



ECHO OF MARY

Queen of peace

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Our Lady's message of 25 July 1999:

Dear Children, Also today I rejoice with you and I invite you all to prayer with the heart. My Children, I invite you all to thank God here, together with me, for the graces He gives you through me.

I wish for you to understand that my desire is not just to realize here a place of prayer, but also a meeting of hearts. I desire that my heart, Jesus' Heart and your heart be fused into a single heart of love and peace. Thus, my Children, pray and rejoice for everything that God does here, even though Satan provokes quarrels and uneasiness.

I am with you and I lead you all on the way of love. Thank you for responding to my call.

Not only place of prayer, but encounter of hearts

On the feast of the apostle St. James, patron of the parish, the Queen of the Apostles rejoices with us, but immediately adds: and I invite you all to prayer with the heart. Hence, the feast is more interior than exterior. It means that the full joy of the feast is reached through prayer with the heart. A fundamental lesson at Her school, prayer with the heart gives us full joy when we meet Jesus in receptive silence; and He will possess us and open our eyes and fill us with His Spirit and change us. Heed me and you shall live ... you shall delight in rich fare (Is 55:2).

Our Lady then invites us to thank God, together with her, for all the graces He gives us through her. Will we ever understand this enough? And Mary expresses her desire that we understand her intentions for this place. She doesn't want it to be just a place of prayer, like many other shrines. Mary has been present here for the past 19 years, and of it she said: this place is dearer to me than many others where I was happy to remain when the Most High sent me to them (message 21-3-85).

Hence Mary wants much more. Perhaps we would have expected her to say a 'place of encounter between men and races', but Mary wants hearts to meet and fuse with Her Son's Heart and her own Heart, thus in an intimate relationship. The immense love of the two Hearts desires communicating with men, whereas men rarely go beyond believing with their intelligence or beyond devotional piety.

Upon meeting the Two Hearts one then loves with them. St. Paul says: It is no longer I who live but Christ who lives in me (Gal 2:20), so much so that it is said: Paul's heart is Christ's heart. You see, when we encounter the Two Hearts barriers of individualism are overcome thus enabling the hearts of men to fuse into one. It can't be denied that in Medugorje humanly- unthinkable relationships and an incredible network of communion continue to be created.

This encounter of hearts is a model wanted by Mary, that the Church and peoples may look and learn from it and form a single heart of love and peace.

This message comes from a place where ethnic groups torn by centuries-old hatred are killing one another and don't want to live together in peace. And God wants these people, and men worldwide, to form a single heart of love and peace. If Mary speaks of wanting to realize this, it will happen, for no one can resist God's will, says Esther (4:17b).

For this reason the Queen of Peace invites us to pray and to rejoice even if Satan provokes quarrels and unrest. Today he is more furious than ever for he knows he has little time left. With accomplices from amongst those who think they work for God, quarrels are easily provoked, and add man's pride, jealousy and misunderstandings; but let us not forget that the good grain is stronger than the weed.

The uneasiness concerning the future of Medugorje may loom over heavily, but do not fear - our Mom seems to say to us - for I am with you and am guiding you on the way of love, and in the end love will win. Her presence makes us feel safe.

Fr. A.

Our Lady's message of 25 August 1999:

Dear Children, Also today I invite you to give glory to God the Creator in the colours of nature. Through the smallest of flowers He speaks to you of His beauty and of the depth of His love with which He created you.

My Children, may prayer gush from your hearts as water gushes from a spring; may the wheat fields speak to you of God's mercy for each creature. Thus, renew your prayer of thanks-giving for everything that He gives you. Thank you for responding to my call.

Amazement for Creation Glory and thanks to Creator

This is not the first time that Mary calls us to look at creation to see God in the easiest book He wrote for us: How manifold are thy works! In wisdom hast thou made them all (Ps 103). But the dull man cannot know, the stupid cannot understand (Ps 91).

We live in a sophisticated world, where man's work is glorified. If Our Lady has invited us to contemplate God's work, then it is because man is used to seeing only his own to the point of idolizing it. The praise and thanks we owe to God - fittingly expressed in the Eucharist (Glory to God; Thanks be to God) - should be continuous. But behind the frenzy of every day, which impedes us from stopping to contemplate God, lies an impure, if not closed, eye: If your eye is sound, your whole body will be full of light; but if your eye is not sound, your whole body will be full of darkness (Mt 6:22).

If Mary asks us to look at the colours of nature, and the little flower which speaks to us of God's beauty, it is because we no longer know how to feel the wonder of little children. This is why we do not know how deep is God's love with which He created us and all things for us.

