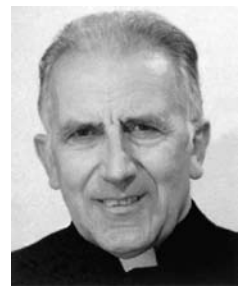




Echo of Medjugorje

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Fr. Angelo Mutti
founder Echo of Medjugorje

Message of 25 November 2013:

“Dear Children, Today I call you to prayer. Open wide the door to your hearts, my children; open them up wide to prayer, to prayer with the heart; and then the Most High will be able to work within your freedom and your conversion will begin. Your faith will become strong and you will be able to say with all your heart: ‘My God and my everything!’. You will comprehend, my children, that here on the earth everything passes. Thank you for responding to my call.”

My God and my Everything!

Suspended between Heaven and earth, man carries within himself something of God's "DNA"; intangible yet real. Being the dominant figure in creation makes man oscillate between the two poles of possession and service, often preferring the first, without finding - perhaps without trying to find - a way that brings the two together.

But does this way exist? **The history of mankind tells us that it does**, even if just a period of time between war and peace. Christian Revelation tells us that it does. God is in us if we really want his presence, and it is this Presence that restores creation. "Whatsoever you shall ask the Father in my name, that will I do: that the Father may be glorified in the Son", says the Lord. "If you love me, keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he shall give you another Paraclete, that he may abide with you forever. ... He who keeps my commandments is he who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too shall love him and I will make myself known to him... (cf. Jn 14:13-23)

“Open wide the door to your hearts, my children; open them up wide to prayer, to prayer with the heart; and then the Most High will be able to work within your freedom and your conversion will begin,” says Our Lady. Open them up wide is to **surrender our heart over to God in prayer**, and allow him to work within our freedom without harming our freedom.

“My God and my everything!”: may these words accompany us throughout the day!

N.Q.



Message to Mirjana,
2nd November 2013

Pray to know how to love!

“Dear Children, I call you again in a motherly way to love; to continually pray for the gift of love; to love the Heavenly Father above all else. When you love Him, you will love yourself and your neighbour. These things cannot be separated. The Heavenly Father is in each person. He loves each person and He calls each person by his name.

Therefore, my children, through prayer hearken to the will of the Heavenly Father. Converse with him. Have a personal relationship with the Father, and this will make the relationship amongst you - you as a community of my children, my apostles - even deeper. As a mother I desire that, through your love for the Heavenly Father, you might raise above earthly vanities and help others to gradually come to know and to approach the Heavenly Father. My children: pray, pray, pray for the gift of love because ‘love’ is my Son.

Pray for your shepherds that they may always have love for you as my Son had and showed by giving his life for your salvation. Thank you.”

(Comments to messages by Nuccio Quattrocchi)

CHRISTMAS 2013

Message to Mirjana
25 December 2013:

“Dear Children, I bring you the King of Peace that He may give you His peace. You, my children: pray, pray, pray! The fruit of prayer will be seen on the faces of those who have decided for God and for His Kingdom. I, with my Son Jesus, bless you all with the blessing of peace. Thank you for responding to my call.”

The Blessing of Peace!

The Birth of Jesus in the world (Lk 2:8-14) is communicated by the angel to the shepherds and the proclamation is underlined by the celestial choir that sings: "Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to people of good will."

With the birth of the Saviour, Heaven and earth are no longer separated, and the glory of Heaven is united to peace on earth. Jesus is the King of peace, and Mary, through whom he is brought into the world, brings him to us again. And Jesus, King of peace, gives us his peace. ***“I bring you the King of peace so that he can give you his peace,”*** Mary tells us.

And what ought we do? ***“My children: pray, pray, pray!”*** we are urged. Perhaps we are used to praying at times of need, and we tend to forget this basic element in our spiritual and material life. Our blessed Mother reminds us that we must pray all the time.

Today is Christmas; so let us turn and fix our gaze on Jesus Christ, for in him alone can we overcome everything that oppresses and divides us. This isn't estrangement, but it is allowing oneself to be lifted up to Him so we can draw from Him peace and forgiveness for ourselves and for others. Mary is offering her Son to us once again; so let us **receive Jesus into our hearts and lives**, without reserve, without hesitation, without calculation and without fear. And we will receive his Peace; the peace that he gives, that he alone can give.

N.Q.

2 *Evangelii Gaudium*

The Joy of the Gospel fills the heart

On the 26th November Pope Francis published his first Apostolic Exhortation, called *Evangelii gaudium*. Following is a synthesis.

