His servant.

Our Lady desires introducing us into an ever more complete relationship with God, so that we too might have the fullness of life, that same fullness which one day made her chant: *“My soul magnifies the Lord...”* **It is very important that our spirituality should take on this simple and vital characteristic,** so that our prayer can become life, and our life can be prayer, and so that through both we are led to communion with God. If we live this way, day by day will unfold before us true miracles, and we will understand that there is nothing more extraordinary than a God who has decided to live within every man's heart.

## News from the blessed land

### Fr Ljubo: *Our Lady was here before me!*

**Fr. Ljubo Kurtovic** substituted Fr. Slavko in his various tasks, including commenting the monthly message and encountering pilgrims who visit the Shrine. From a recording of one these meetings (thanks to Alberto Bonifacio), we have made a summary of the most important points, which help us understand the presence of Mary, today, amongst her children.

“Our Lady came here long before I did ... in fact, She came over 22 years ago. And of course Medjugorje today is quite different to what it was then. Our Lady, however, has remained the same, just as her motherly love has remained the same.. also her words have remained the same. But we can, and must change and improve.

#### **Seeing Our Lady wouldn't mean we'd believe more**

The visionaries see Our Lady as a three-dimensional person. They can touch her, feel her, speak to her, just the way we do with each other. Seeing Our Lady with the eyes is certainly a grace, a great gift, but when the visionaries asked the *Gospa* why she doesn't appear to everyone, she replied with a biblical passage: *“Happy are those who will believe without having seen”* (Jn 20:29). We might think that seeing Her would make us believe more, but faith isn't given through the eyes. It is received by the heart and spirit. One can meet, experience and even love Our Lady more deeply without seeing her with the eyes.

#### **In Medjugorje Our Lady doesn't reveal anything new**

She doesn't satisfy our curiosity; she doesn't foretell the future; she doesn't frighten us. She simply calls us. Medjugorje today is a striking sign that God is seeking man, because man needs God. Medjugorje is the voice of the God of Eden who says to Adam: *“Where are you? Man, why do you hide from me? Why are you afraid of me?”* Thus we must not expect to learn something new here; but we ought to begin to live by what we already know.

Some say that Christianity today is in crisis. This isn't true. Not Christianity, but Christians are in crisis. Christianity is not an ideology, it is a Person. And to those who say that Christianity has aged and has nothing to say to this world, I say that in reality Christianity hasn't been discovered yet; its strength - Jesus' strength - hasn't been discovered yet. Jesus repeats to all Christians what He said to Philip: *“I've been with you for so long, and you still don't know me!”* Our Lady came here so Christians could come to know Jesus better, because it is through knowing Him better that we can know ourselves better.

#### **God and Our Lady have come to look for us because They love us**

Generally, we pray to God, but I would dare say that God also prays, or beseeches us. Through Our Lady, here today, God urges us to believe in Him and to love Him, because just as we need God's Love, He too

needs our love, our heart and our trust.

If some of Our Lady's messages aren't attractive, it's because she came here to disturb us, to make us move onto the way of salvation and of life; and the way she shows us isn't an easy wide tarred road, but is stoney, rough and narrow.

***Our Lady's apparitions: not an invention, not a fantasy***

The Bible shows us how our faith is founded on apparitions. The Bible is full of apparitions, visions, revelations... The only difference between Lourdes, Fatima and Medjugorje is that Mary is appearing here today. I don't know where she'll appear tomorrow. I think, in fact, that a Mother cannot remain silent and immobile. Our Lady was assumed into Heaven, but that doesn't mean she "retired." The love that she has for each of us urges her to come amongst us and speak to us.

***God gave us everything He asks for everything***

The enthusiasm of the early days, and even the first years of the apparitions was very intense, which is only natural. It's easy to be enthusiastic for a day, a week, or even a month or year, but we must grow and mature, and make every effort to fight the battle. Life is a long battle. Spiritual life in particular demands great effort: we must fight if we wish to remain on the way that leads us to God. For this battle Our Lady gives us efficacious instruments which we must know how to use... Even if we read all Our Lady's messages, but if we don't pay heed to them what good would they bring us?



