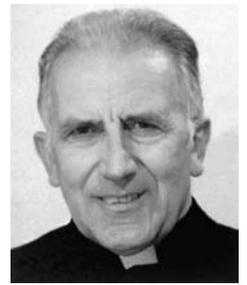




Echo of Medjugorje

March-April 2014 - Edited by: Eco di Maria, Via Cremona, 28 - 46100 Mantova (Italia) - Year 30, no. 2
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Fr. Angelo Mutti
founder Echo of Medjugorje

Message of 25 January 2014:

“Dear Children, Pray, pray, pray, that the reflection of your prayer might influence all those whom you meet. Place Holy Scripture in a visible place in your family, and read it, so that the words of peace might flow within your hearts. I pray with you and for you, my children, so that day by day you might be ever more open to God's will. Thank you for responding to my call.”

I Pray with You and for You

Chasing after novelty with little discernment is a pastime of many. Dependant on time, we are unable to see what is beyond time. Hopeful thinking can impede us from seeing the reality that surrounds us; and thus we risk chasing after the presence of God when someone says, *HE* is here, *HE* is there (Mt 24:23-28) without remembering the Lord's warnings.

If the expectation and wait is tiring us out, we should remember that our time is put to good use by keeping vigil, by practising discernment, by surrendering to God, all the while being patient, and trusting in God.

And even if the messages of Medjugorje were to be considered repetitive, this would not reduce their value. Many things are monotonous and repetitive - like breathing, for instance! And yet we must also recall that repetition has its value as a linguistic device; not to mention that small children usually need to be told the same things over and over again.

Let us draw near to her messages with the certainty that we will find the key for the turning point in our lives; let us stop seeking guidance for future times and we will see that there are specific suggestions for living our present. In today's message we see three clear teachings:

1) Pray till the world changes: Pray, pray, pray, that the reflection of your pray might influence all those whom you meet.

2) The Bible must be the nourishment which gives us peace: Place Holy Scripture in a visible place in your family, and read it, so that the words of peace might flow within your hearts.

3) Surrender to God's will: I pray with you and for you, my children, so that day by day you might be ever more open to God's will.

Mary is with us and won't abandon us. She prays with us and for us. May we firmly believe this! N.Q.



Vademecum for Mary's Apostles

Message to Mirjana, 2 Feb. 2014:

“Dear Children, with motherly love I wish to teach you sincerity, because my desire is that your work as my apostles be correct, decisive and especially sincere. I desire that with the grace of God you be open to blessing. I desire that with fasting and prayer, you obtain from the Heavenly Father the awareness [discernment] of what is natural, holy and divine. Filled with discernment, and under the protection of my Son and my own, you will be my apostles who will know how to spread the Word of God to all those who do not know it, and you will know how to overcome the obstacles that you find on the way. My children, with the blessing, the grace of God will descend on you and you will be able to keep it through fasting, prayer, purification and reconciliation. You will have the efficacy that I ask of you. Pray for your pastors, that a ray of God's grace may enlighten their ways. Thank you.”

The message is almost a handbook for those who accept to be Mary's apostles; to be read and prayed over to understand the full impact of her words, and to put them into practise. This is not a request to add a pious practice of some sort to what we might already be doing, but to truly convert according to the Lord's request! And in this message there is a specific request to look more closely at our lives - *an Examination of Conscience* - and if we see that we have been contaminated by worldly ways and thoughts, we have Jesus and his example upon which to look, and then work at bringing our own lives back into line with his, according to Church teachings.

For us to be true children of God we need divine grace, and this is given us by God, through prayer and the sacraments. N.Q.

Message, 25 February 2014:

“Dear Children, You can see, hear and feel that in the hearts of many there is not God. They do not want Him because they are far from prayer, and they do not have peace. My children: you pray! you live God's commandments! You be prayer, you who from the very beginning said 'yes' to my call. Witness God and my presence, and do not forget my children, that I am with you and I love you. Day by day I present you all to my Son Jesus. Thank you for responding to my call.”

God in the Heart!

At Medjugorje Mary is working to open the hearts of men to enable them to encounter God, to know him as the Father who created us and loved us. Part of her mission is to help us accept his will into our lives, for God does not impose anything on us. Rather, he offers his gifts to us; but it is up to us to accept them; to see in his will the greater good for our own lives.

