

Our Lady's message of 25 August 1994:

Dear children, I remain united in prayer with you today in a special way, to pray for the gift of the presence of my beloved son in your country. Pray, my children, for the health of my most beloved son who suffers, but who is chosen by me for these times. I pray and intercede before my Son Jesus, so that the dream had by your fathers may be realized.

Pray, my dear children, in a special way, because Satan is strong and wishes to destroy the hope in your hearts.

I bless you. Thank you for having responded to my call.

Mary gives wings to Pope for voyage of peace

Never before in a message has the Queen of Peace so openly pronounced Her cause: for the man who represents Christ on earth, calling him "**my beloved son, chosen by me for these times.**" To the Pope's *totus tuus* by which he donates his life to Mary, She seems to respond: "Here I am, *tota tua* (I am all yours)!"

This is so because the Pope has accepted Mary's presence on the earth. Had it been otherwise, Our Lady - who has the greatest respect for man's freedom - would not have been so specific. Precisely because the Pope fully understands and agrees with Mary's plans, he has become Her strongest ally and right-hand man in the realization of them.

No doubt this message was of encouragement to the Pope, and helped him decide for the voyage to Sarajevo (his fear was not for his own life, but for that of the others). He, in fact, counts on Our Lady's protection, and She counts on us, which is why **She calls us to unceasing prayer for him.**

Beyond all human calculations and with the courage of the Good Shepherd, John Paul is ready to risk his life for the sake of others who suffer, who have been forsaken by the world. With his bold gesture of love he wishes to shake the world's powerful who have sat back and watched as if the tragedy of former Yugoslavia was not their concern. His gesture is also one of warning, to say that if a remedy is not found, the violence so brutally applied as a solution in Bosnia could become the accepted method of resolving all hidden conflicts.

In August the Pope told the journalists: "Sarajevo in 1914 and again in 1994. What does this mean for Europe? Europe must reflect on this. Why is the risk of war in Europe beginning from the same point, and what must be done to overcome this?"

He was asked: "What does this situation say to you?" "Above all, it says that through human weakness, sin and history's mistakes, God's Providence is always present to guide us." Thus, his decision challenges the human voice that says "prudence," and calls on the

patient and tolerant love God has for men.

Mary repeats that She **intercedes before Jesus for the realization of "your fathers' dreams,"** and we think of the **Christianity of Bosnia-Herzegovina** which for so many centuries was isolated and persecuted by Islamism and has now been dispersed. We think of the **dream of the Croats:** for a thousand years their country has remained a Catholic "island" whilst under the dominion of others and now, as a free nation, can express her fidelity to the Pope. We think of the lengthy martyrdom of Card. Stepinac because of his fidelity to the Church of Rome, and it wasn't by chance that Card. Kuharic joyfully exclaimed: "**the fathers' dream** is being realized" (Avvenire 1.9.94).

Mary also speaks of the **Pope's sufferance:** moral sufferance of course, but also physical following his recent operation. **Pray, dear children, for the health of my beloved son who suffers.**

Satan is strong. With all his astuteness and the help of his accomplices he tries to stop He who holds him in check and who impedes him from **destroying the hope in the hearts of men.** But you *are from God and you have in you one who is greater than anyone in this world* (1Jn4). With prayer you can defeat him. *Fr. Angelo*

"Sarajevo as soon as possible"

The above article had been written after the Pope had made the decision to go to Sarajevo and before his renouncement which he made because the safety of the others could not be guaranteed. The Pope, however, told the people of Sarajevo: "I will come **as soon as possible.** I will not leave you alone."

On the 8th September, during the Holy Mass, he read the homily he had prepared for the Mass in Sarajevo. With reference to the Lord's Prayer, he shouted: *Thy will is*

Our Lady's message of 25 July 1994:

Dear children, today I invite you to decide to offer with patience a time for prayer. My children, you cannot say you are mine, that you have experienced conversion through my messages, if you are not ready to offer a time to God every day. I am close by you and I bless you all. My little children, do not forget this: if you do not pray then you are not close to me and you are not close to the Holy Spirit who guides you on the way of holiness. Thank you for having responded to my call.

Give a time to God every day for prayer

For the umpteenth time, Our Lady is calling us to **decide for prayer.** This, in fact, is the essence of Her message and the key that allows us to understand the rest. Her words are clear: **offer a time to God every day for prayer.** She has said the same thing many times: *From today, decide to consecrate a time of your day to an encounter with God in silence* (25.7.89; cf. 2.10.86, 25.11.88).