***The messages are a little repetitive***

One often hears this being said, and it's true. I, too, was tempted to ask Our Lady for something else, something sensational, or something new, but then I understood that the problem wasn't the message, but me and my selfish heart. I wanted Our Lady to resolve what I was supposed to resolve. Messages are like signals that show the way, but if we sit back, resting up against one of the road signs we'll never reach our destination. No one can substitute us, no one can live for us, no one can suffer or die for us. Each of us is called to respond personally to God, and to say to Him "yes" or "no."

***God wants everything from us; He is very demanding***

God wants everything from us, because He gave everything to us. He gave us all of Himself, all His love, and His life, and from us He wants everything. How does one meet God? All it takes is to desire meeting Him. Once a disciple went to his spiritual guide and asked: "How can I meet God? I've read many books, and I've been round the world, but I didn't find Him." His guide led him to a river and pushed his head under water, holding it firmly down. The youth tried in vain to free himself. When the guide let go he asked: "What was your greatest desire whilst you were under water?" to which the youth replied, "Air." The guide responded: "When your desire for God is as great, you will surely meet Him."

We cannot deceive our soul. Our soul seeks God because it came out of the hands and heart of God, and when it can't perceive His presence it emits signs of nervousness and bewilderment. You only need to acknowledge these signs, for our soul cries out within us; and when a soul is undernourished it seeks its food, and its food is God.

***Our Lady asks of us strong faith***

She calls us to a faith which is not autosuggestion, because faith means opening the door to someone, it means opening the door of our heart. Fear is contrary to faith. At times even amongst believers we find someone who fears the past, the future, sickness, the number 13, a black cat, etc. This happens when faith is weak. A weakening faith makes room for superstition, and this makes Christians look totally ridiculous.

If I am not close to God, I will be afraid of everything. But if your God is all powerful, what should you fear? Everything is in His hands: every moment of history, the entire universe, including your life and your death.

However, as St. Augustine says: "God created us without us, but He doesn't want to save us without us," without our "yes." Many people, upon coming to Medjugorje, say they find peace and are able to pray better, and the problem begins when they return home; but Our Lady is always the same, whether you are in Africa, America, Italy, or Medjugorje. You see, we are the ones who change: maybe we stay with God five or ten minutes, or an hour, but then we leave Him in the church while we go back to living out our daily lives.

***Why pray? God needs my heart***

Prayer is nourishment for our faith. The more I pray, the more I believe. The two things go together. Prayer is only a means, not the scope. Praying for the sake of praying doesn't make sense, because God doesn't need my prayer. God needs my heart, my life; He needs me. It is easier to give God one's prayer than one's heart. Prayer is an instrument which tills and aerates the soil. If prayer is absent from my life, then there is no space in it for God to enter. God knows how to wait, and when He meets me He doesn't ask: "What have you done? Why did you sin? Where have you been?", but rather: "Do you believe in Me? Do you love Me?" God isn't interested in our sins, but in us!

***Mary approaches us with great respect***

She doesn't force us; she doesn't insist, and she never says: "you must", but: "I bow down before your freedom." If we think it is better to sin, we can sin. No one can force us not to sin, no one can impede us. In each sin there is a reality which we find attractive, or promising. No sin is ugly on the exterior, but it gives you little and in the end it takes everything from you, catching you in a net from which you can be freed only through God's Grace.

***Medjugorje: world's confessional***

Our Lady calls us, above all, to confession. In fact, it is said that Medjugorje

is the world's confessional. Today, confession is going through a period of crisis because people have lost the awareness of sin, so they think that if God doesn't exist, sin doesn't exist either.

Sin is a spiritual reality which influences our relationships, our very life. We see its consequences, but we can't see how it is the cause of our nervousness and restlessness which sin provokes. That's why confessionals are empty and psychiatric clinics are full, because neglecting man's spirit and heart means to neglect his whole person.

Our soul is like a glass pane. When the sun shines on the glass pane all its stains become evident. The same happens with our soul and heart when God's light (grace) shines on it. That is why the greatest saints always felt they were the biggest sinners. Theirs wasn't an act of humility, but the plain truth, as they had a much better vision of themselves.

