

Christmas message: 25 Dec. 1993:

Dear children, Today I rejoice with little Jesus. My desire is that the joy of Jesus may enter every heart. My dear little children, I give you this message, and like my Son Jesus, I give you my blessing, so that peace may reign in every heart.

I love you my little children, and what I ask of you all is that you come closer to me through prayer. You talk and talk, but you do not pray. So my little children, decide for prayer. It is only this way that you can be happy and God will give you what you want of Him. Thank you for having responded to my call.

**There is no peace
without prayer.
You talk and talk,
but you do not pray!**

Our Lady seems to echo the words the Angel said to the shepherds: *I bring you news of great joy, a joy to be shared by the whole people* (Lk 2:10). Her **desire** is that our joy be not just human, but that **Jesus' own joy enter every heart.**

The joy that comes from Jesus is in always saying *yes* to the Father's will. Mary has always possessed this joy and She wants us to possess it too, not just at Christmas, even if "this time" is a stimulus and an extraordinary grace so that we may be born again into a child-like joy.

The essence of the message remains the same two things She proposed in the beginning: **prayer and peace**, cause and effect. Peace, of course is real peace that comes from God (of which **joy** is an expression) that holds up to every contrary wind. That is why **She grants us, together with Jesus, Her blessing**: that we may work and never lose this peace. Our Lady is unable to hide from us that She **loves us**, calling us three times with endearing terms: like the Apostle John: **little children!** And She invites us to be **closer to Her through prayer.**

The sad reality is this: **you talk and talk, but you do not pray. Make up your minds to pray.** Her lament reflects our actual situation: rivers of words, meetings, debates and documents. Effective talking comes from profound conversion: listening to God and awaiting His grace. Then it is He Who talks through us and our words and decisions bear fruit: *without me you can do nothing.*

Jesus too listened to the Father; in the *morning when it was still dark he went off to lonely places*, and though the Apostles pressured Him (*everybody is looking for you*), he went elsewhere, where no doubt the Father was calling Him.

Let us learn to say like Samuel: *Hear I am Lord. Speak, your servant is listening* - so we can understand what we need to do or

22 February: *The Chair of Peter*
«I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail. And you.. strengthen your brothers.» Lk 22

ask; and not be led astray by the human logic of men detached from God who do not take into account the cross or "impossible" things. Praying is letting God act; not praying is condemning ourselves to being helpless - and peace cannot make progress in the world.

This goes for our groups too, where we may be deceiving ourselves with pretty words. Let us not forget that Jesus said: *For every unfounded word men utter they will answer on Judgement day* (Mt 12:36); and: *you don't have what you want because you don't pray properly for it* (cf. Jm 3:13-4:4). *You multiply the words, but not your charity*: you do not pray with your heart, in your prayer you do not encounter God, you do not accept His will with an open heart.

As for our personal prayer, we can't make up excuses like: I haven't time! With regards to time, we can testify that after prayer our time seems to be multiplied, allowing us to do lots of things, because God guides us! It is only through prayer that we can testify that God is God; that we are able to subject ourselves to Him, and He, mysteriously, will subject Himself to us and give us His Spirit and His authority; through prayer we lose our every fear and our testimony will be efficacious.

Mind, there is no other way. **This is the only way** where you can **be happy** to collaborate with God in His great plan and be able to donate peace and joy to the others, and **God will give you what you ask**: *Ask and you will receive, so that your joy may be complete* (Jn 16:24).

Fr. Angelo

**Like Mary, Pope asks
Church to pray and fast
for peace!**

Dear children, Today, as never before, I am inviting you to pray. May your life become fullness of prayer. (25 Nov.'92)

Over these years Our Lady has taught us all about Christian life, starting from prayer. She has never stopped showing us how the real work of a Christian is faith nourished and strengthened by prayer. Her voice over these 12 years has been a lone voice, that we have often not wanted to listen to. That's not counting that in many environments, including the Church, some say: "prayer, but not only;" "prayer's OK, but you've got to be professionals;" "now is time to act, not pray;" and many other similar expressions.

The enemies of Medjugorje hide behind a shadow: the apparitions have not yet been approved. The pressing and insistent call, however, to arm ourselves with prayer in these times comes also from a voice that does not need approval: that of the Pope.

Those who remain in Jesus bear fruit

In the Holy Father's CATECHESIS at the General Audience of 1 Dec.'93, he gave the following explanation on spiritual life of the laity: *"All Christian spirituality must be based on what Jesus said about the need for a vital union with him: Remain in me ... whoever remains in me and I in him will bear much fruit (Jn 15:5). The distinction between the two aspects of the union to which the text refers is significant. First there is the **presence of Christ in us**, which we should welcome, recognize, and increasingly desire, and happy are we if we are sometimes able to experience it with particular intensity. Then there is **our presence in Christ**, which we are invited to achieve through our faith and love.*

This union with Christ is a gift of the Holy Spirit, who instills it in the soul. The soul accepts it and complies, both in contemplation of the divine mysteries and in the apostolate, which seeks to communicate its light in both personal and social action.

Since it is a gift of the Holy Spirit, **union with Christ must be asked for in prayer.** Doubtless, when work is performed according to God's will, something pleasing to the Lord is being done, and this is a form of prayer. Thus even the simplest actions become an offering that gives praise to God. But it is equally true that this is not enough. **Specific moments must be expressly devoted to prayer**, following the example of Jesus, who even in the midst of the most intense messianic activity withdrew to pray.

This is true for everyone, and thus, for lay people too. These "pauses" for prayer can take many different forms, but in each case the principle is that **prayer is indispensable for everyone**, in both personal life and the apostolate."

Satan is strong and awaits each one of you to try you. Pray, so he cannot harm you! (25 Sept. 1987)

The more we observe the Pope the more we see the intimacy that exists between Mary and Her consecrated son. He is a model for us all. In Medj. we learnt that we have to **defend ourselves from Satan and protect the spiritual gifts** with spiritual weapons. The Pope too tells us this.

In his famous HOMILY on 31 Dec. '93, John Paul II commented on this battle with the words of St John: "Now many antichrists have appeared. Thus we know this is the last hour." The Apostle recalls that the world "is under the power of the evil one" (1 Jn). **It is good for this evil one present in the world to be called by name.**

Christ, who allowed himself to be tempted by the spirit of darkness, taught us to say: "deliver us from evil." We cannot close our eyes to what is about us. We cannot fail to see that Christ and his Gospel are and remain a "sign of contradiction." We cannot fail to notice that, together with the civilization of love, of truth and life, another civilization is spreading: this is precisely what St John is speaking of in the context of the "last hour." The Apostle writes: "Many antichrists have appeared." And he adds: "They went out from us, but they were not really of our number." (1 Jn2)

The Pope points out that this civilization of the antichrist can be opposed with the inner power donated to us by Christ in the frequent use of the Sacraments and prayer.

Prayer joined to sacrifice constitutes the most powerful force in human history

We cannot forget that besides these enlightened appeals by the Pope, there are also his continuous **interventions to awaken Christians** so they may collaborate with the restoration of peace in the Balkans, particularly by prayer. For this specific purpose he dedicated the **23rd January '94 to a day of prayer**, preceded by a **day of fast on Friday 21st**, adding that these are the only means that can obtain a solution to all conflicts. Where else is it that we hear that only prayer and fasts can stop wars (25 April 1992) if not in Medjugorje?