Our Lady doesn't mean our usual daily encounters with God, such as morning and evening prayers, or other devotional prayers that we recite during the day. She means a **time to offer to the Lord,** where we place ourselves before Him to be entirely at his disposal, where the Spirit will pray in us and God will work in us.

So we must organize our day with this in mind, to let God enter our lives. He wants to take possession of us and lead us where He knows. God wants a profound, personal encounter with each of us, to reveal His heart to us and listen to ours. He will correct our ways, and through the work of His Spirit, who guides us on the way of holiness, our ways will be transformed, day after day, to become similar to His.

We must learn to live His presence; our ego will be weakened and we will become more attentive to the others' needs. Doing »

peace! (...) *Peace is possible, for it is part of God's plan... but international rights must be observed. There must be forgiveness. Lead us not into the temptation of hate, racism and nationalism. Do not use restrictive measures which cause unhuman suffering for the poor. Lord, make our hearts of stone break down and become hearts of flesh.*

He concluded by greeting the pastors of the Orthodox Church and the Serbs (who were contrary to his visit).

The Pope's aim is to visit "their country" - the expression used by Mary - meaning Croatia: equally destroyed by warfare.

The Pope is not alone, for prayers, fasts and other initiatives have blossomed within the Church to support him in his intentions. Communities and groups in Medj. alone have been praying and fasting for weeks and in Croatia the Rosary movement has invited people to pray. In Zagreb a million rosary beads have been made available for his visit.

Cairo Conference: Pope defends life

The **Cairo Conference** (4-11 Sept.) on *Population and Development* has been the subject of the Holy Father's meditations during recent Angelus messages in a will to enlighten consciences: "it is never legitimate to intervene with authoritarian, coercive measures aimed at usurping the couple's primary and inalienable responsibility" in planning their own family.

What the international community can and cannot do for birth control - "The complex phenomenon known as 'demographic explosion' is the subject of assessments that do not always converge. According to some, humanity as a whole is growing at a rate that in the future could create difficulties for human coexistence itself. In many nations, however, a worrisome crisis in the birth rate has been observed.

The Church is familiar with the problem... The Catechism explicitly states that public authorities can 'intervene to orient the demography of the population.' It must be husband and wife, though, who make their own decision to procreate according to a reasonable plan based on a generous and realistic assessment of the welfare of the child and of society itself...

The ethical dimension also puts precise

» God's will becomes joy, for we are certain of His powerful presence in us. The way of the disciple, then, becomes totally different to that of the others because it is He who leads us. Everything that we do in Him takes on a different value and always works out well (Ps 1) because both men and things are in His hands. We are made new and people begin to see the serene and loving face of Jesus in His disciples. People aren't interested in the other things. What they need are hearts that overflow with peace, love and joy: this is what convinced the pagans in the times of the first Christians.

This time for prayer must be daily: give us this day our daily bread, for together with life, God wants to instil in us also His divine being. It is so easy for the worldly spirit to take hold of us without His daily bread.

There is a new element in this message. We must offer this time with **patience**, not only because we are assailed by so many things, seemingly more important than prayer, but because it is our human nature to be reluctant to place ourselves before the Invisible. That's without counting the many distractions that at times can really discourage us. Jesus said: pray without tiring (Lk 18:1), for it is easy to become tired of praying; thus the need to insist with **patience**.

Mary discourse is maternal, but serious. She reminds us that She is **close to us** and She blesses us, and since we are "Hers," She adds: **you cannot say you are mine** if you are not ready to do as I say. We consider ourselves as chosen, as belonging to Mary, but unless we are perseverant, unless, by the grace of the Holy Spirit, we encounter God, **we cannot say we are Hers**, nor that we have found conversion through Her messages.

Our Lady wants it to be clear, and repeats: **Children, do not forget, if you do not pray you are not close to me nor to the Holy Spirit**. Mary would like to see the effects of Her teaching; that is, that they become *salt of the earth, light for the dark world*, owners of the joy and peace of Jesus, fountains of live water for this thirsting world. Fr. Angelo

limits on the intervention of States and of the international community so that a couple is not deprived of its primary and inalienable responsibility. It is also unacceptable to encourage the use of immoral means to regulate birth, in particular abortion and abortifacient drugs and agents.

