

Our Lady's message - Medj., 25 July '93

Dear Children, I thank you for your prayers and for the love you show me. I am inviting you to decide to pray for my intentions. Dear children, offer up novenas, making sacrifices in those things that bind you the most [to sin]. My desire is that you be bound to me.

I am your mother dear children, and I don't want Satan to distract you. He wants to lead you onto the path of evil, but he cannot if you do not permit him. For this reason, my dear children, you should renew prayer in your hearts, then you will be able to understand my call and my ardent desire to help you. Thank you for having responded to my call.

Call to mobilization! with prayers and sacrifices for Mary's intentions

**"Remain bound to me
to help me in this great undertaking"**

The entire message is an appeal to Her children to help in Her great plan of salvation, which is God's great plan of salvation (see messages 14 Jan. '85 & 25 May '93).

It is consoling to hear Her **thank us for our prayers and love** - it means there are still those who pray and love Her. And we know Mary doesn't concentrate the love and prayers on herself: like a mother, Her first concern is for Her children, and since She belongs totally to God, everything She receives is transmitted to God.

This is why She asks us to give 2nd place to our intentions: **Pray for my intentions; decide** [to pray for my intentions] - for the little things that worry us must be secondary to her **urgent plan of salvation**, for which She fights and prays before God. When a ship is about to sink, a person doesn't think about himself, but concentrates on helping to save the ship - if the ship is saved, so is he. Our Blessed Mother *knows* what the world needs for She sees everything in God's light. If we put aside our intentions to pray for Hers, we can be sure that She will not forget them - for our intentions are Hers. Thus, let us start praying for Her intentions, personally and with our groups.

To give more effect to our prayers Our Blessed Mother suggests the use of **novenas**, and to sacrifice those things that keep us tied down: bad habits, certain friendships, mundane pleasures; for they have a deleting effect on the spirit and vigour that we otherwise receive to make us efficient soldiers. At the beginning of the war, Our Lady suggested a similar novena so Her Fatima promises could be realized (25 Aug. '91).

Yet this is not all. Every time we offer up a sacrifice and choose God in favour of any other thing, God immediately makes Himself be felt. He fills whatever is empty. He fills with joy and power the person who prefers Him to whatever other satisfaction.

I am all yours Mary, and all that I have is yours.

God gives His Spirit and His strength to those who place God first, before any other thing, and God makes them invincible.

Satan is trying to distract us from this commitment, but Our Lady has forewarned us. She wants us to drive him back - decisively - for though he is powerful, **he can do nothing to us unless we permit him**. You see, if we *pray*, all that he wants to do against us is transformed into our own good and for the glory of God (7 Feb. '85).

So Mary wants us to remain bound to Her without dangerous distractions, for Her great plan, and though this small squad (small, though spread all over the world) may seem to disappear in front of Satan's devastating work, we can feel sure under the guidance of She Who is: *terrible as an army with banners* (Sg 6:10). With God we will do great things: *He will trample on our enemies* (Ps 60).

Of course we cannot forget the power of **prayer with the heart**: it can open everything, provide us with a remedy, and with light to see. This is also the condition required to **understand the call** to realizing Her plan in this grave moment and Her **immense desire to help us**. Fr. A.

"I am your Mother!"

The messages given to the world by Our Lady are not given by chance, but each one is a step to the triumph of Her Immaculate Heart on the earth that leads to the House of the Father. In this message, Mary comes as **our Mother**, calling us Her dear children. It is indeed a great mystery of love that makes us wonder: that same pure womb that accepted the Son of God, also accepts and nourishes each one of us!

This Mother - God's and Our Mother - thanks us for our love and our prayers. She is happy, but not totally, and She explains

As usual, we give ample space to the Pope: authentic teacher given by God to His Church, and the only authority on morality that the present-day world listens to. We know this pleases our readers, particularly in countries where though there may be a large Catholic presence, they neither get to hear nor read his teachings: faithful echos of Mary's messages.

"Extraordinary Prophet" The Pope in Denver: YOUTH, COME OUT FROM THE DARKNESS the truth that liberates exists

During the vigil (14 Aug.) the Pope began the meeting with the world's youth by meditating upon the mystery of divine life placed deep in the heart of each person.

The theme of the clash between light and darkness that marks the history of mankind was once again proposed by the Pope during the vigil and closing Mass in Denver. He wanted to strike out at those elements of today's culture and civilization that go against life and express Satan's refusal of the Truth. The two meetings in Cherry Creek State Park (**prayer vigil on evening of 14th** and Mass on the 15th) proved to be a lesson on the Christian meaning of life.

The Good Shepherd lays down his life for the sheep

I came that they might have life, and have it abundantly (Jn 10:10), as we know, was the main theme of the 8th World Youth Day. The Pope expanded this theme by starting from the Scriptural words: *The Good Shepherd lays down his life for his sheep* (Jn 10:11). "Death assails life. At the level of our human experience, death is the enemy of life: an intruder that frustrates our

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why: in us are other things that bind us not to Her, but to sin. This stops us from being totally Hers. What are these things? Each one of us must search our own conscience, seriously and with sincerity, to discover what they are. Our Blessed Mother gives us a remedy for them: Offer novenas and sacrifices. That way we can be totally Hers and free of the devil who, *like a prowling lion is looking for someone to eat* (1 Pt 5:8).

Our Blessed Mother also asks us to **pray with the heart**, for Her intentions. She had already asked us to do this (25 Sept. '91). Why does She ask us again? When we pray to God, He takes our requests seriously and is "tied down" by our intentions. What I mean is that if I pray for my vegetable garden to produce abundant fruit, God can't use that prayer to give peace to the world.

Our Lady is asking us now to pray with the heart, for our prayer to be free of intentions, so that She Who sees and knows all the urgent needs of humanity, will use our prayers for the salvation of the world, without forgetting our own personal needs; for Mary, Our Mother is an attentive, loving and good Mother. fra Lino

natural desire to live. It is not surprising then that among the 10 Commandments the Lord of Life, the God of the Covenant, should have said on Mount Sinai, *You shall not kill.*

The Law of Conscience

The words *you shall not kill* were engraved on the tablets of the covenant, but even before that this law was engraved on the human heart, in the sanctuary of every individual's conscience. In the Bible, the first to experience the force of this law was Cain, who murdered his brother Abel. Immediately after his terrible crime, he felt the whole weight of having broken the commandment *not to kill*. Even though he tried to escape from the truth, saying: *Am I my brother's keeper?* (Gn 4:9), the inner voice repeated over and over: "You are a murderer." **The voice was his conscience, and it could not be silenced.**

So what is needed to build the culture of life is righteousness of conscience: a gift from God, placed deep in the heart of each person. Often this inner light is darkened. **"Why do the consciences of young people not rebel against the moral evil** that flows from personal choices? Why do so many acquiesce in attitudes and behaviour which offend human dignity and disfigure the image of God in us? The normal thing would be for conscience to point out the mortal danger to the individual and to humanity contained in the easy acceptance of evil and sin. And yet it is not always so. Is it because conscience itself is losing the ability to distinguish good from evil?"