He couldn't have been clearer in his speech during the GENERAL AUDIENCE (12 Jan.'94). John Paul II surprised all for the subject and the gravity of his voice. With regards to the real possibility of stopping the war he said: "**The most powerful humanitarian intervention is always prayer. Prayer represents an enormous spiritual power, especially when accompanied by sacrifice and suffering.**

Even if it is not apparent to a superficial glance, and many people do not acknowledge it, prayer joined to sacrifice constitutes the most powerful force in human history. As St Paul says, it is like "heaping burning coals on the head" of those who commit crimes and injustices; it is like the "two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and spirit... and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart" (Heb 4:12). **Prayer is also a weapon for the powerless and for those experiencing injustice. It is the weapon of that spiritual battle which the Church fights in the world: she has no others at her disposal. Prayer must really unite us all before God, the just and merciful Father.**"

Peace is possible because nothing is impossible to God

The Pope's teachings of late have been concentrated on the message regarding the Lord's mercy. The absolute necessity for every man to re-encounter the love of the Father was already stressed by John Paul II in his encyclical: *Dives in Misericordia*. Over these last years, this appeal for man to trust in His mercy has become more urgent, and culminated in the beatification of Sr. Faustina Kowalska, who was called by Christ to a vast apostolate of mercy.

"Sr. Faustina was aware of the importance of the message entrusted to her by Christ, but she could not have known how rapidly it would have spread throughout the world. **All mankind needs this message of God's mercy. Today's world needs it, especially the war-torn lands of the Balkans. The message of God's mercy is a forceful call to a more lively trust: "Jesus, I trust you!"**

It is difficult to find more eloquent words than those left to us by Sr. Faustina. **Jesus, I trust you!** This is the hope which has guided us over the past days, confirming our awareness that peace in the Balkans is possible. With God nothing is impossible! Conversion is possible, and it can turn hate into love and war into peace. **So our prayer becomes all the more insistent and trusting: Jesus, I trust you!"**

Editorial Staff

Quite a few of you wrote to suggest various initiatives for prayer and fasts. We offer them to the Father who sees in the secret of your hearts and will give you your just reward.

Italy: Pope makes appeal for great prayer to defeat spirit of division

In a special letter to the Italian bishops the Pope spoke out about the responsibility of Catholics in our society. He stressed how the duty of the Italian people is to conserve their **precious heritage**: the legacy of human and Christian values - i.e **faith, culture and unity**.

The presence of Christians in society is necessary for a profound social and political renewal ... "The Italian society has to be profoundly renewed, purifying itself of corporatist tendencies, separatist threats and mutual suspicion, and look with confidence to its future; for this it is necessary that all believers be **mobilized through common prayer** ... As we approach the year 2000, the whole Church needs great prayer." Let us ask for this grace from the Holy Spirit, Who alone can create this communion among men.

These indications given by the Vicar of Christ to the Italian people **strike out at that spirit of division and disgregation which is so dominating in our country at the moment. It is scandalous to think that Catholics divide themselves into "bands,"** and that the more intellectual of them formulate theories of unity and communion **not being necessary**, or having been surpassed. The Catholic conception says that political and social activities cannot be separated from our Christian faith; but are rather a consequence of it. **Satanic spirit is one of division.**

We are forgetting, and it took the Pope »

Merciful Jesus The dead come back to life these days too!

Easter Monday - After lunch my husband René complained of a sudden stomachache. He lay down for a while but the pains got worse: his chest hurt, his arms became stiff and he began retching. I called the doctor who was quick at diagnosing angina pectoris.

He was admitted to intensive care in a deep coma and they connected him up to machines. That night all the diagrams on the machines were flat. The next morning I asked the head physician if there were any changes. He said none, that they would keep him connected a while longer, then disconnect everything, for there was nothing else they could do. My son Marcel and one of René's brothers wished to see him for the last time.

As far as me, I remained alone in a small room and with all my heart I cried out for help: "Sr. Faustina, intercede! Sr. Faustina, intercede before Merciful Jesus for René!" Suddenly, I felt a light breeze around me. Was it a sign? Could God have listened to me? Marcel and my brother-in-law came back and said: "René is dead, he's all puffed up, and purple, and cold." René had gone, just the machines were keeping him artificially alive.

On the way home we cried. My daughter Marylise didn't want to accept the truth. Her father couldn't have left her like that, she thought, and she prayed and dared to hope still.

At 4 p.m. that Tuesday (13 April 1993), I called the hospital again. The person on the other end recognized me. Her voice was wavering: "We've just disconnected all the machines. Your husband has just finished responding positively to the three infallible tests: if you can hear me, bat your eyelids; and he did. If you can hear me, stick your tongue out; and he did. If you can hear me, close your fist; and he did. Your husband is alive and you can come and see him..."

Surprised and happy we cried out with joy: A miracle! ... Merciful Jesus heard our prayer and He gave us this great gift in the week dedicated to His Divine Mercy. René was born again.

There were no neurological consequences, no paralyses, everything functioned perfectly. A *new heart*, the doctor later said. I bless the Lord every day for this immense grace that He granted us through the intercession of Sr. Faustina.

I hope with all my heart that this will help with the cause for her canonization."

Mme A. Menjot (from *Stella Maris*)

Cecilj from New Delhi rejoices for her nephew who awoke from a coma after 2 months. Cecilj's prayer group had been fervently reciting the chaplet of the Divine Mercy for him and after some days he came out of the coma. They too give thanks to Sr. Faustina for her intercession.

«First of all, we need silence. Fruit of silence is prayer. Fruit of prayer is faith. Fruit of faith is love. Fruit of love is service and fruit of service is peace.»

Mother Teresa of Calcutta

and Our Lady to remind us, that there is only one solution to our problems: *If God is with you, you have everything*.

Editorial Staff

THE FALL of false gods that enslave us So we may return to the true God

Examine your consciences: did you come here to ask or give something to the Lord - to be healed, consoled, to receive light, or to offer Him your problems?

This is what Fr. Tomislav asked the many people gathered in a small country church last November. They came, not for theories or vague solutions, but to hear the fruit of live experience with God which touches people's hearts, and allows them to discover what is needed to find peace.

«What is dominant in your hearts at the moment? During my travels over these last days I came across many worried, tense and unsatisfied people. Some spoke to me about their problems (family or sickness) - I could sense their uneasiness. In the papers we read of fear and uncertainty regarding the future of the country. It comes down to this: in people's hearts, which mirror what is happening in society, the Church and the world, I saw much worry. Let us consider what is happening and which is the road that will lead us to a beautiful, light future.

In today's world, people are very unsatisfied and confused - unable to live with others. We have separation in the families, divergence in political parties, division even in the Church, prayer groups, in congregations and among the consecrated, and aggression and hate in the world.

What does Our Lady say about this? For some time She has been announcing that these times are the times of God and of Satan, times in which the action of grace is evident, but just as clear is the action of the devil. All this must happen, though, so that what is false can fall. In fact, a new world cannot be born, the Church cannot be renewed, unless the false and corrupt values first fall.