The joy of the Gospel fills the heart and life when you encounter Jesus, says the Pope, whose intention is to encourage us to embark upon a new chapter of evangelization marked by this joy.

Let us be permanently in a state of mission (25) - Pope Francis strongly appeals to all baptised to bring the love of Jesus to others; to "recover the original freshness of the Gospel", which requires "a pastoral and missionary conversion", and an awareness that the "ecclesial structures" are not hampering the Church's missionary call. And he says of himself that as Pope he must be: "open to suggestions which can help make the exercise of my ministry more faithful to the meaning which Jesus Christ wished to give it and to the present needs of evangelization."

The Eucharist is not a prize for the perfect (47) - A sign of the acceptance of God is that "Churches everywhere have open doors", so that those who seek him are not met by "the coldness of a closed door", adding that even the gates to "the Sacraments should not be closed" for any whatsoever reason. Thus, **the Eucharist is** "not a prize for the perfect, but a **powerful medicine and nourishment for the weak**". The Pope expresses his preference for a Church that is "**wounded and dirty** because she has been out on the streets, rather than a Church that is worried about being the centre..." adding that we ought to be disturbed by the fact that so many brethren live without the friendship of Jesus.

God save us from a worldly Church! (97) - "The Christian ideal will always be a summons to overcome suspicion, habitual mistrust, fear of losing our privacy, all the defensive attitudes which today's world imposes on us. (...) God save us from a worldly Church with superficial spiritual and pastoral trappings! This **stifling worldliness can only be healed by breathing in** the pure air of the Holy Spirit who frees us from self-centredness..." While warning us against a "sterile pessimism", the Pope urges us to be a sign of hope: "The Son of God, by becoming flesh, summoned us to **the revolution of tenderness**."

On the need to avoid a spirituality of well-being: Genuine forms of religiosity "entail a personal relationship, not with vague spiritual energies or powers, but with God, with Christ, with Mary, with the saints," which are devotions that have a face, capable of fostering relationships and not just enabling escapism."

Whom can we evangelize when our own behaviour is wrong? (cf. 100) - The Pope appeals to church communities not to let themselves become prey of envy and jealousy: "**How many wars** take place within the people of God and in our different communities!" Whom do we want to evangelize if we behave



this way? and he urges us to ask the Lord to help us understand his law of love. "**How much good it does us to love one another, in spite of everything.** Yes, in spite of everything! St. Paul's exhortation is directed to each of us: "*Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good*" (Rom 12:21)... **At least let us say to the Lord:** 'Lord, I am angry with this person, with that person. I pray to you for him, for her'. **To pray for a person with whom I am irritated is a beautiful step forward in love,** and an act of evangelization. Let us do it today!"

No to desk-bound theology (133) - Underlying **popular piety**, as a fruit of the inculturated Gospel, is an active evangelizing power which we must not underestimate: to do so would be to fail to recognize the work of the Holy Spirit. Instead, we are called to promote and strengthen it in order to deepen the never-ending process of inculturation. Expressions of popular piety **have much to teach us!**

When an economy kills - The Pope denounces the present economic system. "Just as the commandment 'Thou shalt not kill' sets a clear limit in order to safeguard the value of human life, today we also have to say "**thou shalt not**" to an economy of **exclusion and inequality.** Such an economy kills" (53). "Today everything comes under the laws of competition and the survival of the fittest, where **the powerful feed upon the powerless.** As a consequence, masses of people find themselves excluded and marginalized: without work, without possibilities. Human beings are themselves considered consumer goods to be used and discarded. We have created a "**throw away**" culture which is now spreading; as something new based on **exclusion,** where those excluded are no longer the exploited or the outcast, but are the "leftovers."

He denounces the "attacks on religious freedom" and "**new situations of persecution** of Christians," which he says is often fruit of a "wide-spread relativistic indifference".

The family "is suffering a deep cultural crisis", and he confirmed the need for "the indispensable **contribution of marriage** to society" emphasizing that "the individualism of our postmodern and globalized era favours a lifestyle which weakens the development and stability of personal relationships and distorts family bonds." (65)

On Politics: "Though often denigrated, it remains a lofty vocation and one of the highest forms of charity, inasmuch as it seeks the common good. (...) I ask God to give us more politicians capable of sincere dialogue who really care about the poor... adding that any community which does not help the

poor to live with dignity will end up falling in on itself.