This obscuring of the faculty of seeing and judging the truth appears in many ways, the root of which the Pope indicated as coming from "a culture which holds that no universally valid truths are possible, nothing is absolute. So, in the end objective goodness and evil no longer really matter. Good comes to mean what is pleasing or useful at a particular moment. Evil means what contradicts our subjective wishes. Each person can build a private system of values."

The Pope warns youth against "this false morality" that suffocates one's conscience. "Conscience is the most secret core and sanctuary of a person, where we are alone with God. **In the depths of his conscience man detects a law** which he does not impose upon himself, but **which holds him to obedience.** That law is not an external human law, but the voice of God, calling us to free ourselves from the grip of evil desires and sin, and stimulating us to seek what is good and true. Only by listening to the voice of God in your most intimate being, and by acting in accordance with its directions, will you reach the freedom you yearn for. As Jesus said, *only the truth will make you free* (Jn 8:32). And **the truth is not the fruit of each individual's imagination.** God gave you intelligence to know the truth, and your will to achieve what is morally good. He has given you the light of conscience to guide your moral decisions, to love good and avoid evil.

Moral truth is objective - a properly formed conscience can perceive it. But often this inner freedom is damaged, making it difficult to sincerely accept the truth. "If conscience, which is light, no longer enlightens, how can we overcome moral darkness? Jesus says: *The eye is the body's lamp. If your eyes are good, your body will be filled with light; if your eyes are bad, your body will be in darkness. If your light is darkness, how deep will the darkness be!* (Mt 6:22)

The way where hearts are healed

But Jesus also says: *I am the light of the world. No follower of mine shall ever walk in darkness; no, he shall possess the light of life* (Jn 8:12). If you follow Christ you will restore conscience to its rightful place and proper role, and you will be the *light of the world, the salt of the earth*. A rebirth of conscience must come from 2 sources: first, **the effort to know objective truth with certainty**, including the truth about God; and secondly, **the light of faith** in Jesus Christ, who alone has the words of Life.

When the light of faith penetrates this natural consciousness we reach a new certainty. The words of Christ ring out with utter truth: *I came that they might have life, and have it abundantly.* Against all the forces of death, in spite of all the false teachers, Jesus Christ continues to offer humanity the only true and realistic hope. He is the world's true Shepherd. This is because he and the Father are one. In his divinity he is one with the Father; in his humanity he is one with us. Because he took upon himself our human condition, Jesus Christ is able to communicate to all those who are united with him in Baptism the Life that he has in himself. And because in the Trinity, Life is Love, the very *love of God has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us* (Rm 5:5). **Life and Love are inseparable:** the love of God for us, and the love we give in return - love of God and love of every brother and sister."

That they may have life and have it abundantly

How can Christ give us Life if death forms part of our earthly existence? How is it possible if *it is appointed that human beings die once, and after this the judgement* (Hb 9:27)? Jesus Himself provides the answer, and the answer is a supreme declaration of divine Love, a high-point of the Gospel revelation concerning God the Father's love for all creation. The answer is already present in the parable of the Good Shepherd.

Christ says: *The Good Shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.* Christ, the Good Shepherd, is present among us, among the peoples, nations, generations and races, as the One who lays down his life for the sheep. What is this but the greatest love? It is the death of the innocent One: *The Son of Man is departing*, as Scripture says of him, *but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed.*

Christ on the Cross stands as a sign of contradiction to every crime against the commandment not to kill. He offered his own life in sacrifice for the salvation of the world. **No one takes that human life from him, but he lays it down of his own accord.** He has the power to lay it down and the power to take it up again. It was a true self-giving. It was a sublime act of freedom. In the new life of the resurrection, he has become a life-giving spirit (1 Co 15:54), who can now bestow the gift of Life on all who believe in him.

Life laid down - Life taken up again - Life given. In him, we have that Life which he has in the unity of the Father and of the Holy Spirit - if we believe in him, if we are one with him through love, remembering that *whoever loves God must also love his brother* (1Jn 4:21).

Teach the youth gathered here, all the youth of the world, the meaning of laying

Mary upsets plans in Denver

Another attempt at imprisoning Peter, defeated by communion of faithful.

The hostile environment of Denver not seen on TV

A few details we noticed during our week's stay in Denver threw a different light on the Pope's presence in that city.

Thoroughly disappointing was the amount of space the **local press gave to the superficial and trivial matters.** *Denver Post* and *Rocky Mountain News* inundated its readers with articles about everything except for what really counted: the accommodation, the showers, the fast food, the pilgrims' attire, the weather, the sick, the rubbish left after the meeting, but so little about the Pope's meditations. They only seemed to care about whether he was in favour of or against abortion. Could it be that they didn't know?!

So the young people who were unable to attend the meeting were denied the right of knowing what the Pope wanted to tell them. In a country that boasts of its information service, we could only call it a symptom of **"wanting to deliberately gag the Pontiff."** This would explain why John Paul II was unable to celebrate the Way of the Cross, and why in Cherry Creek Park the platform seemed so small that a normal square outside any Sanctuary would have been preferable. Not only, but the PA system proved insufficient, nor were there enough screens during the wake or the Mass on the 15th, so that more than half the youth present could neither hear nor see a thing. Then we who could see and hear were astounded when the PA system failed twice as he was talking. All we could hear was the rolling of the drums of the "Hollywood" type orchestra that accompanied the liturgy!

The Pope's presence was not looked upon favourably. Only the youth really wanted to listen to him, though some of them were used as instruments in yet another **demonstration of the cult of American independence.** During the wake of the 14th, the testimonies that followed the Pope's reflections seemed more like a lesson in faith for the benefit of the Pope!

One of the speakers came out with: "Holy Father, my faith is big!" Another joyfully exclaimed: "We are the Catholic Church!" Then someone thanked the Pope "for having come from Rome to stay with us."

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down their lives through *vocation* and *mission*. Challenge the youth of the Church to carry on the vast mission of making you known to all those who have not yet heard of you! **Give these young people the courage and generosity** of the great missionaries of the past so that, through the witness of their faith and their solidarity with every brother and sister in need, the world may discover the *Truth, the Goodness and the Beauty of the Life you alone can give.*

Teach these young people the proper use of their freedom. Teach them that the greatest freedom is the fullest giving of themselves. Teach them the meaning of the Gospel words: *He who loses his life for my sake will find it.* You are the Good Shepherd! And there is none other! **Maranatha! Come Lord Jesus!** (Edit. staff)

Next month, the Pope's conclusive speech given on Solemnity of Assumption

Obviously, that person missed the point: we were the ones who went to where the Pope had called us. If it hadn't been for him none of us would have been in Denver - the attraction in Denver was the Pope, for all.

Neither dare we think the Pope went to Denver to be taught a lesson in faith, or to hear a speech prepared by American intellectuals. We really did get the **impression that for them the Pope was just an "ornament" for a youth meeting that would have succeeded anyway.**

How many people were there? For the American mass media: 200,000, some said 300,000, and the more generous: 370,000. Yet we all heard the Bishop of Denver, Msgr. Stafford, tell the Pope there were **750,000 people**. Why then say there were less? The press and local TV stations had been trying for some time to keep people away from Cherry Creek State Park, and the county sheriff had launched an appeal, advising people to stay home.

