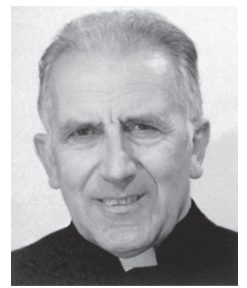




Echo of Medjugorje

July - August 2012 - Edited by: Eco di Maria, Via Cremona, 28 - 46100 Mantova (Italia) - Year 28, nr. 7-86
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Fr. Angelo Mutti
founder Echo of Medjugorje

Message of 25 May 2012:

"Dear Children, Also today I call you to conversion and to holiness. God desires giving you joy and peace through prayer but you, my children, are still distant, attached to the earth and to earthly things. Therefore, I call you anew: open your heart and your gaze towards God and the things of God, and joy and peace will reign in your hearts. Thank you for responding to my call."

Conversion and Holiness

I call you to conversion and holiness, says Mary. "Repent and believe in the Gospel," says the Lord (Mk 1:15b). The call is one and the same, since "believe in the Gospel" is equivalent to holiness of life. Though the same, they are separated by 2000 years, which is much more than the time span between the first and the present-day message by the Queen of Peace at Medjugorje. Perhaps this might make those who think Our Lady is repetitive reflect a little. Nonetheless, what counts is that we are all called to reflect on this call to **peace and joy**, both of which are characteristic of eternity and which we can experience already here on the earth!

God desires giving you joy and peace through prayer, but you, my children, are still distant, attached to the earth and earthly things. With clarity of speech we are called to soar up high, to detach ourselves from earthly things. Attachment to earthly things bogs us down, and while we think we've dominated them so we can use them, we are not aware that we have become ever more dependent on them. The illusion of finding joy in the possession and consumption of what we manage to grab hold of - things and people alike - can overwhelm both the possessor and the possession turning into objects he who bears within himself the image of God.

Open up your heart and gaze to God and to the things of God, and peace will reign in your heart, Mary urges us. Yet, "deciding for God" is all it takes to start out on the way to conversion and begin to taste peace and joy.

There is something else we cannot neglect: Mary's call to **turn our gaze and heart to God** isn't something abstract. The coming of Christ into the world sealed the Alliance between Heaven and Earth. The kingdom of God is already in our midst, even if not in all its glory, and it is up to us to help it be revealed. *All of creation ardently awaits the revelation of the children of God*



to enter into the liberty of their glory (cfr Rm 8:19-22).

Already on this earth we can - rather, we must - taste something of God's Kingdom and witness it to the world. The holiness to which Mary calls us abides on this Earth and is experienced in the amount we accept Jesus into our life, and acknowledge His presence in others. Then, joy will be true joy, and peace true peace.

Peace and joy in Jesus and Mary. §

Message, 2 June 2012 (Mirjana):

"Dear Children, I am continuously in your midst because, with my infinite love, I desire showing you the door to Heaven. I desire telling you how it is opened: Through goodness, mercy, love and peace; through my Son. Therefore, my children, do not waste time on vanities. Only knowledge of my Son's love can save you. Through that salvific love and the Holy Spirit he chose me; and I, together with him, am choosing you to be apostles of his love and will. My children, great is the responsibility upon you. I desire that by your example you help sinners regain their sight, enrich their poor souls and bring them back into my embrace. Therefore pray; pray, fast and confess regularly. If receiving my Son in the Eucharist is the centre of your life, then do not be afraid, you can do everything. I am with you. Everyday I pray for the pastors and I expect the same of you. For without their guidance, my children, and without the strengthening you receive through their blessing, you cannot go on. Thank you."

Message of 25 June 2012:

"Dear Children, With great hope in the heart, also today I call you to prayer. If you pray, my children, you are with me and you seek the will of my Son and live it. Be open and live prayer; may it be for you at every moment the savour and joy of your soul. I am with you and I intercede for all of you before my Son Jesus. Thank you for responding to my call."

Prayer is Savour and Joy for the Soul

How these words by Mary seem distant from the daily dramas lived out by individuals and peoples throughout the world. Yet, they alone are an effective medicine in a world which insists on finding salvation and well-being where it does not exist. It is the sin of the first man that still today tends to choke hope of communion and peace. It is the same old pride that still wants to resolve the problem of existence while excluding God.