On human life: The Pope invites us to take care of the most vulnerable: "the homeless, the addicted, refugees, indigenous peoples, the elderly (increasingly isolated and abandoned) and migrants." (210)

On victims of human trafficking: If only we could hear God's cry!: *Where is your brother?* (Gen 4:9), who is enslaved; whom you are killing each day in clandestine warehouses, in rings of prostitution, in children used for begging, in exploiting undocumented labour? The infamous network of crime is now well established in our cities, and many have blood on their hands as a result of their comfortable and silent complicity... Doubly poor are those women who endure situations of exclusion, mistreatment and violence" (212).

On the unborn: "The Church wishes to care with particular love and concern for unborn children, who are the most defenceless and innocent among us." We cannot expect that the Church change its position on this issue - he pointed out - for it is not progressive to think one can solve problems by eliminating human life.

Font: www.vatican.va/

If the heart is like a market place

On 7 Jan. 2014 **Pope Francis** compared man's heart to a market place where one can find everything, inviting us to discern what goes on in the heart, so to discern the way of Christ from the way of the antichrist.

A fundamental attitude to keep if we desire remaining in the Lord is to "know what's happening in the heart!", with the warning: "**Do not to trust every spirit, but test the spirits**" so we can discern whether something helps us remain in the Lord or takes us away from Him. Our heart - he says - always has desires, cravings, thoughts; but are they from the Lord or do some of them remove us from the Lord? **That's why we must "test"** what we think and desire: "Test the spirits to see if they really come from God, because many false prophets have come into the world... Do your desires and thoughts bring you to the Lord, or lead you away from Him! A Christian is one who knows to keep watch over his heart..."

What is the criterion to determine if something comes from Christ or from the antichrist? "Every spirit that acknowledges Jesus Christ come in the flesh belongs to God, and every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus does not belong to God, but is the spirit of the antichrist." To recognize that the Word is come in the flesh means to acknowledge that Jesus Christ, being God, emptied Himself, and humbled Himself even to death on the Cross":

"This is the path of Jesus Christ: abasement, humility, humiliation. If a thought or desire takes you along the road of humility and abasement, of service to others, it is from Jesus. But if it brings you to the road of sufficiency, of vanity, of pride, along the path of an abstract thought, it is not from Jesus.

[Radiovaticana.va/]

“MY APOSTLES”

In the message of 2nd January 2014, Our blessed Mother begins by calling everyone to become responsible: **“Dear Children, to be my apostles and to be able to help all those who are in the darkness that they may come to know the light of my Son’s love, you must have pure and humble hearts.”**



The expression, **“my apostles”** is not new and is reflected in many of Our Lady’s calls when she asks us to be her “witnesses”, to be “bearers of peace”, her “hands stretched out to this world”, however in the last two years the specific word “apostle” has been used with surprising frequency and especially in the messages on the 2nd of March, June, October and November of 2012, and 8 times so far since 2013 and the start of 2014.

This means that there is something with a priority status in the use of this word. It is a desire of our Blessed Mother that we are being asked to make our own. As a part of this **“great plan of God unfolding in Medjugorje”** (25.06.2007) there are particular concepts that Our Lady repeats at particular moments that are important and necessary for us to perceive and receive.

The word **“apostle”** means **“sent”**, and the Gospel makes it clear where the prerogative lies. Jesus “summoned those whom he wanted and they came to him. He appointed twelve (whom he named apostles) that they **might be with him** and he might **send them forth** to preach” (Mk 3:13-14). So before being sent forth to preach, the Apostles were first summoned to stay with Jesus.

In his book, “Jesus of Nazareth”, **Benedict XVI** points out that this “staying with the Lord” is fundamental for the successive mission of the apostles because they must learn and know the Lord not only from the outside as others might see Him, but so they can become witnesses of his mystery and be in communion with Him.

“Staying with” Jesus is necessary because the “twelve have to learn to stay with Him in a way that allows them to be with Him even if they go to the ends of the world.”

We therefore see how **the word “apostle” implies, first of all, being called by God** - since no one can appoint himself apostle - and that secondly, **it is implied that an apostle would “stay with God”** who has made the call, so we can be sent forth to proclaim and to witness something that comes from God. The Church makes it very clear also when she says in the Catechism: *“Christ, sent by the Father, is the source of the Church’s whole apostolate; thus the fruitfulness of apostolate for ordained ministers as well as for lay people clearly depends on their vital union with Christ”* (CCC 863-864).

So under this light we see how **Our Lady - when speaking to her “apostles”** - is addressing those who have accepted and replied to her call; which **implies those who have “stayed” with her**. The last 13 messages in which she uses the word “apostle”, between March 2012 and January 2014, we see **particular elements which identify the apostle**. First of all, there is the **awareness of being chosen**, of having been called: “[God] chose me, and I, together with Him, choose you so that you might be apostles of his love and of his will. My children, great is the responsibility upon you” (2 June 2012). “My children, I gather you as my apostles and I teach you how to let others know of my Son’s love; how to bring to them the Good News; to my Son” (2 Oct. 2013).