It would have bothered "the authorities" to see the Pope being welcomed, listened to and followed by too many people, as what they wanted to demonstrate was just the opposite: that his presence was superfluous and disturbing. But **Our Lady upset those plans**, and called such a great number of youth that they didn't know how to handle it, since they had not expected more than 400,000. The day after the papers talked about finding whoever was responsible for the "disaster." What disaster? What we saw was about a **million** people (our Italian TV reported this number) come from all over the place to become like one, finally before their father in faith, whom they know loves them and takes them seriously.

In Denver we saw that **the real men of God are those who make communion grow**. The Pope announced the Gospel and stressed the importance of searching for one's vocation and mission. All this exploded in our hearts during the Mass celebrated by him. What became evident is that communion of the Church, acquired through the Sacraments, knocks down the barriers of separation built by Satan.

To Mary we entrust the Pope's plans for the new evangelization, and may we never break away from that wonderful mystery that God gave us called communion with Jesus Christ in the Holy Catholic Church.

All the negativity was destroyed by the Pope's message. We know that many do not give importance to his words, but this mustn't deter us. What the Pope told us in Denver is light - the strongest light granted by God to the Church and the world of our time. For the *faithful* the important thing is to pray and meditate upon it, and let ourselves be guided by he who is consecrated to Mary.

To remain in communion with the Pope means defeating Satan who teaches many to be pridefully indifferent to the Magisterium of the Church.

Edit. staff

American Press distorted meaning of Denver meeting

Peter Steinfels in the *New York Times* says how the American mass media insisted on bringing up the same old controversies: disagreements within the Church, female priesthood, birth control - as if all the Pontiff's teachings were limited to this.

Mr Steinfels, representing the **Jewish religious environment**, spoke about how broad the meaning is, instead, of the **value of "life"** as presented by the Pope during

CONVERSION must not stop but needs a guide

Some, after the enthusiasm that accompanies the beginning of a conversion, find themselves battling with feelings of bewilderment and disconcertion, perhaps for old problems not resolved, or conflicts that have been bottled up inside, or old passions that keep on surfacing. This is nothing to marvel about, but is a natural symptom in a person called to go beyond those first steps of a conversion, and with Jesus, face up to the next, often hard ones.

An Australian sister with a joyful beginning in her conversion writes: "At times it's so difficult to believe Her words of love and be faithful: it seems so unreal ... for certain situations I don't see an answer. (...) I can't understand why Our Lady gives so much to the visionaries and seems so indulgent towards them. Not that I would like to be in their place, but this *freedom* is a real thorn in my side. (...) Why does God not give us a bit of respite? He seems so hard-hearted. (...) Our Lady keeps on asking for sacrifices, but I'm tired of giving, giving, giving and never receiving. I'm tired of thinking of others and never of myself. (...) I still pray, but out of fear, not out of love..."

The following is that part of my reply to her that may be of interest to all:

Dear sister in Christ, (...) It seems to me that what is happening in you is similar to what happens in many others, whose conversion starts from an extraordinary event, like Medjugorje for instance. Without a doubt, such a conversion is a stimulus to change life; and things start off well, but inevitably one finds oneself before the same old inner and outer problems, especially having to face up to those deep wounds that remain. So what happens when we feel alone, without help? We are discouraged, rebellion rises in our hearts, we feel stressed, even effortless.

The initial conversion must become "daily conversion," says Our Lady (25.2.93), and needs to be continually purified (Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament is very effective), of our inner feelings to be freed of false idols, to create a harmony between spirit and nature. Otherwise our conversion becomes illusion or disappointment.

The key word to help keep us on the move is accepting one's cross, oneself and the others. That is what Jesus asks of those who want to follow Him. When we accept our cross, Jesus Himself forgives, purifies, corrects our intentions and frees our heart from looking for self-achievement. And He gives us peace and joy: the kingdom of God is righteousness and peace and joy brought by the Holy Spirit (Rm 14:17).

But this can't be achieved in a day. The road is a long one; we can't walk it alone,

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but only with Jesus and it leads to Jerusalem, that is, in the opposite direction to the way the world is going.

I see you have many things worrying you, and that you do not have peace in your heart. What you need is to find rest in prayer, by letting Jesus and Mary pray in you - for They know what you need the most (cf. Rm 8:26). Once your soul is surrendered up to God in prayer, it receives peace. When we depend on Jesus, and surrender ourselves to Him, He enters us; and like in the multiplication of the 5 loaves He produces fruit - because without me you can do nothing (Jn 15:5).

Which means that "with Me you can do everything," and if I do everything in Jesus, then through Him everything goes well. And I won't be so anxious because I won't have to answer to men (who can be demanding and ruthless) for my actions, but to Jesus - and we know Jesus is merciful, and He knows how to make good out of the wrong I do. How consoling!

So everything can be resolved by my yes - like Mary's yes, the yes of [accepting] the cross, the yes of the childlike to whom the secrets of the kingdom are revealed, while they are hidden from the learned and the clever (Mt 11:25).

No one can claim to be privileged - including the visionaries - unless we consider those who are given a great deal, and so God will demand much of them (cf. Lk 12:48). And though God showers us with His loving gifts, we are still free, like Judas, to say no.

God is not hard of heart. He loves us. And it's because He loves us that He wants to make us similar to His Son Who is happy to do the Father's will even when it means suffering. Jesus, Who knows how the Father loves Him, does not hesitate to go on the cross where He is glorified. The sacrifices that Our Lady asks of us would have no meaning if they were not for love. We can renounce things that give us immediate gratification to obtain a much higher Good, an infinite Good, both for us and the others. This gives us real joy.

All this is possible, however, with the help of a guide who can lead us on our faith walk, like Jesus did with the Apostles, with Mary Magdalene and the disciples. We also know that Jesus said no when some, moved by enthusiasm after a sign or a healing, asked to follow Him. Jesus had to take care of those who had been called and who had left everything to follow Him.

*So following Jesus is something that can't be done alone. It takes a father to guide us, a doctor to heal us, an environment that allows us to grow. In your case, you need a priest to act as your **spiritual director** in the place of Jesus, and a **group or community** to help you.*

Often, spiritual directors are difficult to find. There has never been a time where there have been so many teachers of theory and so few practical helpers, so many teachers and so few fathers! (cf. 1Co 4:15).

That is why Our Lady has come to the Church to act as a spiritual guide, simple and practical, all over the world. We can find this maternal guidance in those priests or lay people, or groups or communities, where Her call is developed.

I am sure Jesus will grant you this gift, and in the meantime I and other friends are praying for you and pleading for you. You are no longer alone.