Prayer gushes forth spontaneously like spring water when the eye is pure and when wonder is born from an unaffected heart. The wheatfields speak to us of God's mercy; it makes the sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust (Mt. 5:45). Despite our sins, He does not cease to provide us with all which is necessary to live.

The invitation to give thanks for everything God gives us makes us think of all those in the world who do not have enough to live. God placed within creation the means to live for all men, past, present and future; but the egoism of a few subtracts what is necessary from the majority who live badly and even die of hunger.

What judgement can we deserve if our thanksgiving (Eucharist) is stained by the closure of our hearts!

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Oh Father, not always are we able to recognize the work of Your Love in the wonder of Your Creation. Not always are we able to feel amazement before the beauty of a humble wild flower.

Our eyes, blinded by the lights of the city, are no longer able to appreciate the soft glow of dawn, or the ever-changing colours of dusk. Our ears, deafened by worldly noises, are unable to perceive the sound of a gentle breeze (1K 19:12) which announces Your presence.

Even when, oh Father, the beauty of Your Creation is in our eyes, we are unable to look beyond and see the signs of Your Work and contemplate in it Your beauty. Not only does this clip the wings of our gratitude, but it makes us stop to ponder on our own feelings, or even think that we have the right to use and abuse Your gifts.

Hence the root of all greed, of all tyranny, of all violence and unjust wealth. Consequently comes all poverty, the marketing of human flesh, the violation of innocence and the stripping of nature...

Oh Father, but You are patient and merciful as You await the return of Your children after the damage caused from not acknowledging You; and then Your children will give You thanks in the joy of communion of all brothers and sisters.

Nuccio

Pope to Youth: "You must be holy"

My Dear Young People, fifteen years ago, at the close of the holy year of the Redemption, I entrusted you with a great wooden cross, asking you to carry it across the world as a sign of the love which the Lord Jesus has for mankind and to proclaim to everyone that only in Christ, who died and is risen, is there salvation and redemption. Since that day the cross has made a long, uninterrupted pilgrimage across the continents, to demonstrate that the Cross walks with young people and young people walk with the Cross.

With these words John Paul II opened his message to young people for the XV World Youth Day, to be held from 15-20 August in the year 2000 in Rome. Its theme is: "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us."

On the eve of the new millennium, I make again to you my pressing appeal to open wide the doors to Christ who "to those who received him, gave power to become children of God" (Jn 1:12) To receive Jesus Christ means to accept from the Father the command to live, loving Him and our brothers and sisters, showing solidarity to everyone, without distinction.

With impassioned and hopeful tones the Holy Father invited youth not to let themselves be blinded by false lights which the world proposes, and showed them, instead, the way lead by Crucified Jesus who reveals the depth of God's love for man.

"Passion," he said, "means a passionate love, unconditioned self-giving: Christ's passion is the summit of an entire life given to his brothers and sisters to reveal the heart of the Father. The Cross, which seems to rise up from the earth, in actual fact reaches down from heaven, enfolding the universe in a divine

embrace."

To the world's youth the Pope said: "Contemplate and reflect! God created us to share in his very own life; he calls us to be his children, living members of the mystical Body of Christ. He calls us to be his: he wants us all to be saints. Dear young people, may it be your holy ambition to be holy, as He is holy." But is it possible today to be saints? "If we had to rely only on human strength, the undertaking would be truly impossible. At times we may be gripped by discouragement and even come to think that it is impossible to change anything either in the world or in ourselves. Although the journey is difficult, we can do everything in the One who is our Redeemer. Turn then to no one except Jesus. Do not look elsewhere for that which only He can give you. With Christ, saintliness becomes possible. Rely on Him; believe in the invincible power of the Gospel. Jesus walks with you, he renews your heart and strengthens you with the vigour of his Spirit."

With great wisdom Peter's successor speaks to his flock - aware of man's limits and fragility, he also shows great trust in the divine Providence.

"Young people of every continent, do not be afraid to be the saints of the new millennium! Be contemplative, love prayer; be coherent with your faith and generous in the service of your brothers and sisters, be active members of the Church and builders of peace.

To succeed in this demanding project of life, continue to listen to His Word, draw strength from the Sacraments, especially the Eucharist and Penance. The Lord wants you to be intrepid apostles of his Gospel and builders of a new humanity. In fact, how could you say you believe in God made man without taking a firm position against all that destroys the human person and the family? If you believe that Christ has revealed the Father's love for every person, you cannot fail to strive to contribute to the building of a new world, founded on the power of love and forgiveness, on the struggle against injustice and all physical, moral and spiritual distress..."