This is one of the points of radical difference between the Church and some orientations now coming to the fore. Truly, how can we not be disturbed by the fact that vast sums of money are allocated for distributing ethically impermissible contraceptives, while development of the great potential of 'natural family planning' has been rejected? The latter, in addition to being less costly, helps couples maintain their human dignity while exercising responsible love... More intense efforts are required to increase natural and economic resources and fair distribution... (Angelus, 24.7.94)

The State has the task of guaranteeing respect for the life of each human being in every possible way. Freedom of conscience and choice cannot be invoked against this duty, because the right to life of every human individual is a constitutive element of a civil society and its legislation. When the state does not place its power at the service of the rights of each and every citizen the very foundations of a State based on law are undermined. (7 August)

Authentic emancipation of women - There are those who reproach the Church for insisting too much on woman's mission in the family and for overlooking the question of her active presence in social life. This is not the case, for the Church is well aware of how much society needs the feminine genius in all aspects of civil society and insists that every form of discrimination of women be eliminated... Against the oppressive culture which makes the woman's task as mother more burdensome and where man is inclined to look upon her as an object of pleasure or a mere reproductive device, every legitimate effort must be made to promote the authentic emancipation of women. (14 Aug.)

Family comes before State. Promote a culture of responsible procreation - 'Man,' Aristotle stated, 'is by his nature more inclined to live as a couple than to associate politically, since the family is something that precedes and is more necessary than the State.' It would be serious if at the Cairo Conference, through concern to face the problem posed by rapid demographic growth, instead of striving to promote a culture of responsible procreation, one were to be content with accepting or even fostering a sexuality detached from ethical references.

The psycho-biological structure of human sexuality is an objective factor which, notwithstanding weakness in behaviour and the variety of opinions, does not cease to orientate towards the deep and stable relationship between the man and the woman in marriage, making them responsible for the life that springs from this relationship... In fact, what is at stake is the future of the family and of society itself."

This can be noticed in the more developed nations where the birth rate is very low, but where one notices "many alarming signs of a morality of life - for example: drugs, violence, the lack of ideals and values, of meaning and respect for life, indifference to the elderly and the insecurity of youth.

Does not the need to call for the indispensable restoration of the role and responsibility of the family spontaneously emerge?" (28 August)

Church heads world movement in defence of life

Harsh reactions come from anti-Catholic circles to the Pope's firm position regarding the family and responsible procreation. Many Third World countries, the Jews and the Islamic countries support the Pope's view, though, with their stance against the West: "advocate of licentiousness."

The Holy See practically heads this world formation in defence of life, since it has the power to influence a modification in the UN documents. The Pope's requests, made through a delegation from the Vatican, is summarized below.

1. Above all, society must shift attention from **family planning to launching economic and social development of the less prosperous peoples** (only 7 pages out of 113 in the UN document are dedicated to development, the rest to family planning).

2. Resist the dangerous short cut of relying only on **birth rate reductions in the poor countries** through family planning with use of contraceptives, sterilization and abortion which is a way of **enslaving and exploiting** the underdeveloped countries, of being rid of the nagging disturbance created by the presence of the poor, of humiliating their families and their women to condemn them to chronic underdevelopment and ethnic "thinning-out."

3. The Holy See is not opposed to **reasonable demographic regulation** that respects those fundamental values and rights that cannot be overthrown by politics: - the **right to be born** for every human being from its moment of conception; - the **rights of a family**, a family being a stable union between a man and a woman for reciprocal commitment and responsible procreation.

The Pope's words did not go unheard, for the US delegation did propose removing the accent on abortion as a birth control method from the UN document. The battle, however, is not won and the Vatican will not accept compromise as a solution. **

Mother Teresa: "The world that God gave us is sufficient for all."

With the Cairo Conference in mind, Mother Teresa made an impassioned appeal **against abortion**: "If there are unwanted children, children that cannot be nourished, then give them to me. No one has the right to kill a human life. Abortion is not admissible, not even when a woman has been raped." Mother Teresa's maxim has always been just this: "**Combat abortion with adoption.**" "God created the world big enough for everyone that He wills be born," she added.