My blessings, Fr. A.

his visit to the US. The Jewish journalist pointed out how the Pope was **condemning moral relativism**, i.e., the refusal of a law or a universal truth that deeply distinguishes modern-day civilization, particularly the so-called developed countries. **Rabbi Jack Bemporad** from the University of Fairfield in Connecticut added that this item was the real meaning of the Pope's visit, and he concluded by stressing that intelligent journalism should have accepted and amplified these matters. (Avvenire, 25.8.93)

OFFERING OF ONESELF is announcement of life

Dedicated to all whom Mary calls
to total surrender

You have seduced me Lord, you have overpowered me ... (Jr 20:2-9) I beg you to offer your living bodies as a holy sacrifice, truly pleasing to God ... (Rm 12:1-2)

If anyone wants to be a follower of mine, let him renounce himself and take up his cross and follow me ... anyone who loses his life for my sake will find it (Mt 16:24-27)

Fr. Tomislav addressed family and friends as a large group of young men and women took the habit:

To begin, I want to ask: how do you feel about seeing these young people who've decided to leave the world? Each one listen to their own heart. It is on rare occasions that parents truly understand how big a step their children have taken. Many think: they are young, healthy, able and good-looking and they could have had a wonderful life - why then choose consecration? I then, on their behalf, wish to explain the meaning of such a step so you may become part of this act of consecration and offering they are making to the Lord.

There is a word that defines what they are doing. That word is **birth**. What they are doing is taking another step in their birth to life. The world asks why they give up life; and they all reply: *It is here that I find a life much fuller than what the world offers.* These young people yearn for that immense space called life. Each of them is convinced that this is more difficult than remaining in the world, but they also know that *this road leads me to a fuller life, a more complete happiness, and this is birth.*

They have discovered that when you walk behind Jesus, the road to life opens up wider and wider. He promised happiness to those who follow Him; He promised they could enter the perfect life - like it says in the Gospel. He also promises them a hundredfold while on the earth and then eternal life (Mt 19:27-29). The steps these young people are taking lead to this life, to this birth. The world does not understand.

This is no wonder, for not even St Peter understood. We know Jesus indicated the way to Jerusalem and Peter was against it, for it was difficult, it meant persecution, condemnation and death. Peter couldn't understand it was a way of birth, victory and resurrection. And Jesus said: *Away from me, Satan* - to Peter. So we Christians have to see that these forms of resistance exist within us. Our resistance is our blindness, our inability to see the life that Our Lord gives us, it is our inability to be reborn.

After the Lord's Resurrection, the Apostles were reborn, they became new, despite the difficulties and persecution. These brothers and sisters here have decided to give themselves totally to the Lord so they may enter this life. There is something in the life of those who give themselves up totally to the Lord that cannot be understood in terms of human logic - like two people who fall in love: human logic cannot tell us why they are so close.

There is a fire burning within my bones that I am unable to contain, says the Prophet. This fire burns constantly in a servant of God, even if the environment is contrary. All the human logic cannot stop it.

These young people and those who participate in this faith walk thus experience

a new birth. This is the only prospect for humanity. Look at the TV and the papers and see how worldly life is. People conform to the world. They look at ugly things and become ugly. They look at frightening things and are filled with fear. This way, the world will die. There is no prospect for the world - on this material level.

The only prospect is being born again in Christ: when people are in trouble and [they can] announce hope and be bearers of life, to people and groups. God alone can give life to the world, and God can give it through His servants, who are open to Him.

So these young people that you see here have decided for this life, to be reborn, to possess life and manifest life everywhere. Everywhere? Just so, wherever there is tragedy, God wins and gives life. Wherever there is incomprehension and the world says it is impossible to forgive, God says: it is possible. Where the world says it is impossible to heal, God says: it is possible to heal. Where the world looks ahead with trepidation, the servants of God jump with joy because they know they are going on to meet the Lord and thus defeat even death.

Those who serve God announce life, they do not die. This is the reason why these young people have started on this journey.

To you parents I say: you gave them life humanly speaking. Take part in this process of rebirth so you too may be reborn, generated by God. I invite all of you to live *this* life, this peace which is greater than all situations of tension, this joy that is greater than all the sadness, this light that is greater than all the darkness, this love that is greater than all the hate. *This is* life, so I invite you to live joyfully this act of consecration and be happy that your sons and daughters are going to be reborn and that you too want to be reborn in Christ.

So all of us here, and indeed the entire Church, in this moment are profound participants of Christ's life in these young people. And as Christians, let us offer our joy to the Lord because of these young people who are open to the Lord and who look upon their future and the world's future with serenity; because they are preparing to call out to all men that there is a way to happiness, a way to joy.

(Lama dei Peligni, 5 Aug. '93)

Mary Mediatrix of all Graces

From a booklet written by Mr. Mark Miravalle (University of Steubenville in Ohio) and from an inspiration by Msgr. Paul Hnilica, the idea came to start up a new international movement called VOX. The aim of VOX is to promote the definition of **Mary Mediatrix of all Graces** - a definition which was placed aside after Vatican Council II.

From Santa Barbara in California the movement is spreading all over the world. Its full name is *Vox populi Mariae Mediatrici* and it has already gathered up a million signatures for a petition that will be presented to the Holy Father. The book, "Mary Co-redeemer, Mediatrix and Advocate," by Mr. Miravalle was presented to Cardinal L. Ciappi, theologian emeritus of *Casa Pontificia*, and will soon be translated into the principal languages.

CHAIN OF PRAYER for the intentions of the Queen of Peace. The list of participants in the non-stop prayer organized by Yvonne from France and other teams in Italy, has been given to Our Lady via Vicka.

In Slovenia, Queen of Peace confirms Medj. messages

December 1989: a Slovenian pilgrim on Podbrdo heard the voice of Mary: *... renew prayer in a forgotten and abandoned place!* At a later date that pilgrim understood that the message referred to the ruins of a church on Mount Kurescek near Ljubljana where a church had existed since the 15th century. The church had been dedicated to the Queen of Peace but was damaged during WW II and left in ruins.

Holy Mass was celebrated once again on those ruins on 10 Feb. 1990. After Communion a deacon (who goes by the name of Smaverski - Our Lady wants him to remain unknown) heard a voice: *I am the Queen of Peace. May prayer be renewed here in this place. Here you will meet my Heart and the Heart of my Son... This will be a place of healing from spiritual illnesses. (...) Be faithful and pray, I will be with you. Do not try to prove anything; I will give you proof. Learn from the messages I give in Medj. I bless you.*

In the meantime, the church was rebuilt and the Archbishop of Ljubljana, Msgr. Alois Sustar, consecrated it on 30 August 1992. The messages received by Smaverski (usually every first Saturday) are published by his spiritual father (a Jesuit priest) once the Archbishop has checked them.

Truly, Our Lady keeps on reminding Her children of what's necessary for their peace, when they do not understand or accept it (cf. Lk19:41). Here She says: *Peace depends on man's obedience to God and to She who speaks in His name. Terrible powers surround you. Only in being obedient to God and His Gospel, through prayer, fasts and sacrifice, will you be able to keep your heads above them.* (25.7.92)

Often, Mary's words are for **priests**: *Priests, my beloved sons, accept my invitation to conversion. Permit my Heart to transform you according to the Heart of my Son. (...) Once again I invite the faithful and the priests to renewal: they must follow me with trust, and realize my messages of Medj. and Kurescek.*

Pray very much for priests, and love them. In particular pray for those among you who are in danger, love them and do not abandon them. (...) Priests, my beloved sons, I desire that you plunge yourselves into the meaning of your vocation, and recognize the work you do when reconciling people's souls [to God]. Put your hearts into this service: so noble and full of grace. Take my peace to all men.