If we want to follow Our Lady we need to see clearly what is happening and walk along the road that leads to Jesus with joy and exultation. Why is there so much confusion and dissatisfaction? There is only one answer: the spirit of man has become detached from the Spirit of God. Man thinks he can live alone, but he is unsatisfied because he is without his fount of happiness. Dissatisfaction leads to confusion, because people don't know how to find happiness. Confusion leads to finding fault in the others, and this leads to aggression, hate, division. Why division? Because men's spirits, detached from the Spirit of God, gather in groups, in parties, in closed circles, that are disconnected on a human level, with no way out. This is not the Church that was united under God's Spirit.

All the problems you see within and around yourselves have their roots in this detachment from God and in the attachment to false gods (wealth, power, beauty) that encourage [the growth of] one's ego.

Why are the men of today unhappy? A man with 4 houses is unhappy because he can't afford another one. Another is unhappy because he earns \$10 less than his neighbour.... People are unhappy because they adore material things and look for material things in other people (who can offer me more?). And he thinks he can find his salvation in this.

Everything that does not lean on God, the only true God, must fall; even the fall of authority had to come; and a total fall will come, because it doesn't lean on God.

Authority detached from God falls. That's the reason for this crisis. And after all this we go back to adoring other gods!

In this society people always look out for someone to blame, but that doesn't build our future. Even in situations of frustration, Satan drives you to blaming yourselves, your wives/husbands, your children, to punishing yourselves and others. This is adoring a god in us that can't do anything, that can't resolve problems, so that as we fix on a black point within us, with no hope, only feelings of bitterness and desperation grow. And this is Satan's spirit, for Jesus always saves and justifies.

I would like for each one of us to eliminate this false god, for it is here that we find that concentration of negative tension, so contrary to the Gospel, that destroys us. Let us heed Our Lady's voice: **surrender ourselves totally to our Saviour and be truly free!** Let us start adoring the true God when trouble arises, be truly surrendered to Him in difficult situations.

There are crises because there's got to be; so the true values in the Church and the world can be rediscovered and experienced. Adoring God during times of trial makes us able to wait with hearts full of hope, certain of God's intervention. Our politicians can't save us. God saves .. be sure of that! God saves the whole world! He saves you even when you're not aware of it. God saves from within, but we must send away all those false idols we have constructed. That is what Our Lady wants when She invites us to convert, urging us to offer sacrifices: which teach us to hope.

Now is the time when we need to adore God from deep within ourselves, because beyond all the troubles, difficulties and confusion, God is the one who holds together the strings of our life. That is why it is so important we accept the poverty of every day: lack of success, troubles and trials. In these times those who do not accept it become aggressive towards others and themselves and begin hating. So accept every type of poverty, and look for God in it. This is the road to purification.

To the members of my community who undergo hard trials, I often say: you could go walking around the streets with a walkman like the others and not suffer these trials. It's only when you're face to face with God or when you're forced to reflect, that the negative things surface; and they have to surface for you to be purified. Society too, and the Church, must experience these trials to be transformed.

For you, though, who listen to the Blessed Virgin and accept Her invitation to conversion, you have to understand! Be poor, accept poverty willingly, and you'll be happy! Neither wealth nor poverty are important; what is important is to have God. With Him you find happiness and satisfaction, even if you're broke. You will be united to God's Spirit; He will give you neither wealth nor power, but He will give you true life. And there's no man on earth that can give you this! This has always been Our Lady's invitation: **come close to God, put God first ...**

We cannot, though, have this grace without poverty. Which poverty do we mean? Well, your daughter is ill and you are worried. Surrender your worry to God and tell Him: "Lord, I am poor. I did not have her, but You gave her to me. She is Yours. I entrust her to You," or "Lord, I have a house, and money ... but if You see that for my salvation it's better to be without, then

take them!" This is the way that will open your heart to God and to His grace.

Discover wealth in your everyday situation - when you lack something, when you can't see how to resolve a problem - discover the wealth of God, search for it! I don't say to you: start walking barefoot, but I do tell you: start walking with God. I don't say: don't worry about your health, but do look for God in your illness, and remove from your life those things that divide you from Him. This way you will be truly happy!

Our present times tell us about "future times" that will be bad and good: bad for those who walk detached from God's Spirit, good for those who walk united to God's Spirit. Men can be united to one another, but without God they cannot support one another. Like devils who live united under a head who uses force: they hate one another. Men can be united in groups even without God, but these will fall. You, though, must be united to one another in God, without interests. Be like Jesus: it is when you lose everything that you are united to the Father.

I shall conclude now with the reply to my initial question. We are not used to going to Church to encounter Jesus and give ourselves to Him, and this is tragic. Only through giving yourselves totally to Jesus can you find fulfilment and satisfaction. The amount you give yourself to Jesus determines how united to Him you can be. Start from the little negative things: Jesus is looking for you and wants your sins, your worries, your crosses ... he wants everything! He is asking for your real love.

Start giving everything to the Lord and you will be changed. Like Jesus gave Himself to the Father, so each of us should give ourselves to God. Truly, what we receive from a person depends on how much we give ourselves to that person, because love by nature is communicating. I beseech you! From now on go to Jesus and give Him all, and He will give you all that you need. Give without asking, for you cannot receive without first having given all.

What do we celebrate at Holy Mass? Jesus Who gives Himself to us and we who give ourselves totally to Him. This donation of love makes perfect union; then bitterness and hate will no longer grow in you, but only light, serenity and satisfaction.

This is what I wanted to give you; but you can experience it only if you seriously decide to put it into practice. I tell you this because I meet many people who pray, many of whom are consecrated, yet they are unhappy and irritable. Decide to live united to the Spirit of God and donate it to the whole country!

Donate God's Spirit to this society. All your country needs is the Spirit of God.»

«Lord, make me an instrument of Thy peace!»

This was the theme of a meeting guided by Fr. Tomislav in Jan. '94. There were more than 1,000 people, and despite the numbers and the presence of children, all went smoothly. Only Our Lady could get to the hearts of each person in such a large crowd.

Fr. Tomislav spoke of the necessity of an UNCONDITIONAL aperture of heart to the love of the Father. The Father wants us - refugees on the earth - to be His children. He wants us to let Him love us and fill our souls with His caresses. » page 8

Francis: NEW EVANGELIZATION

conforming to the spirit of the
messages of Medjugorje

**Recognizing what is positive in other
faiths. Consideration of other cultures to
evangelize them in reciprocal love**

*Q. The messages of Medj. are deeply
religious. They conform to the Gospel:
speaking of conversion, penance, prayer
and invite to peace. What do you think?*

A. The messages, valid for the whole
world, are an outline for the new
evangelization of Europe and the world. In
particular, they speak of reciprocal respect
and love among peoples, religions, cultures
and political systems, in reciprocal
collaboration between faiths and peoples.

*Q. Would you like to say something
more about the spirituality of Medjugorje
from this point of view?*

A. In the past, evangelization was
mostly an argument against the errors of the
faith and adversary cultures. The differ-
ences were used to beat the others with
more ease. Now, quite the opposite is the
new evangelization which looks for the
positive values of each faith and culture,
even in the polytheistic religions with all
their myths, and in modern atheism. This
new evangelization, however, could be
risky for our faithful if they are not
sufficiently instructed in their own faith.

That is why some opposed Vatican
Council II which was the first to impose this
new type of evangelization, and harshly
condemned those who put it into practice by
showing love towards peoples from
different faiths and towards atheists. The
love they were showing was the one that
asks us to love others as we do ourselves,
but without identifying with the others in
their faith and ideologies.