News from the blessed land

(taken from Sr. Emmanuel's diary)

* **Youth Festival** theme was family. The Youth Festival was celebrated also this year from 31 July to 6 August with at least 2,000 participants. It was a week of intense joy and faith discovery. The Mother Church manifested her live and joyful reality to the young people who learnt the real, Christian, meaning of family - family the way Our Lady invites us to be, in all its beauty and magnificence, not the way the world imposes on us with its anti-Christian ways that go against life. Neither was it the way the UNO would like the family to be which, with all its projects, risks destroying the family unit.

During the Festival, beneath the huge tent, the visionaries came to testify their faith to

the youth. **Mirjana**, who had recently seen Our Lady in an apparition (2 August) was still radiant with joy. Mirjana, married with two children, said how every family first needs to take as a father our Father in Heaven and as a mother our Mother in Heaven, and that the children must be taught this.

Mirjana told of one of Our Lady's messages for parents: *That they never ask for anything they do not first set an example for.* (The importance of putting God first before anything else.) *The children must know that Holy Mass is an integral part of life and that they are welcome.* Mirjana spoke of the importance of praying first for non-believers, for when you pray for them you are working for the future and safety of your own children.

Ivan spoke of the family and its importance for young children. Talking of family, Our Lady has said: *"Parents must give as much time as possible to their children, to listen to them and talk to them in confidence. Prayer in the family is medicine for young people and for the world. Your first prayer group is your family. Start with loving those in your own home."*

Ivan also spoke of prayer groups and what Our Lady desires for them - such as do not go to the group just to say the Rosary and then leave straight away. She said we should find time to know one another so that real love has a chance to develop within the group. It is a good thing, for example, for members to find the time to do other activities together, like paying visits or going on excursions.

Vicka stressed: *The Virgin insists that we pray for the Pope, the Bishops, the priests and the whole Church.*

* **Vicka and the future of the youth** - To a question regarding the future of the youth, Vicka replied with Our Lady's teachings: *It is through daily prayer that you begin to listen, little after little, to God's voice in your hearts. You have to learn how to hear His voice through which He desires to make you understand what He wants from you and make known His will for you. For this, you must pray every day with your heart. If you do not pray, you will not be able to understand what your vocation is.*

* **On the 5th August** it was the 2010th anniversary of Our Lady's birth. It was a Friday, the stars were out and with all our heart we sang to Her: *Happy birthday to you.*

* **An atheist girl** saw Our Lady - It was 11th July, Our Lady appeared on the hill and prayed for the conversion of sinners.

A 14 year old girl, a non-believer, was in Medjugorje to accompany her invalid grandmother. At 10 pm, during Our Lady's apparition to Ivan, she saw a beautiful woman standing near the blue cross. She was smiling at the pilgrims. The young girl wondered if it was the Virgin, and then exclaimed: "I can see Her."

I spoke to her afterwards and realized that she is a typical child of our society who knows neither God, prayer or life's meaning.

Her heart has now taken a complete turn. She asked herself why this happened to her and not someone who had come to pray.

To her we say: it was precisely because you didn't know Her. Our Lady had been waiting for you for a long time. She loves you infinitely and wanted you to understand that you are important to Her, that you are no longer alone. She will always be with you.

This grace is a sign for us for the forthcoming Youth Festival. Our Lady, who cried for the situation of the youth, is ready to reveal to them Jesus' love and Her own love and heal them of the void that is in them.

* **Protect Medjugorje** from strange messages. Though she was soon due to give birth, Marija Pavlovic was in Medj. for the anniversary. She said how she was worried for the prayer groups. "We (the visionaries) have spoken at length with Fr. Jozo about the graces, battles and the sufferance of these past 13 years. We all agree: it is urgent to protect the Medj. presence in the world, its message must not be mixed with other revelations.

Unfortunately, many prayer groups are divided and have even broken up because of this, and the real Medj. message has been lost. Many false prophets are circulating, taking the people away from its basic message. As butterflies pass from one flower to the next, many go from one event to the next in search of the extraordinary, and their conversion is blocked." Marija said how she noticed this a lot in Italy and America.

"**Protect Medjugorje!**", the Pope told Fr. Jozo, and Our Lady often says: "Live the messages I give you here."