When the freedom and intelligence received from God are badly handled, they become as poisons that threaten life in every form and environment, from the simplest to the most evolved. And thus it shall be till the return of Christ, that the Father shall await from man the liberal acceptance of his kingdom of peace and love. *The kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel (Mk 1:15) proclaimed Jesus at the start of his mission, and in the meantime, there is the continual growth of the number of souls of those who had been slaughtered because of the witness they bore to the word of God. They cried out in a loud voice, "How long will it be, holy and true master, before you sit in judgement and avenge our blood on the inhabitants of the earth?" ... and they were told to be patient a little while longer until the number was filled of their fellow servants and brothers who were going to be killed as they had been (Rev 6:9b-11).*

Even though the time of waiting is not over, it is not a vain time, but is useful if lived according to God's plan of love, if spent seeking the Lord's will in our lives. And this isn't impossible if we truly desire it, because the Lord Jesus will abide in us and we in him and this will be pleasing to the Father who seeks in each of us his beloved Son! This is what Mary calls us to, without ever tiring, without fear of sounding repetitive, because it is God's will. If we pray with the heart, and not just with our lips, Mary will be by our side and will intercede for us before her Son Jesus, and we will experience the scent of Heaven already on this earth, and prayer will be savour and joy for our soul. §

(Comments to messages by Nuccio Quattrocchi)

International Feast of the Family

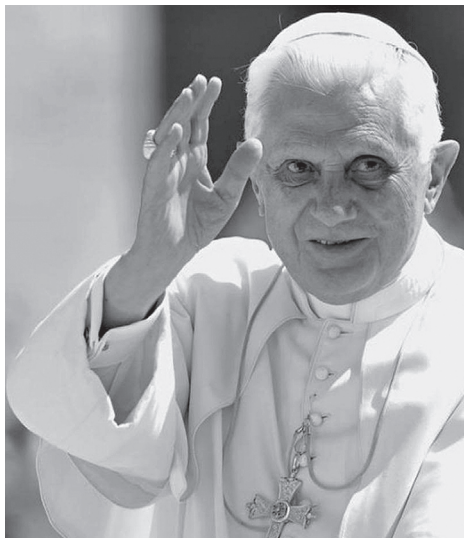
Milan 2 June 2012: *An engaged couple from Madagascar on saying how they felt both attracted by and fearful of being married "forever," received the following response by the Holy Father:*

"You mentioned several types of marriage. Even in Europe until the 19th century, there was another dominant model of marriage which was often a contract between clans, in an effort to preserve the clan, to defend one's property, and so on.

So it was partly in our countries. I remember in the small town where I went to school, it was still largely the case. But then came the emancipation of the individual, personal freedom... and marriage is no longer based on the will of others, but on one's free choice; it begins with falling in love, then there is a period of engagement and then the marriage.

In that time we were all convinced that this was the only right way and that love in itself would guarantee the 'forever', because love is absolute, and wants everything including a dominion over time. Unfortunately, reality was not so. One sees that falling in love is beautiful, but perhaps not forever, just as the feeling does not remain forever. So, we see that **the transition from falling in love to engagement and then to marriage requires several decisions** (and) inner experiences. As I said, **this feeling of love is nice, but it needs purifying**; it needs to go through a process of discernment, which involves **reason and will**; there needs to be a bond that unites reason, sentiment and will.

In the Rite of Marriage, the Church does not ask: 'Are you in love?', but: 'if you 'want', if you are 'decided'. In other words, love must become true love by involving the will and reason - during the period of engagement - in a journey of purification and deeper



understanding, so that man in his entirety: with all his capabilities, discernment of reason and will power is able to then say: 'Yes, this is the life I want.'

I often think of the wedding at Cana. The first wine is beautiful: it is the falling in love. But it does not last to the end. A second wine is required, and it must ferment and grow and mature. A definitive love that truly can become 'second wine' is more beautiful, better than the first wine. And we must try this. **It is also important that the self is not isolated, that there not be a 'you and me'**, but that there be the involvement of the Parish community, of the Church, of friends... the right communion of life with others, with families who share the same experience, the same life and same faith."