This month's message differs a little to the style we have so far seen, because we are being urged to see, to listen and to recognize that in the hearts of many people God is not present. Our Lady goes on to explain that it is the distance from a life of prayer that results in lack of peace and in a refusal of God. The message continues with an appeal to put her teachings into practice: pray, and live out God's commands. You be prayer! is the strong suggestion addressed to those who have said "yes" to her call.

Those who wonder about the need for us to do our part, do not know enough about God and his Love for us. Let us concern ourselves, instead, with witnessing God so that others can come to know him, This is, after all, Mary's great concern, and her mission: i.e. to help others come to know God's love, because the more we know his love, the more peace we have in our own hearts.

N.Q.

(Comments to messages by Nuccio Quattrocchi)

2 POPE FRANCIS ON MERCY

"Mercy means neither indulgence nor severity" said the Pope to the Roman clergy.

"In the image of the Good Shepherd, a priest is a man of mercy and compassion, close to his people and servant of all. A pastoral criterion that I would like to emphasize very much is this closeness, this proximity: being servants and being close.

In particular, **the priest must show the depths of mercy in administering the sacrament of Reconciliation**; and will show it with his whole attitude, the way he receives (others), the way he listens, advises, absolves (...).

In Buenos Aires **there was a famous confessor**; almost all the clergy went to confess to him. One of the two times that John Paul II was there (in BS), he called for a confessor, and this priest was sent to him. He was old, very old, he was a Provincial in his Order, a professor, but he was always a confessor, and in the Church of the Blessed Sacrament there was always a queue.

Fr. Aristi died on the Easter Vigil; he was 96 years old. On Easter day I went to the church, which has a very large and beautiful crypt. I went down into the crypt and there was the coffin with only two old ladies there praying. There were no flowers; and I thought: **for this priest who forgave the sins of all the clergy of Buenos Aires, and my own, there is not even a single flower.** And so I went to a florist's and bought flowers and came back and I began to arrange them in the coffin, and I saw the rosary in his hands and I immediately thought of the thief that is in us all, and as I was arranging the flowers I took the Rosary beads in my hands and **with a little tug I pulled the cross off the beads, and then I looked at him and I said: "Give me half of your mercy."**

I felt a strong urge that gave me the courage to make this gesture and this prayer. I put the cross in my pocket; and (...) from that day that cross is with me. And when I get a bad thought against someone, my hand goes immediately to that cross that I carry with me, and I feel the strength of Grace; and it does me good.

How much good is there in the example of a merciful priest! Of a priest who is close to the wounds. Surely you will have known many, because Italian priests are good. I believe that if Italy is still very strong, it is not because of us bishops, but because of the priests. I really do believe this.

Think of the many priests who are in Heaven; and ask them for this grace: that they give you the mercy which they used with their faithful. And this will bring down good."

6th March 2014 - www.vatican.va/



Pope Francis Interviewed

Q) *"Tenderness and MERCY are at the centre of your pastoral message ..."*

A) **Pope Francis:** "... and of the Gospel. Tenderness and mercy are central to the Gospel; otherwise Jesus Christ cannot be understood, nor can the tenderness of the Father who sent his son to listen to us, heal us, and save us!"

Q) *"The focus on poverty is mistaken by some observers as a profession of pauperism. The Gospel does not condemn wealth, and Zacchaeus was rich and charitable."*

A) **Pope Francis:** "The Gospel condemns the worship of wealth. Pauperism is a critical interpretation. In the Middle Ages there were many currents of pauperism. St. Francis had the brilliant idea of putting the issue of poverty on the path of the Gospel. Jesus says that one cannot serve two masters, God and Wealth. And when we are judged in the final judgment our proximity to poverty counts. Poverty removes from idolatry and opens the door to Providence."

Q) *"How will the role of women in the Church be promoted?"*

A) **Pope Francis:** "It is true that women can and must be more present in the places of decision in the Church; but I would call this a promotion of functionality... We must rather think that the Church has the feminine article "la": she is feminine. The great theologian **Urs von Balthasar** worked hard on this issue: the Marian principle guides the Church along with the Petrine principle. The Virgin Mary is more important than any bishop or apostle. The theological study is in progress. Cardinal Rylko, with the Council of the Laity, is working in this direction with many women who are experts in various subjects."