***Our Lady speaks to us in a simple way, as a mother would***

Mary loves us, and she suffers with us. She suffers when I suffer, and she is sorrowed if I do not take her seriously, when I don't pay heed to her, or when I distance myself from her. Her messages may seem simple and even banal, but she didn't come to give us intellectual or theological lessons. She came to speak to us with simple words, with the words of a mother. In a family where the children are on the right way, parents don't need to speak, to repeat, to counsel. Instead, when the children take a wrong way parents never tire of correcting them. The same happens in the world: if everything is okay, there is no need of Our Lady's apparitions. They are, therefore, a sign of our times, a sign that God wants to tell us something. Through Our Lady's apparitions God is bowing down over us even before we turn to Him. St. John the apostle says: "Not we have loved God, but God has loved us" (1 Jn 4:10).

***With Jesus in Her arms***

Sr. Emmanuel reports how Our Lady appeared to **Mirjana** (on the 2nd Jan.) with the Child Jesus in Her arms. "Our Lady has always appeared with the Child Jesus in her arms on the night of Christmas. For the first time, after 22 years, she has appeared with the Child Jesus in her arms on a day which is not Christmas Day.

Mary held Jesus out in front of herself so His gaze could embrace all those present. When Mirjana came to herself again after the ecstasy, she was moved by the event and wrote the message down immediately: "Today I bring you my Son, your God. Open your hearts so that you can receive Him and carry Him with you. Receive the happiness and peace that He offers you. Thank you for responding to my call."

\* **She had given him a kidney.** On the 4th February, the brother of the visionary Marija, Andrija Pavlovic, returned to the Lord. He was 47 years old. Marija and husband Paolo arrived from Italy for the funeral. In 1988 Marija saved his life by donating him one of her kidneys.  
Sr. Emmanuel

## A Fresh Clear Spring

The cold air bites into your skin when you get out of the car after arriving in the village of Herzegovina; with your heart full of expectation. The *bora* - that strong gusty wind of the Balkans - blows away every particle of dust, making the air clear, dry and glistening. Just one breath and you realize that you have reached the spring of something that gushes out, limpid and chaste. Not the weather conditions, however, create this sensation. No, it is the certainty in one's heart that the **Heart of the Mother, most pure and Immaculate, here in Medjugorje, is open.** Her Heart is a spring which pours out its water; it is fresh spring water, gushing impetuously; it mitigates every scorching heart and every parching thirst.

Having to live in the relentless mechanism of society which produces and consumes in a frenzy, one gets the sensation of being caught up in a whirlpool by the many things which require our attention, time and energy. In return we feel poisoned by life, which is ever so demanding and polluted. We busy ourselves to follow goals that make us age precociously, devoiding us of vitality and life's true meaning. We rush "to get it all done" and then we realize that perhaps many things weren't necessary, but were imposed on us by a system which lives only for appearances and consumption.

**That is why it is so important to come here to this precious Spring of Grace..** to be fortified and cleansed. We must allow it to cleanse us of all that steals its way into the folds of our being and spirit and which burdens and suffocates us.

Particularly now at the end of winter there aren't many pilgrims about, and Medjugorje can be enjoyed all the more. There is calm and silence, children going to school and returning home, men repairing roofs, women busy with their daily chores, and smoking chimneys: a sign that inside there is a fire, around which the family moves and rests. There is the strong odour of dried meat, cheeks turned red by the cold, souvenir shops closed, the deafening sound of a hammer. All these things whisper to our heart: **it is here that Mary lives:** in the ordinariness and simplicity of a normal life. She doesn't want to be seen with the eyes, but desires living in us, looking with our eyes, speaking with our tongue, praying with our heart.

She came from Heaven to make our lives more beautiful, by filling them with Love, by bringing us the **Grace of which Mary is full**, which would make us immaculate like her. It is only in this inner transparency which she donates to us that we can live without feeling anxious and whilst still bearing the sufferings which often accompany life. The Mother teaches us to lift ourselves with naturalness above our human condition and to face everything with a spirit that knows how to look beyond, with a mind that comprehends beyond reason, with a body that though it is destined to perish knows it will one day be assumed into eternity, just as she was. Mary, assumed into heaven, is present today on the earth.

I climb the hill to go and thank her and to return the embrace she made me feel on my arrival. As companions I have only the stones, trampled on by a multitude of people over these years of apparitions. There is no need to pray, or to think.. The air I breathe is my prayer; the sun which warms me as I walk is my thought. I simply keep on climbing as I go to meet my Queen who awaits me.