A couple from Brazil asked about those who've divorced and remarried and desire being in communion with the Lord and the Church. The Holy Father responded:

"This problem of the divorced who've remarried is one of the **great sufferings of the Church today**; and we don't have easy answers. The suffering is great and we can

only help the parishes and individuals to help these people to bear the suffering that comes with divorce. I would say that it is very important to (work on) prevention; i.e. to consider more profoundly the (process of) falling in love (so that it can evolve into) a profound and matured decision. And couples need to be accompanied during the marriage so that families are never alone but are truly accompanied along their journey.

It must also be said that these people (divorced and remarried) **are loved by the Church, but they must see and feel this love**. I think this is a great task for Parishes and Catholic communities; to do all that is possible so that they do feel loved and accepted, and not excluded, even if they cannot receive absolution and the Eucharist.

They must see how they are part of the Church. Perhaps, if it is not possible to have absolution in Confession, it would still be **a good thing if there were a permanent contact with a priest**, a spiritual guide, so they can see that they are accompanied.

Then it would also be **important that they feel that the Eucharist is real** and that they can participate by entering into communion with the Body of Christ. Even without the "corporal" reception of the Eucharist, we **can still be spiritually united to Christ in his Body**. It is important for this to be understood; that they truly find the possibility of living a life of faith, with the Word of God, in communion with the Church, and are thus able to see how their suffering is a gift for the Church, because (it serves for all) to also defend the stability of love, of Marriage. Also, that this suffering is not only physical and psychological torment, but the suffering is shared by the Church community for the great values of our faith. I think their suffering, if really accepted in the heart, is a gift to the Church. They must know this; **that in this way they can serve the Church; that they are in the heart of the Church.**" www.vatican.va/

Feast of Sts. Peter and Paul

Non prevalebunt

The destructive power of evil will not prevail over the Church which is a community of sinners, but is founded on the message of Christ

29 July 2012: "**Peter and Paul**, much as they differ from one another in human terms, and notwithstanding the conflicts that arose in their relationship, **illustrate a new way of being brothers**, lived according to the Gospel, an authentic way made possible by the grace of Christ's Gospel working within them. **Only by following Jesus does one arrive at this new brotherhood**: this is the first and fundamental message that today's solemnity presents to each one of us, the importance of which is mirrored in the pursuit of full communion, so earnestly desired by the ecumenical Patriarch and the Bishop of Rome, as indeed by all Christians.

In the passage from Saint Matthew's Gospel that we have just heard, Peter makes his own confession of faith in Jesus, acknowledging him as Messiah and Son of God. He does so in the name of the other Apostles too. In reply, the Lord reveals to him the mission that he intends to assign to him, that of being the "rock", the visible foundation on which the entire spiritual edifice of the Church is built (cf. Mt 16:16-19).

But in what sense is Peter the rock? How is he to exercise this prerogative, which naturally he did not receive for his own sake? The account given by the evangelist Matthew tells us first of all that the acknowledgment of Jesus' identity made by Simon in the name of the Twelve did not come "through flesh and blood", that is, through his human capacities, but through a particular revelation from God the Father. **By contrast**, immediately afterwards, as Jesus foretells his passion, death and resurrection, Simon Peter reacts on the basis of "flesh and blood": he "began

to rebuke him, saying, this shall never happen to you" (16:22). And Jesus in turn replied: "Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance to me ..." (16:23).

The disciple who, through God's gift, was able to become a solid rock, here shows himself for what he is in his human weakness: a stone along the path, a stone on which men can stumble - in Greek, skandalon. Here we see the tension that exists between the gift that comes from the Lord and human capacities; and in this scene between Jesus and Simon Peter we see anticipated in some sense the drama of the history of the papacy itself, characterized by the joint presence of these two elements: on the one hand, because of the light and the strength that come from on high, the papacy constitutes the foundation of the Church during its pilgrimage through history; on the other hand, across the centuries, human weakness is also evident, which can only be transformed through openness to God's action.