Thus, the call is to “stay” or “be with”, and there are inner conditions to this “being with” Our Lady and with our Lord Jesus. **Our Lady herself has dictated these conditions**, or virtues, of the apostles to whom she entrusts tasks. **“I need apostles with pure hearts”** (2 Oct. 2012). **“Be humble and kind to everyone”** (2 April 2013).

It is **“through reconciliation with the Heavenly Father**, and through fasting and prayer, that there can arise apostles of God’s love; apostles who will freely and lovingly spread God’s love to all my children; apostles who will spread a trusting love in the Heavenly Father and who will open the gates of Heaven” (2 July 2013). **“I need apostles who are humble**, and who with an open heart can accept the word of God and

help others, so that with the word of **3** God they may comprehend the meaning of their life. To be able to do this, my children, you must - through prayer and fasting - listen with the heart and learn to subject yourselves” (2 Sept. 2013). **“To be my apostles, you must have pure and humble hearts”** (2 Jan. 2014).

Union with the Lord Jesus is a fundamental condition for every type of apostle, and as Our Lady teaches, **this requires humility, a pure heart, prayer and fasting**.

In particular, an **authentic prayer life is essential for an “apostle”**. “Through prayer harken to the will of the Heavenly Father. Converse with him. Have a personal relationship with the Father, and this will make the relationship amongst you - you as a community of my children, my apostles - even deeper. As a mother I desire that, through the love for the Heavenly Father, you might raise above earthly vanities and help others to gradually come to know and to approach the Heavenly Father” (2 Nov. 2013)

So before being a “missionary” able to help others to “know the Father”, we must pray with the heart to learn to hear and heed the Father’s will, in an authentic and profound relationship with God.

The Dogmatic Constitution, *Lumen Gentium*, tells us that Christ called the Twelve, reuniting them, and forming them “after the manner of a college or a stable group, over which He placed Peter, who was chosen from among them” (no. 19). **The strength to testify and to proclaim the salvation comes from this unity amongst the apostles:** “I in them and you in me, that they may be brought to perfection as one, that the world may know that you sent me” (Jn 17:23).

For this reason, Mary’s call to be “her apostles” cannot be separated from another of her great desires - which she expressed in the message of the 2nd January 2014: **“It is this that my motherly heart yearns after: that through my Son all my Children might be united as one.”**

Marco Vignati, Comunità Casa di Maria, Roma

*“For LOVE is not really about fitting in and being friendly and getting along; it is willing the good of the other as other. It is truly wanting what is best for another person and then concretely doing something about it. And this means that **real love can be as tough as nails** or as disagreeable as a slap in the face, indeed, in Dostoevsky’s phrase, something “harsh and dreadful.” Compelling an addict to get help, or questioning a dysfunctional style of life, or calling someone to real conversion all involve the willing of the good of the other - and none will cause people to characterize you as a nice guy. This is why, by the way, the God who is love is not a kindly Santa Claus who magically makes troubles disappear.”*

Excerpted from an article by Fr. Robert Barron



Annual apparition to Jakov Colo on Christmas day, 25 December 2013:

“My children, today in a special way, Jesus desires dwelling in each of your hearts and sharing with you your every joy and every pain. Therefore, my children, today in a special way, look into your hearts and **ask yourselves if your hearts were flooded with peace and joy for the birth of Jesus**. My children, do not live in the darkness; aspire towards the light and towards God’s salvation. Children, decide for Jesus and give Him your life and your hearts, for it is only this way that the Most High can work in you and through you.”

Message to Mirjana 2nd Dec. 2013

"Dear Children, With a motherly love and a motherly patience I look at your ceaseless wandering and how you are lost. That is why I am with you. I desire helping you to first find and come to know yourselves, so that then you are able to understand and acknowledge all that does not permit you to know the Heavenly Father's love honestly and wholeheartedly. My children, the Father is known through the cross. Therefore, do not reject the cross. With my help strive to comprehend and accept it. When you are able to accept the cross you will also understand the love of the Heavenly Father; you will walk with my Son and with me; you will stand out from those who have not come to know the Heavenly Father's love; from those who listen to Him but do not understand Him; from those who do not walk with Him, who have not come to know Him. I desire for you to know the truth of my Son and to be my apostles; so that, as children of God, you may rise above the human way of thinking and always and in everything seek anew God's way of thinking.