All sanctuaries should be places of reconciliation. All you who search for peace and reconciliation, go to sacramental reconciliation (confession). Forgive, and you will be forgiven. Fortify yourselves with the Body of my Son. All you who are sincere will experience peace.

What the refusal of the Queen of Peace has cost - 8.2.92: *If humanity, Christians and especially the Croats could at least see now the wrong they did in not obeying me! (...) For 10 years I invited them, warned them, begged them. The majority did not accept me, God's messenger, nor did they accept my warnings or invitations to consecration. The consequences are terrible. Oh, if only they would recognize me now as the Queen of Peace and accept me as Mother, through whom God speaks.* (md)

MEDJUGORJE NEWS

Youth festival

About 1,000 young people attended the Youth Festival, held from 31 July to 6 August. The Czechs and Slovaks were the most numerous (5 bus loads). Then there were the Croatians, Italians, Germans, French, Hungarian, Irish, English and Belgians. **Fr. Slavko** was the able guide of the theme, *From Darkness to Light*: building a new life on the ruins. He, like the others, spoke in Croatian while Marija Dugandzic' translated into Italian, Milona translated into English, German and French, and others into Czech and Magyar.

The day began at 8.30 a.m. when the heat was already stifling in the giant tent, but this didn't balk the young people. The day was made up of prayers, testimonies, reflection and singing. A high-point was the Rosary at 6.00 p.m. followed by Holy Mass, and Adoration from 10.30 p.m. till mid-night.

The music provided by the orchestra and Fr. Liam from Ireland, was a wonderful accompaniment to the reflections and prayers, and helped to intensify the retreat.

Moving **testimonies** were given during the mornings. Fr. Petar spoke about vocation. Sr. Elvira's young people talked about their stories with drugs and how grace helped them get out of it. Fr. Liam, Sr. Emmanuel and Marija Pavlovic' also gave testimonies. Wednesday night, around mid-night, songs and chants in various languages could be heard as the youth began wishing Our Lady a happy birthday. Many offered Her flowers, placing them at the foot of the statue of the Immaculate Conception, some had letters and petitions.

Thursday 5 August: Mary's birthday. Fr. Jozo came to speak to the youth. He was delayed by the news of the death of the young husband of one of his nieces, killed in battle in Mostar. He invited all to *pray for peace before the cross*, and he blessed rosary beads and holy pictures for all.

That evening there was a concelebrated Mass. Main celebrant was Archbishop Francic', who invited everyone to stay and recite the Rosary after Mass. In the meantime groups of people started making their way up Krizevac where many young people stayed the night in prayer. At 3.30 a.m. Fr. Slavko started his way up, doing the Stations of the Way of the Cross, with a large group of followers. Mass began at day-break, and as the sun began to appear the youth were filled with joy. Fr. Slavko said how Krizevac had been transformed into Mt. Tabor and how they felt wrapped in the love of God. "Take Mary into your homes," he concluded, "and you will never fear anything again." *Alberto Bonifacio*

Sr Emmanuel's Diary

* (July) **Beware of false rumours!** No, Medjugorje has not been attacked. Since each pilgrim that arrives is a great victory for peace, we are saddened by the cancelling of many pilgrimages. If there were any real danger, we would warn you. Fr. Jozo says in fact: "It would be better to bring the pilgrims here, rather than [send us] money." Fr. Slavko says: "No problem, they can come." Vicka says: "Let them come, there is nothing to fear!"

* On 2 July, during the **apparition to Ivan on Podbrdo**, Our Lady told him there would be no more messages on the hill for the pilgrims, but that they would continue

for the prayer group. The pilgrims are invited to join the prayer group on the hill as they have always done. It was in 1982 that Our Lady asked Ivan to pray together with 16 young people from the village (that she chose) in the evenings on the hill.

We thank the Virgin for the great blessing of Her presence on the hill, we beg Her to remain still more.

* Medj. buried its first fallen soldier, Ilko Barac', 20 years old. **Mirjana** learnt of the killing of 20 of her relatives in Bosnia, massacred by Muslims. No family around us has been spared the anguish of having lost a relative of some sort. There are more and more massacres, thanks to the arrival of professional killers from outside. The soldiers from Medj. fighting in Mostar, Stolac', Buna, etc. say that coming back here from the front is like going from hell to heaven. It is up to us and our humble yet fervent prayers to make it so heaven spreads, not hell.

* (August) A great crowd of pilgrims arrived for the Assumption celebrations. On 14th August hundreds of women came in procession from the crossroad at Tromedja to Podbrdo. They were the **mothers of Croatian soldiers**, come to implore protection for their sons, from the Mother of Crucified Christ; full of hope that She, a Mother like them, would hear their cry.

* **Marija's wedding.** The date of her marriage with Paolo Lunetti from Monza is set for 8 Sept. It will take place in the Holy Apostles basilica in Milan. To impede her from being treated as a star, no journalists, TV teams or even private movie cameras will be allowed in; and here we can stress how the visionaries suffer when they are treated like objects of curiosity, when instead the people should be centering on God.

(We of Echo, together with all Medj. friends, wish her happiness. May Our Lady bless her and accompany her in her new task in family life, as well as in the task she already has in the Church.)

* A group from the "**Oasis of Peace**" community has settled permanently in Medjugorje. This Marian community started up years ago after a Medjugorje experience. There are already hundreds of members spread over 7 different dioceses. Their modest home situated between Podbrdo and Krizevac has a chapel where the community prays day and night in adoration before the Blessed Sacrament.

Close by there is also another group of young people belonging to Sr Elvira's **Cenacle** community. These young people built their own home, and divide their day between prayer, work and giving hospitality to numerous friends in need of healing.

* For more than 1 year now in Medjugorje, Mass is celebrated every evening for the Croatian soldiers and for all the war victims. The 19th May is the day the young soldiers came back home from the front in Mostar, all unharmed, and this day has now become a **day of prayer and pilgrimage for the army**.

Youth at Mass, 5 August - in background: giant tent and Krizevac

* **Bishop of Mostar resigns** - 2 months after his 75th birthday, Msgr. Pavao Zanic's resignation was accepted. At the moment he is in Italy. He is succeeded by Coadjutor Bishop Ratko Peric'.

Declaration by 2 Croatian Bishops regarding Medjugorje events

In an interview on the 7th August 1993, **Cardinal Franjo Kuharic** replied to queries concerning Medj. *Glas Koncila* gave a report of it on 15 August. The Cardinal made the following declaration:

"The special Commission has been studying these events for 3 years, and we bishops have **accepted Medjugorje as a place of prayer, a sanctuary**. This means that we have nothing against people honouring Our Lady in a way that conforms to Church doctrine and to the faith. With regards to the supernatural aspect of apparitions, we have said that for now we cannot state that there is a supernatural aspect. We still have important reservations. Therefore, this aspect is left for further inspection. The Church is not in a hurry."