Pilgrimage of Charity

"After more than twenty years our little charity for the peoples of Bosnia-Herzegovina who are unable to recover after the war between peoples of the former Yugoslavia continues. Factories aren't rebuilt, so there is not work. **There are still over a hundred thousand refugees** who can't get a home, many of whom live in dilapidated structures, and are in need of everything.

The country is split between the Muslim-Croat Federation (a large Muslim majority) and the Serbian Republic of Bosnia, with two capitals, two parliaments... and a lot of corruption. Often, state employees (at municipalities, hospitals, etc.) don't receive their salaries, yet these don't rebel because they consider themselves lucky just to have a job. Often hospitals, orphanages, old-age pensioners, soup kitchens, etc. don't receive grants from the State and find it difficult to carry on. Health care is not free, so the poor are denied hospital care, medical visits, and medications.

The list could go on, but I think it is clear enough by what I have said that we must continue helping, especially since the situation is not given voice or help by anyone. So at least once a month we organize convoys of trucks and vans, thanks to the many volunteers from all over Italy, to deliver in various parts of Bosnia, mostly food, incontinence pads for the elderly, and detergents.

We stop each time at Medjugorje to spiritually recharge and to ask Mary, Queen of Peace, to accompany us as we visit the poor, and to bring also Jesus so that they might be blessed with a bit of courage and hope along with the goods. So far we've always managed to fill the vans, but donations are diminishing. For many children in extreme poverty we have organized a sponsorship scheme (30 euros per month which we deliver every three months), but there are many more children than sponsors; and there are often children or young people with serious illnesses for whom we are asked to donate money we don't have. A priest friend of ours and of Bosnia is trying to raise the extra money required by a young man from Sarajevo urgently in need of a kidney transplant.

If you wish to donate, please indicate whether for: material aid, sponsorship, or the young man from Sarajevo. May God and the Queen of Peace bless you.

www.associazioneregina dellapace.org
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From Sr. Emmanuel's Newsletter:

The Holy Family heals: The life-size Nativity Scene in our garden is visited by all types of people: some with inner suffering in need of inner peace, some who come to adore the Child Jesus, others who come to

entrust their families to the Holy Family.

Angela had come to cry. She was a wreck, overwhelmed by suffering. She had been raped at the age of three by her grandfather, and was deeply traumatized. She prayed for a long time in front of the Manger, and Our Lady wrought a great victory in her heart, for Angela was finally able to surrender her wounded heart up to God. That evening the group she was with could barely recognize her, such was the change - in fact, her face was now alight with joy, because she no longer felt she was trash and unworthy of someone's love!

Blandina, 77 years old, had lost her second child, and she was inwardly tormented by that loss since she had never accepted it. She came to the Manger, took the Child Jesus into her arms, and began to scream. Her group was rather shocked, but they began to pray for her, and Blandine gradually calmed down. When she picked up the statue of the Child Jesus she was reminded of her lost child, and all the pain surfaced in her heart, but when she lifted her eyes to the statue of Our Lady with open arms, Blandina felt the need to finally give her son up to the Blessed Mother. It was then that she began to experience peace. The bond of death that burdened her heart was finally cut. Blandina was free at last, and her heart was filled with joy and new life.

Credit: © Enfants de Medjugorje 2012

Premier of Oratorio Johannes Paulus Secundus at Mother's Village in Medjugorje

In the last times, the main battle between good and evil will occur in the field of culture - famous Canadian author Michael D. O'Brien has said.

Indeed, we too can see how evil, aggression, death and dissolution permeate throughout films, cartoons, music, art, etc. And on the other hand, there are artists (sadly ignored by the media) who attempt to promote life, love, faith and hope through their work.

Precisely such a piece is the oratorio, Johannes Paulus Secundus: an opera for soloists, chorus and orchestra, which on Friday 20th July was presented to three hundred spectators from Herzegovina and Medjugorje pilgrims, at the St. Joseph's hall in the Mother's Village.

This oratorio has already been performed fifteen times in Italy in front of about 18,000 spectators; and founder and conductor of the ArtEnsemble orchestra, Maestro Maurizio Mune, desired coming to Medjugorje for two particular reasons. First of all he came to thank Our Lady for his conversion some months earlier, which prompted him to confess after 30 years,



and secondly, to pray for the grace that his work and his music might be a form of apostolate to proclaim the Eternal Good in man and the world around us.