A statue indicates the place where the Virgin appeared on many occasions. Around her there are two.. three.. four people, immersed in secret conversation with their Mother. Rosary beads slip slowly through their fingers. I choose a stone to sit on, and fall happily into Mary's embrace

A list of names begins to slowly and silently unfold before me, bringing to mind the needs, sorrows and desires of many, known and unknown. I offer them to Mary while remaining silent. It is then that from the Spring – in which I have placed my heart – Grace begins to gush forth. Irrepressible, like a river in flood, it rushes through my soul and begins to flow out in all directions.

Beauty cannot be restrained; it spreads out on its own. Inebriated by its purity, I remain a little longer in this heavenly embrace, and discover how I, too, can become a fountain of peace and blessing.

*Stefania Consoli*

## Gospa's 'voice' via Radio

**Radio Mir Medjugorje has begun transmitting live via satellite.** The prayer and liturgical programme can now be heard by friends of the Gospa in Europe, the near East and Africa. **Radio Mir Medjugorje is fruit of Our Lady's apparitions**, and is at the service of the faithful, of the Church, of society and of the numerous pilgrims. It has so far offered consolation and hope to the many who are isolated, poor, or who have suffered the consequences of the war which recently devastated our regions.

**Every evening (at 5 pm) the radio transmits live from St. James the evening programme (Rosary, Mass, Adoration).** Our radio is not financed by organizations (state or other) but lives on God's providence and on what friends of the Gospa generously donate. So far the radio has survived thus.

Transmission via satellite (a service requested of us by pilgrims) obviously entails many more costs. For this reason we are for the first time asking for help to support this project. Only with your help will we be able to reach you and your continent. Donate to: Informativni centar MiR Medjugorje, Zagrebacka banka BH, D.D. Mostar, Swift: ZABA BA 22, 7100-48-06-027746

When donating please supply your full name (or name of the institution). We thank you in advance for donations, even the smallest, and for your support. We entrust you to the prayers and intercession of the Queen of Peace.

*Fr. Mario Knezovic, ofm (Director)*

How to find us: Satellite HOT BIRD 6, Position: 13 E, Transponder No. 90, Reception frequency: 12 520 MHz, Polarization: Y (vertical), Symbol rate: 27 500, FEC 3/4

**"Return to your initial fervour"**

## Importance of the Heart in Mary's Messages

(Part II)

As at Fatima, also at Medjugorje, Our Lady urges us to **Consecrate ourselves to Her Immaculate Heart**, attributing a decisive value to this spiritual passage, almost as though it were a compulsory way upon which we receive the fullness of the special graces God is offering to the world in this time: *"Consecrate yourselves to my Immaculate Heart. Surrender yourselves completely to me and I will protect you and pray to the Holy Spirit to pour forth (His gifts) upon you..."* (Message 2/8/83); *"I desire that every family should consecrate itself every day to the Heart of Jesus and to my Immaculate Heart"* (19/10/83); *"Lift up fervent supplications to my Heart and the Heart of my Son, and you will receive every grace. Consecrate yourselves to us"* (2.7.83).

**But what is the meaning, in full, of this special consecration** so important to Mary? (And to which some no doubt object, asking if anything can possibly be added to the fundamental baptismal consecration saying that it is the source and beginning of every perfect grace.)

**Our Lady herself, gives us the answer:** *"In particular, my Children, I would like to bring you closer to the Heart of Jesus. Thus, my Children, I am calling you today to pray to my beloved Son, that all your hearts may be His. I also invite you to consecrate yourselves to my Immaculate Heart. I desire that you consecrate yourselves as individuals, as families and as Parishes, so that all might belong to God through my hands"* (25/10/1988); *"I invite all those who have said 'yes' to me to renew their consecration to my Son Jesus, to His Heart, and to me, so that we might use you even more effectively as instruments of peace in this world without peace."* (25/04/1992).