My children, pray and fast that you are able to recognize all of this which I ask of you. Pray for your shepherds and long to come to know the love of your Heavenly Father, in union with them. Thank you."

Diagnosis and Cure: Mary typically points things out to us with the love and care of a mother. And today we are being shown **how terribly serious we do ail.** We wander around aimlessly, but always towards the abyss, even without realising it. The glitter of the city lights, the images of well-being and of wealth that reach us through our television screens, are like a drug for us all. Fiction seduces the young and the old; creating voids within, even to the point of stealing the soul!

If this is the diagnosis, what is the cure? The cure is long and difficult, even impossible without God's help. This is why Mary has been with us for so long. "This is the time of fulfillment. The kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel" (Mk 1:15), says Jesus at the outset of his mission. But today, after nearly two thousand years, does this still make sense? Peter responds: *"Do not ignore this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years and a thousand years like one day,"* immediately adding: *"The Lord does not delay his promise ... but he is patient with you, not wishing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance"* (2Pt 3:8-9).

With motherly love and patience, still today Mary urges us to be aware of our dignity as God's children. If we follow the suggestions she gives us, they are able to change the quality of our lives; and might even shorten the time of expectation of the Lord's return to the world. **Come, Lord Jesus! Maràna tha!**

N.Q.

THE POWER OF THE SACRAMENTS!

Just as life is transmitted from one generation to the next, so too, from generation to generation is grace transmitted through BAPTISM; and with this grace **Christians are like a river that irrigates the earth and spreads to the world the blessing of God.**

From the time when the disciples went out to baptise there is a chain in the transmission of the faith through Baptism. Each of us is a link in that chain... in that river that irrigates. Such is the grace of God, and such is our faith which we must transmit to our children so that they, once grown up, can transmit it to their children. **Baptism makes us missionary disciples.** Baptism gives us the Grace to help us transmit the faith.

On the subject of the **importance of Baptism** for the People of God, the history of the **Christian community in JAPAN** is exemplary.

It suffered severe persecution at the start of the 17th century. There were many martyrs, members of the clergy were expelled and thousands of faithful killed. No priests was left in Japan, they were all expelled. Then the community retreated into hiding, keeping the faith and prayer in seclusion. And when a child was born, the father or mother baptized him or her, because the faithful can baptize in certain circumstances.

When, after roughly two and a half centuries, **250 years later**, missionaries returned to Japan, thousands of Christians stepped out into the open and the Church was able to flourish again. They survived by the grace of Baptism! This is profound: the People of God transmits the faith, baptizes her children and goes forward.

And they maintained, even in secret, a strong communal spirit, because their Baptism had made of them one single body in Christ: they were isolated and hidden, but they were always members of the People of God, members of the Church. Let us learn a great deal from this history!

Pope Francis at the General Audience, Wed. 15 January 2014 [www.vatican.va]



*Virtues are formed by prayer.
Prayer preserves temperance.
Prayer suppresses anger. Prayer prevents emotions of pride and envy. Prayer draws into the soul the Holy Spirit, and raises man to Heaven. (St. Ephraem of Syria)*

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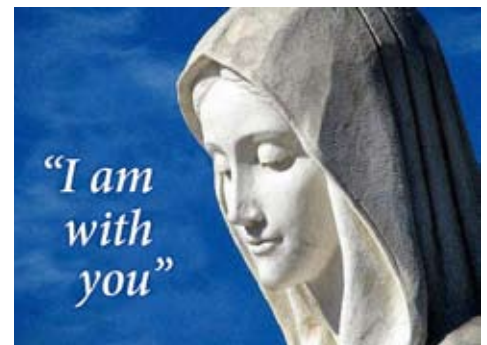
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MARY IS WITH US

Said Pope Francis: *"In our personal history too, there are both bright and dark moments, lights and shadows. If we love God and our neighbours, we walk in the light; but if our heart is closed, if we are dominated by pride, deceit, self-seeking, then darkness falls within us and around us."* He **said** this in his homily to the faithful at the Midnight Mass in the Basilica of St. Peter's (Christmas 2013).

[Liturgically speaking] we have now entered the Ordinary Time. Also in this Ordinary Time of the Church's liturgy, there are times of **light and of darkness**, of trial and of consolation, of **suffering and of joy**. Mary, with her motherly love, comes to us daily and untiringly, to encourage us, sustain us and to teach us to pray. With her we can make it through the difficulties of these times and any that are to come.

With Jesus and Mary, I bless you!

J. Remo

Mantua, January 2014

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