Fr Svet Kraljevic, director of the Mother's Village, expressed thus his gratitude: "We thank you sincerely, because there is a lot of garbage music, but this evening you showed us what real music is!" Fr Marinko Sakota, who opened the concert in the name of the parish priest of Medjugorje, also said that the arts, especially music, should reflect the beauty of the Creator.

The concert, along with the image of John Paul II, to whom it was dedicated, gives us a strong message of hope: "Do not be afraid!" Love explains everything and resolves all! Contemplate Love, wherever it is..."

Thanks to *Paula Tomiäc* for reporting and forwarding news from Medjugorje.

Turn the Other Cheek?

Fr. Robert Barron, acclaimed author, speaker, and theologian from the USA, is the creator and host of *The Catholicism Project*. In one of the episodes, he explains how it is possible to "turn the other cheek".

Instead of returning violence with violence or of being passive or to acquiesce, he says Jesus suggests a third way: of resisting effectively, where we rather stand our ground and turn the other cheek, which is to mirror back to the violent person his violence, hoping thereby to lure him into a different moral and spiritual space. This is turning the other cheek, he says, and he offers some examples.

One is of **Bishop Desmond Tutu** who - Fr. Barron says - was walking down a narrow sidewalk in South Africa. He came to a portion of the sidewalk that was more like a narrow bridge over a muddy area. Approaching him was a white man, a known racist, who told Tutu to get off the sidewalk as he didn't make way for gorillas. Bishop Tutu stepped off the sidewalk, and gestured broadly, saying, 'I do.'

Another example is of **Mother Teresa** who took a hungry child to baker's shop begging for some food for the child. The baker spat full in her face, Fr. Barron tells us. Mother Teresa wiped her face clean and said 'Thank you for that gift for me, now perhaps something for the child!'

In both cases, Fr. Barron points out, these two individuals "turned the other cheek by **getting their point across without nasty backlash**, backing down or compromising their own dignity."

Another example was of when Pope JP II celebrated Mass in Victory Square in Warsaw (2 June 1979). In his homily the Pope spoke of God, freedom, and human rights. The crowd began to chant "We want God." As the Pope continued with

his homily, the chant went on until the entire massive crowd was chanting "We want God." His move - says Fr. Barron - is a remarkable example in our time of **provocative non-violence**.

"Sometimes in our fallen, conflictual world all we can do is to resist violence with violence. That's true, that's why the Church has a doctrine of just war. Sometimes it's all we can do in the face of overwhelming violence, just as all we can do is run away or to acquiesce," Fr. Barron acknowledges. "We don't live in a perfect world, and sometimes we have to make those compromises. Nevertheless, I think we can marginalize Jesus' teaching way too much, saying it's just a high ideal that no one can really exemplify. False! False!"

"We see **Ghandi** in the 20th century who learned it from Matthew chapter 5. Ghandi didn't learn it from his own Hindu tradition," says Fr. Barron. He learnt it - he says - when he went to London and read the Gospel of Matthew and found it extraordinary, and his Christian friends said that nobody took it seriously, to which Ghandi replied that he did, instead, take it seriously! "And by God, did he make it work in India!"

Fr. Barron also offers the example of **Martin Luther King** who followed Ghandi and knew those texts as a Christian preacher; and he knew they could be very powerful; and of **JPII** who also read those same texts and saw their power, and exercised it. "These three found their propitious moment. They knew (that) in this circumstance, in this time, it could work. But we're too quick to say: 'Oh, it's only a high ideal that could never really work in our world'. No! False! **In the 20th century we have these three powerful examples of enormous evil being overcome through non-violence.**"

Father Barron reaches out particularly through new media. "The church can't assume people will stream into schools and parishes to be evangelised - we need to go get them, reach out to the general culture."
www.wordonfire.org/

Persevering ...

The Curé of Ars urged his listeners to pray with great trust. It is said one of his prayers was this:

"I pray to you, Blessed Mother of God: for the immeasurable suffering that the passion and death of your Divine Son caused you, and for the bitter tears you shed, offer up to the Father on our behalf the Holy Body, wounded and bleeding, of our Divine Redeemer, united to your own tears and sorrow, for the salvation of souls and for the grace that I now implore (...)" ... adding the following 3 times: "Jesus and Mary, I love you, save priestly souls, save souls."