Even John Paul II received criticism for
the fast and pilgrimage he did in Assisi with
the Orthodox, Protestants, Buddhists, Shin-
toists... But it means learning about other
faiths and cultures to be able to show the
Gospel of Jesus Christ in a more friendly
manner, allowing God to do the rest.

**Penetrating the culture and faith of
other peoples, however, demands better
religious instruction and greater personal
holiness.** This is the way the new evangel-
ization is moving, and this is also the
message of Medj: reconciliation, forgive-
ness and love for all, so that every religion
and every culture may be evangelized more
efficiently.

*Q. Who should carry out this evangel-
ization?*

A. Not just the clergy, like in the past,
but all those who have been baptized are
called by God to help. The work of the laity
can no longer be defined as a participation
in the hierarchic apostolate, but rather, a
co-operation in the Christian redemption of
the world; because through our baptism we
all received from Christ the right and duty
to participate in His redemptive work. That
is what the Council teaches us; and this
demands obedience to the Pope, the bishops
and priests, who in turn cannot deny the
laity the right to take part in the triple
power: prophetic, priestly and regal power.

The Medj. messages promote the

modern apostolate of the laity, for we must
keep in mind that they are spread through
the laity, and that Our Lady gives them for
all men, not just for the religious. (...)

**The Bishops, not their experts or
theologians, are responsible for discern-
ment concerning the faith**

*Q. We have a great number of eminent
philosophers, theologians and doctors who
have expressed positive thoughts on the
phenomena of Medj...*

A. Yes, the latest declaration by our
bishops in Zara (10 April '91) is very grave
if it explicitly rejects the supernatural
character of the apparitions. Our bishops are
the ones who are responsible for this
declaration, not their theologians. None-
theless, it can be seen from their declaration
that the last word has not yet been said
about Medj.

*Q. Have these attitudes discouraged
people in any way from going to Medj.?*

A. I am convinced that if our bishops
had supported Medj. great crowds of people
would have gone and been converted. And
to conversion Our Lady associated peace... I
think our bishops have depended too much
on our professors of theology from the
various schools and on the commissions,
which for the most part were made up of
these professors. **Theology must be
rational, but not exclusively so.**

Private revelations and mystics have
always been present in the Church and
always will be, as a second vital element
next to rational theology. **But it's as if the
Holy Spirit has not yet entered our
pastoral programmes.** This is a reason for
which our bishops have not publicly
confirmed or recommended the present-day
movements for a renewal in the Church, so
most of the parish priests do not have the
courage to introduce these into their pastoral
plans; let alone promote pilgrimages to
Medj.!

Everyone knows that I do not think the
same way as the Bishopric of Mostar. I have
been and I remain contrary. (...)

(Taken from *Glas Mira*, Dec. '93)

Queen of Peace donates radio of truth to American Church

In a meeting organized last Autumn by a
Medj. prayer group (with pilgrims, faithful
and representatives of the Church of
Chicago), the Auxiliary Bishop of the city
of Jaworski threw light on how grave this
historic moment is for the Church in the
USA.

There were 5,000 people praying
together, but there were no film crews or
journalists as these were more interested in
the incriminations made against priests or
with the war in Somalia or Bosnia.

Those present showed profound concern
for the injustices and the lack of objectivity
in news transmissions, so they favourably
accepted the Medj. Association's proposal
to buy a powerful radio station for the
Archdiocese so that the Word of God could
reach and heal the many wounds caused by
so much scandal.

Medjugorje Vocations - During that
same meeting a young nun spoke about her
experience with Medj. and her subsequent
decision to become a nun. *Medj. vocations*
are frequent in groups in the US.

Only Mary is left in Medjugorje

Going to Medj. on pilgrimage during the
Christmas period (1-4Jan.) and finding very
little but UN military vehicles, small trucks
belonging to EEC observers and Caritas
vans is disconcerting. Medj. shows signs of
the war too. To say all is tranquil like in the
beginning is not true. There may not be any
danger; and the road from Split is safe, but
one can't forget that a civil war is going on
in that country, where friends of yesterday
are now killing one another.

You can't say it's like before. The
bungalow village has become the barracks
for the UN contingent. It's surrounded by
barbed wire and has control towers fitted
out with machine guns on each side. More
than half the shops and restaurants have
closed down. In the evening you can't go
out because of the curfew, which means
being able to climb Krizevac and Podbrdo
only during the day.

You don't see many people around. The
grounds outside the church, once the
meeting place for pilgrims, are deserted for
a good part of the day.

People have started returning, but it
can't be compared to the crowds of 3 or 4
years ago. Every now and again a distant
thud can be heard in the direction of Mostar.
You can't pretend and think that Medj. is
back to normal.

Then again, all this does not change the
fact that Medj. is the only place in the world
where Our Lady lived for 12 years and
continues to do so, even corporally. This is
the essence of Medjugorje. We've said it
many times, but now it has become more
evident, as the works of men, here in
Medjugorje, have all fallen.

There is just nothing to do or see in
Medj., except "meet" Our Lady. The parish
of course tries to organize things for the
pilgrims, but the value of Medj. is some-
thing else; it comes from the Spirit which
Mary obtains because of Her presence there.
Its true value is in the messages. If it has
been saved from destruction it's only
because Mary, in Her mysterious goodness,
wanted to save that village.

Everything depends on Our Lady and
how we listen to Her. The greatest disaster
for us would be to put Mary on the same
plane as things or people.

Medj. is and remains a unique place in
the world. It is the heart of our spiritual
renewal, of the renewal of the Church and
of humanity. We have done nothing to
deserve this, the greatest gift the Church has
ever received: 12 years of daily apparitions
by the Virgin Mary. We could, though, go
down in history as the generation of the
great refusal, of those who opposed Our
Lady. This is our responsibility! *Edit. Staff*

From the message of 28 Jan. 1987:

*In whichever place I go, and my Son is
with me, Satan also reaches me. Without
realizing it, you have permitted him to get
the better of you, to dominate you. At times
you understand that some of your gestures
are not permitted by God, but you quickly
suffocate these feelings. Do not give in, my
children! Wipe away the tears that I shed
as I watch you.*

Satan's triple assault DON'T KILL THE LIFE born again in Medjugorje

What is Medjugorje? It is the irruption of heaven into the world, through the presence of the Mother of God on a mountain. Mary comes because men don't know how to meet Christ anymore. That is why Medj. has become such a bright light, for it is the power of the Spirit Who is breaking up all the negativity on the earth, the way He unhinged the rusty gates of our hearts. We have also had the grace to see signs, for our faith to be confirmed.

From that moment our lives started anew, we began breathing, our hearts opened to the sound of this announcement, and in turn they became little Medjugorjes. Our Lady's every word is echoed in your hearts because it is tuned in with the new person in you and with the life of the Spirit you received in your baptism.

This life was buried in us, but here in Medj. we received the grace of conversion. We, who were full of the *life of the flesh*, rediscovered our *life in the Spirit*. That life of the flesh was thrown over, and we work at keeping our spiritual life above the rest; because this is true life, that not even death can destroy. In fact, it is death that brings our spiritual life to fulfilment in the presence of God in eternal life.