On 22nd August in another interview the new bishop of Mostar, **Msgr. Ratko Peric'**, was asked: "What do you think of the supposed Marian apparitions in Medjugorje?" *Glas Koncila* reports:

"I agree 100% with the decision made by the Catholic Bishops in Zara on 10 April 1991, that is: Based on the investigations made so far, it is not possible to say that apparitions and supernatural revelations are occurring in Medjugorje. Nonetheless, one must recognize that many pastoral impulses came from Medj. What my predecessor, Bishop Pavao Zanic, wanted was for people to convert not just in Medj., but wherever people live."

To the question: "How will you collaborate with the Franciscans of Herzegovina," Bishop Peric replied: "That's not an easy question. It is strictly connected to the truth in Medj. The Franciscans in our diocese are not what you could say in strict obedience. Nonetheless, there is no reason to worry, because the saying, *if it comes from God it will remain*, is also valid for Medjugorje."

The Pope to youth in Agrigento: Two generations separate us, but I feel as if I were one of you, for the Spirit makes me grow day by day if I remain open to conversion.

Donations (July-August): *Medj. in East:* Lit.5,359,000; *Croatia-Bosnia:* Lit.10,237,000; *RadioMariaPoland:* Lit.3,918,000; *Printer for Russia:* Lit.1,620,000; *Other:* Lit.210,000

BOSNIA a "peace" plan that stirs up war

Our Lady has always said that wars could be avoided and stopped only through prayer and fasts. We sadly note that man's attempts at stopping it have worsened and complicated the situation. The solution proposed was to divide Bosnia & Herzegovina into 3 decentralized states, depending on ethnic majority: 52% to the Serbs (were 32%), 30% to the Muslims (44%) and 18% to the Croatsians (17%).

But this plan has done nothing but worsen **ethnic cleansing**, for the peoples not belonging to the ethnic groups in the assigned areas are sent away, and in the meantime they work at making their areas as large as possible. This foul and criminal operation was first done on large scale by the *Serbs*, who now occupy 70% of Bosnia - and we know how ruthless they were. Then the *Muslims*, after being defeated by the Serbs, decided to strike back by hitting out at the weaker Croatsians, by taking over towns and villages from Travnik to Bugojno and Kakanji, etc. The *Croatsians* too, in certain areas, have been no better.

The Archbishop of Sarajevo, Msgr. Vinko Puljic', says: "From when the international community began tolerating the Serbian violence and accepting the law of the strongest wins, civilization took a step backwards. The only thing that counts now is this law whereby the strongest man wins, and since the West has accepted this, all the armed groups are throwing themselves into conquering land by force. If it's true that the UNO is going to accept the division of the Balkans based on ethnic representation, then civilization will fall down completely. And justice won't exist anymore, not just here, but no where in the world, because there'll be no more limit to evil."

The war could have been stopped at the start if the European countries had decided to act instead of organizing so many useless meetings, and if they had listened to the Pope who repeatedly called for **humanitarian interference**, saying it was necessarily a charitable act towards those unable to defend themselves. We saw how Europe only had to threaten they'd use their air forces to make the Serbs move out of Sarajevo.

Sadly, the situation worsens (time of writing: 3 Sept. '93), partly because the peace plan was not accepted by the Muslims who have had their territory greatly reduced. And in this tragic theatre of war 200,000 lost their lives, 14,000 are wounded, 1,000 of whom are children who will be maimed for life, and a thousand children are missing!

There is another, crucial, problem: The Croatsians had fought side by side with the Muslims and accepted into their territory half a million refugees. Now the Muslims have turned against them. This would be a great chance to show how love knows no enemies! And yes, this is happening already in many places. Let us pray that this evangelical novelty may make its way into the hearts of many, with the help of the Queen of Peace, Mother of *all* men. This could be the beginning of reconstruction. *

Bosnian Church on point of disappearing

The Church has been accused of giving preference to Croatsians. Bishop Puljic' replied to this accusation: "I do not defend the Croatsians, but the rights of each and every man. I do the same for the Muslims

Msgr. Franic' and Vicka lead the peace march for 12th Anniversary

and the Serbs when their rights are being violated. But look, here in my diocese (Sarajevo - which embraces all of Bosnia) there were 144 parishes with half a million faithful. The Serbs have destroyed and occupied 66 parishes, and razed churches and convents to the ground. Then the Croatian-Muslim alliance broke up and the Muslims have now occupied a further 33 parishes. Two thirds of the faithful in my diocese have had to escape from their homeland. The Church has been here for 9 centuries, and now its on the point of disappearing...

The Catholics are those who suffer the most of course. Here in Sarajevo they're starting to deny citizenship to anyone who is not a Muslim. People are losing their jobs because of their religion. In the schools the students are being taught to hate the Serbs and the Croatsians. (...) An agency confiscated 75 tonnes of aid that Caritas had sent to us for distribution among all those in need, irrespective of race or religion.

(Avvenire - 17 Aug.)

THE CROATIAN TRAGEDY what the press and TV don't know

While people were making their way to Medj. for the Solemnity of the Assumption, or the youth festival, tens of thousands of Croatsians were escaping from their cities in central Bosnia under shellfire and gunfire. Desperate, they arrived in Citluk and other nearby towns with all their belongings in one plastic bag. **Alberto Bonifacio** witnessed their arrival and sent us a long report. The following is part of that report:

In the torrid heat they look for water: to drink and wash themselves, but here the water and electricity is rationed and arrives only a few hours a day. They tell of horrifying episodes, the women are practically insane over the death of their sons, the old and the children are terrorized. Yet, those areas were Croatian, like Mostar, and according to the UN plan, they should have remained so. But they were invaded by the Muslims who have been made aggressive by the Mujahedins from the East. For them, killing a Christian is a good deed.

So, with all those dollars from the rich Arabian countries they have had **no trouble in buying weapons, particularly from the UN soldiers!** It also seems that they have bought the mass media, if it's true that by now public opinion blames only the Croatsians for starving 55 thousand Muslims (inhabitants and refugees) under besiege in Mostar, while their (Muslim) armed units

are supplied both by air and land with weapons and food.

"We are not waiting for help from politicians but from the Rosary!" - said **Fr. Jojo** on 1st August. "The UN soldiers have brought us drugs and traffic in weapons and sex. (...) Our Lady did not say we would be freed by the UNO, nor that we'd find peace in Geneva. No. And things are getting worse while these false meetings are being held." He said of the 50,000 Croatsians from Bugojno who crossed Serbian territory to escape from the Muslims and arrived here without anything and now live in the woods: "do we have to ask London or Paris or Geneva why they had to do this? We are not looking for help from the politicians anymore, but only from Our Lady."

He then spoke about the new **Rosary Crusade**, and about how Pope Pius V defeated the Turks in 1571 in Lepanto with the Rosary. He spoke about Sinj and Boka Kotorska near Ragusa (now Dubrovnik in Montenegro) "where armies were defeated with prayer." (Here now there are many persecuted Catholics and a missing Bishop.) There were no victories with armed men. The victories came about by a miracle.