**Our Lady, in fact, offers herself in this time in a special way to the Most High:** *"I am aflame with love and I suffer for each of you"* (20/11/1984). Mary offers herself so that each of her children might ever more intimately partake of the same Life that sets her motherly Heart so aflame with divine love, and so that all might be fully associated to the great mission of hers which is to be co-redeemers, so that the Life of the Son might be regenerated in the souls of our brothers and sisters and in the entire universe. *"I am your mother; and I desire for your hearts to be similar to my Heart"* (25/11/1994); *"Dear Children, help my Heart to triumph in a world of sin"* (25/09/1991).

**Mary, the only creature perfectly united to the Heart of the Son**, never ceases to "consecrate herself to God, that we too may be consecrated in Truth" (cf. Jn 17:19), beseeching the Father to make each of her children true *companions of the Lamb* (cf. Rev 14:4), and in His Heart they are perfectly united to His regal offering for the salvation of all creation: *"... people who at the moment of Jesus' sacrifice at the altar are ready to join Him and become with Him a sacrifice for the world's salvation"* (08/11/1984).

**This same meaning can be read in the well-known prayers of consecration to the Hearts of Jesus and Mary, which Jelena received as a child when the prayer group was first formed: “.. through your Heart, make all men love one another.. oh good Jesus, make us open our hearts up to You at least in the moment when we remember Your Passion suffered for us.. may the flame of your Heart, o Mary, descend upon all mankind... impress in our hearts true love” (27-28.11.83).**

**This helps us understand the profound meaning of the great Marian apparitions** at the end of the millennium at Lourdes and Fatima, and of the extraordinarily long presence of the Queen of Peace in the world at the present time. In fact, in a message given to the visionary Mirjana, Our Lady said that even after the apparitions [which would be the last ones granted to the world: “..then, I will not appear anymore in the world; **these are my last apparitions**” (02/05/1982)] she would continue to remain with us with her Heart: “Consecrate your heart to God and make of it the abode of God! May God live in it forever! My eyes and my Heart will be here even when I appear no longer” (18.03.96).

**In her Heart, however, is present the entire heavenly Church.** The real and physical presence of Mary (of whom the Council proclaims: “..in heaven Mary is glorified body and soul .. she is the image and the beginning of the Church whose conclusion is set for a time in the future, with the Lord’s return”) is surely a sign of the “new heavens and new earth” (Rev 21:1) and a sign of the transfiguration of the world foretold by Scripture (2 Pt 3:13; Rev 2:1-27), which for divine disposition, will have its realization in the triumph of the Immaculate Heart of the Mother, as was revealed at Fatima.

**The meaning of this special consecration,** to which Our Lady continues to invite us, **is thus seen more clearly.** She wants to attract us to her Immaculate Heart so that our communion with the heavenly Church is alive and total; so we can commune with the new Jerusalem that in her and through her already “comes down out of heaven from God, and is adorned for her Spouse” (Rev 21:2) and is already present in the Heart of Mary who appears to us, so that also our hearts might be “dwellings of God amongst men” (Rev 21:3).

**Thus, a new and great horizon opens before us** helping us to see the value of **Mary’s call to offer one’s life** through her Immaculate Heart for the world’s salvation: a cornerstone of the message of all her apparitions. It is a call to open oneself and receive in full God’s pure Love, and to be fully united - within the Mother’s Heart - to the only Love present in the heavenly Jerusalem, in a live and definite communion with the Church of the angels and saints.

**In this time the inhabitants of Heaven wish to be united to us** and live in us; they desire us to totally partake of the life and glory of God which they already enjoy, for the long-awaited fulfilment of “the mystery of His will, according to His purpose which he set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in Him, things in heaven and things on earth” (Eph 1:10).

*Giuseppe Ferraro*



In her messages Our Lady has always stressed the importance of Lent as a favourable time of Grace and conversion. In particular, to the Prayer Group, through Jelena, She said: “*Make a firm decision to do something particular this Lent. I would like to give you some ideas. During this time try every day to correct a bad habit, by not committing one of your most frequent weaknesses or shortcomings, such as a quick-temper, impatience, laziness, gossiping, disobedience, refusal of disagreeable people.*”

*If you are unable to put up with someone who is proud, you must try to approach that person. Show him that humility is worth more than pride. Every day, then, meditate upon yourselves, and within your hearts try to find what needs changing, the weak point to overcome, the bad habits to eliminate. You must make every effort to do this. You must sincerely desire that this Lent be spent in love. That way you will be closer to me and to the heavenly Father. You will be happier, and also those around you will be happier.”*

## **The Battle in the Desert teaches man to love**

*by Jelena Vasilj*

**The desert has long been traditionally meaningful for Christians.** From as far back as the first centuries in Egypt, Syria and Palestine, and later in Asia Minor, and then in Italy, France and in Ireland the Church has given us great men and women, lovers of the desert. From the beginning they have been known as *anchorites* (or *anachorets*), a word of Greek origin which means a person who withdraws from the world for religious reasons, to a secluded place such as a desert.