This rebirth does not suffice on its own, however. Now that you are committed to total dedication of this Mystery, you must nourish your spiritual life! Now beware, for **Satan** is ready to grab onto your new life through spiritual illnesses. One of these is the **temptation to become masters of your spiritual life**. The gift you received is thus blocked.

Many are those reborn into life who have not respected the rhythms of this life, for it **requires silence, prayer and detachment from the world**. It is not possible to correct one's failings without the power of the Holy Spirit. To receive this power one must dedicate time to God.

Satan also attacks us with the **temptation of arrogance**. For instance: Our Lady has revealed Herself to you, so you start judging because you think you're better than others. A gift is worth nothing unless there is a spiritual battle every day. Without serious commitment to remove from your heart what is displeasing to God, everything is blocked. More again, you end up being cause for scandal!

More than anything, though, **Satan attacks communion**; and he has done this here in Medj. We perceive that this is a place of grace, but we live in a time which necessitates much vigilance on our part of Our Lady's messages. Her corporal presence in the world continues to generate the spirit of communion. Satan, though, wants to work against this communion, particularly here at its fount.

Here, in some environments of Medj., Satan has attacked and destroyed the visible signs of communion. He attacked the heart of the Mystery which the Spirit of communion had generated. The devil always rejoices at division. He knows that *a house divided against itself cannot stand* (Mk 3). This work of division has marked all the signs of communion: among parishioners, the fathers, the visionaries, the group of young people and the various prayer groups; wherever Satan provokes

suspicion and incomprehension.

In spite of this, Mary continues to carry forth the spirit of communion; but She is met with resistance. There is no longer a school of communion in Medj. with visible signs for us to follow.

We have received great gifts over these years. There is a task that Our Lady wants to entrust to you; do not fear, for there is no other Mother as attentive and loving as Her, because She is the Immaculate Mother.

These times need these new people, who in the darkest moments are testimonies who bring light, who humbly accept and transmit God's light, because they humbly place themselves at Mary's disposition to learn from Her. [Medjugorje, 2 Jan. 1994]

(from a meditation by Fr. Giacomo)

News from the Blessed Land

(from Sr. Emmanuel's diary)

* **Signs from heaven** still present in Medj. I've noticed that the Virgin often chooses unbelievers and children for the signs. Nonetheless, it was an Irish priest last November who received a special sign.

He decided to make the Stations of the Cross. He was alone. At the 12th station he prayed before the Crucified Christ, and all of a sudden Jesus came to life. His face was swollen by the blows and He was bleeding. Jesus' head swayed like a person in pain. His eyes, full of love and unfathomable sadness, met those of the priest.

The priest was shocked, thinking for a moment that he was going mad, but he looked again and met Jesus' eyes...

Trembling with all his being, he descended the mountain and joined his friends. They no longer recognized their priest, so great was the sweetness in his eyes. They prayed together and he blessed them. "Jesus' wounds are intolerable," he told them as he shared his extraordinary experience. "The look on Jesus' face is implanted in my heart, like a seal in wax."

* **1994 - third year of war**. Many pilgrims had the chance to visit refugee camps during the Christmas season. They received much from witnessing the nobility and humility of the refugees in such dramatic situations.

700 refugees from Vares, for instance, told of how they escaped and then were held up in lorries for a month because the Muslims would not let them pass. In the cold, with hardly anything but water, many didn't make it.

It was with them that the pilgrims learned how to pray for peace and how to cry like Mary for the reconciliation of Her children.

* **"In Mostar,"** one man told me, "you can hear the cries of men being tortured on the other side of the Neretva."

Refugees now comprise half the village which is overflowing with children - the Medj. of tomorrow. Another young Medj. man has died: Mario Bulic; while Jozo Zovko was badly wounded in the legs.

* **Family news:** This January Fr. Slavko left for Hong Kong, Taiwan, Macao and communist China. Ivan will meet him in the Philippines, after a series of meetings in Germany and the USA.

Vicka was recently in Belgium. Ivanka and Mirjana are both expecting and should give birth early this year. Marija is also expecting. Marijana Vasilj, who receives inner locutions, married Mario Juricic. »

"Model of true communion"

Protect God's gifts

* Well-known theologian, **Von Balthasar**, who has never had doubts about the authenticity of Medj., said in an interview in 1983: «(...) I have only one thing to say: you need to be careful [to see] what really comes from God and what comes from men. What is happening in Medj. is from God. The children are reliable, but I repeat that it's **dangerous to hound them with interviews and questions** (without realizing it we have put them on pedestals, ed. note)... You [of Echo] wrote that faith is more important than a vision. The children need a lot of support. If they can understand that faith is greater than a vision, they will be saved.»

Through our little instrument we have always tried to help the visionaries protect the great gift that they have received. We can't deny that they are often used to ensure success. We have always maintained that silence and spiritual guidance is what best protects these gifts, permitting visionaries to meditate and grow in holiness and thus be true testimonies of the words they pronounce. Others have no right to use them for themselves.

Pilgrims too must learn to turn to God and His Word which we find in the church if they want to grow spiritually. It's false to think that out-of-the-ordinary experiences, or listening to or knowing *special* people can help you grow.

*It's pleasing to hear that Marija Pavlovic says the same things. A. Bonifacio sent us a report of her participation in a meeting for Italians on 1 Jan. '94. She spoke about: prayer groups at risk when they chase after sensational events; going from one extraordinary manifestation to another and not nourishing a true and unitary spirituality; fanaticism by Medj. followers causing rejection of Medj. by many priests; the risk of becoming attached to people (monks/visionaries) which stops us from seeing that God is and must be central, and that the normal way He chose for us is the Church, the Sacraments and the Pope. * **

* **Fra Stanko Vasilj** recently passed away. He had been ill for some time. He was the author of the Medj. hymn that we all know, and was the organ player in Medj. in the early years.

DISARM THE AGRESSOR! Pope condemns nationalism

Unlike Europe, John Paul II is not undecided with regards to the war in the Balkans. On 15 Jan. 1994 he spoke to the Diplomatic Corps about how *"the barbarous and unjustifiable war which is staining Bosnia-Herzegovina in blood, after devastating Croatia, has considerably eroded the goodwill which Europe used to enjoy."*

The main victims of the war, the Pope recalled, are *"innocent civilians in the hands of torturers without morals."* The Holy Father is asking the fighting parties to put down their weapons, because: *"what is taken or destroyed by force will never do honour to a man or to the cause he claims to uphold."*

The Pope expressed his admiration for the work being done by the humanitarian organizations; he asked the European political leaders to redouble their efforts, and the peoples of Europe: *"...not to forget, through weariness or selfishness, your brothers and sisters trapped in conflicts which have been imposed on them by their leaders."* The Pope's firm conviction is a great sign of hope for us: *"war is not inevitable; peace is possible! ... because man has a conscience and a heart.. because God loves each one of us, just as we are, so as to transform and make us grow."*

A warning for Christian Europe: *If the international community cannot come to an agreement on how to deal with this problem of nationalist claims, it is foreseeable that whole continents will be as to say poisoned and there will be a progressive return to relationships based on force, in which the first to suffer will be the people themselves.*

Europe, blind and powerless - Archbishop of Paris, **J.M.Lustiger**, celebrated Christmas in Sarajevo. He said how the war in Bosnia is not a war between peoples, but: "an army which, in the name of criminal cynicism, has besieged a nation and its people ... Europe is sick with its powerlessness, its cowardice, its blindness.