Excerpt from Corriere della Sera 5-03-2014



The Pope at Lenten Spiritual Exercises

Our Lady says: "Here at Medjugorje"

From an interview of
Fr. Livio of Radio Maria

Interviewer: "At times I think that we are a bit pretentious about Medjugorje, believing that it is the centre of the world; and if we think of what goes on in the universal Church! ..."

Fr. Livio responds:

"The world's salvation does not depend on Medjugorje. Jesus has already saved the world! The Church is alive! Medjugorje is a bit like Nazareth; a distant, unknown village. Our Lady has often reminded us not to become too proud, and to remain humble. But there is no doubt that she has chosen this Parish as an instrument to renew the Church! But the Parish must not forget that it is a "useless instrument" according to the Lord's teachings. We are all useless instruments; what we have to do, we do, but without attributing any merit to ourselves. The special graces that are granted here are fruit of God's love!

Another thing that strikes me is that Marija - the visionary who receives the monthly message for the Parish - lives in Italy near Milan; but **when Our Lady gives her message she says, "Here in Medjugorje."**

This is a holy place, a place of grace, even if the apparitions occur elsewhere! Our Lady has said: *"Here I give particular graces."* **Here!** So let us not forget that the sign will be given *here* in Medjugorje on Podbrdo (the hill of apparitions), and it will be visible from *here*. The best is yet to come. All this is preparation, and Medjugorje will be even more known in the future.

Cardinal Ivan Dias, prefect of the Congregation of the Doctrine of faith, was in Lourdes as the Pope's envoy on 8 December 2007 for the celebrations of the 150th anniversary of Lourdes. There, he said that Our Lady has been preparing her army over the last two centuries to defeat the powers of the Antichrist. The speech was published in the *L'Osservatore Romano* the day after.

Our Lady, with her apparition of Rue de Bac in Paris, **came to the aid of the Church** at a time when the world was marked by a growing deception by the antichrist in the form of a society that considered itself able to save itself with its own forces; at the cost of the apostasy from the truth.

Medjugorje is the final phase of this eschatological battle, at the end of which we will have a time of peace, "a time of spring", as Our Lady has said. This all fits in with the teachings of the last Popes, beginning with Paul VI. Hence, Medjugorje is in the Church and is part of the great task that the Church must carry out in order to save our generation."

Excerpt from an interview by Lidija Paris dated 17th February 2008

Font: www.medjugorje.hr

"My son whom I have chosen for these times" John Paul II in the message of Medjugorje

Theologian Hans Urs Von Balthasar, one of the greatest Catholic thinkers of the XX century, wrote in 1983 that Marian apparitions represented in a way the mystery of communion among Mary, Peter and John whom the Lord chose as the foundational nucleus of the Church.



with the teachings of the Magisterium. This will be a way to express our gratitude to the Lord for the gift of the Pope on the day of his canonization.

In 1987 at Medjugorje an important change took place that widened horizons beyond the Parish: it was when Our Lady began to give monthly messages after three years of weekly messages for the Parish.

At the same time, John Paul II proclaimed a Marian Year with which he said: "I wish to highlight the special presence of Mary in the life of the Church", indicating that "the Mother of God is present in the midst of the Pilgrim Church." This theme was developed in the memorable encyclical *Redemptoris Mater*; and in the middle of this same year, Our Lady gave a message with an explicit call: "God has granted me - also this year which the Church has consecrated to me - that I may speak to you and urge you on the way of holiness" (25 Aug. 1987).

The spiritual school of Medjugorje is in a certain way interrupted by the war in Croatia and Bosnia, of which two voices spoke as if they were one: one was the Pope's who called for an awareness of the seriousness of the drama, and against the narrow interpretation that seemed to prevail in the world of international diplomacy; and the other voice was Mary's who urged everyone "to understand how serious the situation is... much of what will happen depends on your prayer" (25-7-1991).

In January 1994, John Paul II called all men of good will to pray and fast for peace in the Balkans, and a few days afterwards Our Lady clearly said: "I thank you for your prayers. All of you have helped to ensure that this war will end as soon as possible" (02/25/1994). From that moment the conflict - with the surprise of the political world - began to diminish, making it possible for the Pope to visit Zagreb in September of that same year.