When we feel our spiritual lives are being threatened, we feel the need to withdraw into an inner desert. Yet, when we are in the desert (far from where we think the danger is) we are surprised to find that we are in the middle of the battle. Actually, the “fathers of the desert” chose the desert not to escape from what they couldn’t stand out of their own weakness, but to be immersed in the real battle.

Instead, our battle is often camouflaged, and takes the form of fake combat, which is only a sign of our lack of will to fight our real enemies: the powers of evil. St. Paul calls them. If the Fathers chose the desert it was because it offers no forms of consolation, which would otherwise slow down, if not completely halt, our spiritual growth.

**What is this true battle which a person feels it needs to face once it has finally become aware of the need to raise itself to the high peaks of spiritual life?** St. Augustine comes to our aid with these beautiful words: “Meanwhile, my brothers, it is difficult that we can succeed in living without disagreements. We are called to live in harmony; we have been commanded to be at peace with everyone. All of us must make every effort and engage all our energies to attempt to reach, in the end, the more complete peace; yet we argue especially with the ones upon whom we pour our kindness. When

there is one who errs, you want to lead him back to the straight way; he offers resistance, and you argue. At times, when one is tired of the fight, one says: who makes me do this, to keep on putting up with those who oppose me and who render bad for good? I want to help them, but they want to get lost. I spend my life arguing, I’m never at peace, and furthermore I make enemies of the very ones who ought to be friends, if they took into account the care I have for them. Why should I put up with all this? I want to withdraw from it all; stay on my own, take care only of myself and invoke my God.

**Yes, seek refuge within yourself, and you will find the fight within yourself as well.** If you have begun to follow God, in you there will be the fight. Which fight? The flesh has contrary desires to those of the spirit, and the spirit contrary desires to those of the flesh (cf. Gal 5:17). Now here you are, all alone, alone with yourself; you don’t have to put up with anybody, but you see in your limbs another law which contrasts the law of your spirit, which tends to enslave you to the law of the sin that is in your limbs. So lift up your voice, and amid the fight that is within you, cry out to God, that He might put you at peace with yourself...”

St. Augustine is right when he says: *If you have begun to follow God, in you there will be the fight.* It must be present. However, if I fight alone against the others, it means that in my spiritual life I am still finding excuses so as not to face the real battle which is within me. This, of course, isn’t to justify the way others behave, but he who follows the way of holiness must examine his own love which is never to be offended.

**This is why he must go into himself and look at how he is before his God.** A person might gain from being near others who are holy, but this doesn’t mean that he is growing in holiness. The call of the desert is thus an invitation to view one’s inner house, not to view the conversion of others, but to view especially one’s own, because if a person doesn’t understand he is sick and never goes to the doctor, he has little chance of being healed. There is the risk of closing up into oneself, but this risk disappears when the reason behind the desire to “journey” is love, since this journey of the heart is a road which leads to (the love of) neighbour. However, it must not be undertaken out of curiosity. If this were the case the soul would only lose itself in the illusion that it were “open.” Such a soul might be open, but it would also be empty, because its curiosity for others’ business would only make it lose time.

**The scope of the desert is therefore perfect love.** It is founded on the courage not to entrust oneself to the numerous “crutches” of the spiritual life which permit one to face the difficulties in loving: these are the excesses and attachments to many things and even to people that we turn to in order to be comforted - almost as if they were drugs.