It doesn't want to understand how great the risk is. The war in Bosnia concerns all of us; it's like an illness that could destroy all of Europe from within. If we don't know how to react to the idea that every single person, ethnic group or army can take what it wants, then democracy is finished."

Nationalism is new paganism - French philosopher, **André Glucksmann**, in an interview to *Avvenire* (23 Jan. '94) said:

"We say we don't care if the East becomes like the Far West. Attention though, because we might save our own lives, but not those of our children and grandchildren. Once the Nationalist-Communist disease starts spreading, it won't take long for Rome or Paris to be infected as well."

To conclude, the Pope calls this sickness of Europe *a new paganism, which is the deification of the nation, and the rejection of others because they are different.*

Bosnia: children slaughtered UN forces powerless

New episodes of violence during the three days of prayer and fasts proclaimed by the Pope: on Saturday 22nd Jan. in Sarajevo 6 children were killed by shelling as they played with a toboggan on the icy streets. The day after 4 other children were

massacred by a bomb in Mostar. That's a clear reply to the stand taken by the Pope!

The three conflicting parties have been unable to reach an agreement, despite the endless negotiations. The UN are undecided between trying for a political solution (as they have so far fruitlessly done) or a military intervention where they would bomb the Serb postings around Sarajevo. The UN forces are also having problems with rotating their contingents and are unable to get aid in because of the road blocks. According to the former commander, Belgian general Briquemont, the UNO should use force to be useful.

In the meantime, a big offensive in central Bosnia is being prepared by the Muslims, whose forces have been strengthened by thousands of mujaheddins (guerrillas from Arabia, Iran, Pakistan). The Croatian army, at the moment not officially at war, is preparing to defend the borders of the territory they have managed to keep from what will probably be the bloodiest blaze since the beginning of the war. The objective is to eliminate the Christian presence in Bosnia, like the Archbishop of Sarajevo has already said.

<Brothers and sisters of Bosnia, we will not abandon you!>

During the Holy Mass for peace celebrated on **23 January** in St Peter's, the **Holy Father** spoke out in dramatic tones and expressed his deep sorrow for the war fought especially in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

"The focus of our prayer in the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is an entreaty, an entreaty for peace," he said. *"One could say that we, the pilgrim Church, are making a pilgrimage on our knees, to enter those tortured Balkan lands. May our suffering brothers and sisters know that we will not abandon them."* To them he cried out: *"We are with you and we will be with you, we will always be with you! With the help of God, peace must be victorious."*

The Pope pleaded with all people of good will to pray: *"This superior power must be used more and more. (...) To all we say: brothers and sisters, are we not also responsible for these divisions?"*

Who would have thought that after the fall of the Berlin Wall, nationalism would have erected new walls to divide Europe and single nations? (...) The war in the Balkans has damaged the stable understanding between nations and has harmed the peaceful coexistence of religions.

Considering the absence of some communities (Waldenses, Lutherans and Orthodox) who had been invited to St Peter's for the day of prayer he said: *"If we lack unity, how can the world believe? This must make us think, the Pope first of all."*

Pope lit peace lamp at end of Mass: *Until peace returns to the Balkans and all hostilities have ceased, a lamp will remain lighted in front of the image of Our Lady of Succour.*

*** Mary's presence protects from war: in Burundi as in Medj.**

From the hell in Burundi Fr. Blasi writes (Dec. '93): "Here we are experiencing the great battle between Satan and the Mother of God. We have noticed that wherever there is a sign of Her, that place has been visibly protected.

Giheta, where [an image of] Our Lady cried, was saved from destruction. The »

Litmanová, Mary speaks from the heart of Europe

In Slovakia, near the borders with Poland and Russia, there is a new Medjugorje. 700 metres up Mount Zvir, it can be reached only by a path. It was there in a timber hut in a clearing in the wood that Our Lady appeared as the **Immaculate Pureness** on. Her birthday, 5 Aug. 1990. The name itself is an eloquent reminder of that forgotten Christian ideal.

Our Lady has been speaking for 3 years to 16 year-old Ivetka on the first Sunday of every month. Ivetka was so timid that she spoke to no one, and now she is the visionary who must speak for Mary. She gives the messages to the parish priest who in turn tells the people. Ivetka's friend, Katka, can see but not hear Our Lady.

Great crowds start climbing up the mountain the day before. They sleep in the open and prepare themselves through prayer for the Mass which is also celebrated in the open. This year on the anniversary more than 100,000 pilgrims were present. Last Autumn a friend brought us a cassette to see (the 3 hours of celebration). The great number of men, women and youth, the poverty and simplicity of these mountain folk and the earnestness of their prayer, brought tears to our eyes. As penance, many climb the mountain barefoot, even in winter. It made us think of the poverty of the crowds in Medj. in the early years.

One cannot, however, go the Immaculate Pureness unless in a state of grace, so many confess before they begin the climb, others in the wood prior to Mass. The young Brazilian priest, Fr. Polykarp Jacos, is a true apostle and helper of Our Lady, having accepted the messages with all his heart.

He has launched a **programme of spiritual renewal** in his parish: Holy Mass, Rosary, fast on Wednesdays and Fridays, confession and meditation of the message during the month, "to pray according to Mary's intentions:" *You don't know how much I need your prayers and fasts for the conversion of my errant children. Please help me!* (3 July '93)

The Immaculate Pureness wants to give a great impulse to the moral renewal of the people. If this renewal does not proceed people's values will be deformed in their hearts, which would be worse than a war.

On November 7, 1993 the visionaries received the apparition in the bishop's chapel in Presov where they had been invited by the Commission. As Our Lady appeared, there were 20,000 pilgrims gathered together in the square outside.

The message was: »

city of Gitega, where I built a Marian shrine, was also left intact. Likewise with my parish (Ruzo) where the Blessed Virgin is lovingly venerated by the Christian community. On the other hand, in Mumuri where they had removed a statue of Our Lady, Mediatrix of Burundi, there was a massacre.

One of my catechists said: "Only when both tribes, the Hutu and the Tutsi, will see their sin and plead to the Lord for help, can we have peace."

To all our friends I say: "Your help will be efficacious if you are in God's grace, through confession, Communion and praying with a clean soul. We await the end of the apocalypse in the serenity of prayer." *

A Saint for Lent *Young Dositeo: hero of fasts and self-denial*

With the help of God, Abba Doroteo, a truly blessed man, embraced solitary life and went to live in the monastery of Father Seridos in Gaza where he was edified by the examples of Barsanufe and Father John. The Elders asked him to build and be in charge of an infirmary.

Year 530. One day Father Seridos summoned him and asked him to take care of a **boy in military attire** who had just »

My dear children, I love you and I am happy to be here with you... The King of Love would like for you during this time to meditate upon His great sufferances. Through them He wants to bring your souls back to life... Reflect more upon the words of your Mother.