And if our request should not be granted? Even if we think we've persevered a great deal? What do we do? Throw in the towel ... believing our prayer to be useless?

With all our human limits **we easily tire**, and the temptation is precisely that: not to persevere, not to believe, not to hope. The devil works tirelessly for this precise purpose. Instead, God loves us and desires our good. And since He is our Father and respects our freedom, He works to help us grow and mature not only so we can *store up some treasures in heaven* (cf. Mt 6:20), but also for us to become men and women who can help others do the same; because the answer to Cain's question: "I am perhaps my brother's keeper?" is yes (cf. Gen 4:9).

And the answer to the question posed by Peter: *how long must we persevere?* is given us by the Lord in the Scriptures: "**seven times seventy**" (Mt 18:22), which according to Bible scholars is equivalent to saying continuously. I would say this requires humility. And I would say that St. John Vianney's prayer - or any other prayer - is able to move God's heart when accompanied by sentiments of humility, goodness and meekness.

But rather than move God's heart, Our Lady reminds us that the Lord wants us to be **salt to the earth and light to the world**, so we can help others. At Medjugorje, when Our Lady repeatedly asks us to *give first place in our lives to God* (see, e.g. message of 22 June 2012 to Ivan, or 2 March 2012 to Mirjana, amongst the most recent), she calls us to a life based on the ten commandments and on the beatitudes.

So let us persevere with humility, knowing that our prayer does not reach a deaf ear, and that if our request is not answered as or when hoped, we should not be discouraged, but rather continue praying; and with the support of the Sacraments, **offer it up** for our pastors! and for those who suffer, or as Our Lady at Medjugorje says, for "those who haven't known God's love."

Beverley Kay

Medjugorje Messages from the Archives

Mirjana, 18 March 2011:

"Dear Children, I am with you in the name of the greatest Love, in the name of the good God who came close to you through my Son and has shown you the real love. I desire leading you on the way of God. I desire teaching you real love so that others may see it in you, that you may see it in others, that you may be a brother to them and that others may see a merciful brother in you. "My Children, do not be afraid to open your hearts to me. With motherly love, I will show you what I expect of each of you, what I expect of my apostles. Set out with me. Thank you."

From the Mail: "Greetings from Naples, and our gratitude to Mary the Mother of God and to you all for your bulletin, which I distribute. Mir. Peace".

Fr. Rosario De Luca, Naples (Italy).

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Our prayers and heartfelt thanks to all who are instruments of providence for Echo, enabling us to continue to help Mary reach her children.

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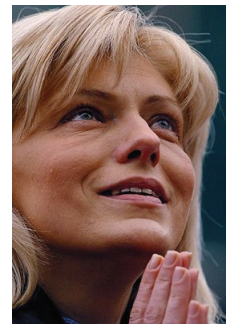
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Message to
MIRJANA,
2 July 2012:

**"My Children,
Again, in a
motherly way, I
implore you to
stop for a moment
and to reflect on
yourselves and on
the transience
of this your earthly**

life. Then reflect on eternity and the eternal beatitude. What do you want? Which way do you want to set out on? The Father's love sends me to be a mediatrix for you, to show you with motherly love the way which leads to the purity of soul; a soul unburdened by sin; a soul that will come to know eternity. I pray that the light of my Son's love may illuminate you, so that you may triumph over weaknesses and come out of misery. You are my children and I desire for all of you to be on the way of salvation. Therefore, my children, gather round me that I may have you come to know the love of my Son and thus open the door of eternal beatitude. Pray as I do for your pastors. Again I caution you: do not judge them, because my Son chose them. Thank you."



May the "great hope" that Mary ponders in her Immaculate Heart be also for us the Hope that will help us overcome all the difficulties and earthquakes in the world. Then, our soul, united to her prayer, will find and be able to diffuse to others the taste of peace and the joy of love. Upon you all I invoke the blessing of God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

J. Remo

Mantua, July 2012

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