**Attach yourself, therefore, to Grace.** We must have the courage to seek comfort in Jesus and to be His outstretched arms for the others. So **with our hearts and souls open up to life,** let us ask Mary for the grace of being in love with God’s will, and that we may be servants for the realization of God’s project of love, conceived in the eternity of His Son, for the sake of mankind, and which He desires fulfilling through our love. \* \*

## Our Readers Write...

**Sr. Maria Luisa, Israel:** Echo is a prize from Our Heavenly Mother, because this land of Jesus, at war and under attack, is almost a desert, and our hearts are wounded. We trust in the Blessed Virgin's love, and in the power she received from the Eternal Father to defeat the devil who roams the world trying to destroy it..

**Theresa B C Kapilikisha, Zambia:** Echo is a wealth of information and a source of encouragement for my poor faith. It is a big inspiration to me. God bless you.

**Ebere C. M. Onweh, Nigeria:** I really enjoy reading your Echo and Our Lady's wonderful messages. I share them with community members (who thirst for more inspiring articles).

**Fr. Mathew M. sj, Kerala, India:** Thank you for sending me the Echo. I (use it to) write (also) in Malayalam to further spread the messages of the Queen of Peace to the people here. I offer a Holy Mass for your intentions.

**J. & D. Ryan, Australia:** May Our Lord and His Blessed Mother bring you many blessings. We have been married 54 years. We have been receiving Echo for years and look forward to reading it.

**E. O'Sullivan, South Australia:** Your newsletter is a blessing. May Our Blessed Mother bless you all!

**B. Kelleher, England:** A thousand "thank you's" for the Echo: a mini retreat six times a year. Enclosed is my contribution.. God bless.

**Chief S. U. Awazie, Nigeria:** I am writing to thank you for the blessing of God which reaches me and my family through your publication. We distribute them amongst friends who benefite from it.

**Paula Kuemper, Canada:** I look forward to receiving the Echo of Mary. It is very enlightening. Please keep up the good work.

**Maria Zeollo, England:** Dear Friends, it is with much affection that I send my little donation to thank you for the Echo.

**H. Pastorino, Uruguay:** May Our Lord bless you through the intercession of Mary, Queen of Peace for your Echo!

**Sr. Juanita Borbon, Costa Rica:** Thank you so much for all the news you give us on our Queen. I don't know how I always receive it, but I do, and I am so grateful. May I ask for a prayer for our street children...

**Julia Zimmermann Llosa, Peru:** Beloved, thank you for sending Echo! Reading it does me so much good and the articles are always interesting. I make copies and send them to friends who give them out at prisons and hospitals. May Jesus bless you for your wonderful work and may He multiply it..

**M. Isabel Badilla, Argentina:** Heartfelt thanks for sending me the Echo. I've been receiving it for seven years for our prayer group. We are enriched by Echo. We are collecting donations to send you. We are poor, but we are happy to do it for Our Lady who helps us so much. I have always loved Mary, even as a little child. I called our prayer group "Mary Queen of Peace" since she comes to our house through your paper.

**Susana Cappa, Argentina:** I've been receiving Echo for several years, and it is

always a great joy when it arrives. I photocopy it and give it to friends and acquaintances. Thank you for all you do for the Blessed Virgin Mary, our Mother.

**Asuncion Peña, Barcelona, Spain:** Thank you for your Echo. It is so rich in content and news about dear Medjugorje. I receive it so gladly and read it with profit. When I can I share it with others. May the Lord Jesus fill you with His best graces, and give you the strength to carry on with this great work which was begun by dear Fr. Angelo.

**Fr. Domenico, Mexico:** Thank you so much for the Echo you've been sending over the years to our mission.. and for serving the Queen of Peace, that the Triumph of Her Immaculate Heart and the promise of peace for humanity made at Fatima might be fulfilled.

Our mission was built in 1987 and dedicated to the Queen of Peace. At the entrance is a beautiful image of Our Lady of Medjugorje with the writing "MIR" on it. The image is inspiration for all who enter our house who inevitably ask what "mir" means. I wait for that question to tell them about the apparitions of Our Lady at Medjugorje.

Echo reaches various people in the 33 communities of our parish. The ministers of the Word share it with the people. The Legion of Mary awaits it anxiously to be recharged in the spirit and carry on with their apostolate. I read it with great interest and devotion and I assure you that your paper arrives as far as here and it touches hearts. Thank you for being precious instruments in the hands of Mary who comes to offer us Jesus' peace.