Today Europe is divided, like then, in front of the Muslims who arrive from all over the world as volunteers, loaded with weapons. Now it's here ... tomorrow it could be in Italy, or Germany. The mother Church in Italy has been hit too.

Know how to read the signs of the time! Start organizing the Rosary."

A. Bonifacio

Mostar hospital and new Bishop give thanks

The equipment for the hospital of Mostar (see Echo 103, page 8), which Echo helped to buy, arrived in the hospital early July. Mrs Randon brought us back a thank-you letter from the management of the hospital on the 18 August.

She told us: "The situation worsens. Things are really chaotic! We were welcomed both by the hospital staff and the **new Bishop**, who was saddened by the tragic events. He said how very little humanitarian aid arrives now because people are afraid to go (to Mostar).

He praised and thanked the Italians and Germans for their generosity, and above all he asked that everyone pray very much: **"because if they sign for a peace without Christ in Geneva, that peace will not last,"** the Bishop said.

SPARKS OF LOVE in kingdom of hate

All over the world, TV, radio and papers report of horrifying events concerning the war in the Balkans, to the point that one might think: "the Lord is not with us, nothing can be done." The following events are what we could call miraculous, where *God manifests His might and saves His chosen ones* - from the ashes of death he awakens life.

*** Strangers become one big family under bombing** - This testimony is from Sarajevo, but is not uncommon to the many other besieged cities. "There were 400 people in our block of flats. Before the war we were all strangers. At the most a few quick words would have been exchanged between those that lived the closest, and that was it. Only just a few days after the bombing started, we became like one big family.

We shared every drop of water, piece of bread, every bit of Providence that arrived. We got to know everyone, one by one, and if someone went missing we'd worry about them, doing the rounds to see if someone knew where they were, worrying that something might have happened. Teams were organized to go out and look for them. These teams were mostly made up of boys, and these were usually the ones who went out looking for water and other necessities. We learnt to love and trust one another. One could say that an old world is dying under the bombs, and at the same time a new man, a new world is being born."

*** A Serbian woman** in Bosnia shared the little food she had with a Muslim monk for more than a year. But to get it herself she had to go from Dervis, her home town, to another town, and in between there were guards and check-points...

*** Killed because they refused to kill** - During the war in Slavonia, **300 Serbian reservists** were taken near the Croatian city of Vincovci and were told to take up their arms and attack the Croats, but they refused to attack that city - for the inhabitants were peaceful, like brothers. They were warned that if they refused a second time they'd be shot. The reservists did not give in to the threats and were all shot dead by their officers; to become martyres for peace. Their death too will bring new life.

*** "He freed us from the lion's mouth," and "turned the wolves into lambs."**

Some nuns from a small town in Slovenia were captured. One of them recently told me: "As soon as they saw me (young and pretty) the chetniks isolated me from the others, and put me in a cell. I thought that after the violence they would have killed me. All I could do was pray. I had a rosary ring on my finger and I recited the Rosary continuously. Then 5 chetniks broke into the room, violently. I greatly intensified my prayer, and then at a certain point I felt no more fear. I was able to pray for them and bless them in the name of the Lord.

After 5 hours their commander came (it was 11 p.m.) and he sent them out. He asked me what I was turning around on my finger. "I'm praying for you," I replied and showed him the rosary ring. He knelt down before me and begged me to give it to him and teach him how to pray with it. I was happy to give it to him. We prayed together. In the end - still on his knees - he said: "My dear sister, when this war will end I will find you to thank you. I am not baptized, I live

Fr. Jozo to aid workers: Convert, embrace the cross and you will be saved

In Fr. Jozo's frequent meetings with the pilgrims and aid workers he never forgets to thank them for what they do - or remind them about what is primarily important.

"Thank you for coming. Your final aim is not delivng supplies, nor is it visiting the towns in ruin.. You came because Our Lady called you.

Right from the beginning Our Lady said: **Convert! This means change. And you're wrong if you think you're all right because you've brought something to the poor.** No, you haven't given anything if you don't give your faith, if you can't show your conversion. What you bring could be less than a crumb that falls from the table of a rich man. Don't try and fool yourself. **You are more important, you are a son of God and you have to make yourself entirely available for Our Lady.** So stop now and encounter God, Our Lady and yourself.

For nearly 12 years the Virgin has been teaching us that the devil exists and he can be sent away only through prayer and fasts. First you didn't believe, and now you go to Mostar to see how strong Satan is. But tomorrow he might show his strength in your home, your parish and your town. The Church has to learn from all that is happening here, because it's like a school.

In my room I have a cross made out of pieces of bombs that fell on Osijek where we said a novena to the Immaculate Conception. From a bomb, symbol of violence, death and destruction, an engineer made a cross, symbol of love. When you see this **cross**, symbol of the sufferance of my people, you will understand that **only the cross can save you.** It's not the medicine or food you brought so someone could live another day that will save you!

This sufferance is a mystery and Our Lady wants to help us understand. Do not ask Her why She let Her Son be killed before Her own eyes. But just say: "Thank you Jesus for your wounds, thank you for suffering, for dying! Thank you Jesus for your Redemption! **Our Lady wants you to enter now into the mystery of salvation, which means sufferance and the cross.**

That is why I told you not to talk about your trucks and the aid you bring. It's trivial, there's no need. It's just a mask if you don't understand what's behind it. Let the UNO do this, but not you! You're [here] for conversion, for light, for being a witness to having understood that great call Our Lady makes to all men. Then your group will become a great sign for the Church.

The important thing for you now is to return home and put your lives in order, because **now is the time of conversion.**

Our sufferance is greater when we think that if we had obeyed 3 or 4 years ago things could have been different. Why the war? If you, if your parish, **if all of us had**

like an animal, but this evening I have met the Lord and our heavenly Mother. Now I understand the sense of my life. This rosary ring will be my sign of gratitude."

A little while later he brought me a camp bed and he kept guard in front of the door till the morning. Then he took me back to the other sisters and let us all go. Now I think of him as a brother and I pray for him and his companions every day."

Fr. Jerko Penava, Ogulin - Croatia

obeyed the Pope when he urged us (to pray, for decisive action in disarming the aggressor), then Mostar and the other towns would certainly not have been destroyed!

Don't put your conversion off! If you do not do this, *you will all die the same way*, Jesus tells us. Don't look for excuses: "Are they true or false these Apparitions?" **Don't. make fun of Our Lady Who has been here for 12 years, or of Her messages**, because refusing Her is tied to all this sufferance and those lost lives."

Siroki Brijeg - 1 May -A. Bonifacio

Fr. Jozo in Luino - A great crowd relived Medjugorje in pretty Ferrini Park on the 25th July. Fr. Jozo recited the Rosary with them and then celebrated Holy Mass. In his homily he asked if we had lost our Lord, our treasure, our pearl, and where we had put it for it couldn't be found anymore in our churches, in our public life, or in our family. Then he told us about the 5 stones with which Mary teaches us to defeat today's Goliath (seemingly invisible).