* **Meeting for Medj. groups.** The Franciscan fathers held a meeting for organizers of Medjugorje groups prior to the anniversary celebrations to discuss various points regarding the Marian shrine. **Fr. Pervan** stressed the importance of there being an evangelical foundation to all that happens in Medj. **Fr. Jozo** reminded the assembly of how the Blessed Virgin calls us to holiness, as in Vatican II, and of the utmost importance of the Eucharist. **Fr. Slavko** insisted on the important role of the lay people in Medj., saying how the Medj. movement began from them. The parish priest, **Fr. Landeka**, asked all those who speak in the name of Our Lady to do so in submission to the parish.

* On 14 July, in Monza, **Marija** Pavlovic gave birth to her first child and son, Michele (Michael). Babe and mother are both well.

* **Annalisa and Jakov's** first child is due in January 1985.

* **Vicka's sister Ana**, a member of the first prayer group since 1982, married a fellow member, Marinko Zovko on 21 August. They will live in Miletina, which will permit them to continue participating in the long nights of prayer on the hill. It is interesting to note that these young people, who grew up in Our Lady's school, have received various signs. Their spiritual knowledge is amazing - not obtained from reading books, but from their fidelity to prayer. Their humbleness is indeed fertile.

Milka, Marija's sister, has also married. You may recall that she saw Our Lady on the very first day of the apparitions.

* **A French pilgrim healed.** Suffering from glaucoma, he was left blind after an operation. He was given a picture of Our Lady of Medj. The words: *If you knew how much I love you, you would cry for joy*, were written on it. It made him angry; the message seemed out of place and timed badly. Within the next hour, though, his vision became normal and the glaucoma had gone. He came to Medj. to give thanks, and bit by bit his healing has led to the conversion of his entire family. All this from a simple message! * *

- Towards the end of July, **Mons. Chabert**, Archbishop of Perpignan, was welcomed in Medj. He concelebrated on 25 July, the feast of St James.

- The **15th August** was a day of great graces for the many pilgrims. **Fiorenza** who is 16 and suffers from Downs Syndrome was on Mt. Podbrdo in front of the blue cross and saw Our Lady. The encounter

liberated her, enabling her to pronounce the Hail Mary. God cares for His little ones, unlike the world which doesn't even want "imperfect" beings to be born.

- **Ivan** was in Belgium in August. Large crowds turned up in Beauraing and the Abbey of Mt César. Ivan then met with the bishop of Namur, Mons. Leonard, who asked to be present for the apparition. He said: "I went to Medj. in 1984 and I came back convinced." Ivan and Fr. Slavko then participated in various meetings in Britain.

- **Vicka** was in Ireland in July.

13th Anniversary on Podbrdo Searching one's conscience

1. This place was donated by God, it was not requested by men. What does your presence on Podbrdo mean, while, after 13 years, Our Lady is still appearing? What does Our Lady want from you now? We are here to reply to the Lord who has a plan and a will for each of us.

We are here after 13 years of insufficient response; insufficient because the war is still raging. We are all responsible and all of us must mend our ways. God wants us to be more involved with His Mother. It seems the response is very limited... so it is a great mystery. Our Lady holds all this up, She attracts people and opens hearts. Is there any other place at war with so many people?

There are **two wrong ways** of being here. One is judging the others or the negative or limited situation of Medj. This isn't being involved in what Our Lady wants, and you blame the others for the change in you. The other way is being here to present your desires (they can be good) to God so He will respond. The level of your desires is not that of Our Lady. Our Lady goes far beyond your desires.

The level of the Mystery is that you embrace Her Son, that you become one with Jesus' Heart and His will. We are but a small piece in the great mosaic of His plan. *Everything is possible for God*, even miracles.

The problem is us, for we were called to embrace His plan. Our Lady said: *I will leave a sign here for all, but you must convert before.* A consolation for those who have responded, a sufferance for those who have not. Podbrdo is the Calvary of our times, where God is present with His Mercy. You, in your spiritual life, were born here according to God's plan; He did not ask your permission.

2. **There are two great impediments to spiritual growth**, and because of our freedom, they stop Our Lady from making us more familiar with the Mystery. The greatest obstacle is our **attachment to ourselves**. God occupies second place, not first, despite our words. That is, we place ourselves before God with our reasoning, habits, thoughts and capacities. This is a congenital condition, in us from the start, caused by the original sin.

It is not an intentional dependency, but a reality which can turn our life about in no time. Like Mary at the Annunciation, we must be ready at all times to allow ourselves to be absorbed by the Mystery. Attachment to self indicates pride, being too impatient to get to the bottom of what is wrong in you. We must create silence within ourselves and avoid instinctiveness.