**Genevieve Gamel, France:** It is with great joy that I read your paper which teaches us and fortifies us in the faith.

**Sr. M. Anne Lea, France:** Thank you for the wonderful reading in Echo. It does us so much good and day after day it renews in us the desire to follow Christ with the help of His Mother.

**Chantal Delevet, France:** Together with my donation, I send my deepest gratitude for your holy and wonderful publication.

**ECHO FOR THE BLIND - In France**  
Echo is recorded on cassette for the blind, who can thus nourish their souls by listening to the voice of our translator who generously provides this service. Their letters, at times very moving, show us how **our publication in audio version** is anxiously awaited and meditated upon; and it is often read at gatherings. "I hope that reading this might inspire some other *apostles* to do the same for the other language editions of Echo," writes our translator Yvonne.

**Marie:** I'm 85 years old, and I can no longer read Echo, but I pass around the cassettes to others with sight impairment.

**Monique:** Since 1988 my husband and I have been going on an annual pilgrimage to Medjugorje. Listening to your cassettes helps us to experience that blessed land all year long.

**Fr. Francesco:** By chance, while paying a visit, I came across your cassettes and I immediately made a copy to take with me. I would like to receive several of these to share amongst the blind residents of the House where I am chaplain. \* \*

**Emanuelita Rossi Candiago, Argentina,** writes to give thanks for the packets of Echo

in Italian and Spanish which she shares with her family, friends, students and former students who eagerly receive it. "Thank you also for the blessed rosary beads and the holy images which you recently sent us. I handed them out at my catechism class. The children were so eager to have one, but quite a few were left empty-handed. I don't suppose you have any more? The problem is that I don't think anyone will ever be able to donate.. the middle class doesn't exist anymore.. many are poor."

**\*\* (Rosary beads can be mailed to Emanuelita R. Candiago, CC 12 (Ortiz de Rosas y 118), 1980 Brandsen Bs.As., Argentina)**

**\*\* More Requests for Rosary beads, medals, holy images:** 1. Moses Ekene, 6 Nimota St., Sari Iganmu, Orile, Lagos, Nigeria. 2. "For abandoned children and youth": Director, Jose R. D. Castrillon, Carrera 33 C n 35-40 Piso 2, Barrio La Primavera, Cali, Colombia. 3. Mrs Theresia A. Missanga, Au-Olmea Mission, P.O. Box 5858, Asmara, Eritrea

**Marian Conference Scotland:** 21-23 May 2004. Main speaker Kathleen Martin.

**48 hours of thanksgiving** with Milona de Rambures (von Hapsburg) for the 23 years with Our Lady, 9-11 July 2004.

**Youth Festival Scotland:** 1-4 July 2004. Contact Craig Lodge, Dalmally, Argyll, Scotland. 01838 200216

## Anniversary of Fr. Angelo's death



It was the **3rd March 2000** when Fr. Angelo Mutti passed on to eternal life.

Twenty years ago he began to spread the messages of Our Lady by duplicating a single type-written page for friends and parishioners who asked him for news of Medjugorje. With time it grew in quality and quantity and was being distributed to all corners of the earth. If Echo speaks in many languages it is because Fr. Angelo always wrote in the language of love which is universal and easily translated into other languages.

A humble instrument in Mary's hands, this dear priest from Mantua always blessed the publication so that hearts might be opened, not by the written words, but by the Grace which was impressed on the paper.

He continues to bless it from Heaven; and we continue to invoke that blessing of his, so that our work for the Echo might always be carried out with his same spirit of dedication and service. *The Echo team.*

**Echo is a free publication. Donations are gratefully accepted; without them we cannot continue to spread the Message to Mary's little children around the world.**

Make personal cheques payable to "Echo of Mary Association" and mail to same at: Cassella Postale 27, I-31030 Bessica Treviso, Italy.

*The Lord isn't tired of us, for He continues to send us His Mother. Let us return to Him with little, but concrete steps. Our words, then, will be powerful. May the Lord bless us.*

7 March 2004

*don Alberto*

**NEW email address: info@ecodimaria.net**

**Echo on the NET - www.ecodimaria.net**

Sped. Abb. Post. 3/70, Aut. Trib. Mant. #13-8, 11.86; Legal Dir. A. Lanzani; Printed by DIPRO Treviso