On the 5th December there were 10,000 pilgrims on the mountain which was covered in snow and ice. *Let yourselves be freed by Jesus. Do not allow the enemy to rob you of your freedom, for which so much Precious Blood was poured out. A free soul is the soul of a child. I would be very happy if during this month you could try very hard to become like children. I am with you to help you receive the Bread of eternal life.*

As can be expected, the apparitions are not accepted by all, but the parish priest invites the Slovaks to take a lesson from former Yugoslavia, and take Mary's words seriously. In Her last message She said:

Turn back to a life of prayer. Why are you so blind before so much love by God? You fill yourselves with false loves that come from this world and you throw away the true Love. My dear children, I beg you, try to use the Blessed Sacrament more profoundly, pray more profoundly. I pray with you. I pray for your inner peace. (9 Jan. 1994)

The declaration of the Greco-Catholic Bishop of Presov, Ján Hirka, seems quite open: "We have been asked more and more frequently to express our opinion on the events of Litmanová where it is said the Virgin appears. The Lord Jesus and the Mother of God at times use individuals to appear to them in an extraordinary way so as to call attention to sacred truths and duties that have been forgotten, or to keep punishments at bay. God benefits us greatly by such, and our attitude should be one of gratitude and openness.

It is true that some cases are deceiving... some are even satanic traps. That is why the Church is prudent with regards to apparitions; to avoid also that ones we are not sure of are not promoted. So, each person must act according to one's conscience and knowledge.

Where the apparitions are true, though, the Saviour Himself or the Mother of God take care to preserve the genuineness in them. An initial critical attitude on the part of the authorities will also help the truth to be certified. St Augustine tells us: "The doubts of Thomas were of more help to us than the faith of the other apostles. It was because of his doubts that Jesus gave us those words so helpful in strengthening the faith of the weak."

(The document is not dated, however, it was being circulated on the anniversary in August 1993.) Fr.A./M.D.

arrived. The boy had been the **page of a general** and so was used to luxury and a life of dissipation. He had never heard the Word of God either. It was when some fellow workers had described the city of Jerusalem to him that he desired seeing it. He received permission to leave and visit the Holy City.

In Gethsemane, he was fascinated by a painting of hell. A majestic looking woman began explaining the meaning of the painting and the reasons why those people were in hell. The young man asked: "My lady, what must one do to avoid such punishment?" She replied: "*Fast, do not eat meat, pray continuously and you will be saved.*" Then she disappeared.

From that moment on, **Dositeo** (for this was his name) repented and starting faithfully observing the three commands of the mysterious woman. The soldiers in the service of the general noticed his odd behaviour and suggested he would be better off in a monastery. Dositeo knew nothing about God, nor did he know what a monastery was, but since he dearly wanted to observe the woman's suggestions, he followed his friends to Father Seridos.

Blessed Doroteo carefully examined him then. All the boy could say was, "I want to be saved." So, in obedience to the Great Elder, Doroteo happily took the boy to work for him in the infirmary, and he knew that under his guidance, he would be saved. When it was time to eat, Doroteo told him: "Eat till you feel satiated, but let me know how much you ate." Dositeo advised: "I ate one [loaf of] bread and one half of another." Doroteo told him: "Then eat one and a quarter. Divide the other quarter in halves, eat one half and leave the other." Dositeo did just that.

Some days later he asked the young man if he was well or if he was hungry. "No, father," he replied, "thanks to your prayers, I feel fine." "So leave both halves of the quarter."

In this way, and with the help of God, Dositeo gradually went from eating 6 lbs to 6 ozs of bread per day.

He was an able and attentive worker, and everyone was happy with him. When he happened to be a little careless, or became angry with a sick person, he would run off to his cell and weep. The other brothers would try to console him but in vain. So Doroteo would go to him, and Dositeo would say: "Forgive me father, but I got angry at my brother." "So you got angry at your brother did you? Do you not feel shame? Don't you know he is Christ?" Dositeo would lower his eyes and cry, and when Doroteo saw that he had cried enough he would tell him: "God has forgiven you. Get up and start again. Let us try our best to be more attentive and God will help us."

As soon as he heard these words Dositeo would shake his sadness off and joyfully return to work, certain of having received God's forgiveness.

Doroteo was careful not to let the boy become attached to anything, so that Dositeo was able to accept everything with joy and even go without if that was asked of him. Once it happened that he was given a beautiful knife. He took it to show his teacher, hoping that it could be kept in the infirmary for their use. Doroteo asked if he preferred to be the slave of a knife or a servant of God. Doroteo then told him to put it down and never touch it again. Dositeo was so obedient that he never did touch it again, not even to pass it to some-

one else. Even though everyone else was able to use it, he never thought: "Why can the others use it and not me?" Everything he did, he did with joy.

That's how he passed his time in the monastery, being obedient till his death, never having once done his own will, or having ever attached his heart to anything but God. Five years after his arrival, when he became seriously ill, he knew that boiled eggs were good for people who spat blood (he had TB), and was tormented by the desire of eating them, so he begged his teacher never to give him any. So Doroteo never gave him eggs to eat. Dositeo fought against his own will even while so seriously ill.

His thoughts were always in God. Doroteo had taught him to repeat often: *Lord Jesus, have mercy on me, a sinner*; or: *Lord help me*. When Doroteo would ask if his prayer life was going well, Dositeo would reply positively and ask his teacher to pray for him. As his sickness got worse, his reply would be: "Yes, father, thanks to your prayers." One day, however, he replied: "Father, forgive me, for I have no more strength." So Doroteo told him not to worry about the prayers, but only to think about God Who was before him.

When the end was near Dositeo asked the Great Elder: "Let me take my leave, for I can bear no more!" The Elder replied: "My son, be patient, God's mercy is near at hand." Then for a second time Dositeo asked for the Elder's permission to leave. The Elder replied: "Go in peace, remain before the Holy Trinity and intercede for us." Dositeo obeyed.

The words of the Elder irritated the other brothers who said: "What did he do for the Elder to say such a thing?" The truth was that they had never noticed Dositeo when he fasted every second day, which was customary for some in the monastery, nor when he kept vigil prior to the night prayer. They had never seen him do anything in particular, but they did remember seeing him drink some of the broth for the sick or eat a left-over fish head at times. They never knew that Dositeo had never done anything out of his own will, that he had been perfectly obedient.

One day, not long after the death of Dositeo, an old visiting monk asked God to grant him the grace of seeing the saints that had died in that monastery. In the vision granted by God all those saints were together, and in the middle of them was a boy. When the monk described the boy in the vision to the brothers, they realized it was Dositeo and they gave thanks to God.

They marvelled at the fact that Dositeo had reached such great heights despite the life he led before and the brevity of his life in the monastery, and they saw how obedience and the desire to break one's own will is pleasing to God.

(Reduced from *Abba Doroteo di Gaza*)

* **Echo in Palestine** - Sister Rita from Bethlehem writes: "Thank you ever so much for the copies of Echo we receive regularly. I give them to my Palestinian friends (one of these translates Echo into Arabic) and to our nuns from Bulgaria who anxiously await news of Our Lady's calls to conversion. We shall offer our Holy Mass at Christmas in front of the Grotto for your intentions. Please also pray for the return of peace to these lands." (17 Dec. '93)

Our Lady's message of 25 January '94:

Dear children, You are all my children. I love you. But you must not forget, my little children, that without prayer you cannot be close to me.

In this time Satan is trying to create disorder in your hearts and your families. Do not give in to him, my dear little children. You must not permit him to be the director of yourselves and your lives.