Each of us needs to make space for the Lord, for what comes from God, and accept it as being in His wisdom. A person who is consecrated to God does not search for one's own reasons, but always for the will of God. A person attached to him/herself will never

be an **instrument of communion and grace**. So think about how you are with the others. You are not ready to deny yourself. You form relationships that give you pleasure and reward. If your heart, though, is truly attached to God, those close to you, and others, will notice. You will be like an open gate. First, you need to accept being placed last, and sweep clean your soul.

The other impediment is fear. "Man of little faith," Jesus told Peter. Out of fear you do not let yourself become entirely involved. We hide our consecration because others think differently about Medj. Fear stems from the "animal" in man, not from his spirit and indicates little faith. Fear is always a sign of Satan's presence and it is a terrible weapon in his hands, with which he claims straight off 80%. If an event or situation puts more fear in your heart than peace, it is a sign that you are not attached to God. Being afraid enslaves you to Satan. He is then happy. Your lack of response to Our Lady indicates that the world is enslaved to sin and fear. The sign of the times is this cold indifference, which makes people afraid to donate themselves, it is why they are afraid of sacrifice.

People are attached to themselves because, after all, **there is no prayer**. People aren't open and attentive to the Spirit.

You are not open to the Spirit so you don't respond to all that the Spirit does. You refuse Mary, you avoid Her, you don't let Her tell you what's wrong with you, you avoid purification. In fact, Our Lady complains: *You cannot say you are mine!* We are too attached to our own egos. "There is no worse enemy than yourself." (St John of the Cross) Our Lady's complaint should disturb us. We do not appreciate God's gifts. God educates us through a surprising gift (Medj.) that our minds cannot grasp.

So the best way to grow spiritually, to mature, to come out of one's self, is to **look at the gifts**. When God donates, when He sends His Mother, all we have to do is follow Her, nothing else - without calculating what God may ask of us, thereby putting limits on them. If the gift is great it will require a great response. Fear of the gift is fear of having to give all and this makes love dry up, it paralyzes it. Coldness in love is fear of God, it is a sign of having shunned God's gift.

The real problem is getting involved with God to the point desired by Him, as far as **total donation of self**. When you do not make this donation every day, it means you are cold. When you give all, you become free in the power of the Spirit, and this is the real victory of your temptations. It makes your relationship with others different. Often, though, we don't hand over our freedom to the point of **total donation**, so what we need to do is make our hope and future coincide with Mary's programmes. Mary wants community, She wants us to manifest our consecration.

Fr. James and Niki from the *All Yours* group.

* **Pilgrims of solidarity** continue thanks to generous and untiring souls. Aid deliverers have notified that fewer donations are being received, perhaps because the plight of the displaced persons in Bosnia and Croatia is no longer reported by the media. With a decline in hostilities, though, many roads are now open, making it possible to deliver aid to areas that had been cut off for up to one year.

So let's give them our support. Contact your nearest Medj. centre for information on how to help. In Britain, the *Medjugorje Appeal* organizes aid delivery in collaboration with an American team. They also organize »

God's Kingdom is already among us

1. God's love works far and beyond human borders, which is why we are invited to open our hearts and to continually take part in this love which we find in the Eucharist.

The Eucharist is God's love that descends into the depth of our beings and heals us. The important thing is to remain open to this love which nourishes us. There is a theoretical atheism that denies God, and a practical one which is present in each of us. We know God, but we refuse Him because He is inconvenient, because our selves and He do not agree. We are called to remain in a state of waiting and of responsibility towards God. The danger is that we look for God in places where He isn't present, like the future, the clouds and our fantasies, and we are unable to recognize Him as being present within us, in our daily lives.

Concerning the wait for Jesus, there is only one correct way to behave: *keep watch!* Jesus said that not even He knew which day He would return. Jesus, though, will arrive in the same way as Spring: from within. In fact, right now we participate in eternity, in the Banquet of the Lamb. Our life is a pilgrimage of faith that leads us to living always in God's presence, to having a live relationship with God, as Mary did. Nothing is impossible for God. He reaches into our sealed tombs to lead us into resurrection. We must keep watch. If we do not discover God's presence in us we are left with a void, a space which will be occupied by false gods. A person who is filled with the true God does not look for false gods.