To conclude the Pope invited young people to turn their glance to the Mother of God: "The Incarnation of the Word and the Redemption of mankind are closely linked with the Annunciation when God revealed to Mary his plan and found in her, a young person like yourselves, a heart totally open to the action of his love. For centuries Christian devotion has recalled every day, with the recitation of the Angelus Domini, God's entrance into the history of man. May this prayer become your daily meditated prayer.

May She teach you, dear young people, how to discern the will of the heavenly Father in your life. May she obtain for you the strength and the wisdom to speak to God and to speak about God. Through her example may she encourage you to be in the new millennium announcers of hope, love and peace." (29 June 1999)

Holy Father on Ultimate Realities

The Pope dedicated various general audiences on the Ultimate Realities, as though to stress the need to speak of these in the Church. He began with Heaven, which is the "participation in complete intimacy with the Father after the course of our earthly life; it is the fulfilment of the deepest human longings, the state of supreme, definitive happiness." (21-7-99)

On Hell he said: "It is the state of those who definitely reject the Father's mercy, even at the last moment of their life, thus separating themselves for ever from joyful communion with Him... Eternal damnation is not attributed to God's initiative because in his merciful love he can only desire the salvation of the beings he created. In reality, it is the creature who closes himself to his love." (28 July 1999)

On Purgatory he said: "For those who find themselves in a condition of being open to God, but still imperfectly, the journey towards full beatitude requires a purification, which the faith of the Church illustrates in the doctrine of 'Purgatory,' .. a term which does not indicate a place, but a condition of existence." ... "Just as in their earthly life believers are united in the one Mystical Body, so after death those who live in a state of purification experience the same ecclesial solidarity which works through prayer, prayers for suffrage and love for their other brothers and sisters in the faith." (4 August 1999) We noticed that the Holy Father did not refer to 2 Maccabees (12:38) to prove the existence of Purgatory (in which Judas sends a collection to Jerusalem to offer up as a sacrifice for the soldiers who died in a state of sin) out of respect for the various Protestant confessions which do not recognize the two books of Maccabees as being divinely inspired.

"The whole of the Christian life is like a great pilgrimage to the house of the Father... A Christian life requires that we keep our gaze on the goal, the ultimate realities, but at the same time, that we strive for the 'penultimate' (earthly) realities... It is a matter of purifying every human activity and every earthly task." (11 Aug.) The journey of conversion does not avoid the works of Satan. "Jesus," however, "defeated him definitely... the battle against evil, though, continues to demand vigilance."

Support Pope in hour of battle

Bishop Hnilica, in a letter to Marian groups dated 29 June 1999, writes among other things: "...This is the Marian era desired by God, and the Blessed Virgin is mobilizing her offspring to bring true peace to the world, and to reconcile man with God. This plan, however, is part of the life plan called Totus Tuus experienced by the Saints and adopted by the Holy Father.

We must recall that if Peter and Our Lady are so closely connected, then Satan's hatred for Mary Immaculate is not disconnected from his hatred for the Pope. Today the devil fights against these two biblical figures and these have to win. Paul VI, on his way back from Fatima, wrote Signum Magnum. The "Great Sign," the Woman clothed in the sun, is the same Woman which must crush the serpent's head. I think Our Lady today has the same mission which Abraham had for Sodom and Gomorrah. If Abraham had found 10 righteous people the two cities would still exist. John Paul II exclaimed when he returned from Fatima in 1982: "How many righteous people would be necessary today?" Well, we don't know this, but Our Lady does, and she will not leave us alone until she has found them all.

We can see especially today how this battle has become bloody. The Holy Father is a target for slander; he is persecuted and misunderstood even by those who should be up front to support him.

Hence, at the threshold of the Jubilee Year, I am here to make this special call to you, readers and friends. Just as the Church of Jerusalem supported St. Peter when he was in prison, I am now asking you to be united in prayer to ask Our Lady to protect and support the Vicar of Christ in this time of tribulation and trial. John Paul II is the only voice which opposes the prince and princes of darkness in the world; the only one to bear a message which goes upstream and is in line with the Gospel.

Just as Moses prayed with outstretched arms and obtained a victory for the Israelites, so our petitions will obtain the grace needed to support the Church and her Pastor in the battle against God's enemy."

"Return to initial fervour"

"Grasp hold of the Rosary"

Following are some of the most pressing messages with which the Queen of Peace has called her children to pray the Rosary.