I love you and intercede for you before God. PRAY, my little children! Thank you for having responded to my call.

**Trust my love
stay close to me through prayer
I want to defend you from Satan**

Mary presents Herself to us on this day as the **Mother of all men**; She loves us all dearly. The trouble is that we do not accept Her as our mother and we do not love one another as brothers because we do not consider ourselves as being children of the same Father - our one and only God - generated at the foot of Jesus' cross by such a great and real Mother.

In theory, all Christians believe Jesus is the Son of God, but very few decide to become real disciples of Jesus. Likewise with Mary, all so-called Christians conceptually believe She is the Mother, and they invoke Her with that name, but very few accept Her as their Mother; i.e. they do not have a filial relationship with Her, they do not let themselves be nourished by Her love, they do not entrust themselves to Her loving care.

There are many Catholics who are not happy about our present Pope being so open about his devotion to Mary; or they are disturbed by the visits of the Virgin Mary to Her children in the various places and various ways, and by the signs of Her presence among us.

The refusal or the non-acceptance of Mary already favours the action of Satan in us and among us. Sin and the Evil One cannot be defeated without Mary. The Queen of Peace in Medj. is reminding us of this once again. We are blind and foolish if we cannot see the confusion and **the disorder that Satan is creating in these times in our hearts, in our families, in our communities and in our society.**

The enemy is coming out into the open. It seems that he wants to conquer everything and everyone, in particular the mass media, to spread sin, discord, indifference and derision of everything that is sacred. **You must not let him**, Mary says to Her children. *Resist him, steadfast in faith*, St Peter tells us (1 Pt 5:9).

Mary wants to be our Mother. She wants us to experience how much She loves us, how dearly She loves us, to guide and protect us. It is time we stopped being rebel, errant children, so indifferent to Her presence and Her calls.

Let us declare ourselves Her children and accept Her as Mother and Queen of our hearts, and our families. Let us cultivate, with profound and continuous prayer, a real relationship of filial love with Her. Let us say to Her today and everyday: «Mater mea et fiducia mea! [My Mother and my trust] In Thee I rest, to rest in God.» *Fr. Remo*

French member of parliament: consecrate France to Mary's Immac. Heart

Cristina Boutin is the president of a group called «Franco-Croat Friendship», consisting of members of parliament, and of another called «Pro Bosnia.» She says: "Despite my political commitments, I had wanted to participate in the pilgrimage on the anniversary and in the peace march as a form of personal penance, to receive light to know what I could do to help."

After Mass, she spoke to the pilgrims: "For some time I have wanted France, the first child of the Church, to be consecrated to the hearts of Jesus and Mary. The Lord asked for this more than 300 years ago. I was moved when I saw pilgrims carrying a banner with the 2 Hearts. I said to myself: we must give back to the Church and to France what we lost so long ago. We consecrated ourselves here; the beginning of France's consecration has begun."

* **The Rosary Way in New Zealand** - Ted Downs from Wanganui (N.Z.) said he got the idea from the Carmelites in Aylesford, Kent. "I took the idea back to NZ, got some nice pictures of the Rosary Mysteries blown up to A3 size, and laminated. A carpenter friend made the weather-proof wooden frames and the poles we fix them to. We (St Mary's Pro-Life Rosary Group) did our first Rosary procession for Our Lady's intention for the protection of the unborn child. It wasn't long after that a friend - a nurse at the local hospital - came to tell me that the doctor doing abortions had told her and the rest of the nursing staff that *he could no longer handle abortions*. For us this was a great answer to our prayers. We have been abortion free in Wanganui ever since. (...)"

* **10,000 people in concert hall for day of prayer** - Milan, Nov. '93: one of the temples dedicated to rock music was for a day turned into one of the biggest churches in Italy. The day of prayer, singing and adoration was offered to God for our suffering brothers in former Yugoslavia.

* **Trieste-Medj. bus service** continues. Departure from bus station (adjacent to train station) in Trieste 6 p.m. daily. Ring Italy 040-360300. Return from Medj. 6 p.m. daily. Return price Lit.86,200

* **Renew your consecration** to Mary - March 25, 1994 marks the 10th anniversary of the consecration (of the world) to Mary's Imm. Heart. Plan to participate in a **global consecration** on that date. A suggested way is to start a 33-day preparation, beginning 20 Feb.

» *from page 3* Oh, may it be that we let our hearts rest in God! All forms of tension would disappear, because He would work in us and through us. We would become His instruments of peace, and take His peace where there is hate, where there is war.

The humbleness in Mary's Immaculate Heart is our compass, our guide. It is a humbleness we can reach through being obedient and subject to Christ's Mystical Bride: the Church and her ministers, through whom Christ continues to operate.

We are not alone in this journey. The divine Spirit, Who loves us despite our errors, walks before us, so that for all His children *every valley may be filled in, every mountain and hill be laid low*. C&F

SOLIDARITY

Hospitals in Mostar and Split

In December **two mobile respirators** for ambulances, and medicinals were delivered to the hospital of Mostar.

From the hospital in Split, Bonifacio reports: "Here, where the most seriously injured are sent, Croatian, Muslim and Serb doctors and nurses work side by side in perfect harmony. «There's no place for politics in here,» they told us. Where the politicians can't get in with their perverse mass media to inculcate division and hate, it is still possible to live together peacefully.

The Bosnian bishops are right when they say they are contrary to dividing Bosnia territorially and politically. This is one of the main causes for the heightening of tension in this war."

Sponsorship of Croatian - Bosnian orphans - If you have not yet received information regarding the child you have sponsored, please contact Matteo Rossi, using **block letters or a typewriter** when you write. You must write *clearly*. Matteo Rossi, Cas. Postale 54, 54100 Massa, Italy.

FAMILY NEWS

Echo 109 went into print early February and not early January as you were probably expecting, because of my health problems. An unexpected heart attack kept me in hospital for 13 days before Christmas; but the fast you were forced to practise and the subsequent enquiries, showed us how much Echo is appreciated, and we saw how Echo is considered food prepared by the Blessed Mother for Her children. As for me, Our Lady forced a much-needed rest on me. That way, I was able to live the feast of Christmas far more spiritually, without the *disturbance* of Echo.

I thank the many readers who have supported us over this period with their donations. They are often very generous and this permits us to publish Echo in the various translations, and support the publication of the editions in the East.

A special thanks goes to our **French-language** readers. Besides covering the costs of the 29,000 copies of Echo, they also donated nearly 5 million lire for Bosnia over the 2 month period. Thank you also to our **German-language** readers in **Switzerland** for their generosity. Apart from the donations handed over to the various drivers of aid deliveries, we gave 13 million lire to the fathers of Medj. at new year. We have also finished paying the 25,000 DM for the printer for the Marian House in Moscow. A very nice copy of Echo in Cyrillic characters is now being produced.

The continuation of Echo depends on my health, for I can no longer face up to the double work of parish and bulletin. That means we need someone to either take care of publishing Echo, or a permanent assistant for the parish, at least for the youth. **I entrust these intentions to your prayers in the certainty that Our Lady will respond.**

As we walk ahead together, with our eyes turned to the victorious Immaculate Conception and the chair of St Peter, I invoke upon you the blessing of God Almighty. May His love and peace abide in you, may He guide your steps, and confirm your hearts, now and for ever. Amen.