The 5 stones are: the *Rosary* (and he told of that American who distributed a million rosary beads to people in his town); the *Eucharist* ("a nation will fall if its churches are empty"); the *Bible* ("without it we are illiterate. The only international language is the word of Christ"); *fasting* ("we send money and supplies, but we are unable to fast"); *confession* ("is not a toy but reconciliation, it's making peace with God and with our brothers, it's starting again").

G. Romolotti

That mysterious repose by the Spirit!

At the same meeting Fr. Jozo was asked: "Could you tell us something about repose by the Spirit that often happens when you bless people. Some say it's negative, many don't know what it is or why it occurs." He replied: "Repose by the Spirit is for us a mystery, like all the fruits of the Spirit. We are unable to know everything, but we can see the fruits and situations. It depends also on the person, his availability - when he puts all his trust in the Lord and wishes to offer his life. It is then that a person is able to receive a grace, help, light, new love, new oil in the lamp. Why do they fall? I don't know, but I do know that all those who look for the Lord with a humble heart and are open to grace are blessed.

So don't judge, don't try to explain what it is, what you think it is, because you might think something that is not right, your judgement is not sure. So, [all we need to do] is say that it is the Lord Who does it. Some of us can sing, others can't. The Lord gives some gifts to some but not to others. If someone near you receives a gift you should feel God's presence, you should not look and doubt or be jealous. For the person who receives it, it could be very special. Go in peace..." (MCBesana)

Sponsorship of Croatian and Bosnian children. So far more than 3,000 children have been sponsored. The sponsors have expressed their satisfaction at the initiative also because of the contact that is made between the children and sponsors.

All those (in Italy and Australia) who have paid for the first quarter and are not in receipt of the child's details, should advise Angela & Matteo Rossi, Casella Postale 54, 54100 Massa, Italy.

**In the beginning was the Word:
the Word was with God
and the Word was God.**

(Jn 1)

**Understand I am your Mother
Victorious sign of the time!
And you will shine out in the dark**

Our Lady's message of 25 August 1993:

Dear children, I want you to understand that I am your mother and that I wish to help you, and invite you to pray. It is only through prayer that you will understand and accept my messages and put them into practice in your lives. Read the Holy Scripture, live it, and pray to be able to understand the signs of this time. This is a special time: that is why I am with you, to bring you closer to my Heart and to the Heart of my Son Jesus.

My dear children, I want you to be children of the light, not of the darkness, so live what I tell you to do. Thank you for having responded to my call.

This is a special time. Why? Our Lady explains that today there are two different plans of action: Hers and Satan's. We are all called to choose with responsibility. Those who choose Mary, Queen of heaven and earth, are summoned by Her motherly and learned Heart on the 25th of every month; let us take heed.

After 12 years Mary tells us of her ardent desire for us to understand that **She is our Mother**. Without this understanding, and the profound experience of daily living that accompanies it, we are lost on this earth and easy prey for the one who wants our death. But Our Lady is given all the power and wealth of the Holy Trinity. She takes advantage of Her motherly tenderness to make us listen to Her advice and be able to receive the grace which helps us resist and live as Her children: rich, joyful, full of light and winners over all the powers of darkness.

How can we obtain all this? Our Lady shows us the way, the one and only, sure way: **prayer**, through which we **understand Her messages, accept** them and **live** them. Through prayer, and only through prayer, we are able to understand that Mary is not just Mother of God, but also our Mother. It is through prayer that we are able to accept Her and live on this earth as Her children. What marvellous things (and how many) we can obtain through prayer, in particular through reciting the Rosary - a prayer which puts chains around Satan and makes him fall back into his kingdom of darkness!

Our Blessed Mother has another desire: She wants to take us by the hand and lead us to the **Holy Scripture**, so that we'll read it and live it. She would like us to experience what She experienced on this earth, so fruitfully, with humbleness and fullness. She accepted the word of God in Her womb, Who became flesh, and through Her, *the light that enlightens all men* came to the world. She is the first believer and the perfect believer at the feet of Her God and Lord. She avidly listens to Him, *making treasures of everything and pondering on them in Her heart*. If Mary lived like that, then we who wish to be Her children, how can we live any other way?

Through prayer we are also able to **understand the signs of this time** where untruth, violence and confusion seem to prevail. It is *the sign that appeared in the sky when the dragon also appeared*: It is the sign that heralds God's victory, that is, *when the dragon was hurled down to the earth, and so came the salvation, and the power*

The crowd at Medj. on 15 August reaches as far back as the vines

and the kingdom of our God (Rv 12:1-10). Do not fear: She, the Immaculate One, Who defeated Satan and the world through Her seduction, takes us into Her Motherly Heart to bring us nearer to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, for we are all nourished by the truth that enlightens, by the meekness that makes our victory greater, by the peace that They wish to pour into our hearts. Then we will shine out like children of the light with our works of light, and the darkness will be unable to defeat us.

So let us surrender ourselves up to the loving arms of our Mother and live as joyful children of the light, as witnesses that show to this disoriented world the way to eternal salvation.

Fra Lino

SOLIDARITY

"We are our brothers' keepers"

Though it is not now possible to go into Mostar and many other towns of Bosnia-Herzegovina, **we still need to urgently help the many refugees** in Herzegovina.

Contact the aid centre nearest you. If you wish to send your donations through us, please indicate your intention and make cheques out to: Eco di Medjugorje, and mail to same at Casella Postale 149, 46100 Mantova, Italy. In GB donations may be sent to the **Medj. Appeal**, Unit J Lambs Bus. Park, Tilburstow Hill Rd, Sth Godstone, Surrey RH9 8JZ, England.

Bernard Ellis from the Medj. Appeal writes to say that apart from the supplies and vehicles they donate, they also support the "near 150 young people from all over the world working in camps ... with vehicles, finance and travel arrangements. (...) We also support the Terra Ravno programme for the rebuilding of six villages... and our representatives, who work with the Franciscans, ensure that all that we send is received by those most in need and that it is shared impartially, irrespective of race or religion."

The Blessed Virgin and the New Age

A bulletin by the Riehle Foundation **warns against New Age** publications. "New Age religious efforts have decided to jump on the "Mother Mary" bandwagon (this title is often a key to be cautious.)" ... The most serious manipulation of Mary's appearances come from the book *Mary's Message to the World*, by A. Kirkwood: a masterful blending of Catholic and other Christian truths with New Age beliefs and mysticism. (...) The messages are dangerous - offering consolation to those who don't want to accept the reality of sin, and God's justice..."

For William A. Reck's book on the matter, write to: Riehle Foundation, P.O.Box 7, Milford, Ohio 45150, USA.

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FAMILY NEWS

We entrust Fr. Thaddeus to Mary. The miracles of his Radio Maria in Poland can be compared to the miracles of Fr. Kolbe in the press. Blessed Mother, look upon him and heal him, that he may soon start working for You again.

Let us also pray for Fr. Roberto Cona who for years has been offering his sufferance for Our Lady's works. I bless you all in the name of the Crucified Christ and Our Lady of Sorrows.