2. Open to God's presence. Israel, many people of Jesus' time, and pilgrims to Medj. and other shrines, including Padre Pio's tomb, have seen signs that talk of God's presence, but their hearts have remained closed. It is the mystery of a closed heart that concerns, in a certain sense, us all. The root of all sin is non-communion with God. All the sin within us that we do not wish to present to God forms like layers that enclose our heart and this forms a deviating energy that destroys us and others. God, before a closed heart, can do nothing, for He respects our freedom.

Jesus is the Lord who heals not only our paralyses, but also the roots of our paralyses. So let us throw away our sins, our past and our worries that only create in us a kind of bitterness, and decide for the Kingdom of God. That way we will defeat all our crosses, there will be no more gossip and tension and in their place there will be unity. There will be unity of the Church and of Christians, because all it needs is unity with God. In the Eucharist, God donates all, and prayer opens the way to union with God, to the new life.

3. Communion: with God, ourselves, the others and the universe. Knowing God does not depend on reason, but on the heart and will. It is love, not one's head that brings knowledge of the mysteries. One's head starts functioning when the heart functions and loves. Jesus was never shocked by a sinner, because He loved. Yes, He loved, and this is the only important knowledge; it is the fundamental aperture for knowing God. It is fundamental for knowing us and others.

The things that happen among Christians and prayer groups at times is really terrible,

» **pilgrimages** to Medj. by coach. Contact them at: Unit J, Lambs Bus. Park, Tilburstow Hill Rd., South Godstone, Surrey RH9 8JZ, UK.

like seeing only the negative sides of people. For the presence of a small spot we see all black. Our hearts are closed, and to think that God lives in him and every person. A person tries his best, and like us all he has a negative side, and we are unable to see God because our eyes are set on something else.

Jesus wants to lead us to communion with the Father and among us. By offering our life to God for each other we become Living Eucharists. For communion to exist among us we need to die to ourselves continually. Our uncertainties and our mistrust must die so that we can become free in God and among us. The journey to God creates freedom among people, and unites them in communion, and Christian life becomes a wealth. In this sense, God's Kingdom is already amid us, in the Sacraments and in the Church that contains all the mysteries of salvation.

The danger is in stopping before the signs (like running after the visionaries), in putting the journey off and not living in full the present. With a simple journey we can live God's Kingdom now, every day, and allow this Kingdom to grow.

(Fr. Tomislav - 5-8 May '94, Montesilvano)

Three day Marian Conference: Waikiki Shell, Honolulu, **Hawaii:** 28 - 30 Oct. 1994, featuring separate programme for youth. For info contact: Hawaii Marian Conference, c/o St Michael Center, 2639 S. King St., Ste 200, Honolulu, HI 96826-3269, USA.

Off the bookshelf: *An Hour with Jesus.* 109 pages of meditations and prayers for Adoration. Published by The Riehle Foundation, P.O. Box 7, Milford, OH 45150, USA. Requested donation \$2.

The Spirituality of Fatima and Medj. by Rev. Edward Carter, S.J. Faith Publishing Co., P.O. Box 237, Milford OH 45150, USA.

Identification with the Sacred Host. "It is not a question of devoting oneself deliberately to suffering... One must sanctify the difficulties of everyday life... as if coming from the hand of Divine Providence." English Distributor: Wing Cmdr John F.M. Harrow, St Annes, 2 Ashley Rd., Marnhull, Sturminster Newton, Dorset DT10 1LQ, England. **

ECHO IS FREE - It lives on your donations. Personal cheques accepted. Mail to: Eco di Medj., Cas. Post. 149, I-46100 Mantova, Italy.

Family news

I decided to do Echo 114 with only 4 pages so as not to delay this instrument of Mary too much, considering the great demand for it from all over the world. Thank you, dear readers, for your letters of encouragement and concern for my health. On the 5th August (Our Lady's birthday!) I underwent heart surgery. Our Lady guided everything wonderfully and I was dismissed from hospital in good condition. I then spent a month in the Rehabilitation Centre (Cardiological) in Garda.

The problems we spoke about in Echo 113 were not financial, however, we do thank those readers who rushed to send in donations. The problems were concerned with my health and personal commitments which still remain.

With the help of God, the next issue will be published after the October message.

May the grace that comes from Jesus' Cross, from Mary's Sorrows and Her Rosary accompany you always, and I bless you all. Villanova, 8 Sept. 1994