And on this occasion we have perhaps the strongest manifestation of this link between Medjugorje and Pope John Paul II. In the message of 25th August, just days before the Pope's arrival in Croatia (11th Sept.) Our Lady made a surprising statement: "Today I am united with you in prayer in a special way and I pray for the gift of the presence of my beloved son in your homeland. **Pray, my children, for the health of my most beloved son** who

suffers, but whom I have chosen for these times." She concluded the message by mentioning "the realization of the dream that your fathers had," and in doing so recalled the history of a deeply Catholic people who were finally able to meet the Holy Father in complete freedom.

Our Lady's messages then accompanied the celebration of the Jubilee Year (2000), and she often mentioned how ours was "a time of grace", and then for six times in a year she urged us "to use this time."

Ending the year with gratitude to God "for everything he has done in this Jubilee Year," the messages then continue along the line of content in *Novo Millennium Invenite*, a Letter indicating spiritual and pastoral priorities, that the Pope had given for the whole Church. In particular, there is an indication to which John Paul II gave an important role, and it seems to have remained as a basic orientation for the "school" of Medjugorje for the 3rd millennium: "make the Church the home and the school of communion, if we want to be faithful to God's plan and respond to the world's deepest yearnings" (NMI 43).

Even in recent months, Our Lady has as a matter of fact, continued with a pledge. Several times she has asked for "the fulfillment of my desire, of my mission here with you, (which is) the unity of God's family" (2-2-2011).

Marco Vignati, Comunità Casa di Maria, Roma

"Dear Children, Help me to fulfil my Plans"

In many of her apparitions at Medjugorje Mary calls us to put our own lives at the service of her plans of grace for the world's sake: "*Open yourselves up to God's plans and to his projects for you to cooperate with him for peace and good, and do not forget that your life is not yours, but a gift with which you are asked to use to give joy to others and lead them towards eternal life*" (25.12.1992).

Even at the beginning, however, Mary warned us that her plans would have met with **relentless and fierce opposition** from the powers of darkness: "*My dear children, Satan is very strong, and with all his might he wants to destroy the plans I have begun with you*" (Mess. 14.01.1985); "*Pray, because Satan wants to destroy my plans of peace*" (25.12.1990). And we have seen how this is true, because there has often been resistance in one form or another, often without rational explanation. In the beginning there was the **violence of the regime** that used disproportionate measures against six small children.

Then the persistent and somewhat incomprehensible opposition of the local bishop who had initially welcomed the apparitions, and whose negative stance was partially neutralized by the intervention



of Pope John Paul II who ordered the **transfer of competence** to higher levels of jurisdiction.

This was followed by the terrible **Balkan war**, which the Queen of Peace, however, had forewarned us of with her pressing and unheeded call to avert war with the weapons of prayer, fasting and reconciliation.

Then came the impact of western **consumerism** in a parish where people had been used to economic hardship for centuries and were culturally unprepared.

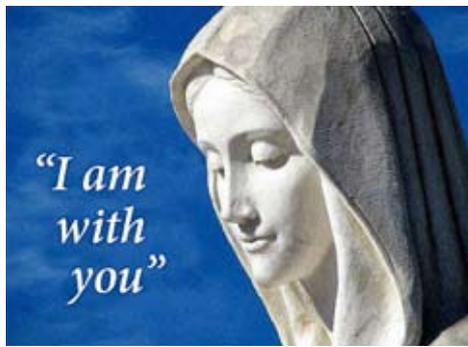
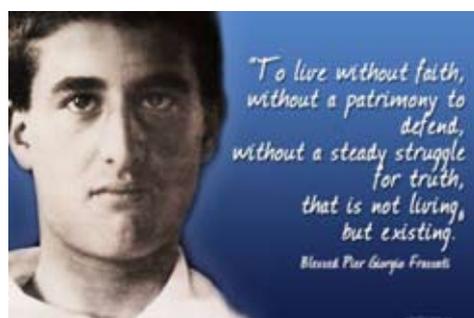
And because of **continuing uncertainties and misunderstandings** by the Institution, there was also created a lack of appropriate Church references for the tens of millions of pilgrims and even for the visionaries themselves who were often left alone to interact with the massive stream of visitors from all over the world. Nonetheless, the local Franciscans have worked with much effort and concern, and deserve all our praise.

And **Mary continues to pour into the Church** and the world rivers of grace and unimaginable fruits of conversion for a multitude of children whom she leads to union with Christ and his Church, by inviting them to live the sacraments and to be active in the Church. Addressing all those who have said "yes" to her call (message 25.02.2014), one would think it is to call them to the frontline at the service of special testimony. On the same date, Our Lady said: "*Witness God and my presence, and do not forget my children, that I am with you and I love you.*"

Now when it seems that upon **Medugorje** there is a thick cloud of misunderstanding and misconception, **Mary is calling us to a special, decisive, humble and courageous witness.** We who have received much grace over these years are being called to show - not with words - but with a new life in Christ, and witness to "what we have heard, what we have seen, what we have touched" (cf. 1 Jn 1:1-2). **We are being called to witness** that unexpected encounter with the ineffable person who lives and is the risen Saviour, who broke into our lives through the Heart of the Queen of Peace, so that we might be humble instruments of salvation for the brethren.

And let us not shirk from this call by the Mother of God! Our sincere and unconditioned "yes" can result in rivers of blessing for ourselves, for the Church, and for the world!

Giuseppe Ferraro



Jesus in the Poor

"That which you do to the least of my brothers, you have done to me" (Mt 25:40).

The Association Regina della Pace A.R.P.A. has for the last 22 years been carrying aid to the peoples of Bosnia-Erzegovina who still today are in great difficulty following the war in former Yugoslavia. Factories have not been rebuilt, so there is no work. There are still thousands of refugees without a house, who live in dilapidated houses of a sort, and often in need of everything. The country is divided between the Muslim-Croat Federation and the Serbian Republic of Bosnia, with two capitals and two Parliaments. There are state employees who do not get paid, but don't protest because they consider themselves lucky to have a job. Often, hospitals, orphanages, old people's homes, soup kitchens, etc. receive no help from the State and are thus in great difficulty. They await us as if manna from heaven. There is no free health assistance, so the poor are left without treatment. We take medicine; so much of it, and at great cost!

There is so much ruin, and our work seems insignificant; yet how could we abandon them! We have so far been able to deliver aid once a month, with many volunteers from various parts of Italy in convoys of vans to many parts of Bosnia, leaving food, incontinence nappies for the elderly, cleaning agents and whatever else there is need for. **We always stop over at Medugorje** to strengthen the spirit, and to ask the Queen of Peace to bring her Son with us amongst the poor, to bless them with courage, strength and hope.

So far we have managed to fill the vans thanks to **donations received**, but due to the economical crisis in Italy, donations are now extremely scarce. We are thus unable to finance some important projects such as providing medical assistance to the ailing elderly of Sarajevo; and we too have had to reduce the amount of aid. And all the while, the **poverty in Bosnia** is increasing.

We ask those who have not been touched by the crisis to consider helping us. Our Lady will know how to compensate in ways unknown to us. We thank you in advance. If anyone manages to fill a van please contact us and come with us. It will be a great experience of charity and faith.

Alberto Bonifacio, Pescate Italia

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Message to Mirjana 2 March 2014

"Dear Children, I come to you as a mother and I desire that in me you find your abode, consolation and rest, as you would in a mother. Therefore, my children, apostles of my love: pray! Pray with humble devotion, obedience and complete trust in the Heavenly Father. Trust as I trusted when it was said to me that I would carry forth the blessing of the promise. May your hearts and your lips always say: 'Thy will be done!'. Therefore, trust and pray so that I can intercede for you before the Lord, that He may give you the Heavenly Blessing and fill you with the Holy Spirit! Then you will be able to help all those who do not know the Lord. You, apostles of my love, will help them to call him 'Father' with complete trust. Pray for your shepherds and place your trust in their blessed hands. Thank you."

"Just as there are mothers and fathers in the natural and physical world, so is there a Father and a Mother called Mary in the supernatural world." So said **St. Louis de Montfort in his Treatise on True Devotion to Mary** (no. 30). Today, all Catholics recognise Mary as Mother. But does this knowledge bear weight in our lives? Dear Children, is how she addresses us in each message. Not just Catholics, but the entire world is the object of Mary's messages! Yes, because it is the world that Mary wants to reach out to. Her motherhood concerns all mankind!

It is as Mother that she attracts us to herself as she calls us to (return to) the Father, and to imitate her own Fiat to God's will (Lk 1:35-38). Today, as in the past, Mary comes to solicit, invite and encourage us. N.Q.

Echo fully relies on Readers' donations.

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

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Mantua, January 2014

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