On the eve of the Assumption in 1984 she said to Ivan: "On these days I would like the people to pray with me; and that they pray as much as possible! That every day they recite at least the Rosary, with the joyful, sorrowful and glorious mysteries..."

On the 4th anniversary of the apparitions (25.06.85) in reply to Marija's request (what do you wish to say to priests) the Blessed Virgin replied: "Dear Children, I beseech you to invite everyone to recite the Rosary. With the Rosary you will overcome all the obstacles which Satan is putting in the way of the Catholic Church at the moment. Priests, all of you, say the Rosary, put aside time for the Rosary!"

When the Gulf war broke out Mary said: "Satan is strong and wants to destroy not only human life, but also nature and the planet on which you live... If you wish, grasp hold of the Rosary; only the Rosary can do miracles in the world and in your lives" (25.01.1991).

And more recently: "I invite all priests and religious to recite the Rosary and to teach others to pray with it. My Children, the Rosary is particularly dear to me; through it you open your heart and I am able to help you" (25.08.1997).

Rosary is quickest way to prayer with heart

"Mary's prayer draws into the heart of those who pray the Rosary, the prayer of the Holy Spirit. It happened in the Upper Room when Mary united her prayer to that of the disciples and became the model of the Church in prayer. The Holy Spirit set alight the fire in the Church and in the world, making it burn at its highest," says Fr. Jean Lafrance, fervent apostle of prayer, from Paris.

With experience, one who prays the Rosary with trust and perseverance, will sooner or later feel the presence of the Holy Spirit praying unceasingly in his heart. Jesus in Luke (18) said: "Pray always, without losing heart."

Oratory of the heart. The Rosary then, when prayed correctly, is like the formless mass of clay offered to the Father that He may shape it with His hands through the Word and the Holy Spirit. Through praying with Mary one finds the way to unceasing prayer. St. Louis De Montfort expresses it as thus: "Mary is for the soul the oratory of the heart, that all its prayers to God may be fully expressed in the certainty of being fulfilled."

"Onnipotenza supplice" - Besides being the Mother of prayer with the heart, Mary is also the "all-powerful petitioner." It is to her that we should turn to obtain the gift of permanent petition. If we continue to say, "Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death," one day the heavens will open and we will understand that Mary intercedes continually for us.

So that Rosary is Prayer with the Heart

Fr. Andrea Gasparino from Cuneo, Italy is famous for his teachings on prayer, which he has been holding for more than 40 years. He teaches the prayer of silence and of the heart, and has always called himself an enemy of oral prayer. In the following interview, held on Radio Maria, the Father clarifies some

doubts.

"Without contemplation of mysteries Rosary is lifeless"

Q. I pray the Rosary every day, but I don't know if I pray with my mouth or heart, for at times my prayer is arid.

A. You need to change your prayer, for when you truly pray, as Our Lady wishes, your life changes. The Rosary is a typically oral prayer unless you work at it. Paul VI, in his encyclical "Marialis Cultus" (no. 47) said: "Unless it is a contemplative prayer it is a lifeless corpse". Your Rosary is worth little if it is not contemplative prayer. So when you recite the Rosary take time over the mystery and see if there is something practical you can do. At each mystery ask Our Lady for light. Try reading the mystery as it is told in the Gospel, because just simply announcing it does little for you.

Take a little longer to meditate the Rosary, then fix your attention on a word of the "Hail Mary." For example, when you say "pray for us sinners now," stop at the word "now" and you will understand that perhaps in that moment you need to forgive, or line up your will with that of the Father's, or correct something in your behaviour. So fix your attention on one of the words from the prayer and you will see how the Rosary will convert you.

Rather than say many Rosaries, say a briefer one, but the way Our Lady wishes, so as to communicate with her. It might happen that half way through you realize you have yet to communicate with her, that your thoughts are miles away; so wake up and say, "I want to communicate with Our Lady," and fix your attention on a few words. This is the real Rosary.

Prayer of listening must change us

Q. I pray often, but I cannot reach true communion with God. I tend to speak to God, so I do not use prayer of silence.

A. It is easier to speak with God than to listen to Him, but remember that what you have to say to Him is less important, because He already knows everything. To the contrary, what He has to say to you is very important. Each time you pray stop for a lengthy pause of silence to put yourself in God's presence.

Think of Him, the Holy Trinity, present in you and ask Him: "Lord what do you want to say to me today?" Help yourself a lot with the Word of God, the Gospel. Ask for example, "What do you want to tell me today about charity, my duties, or the way I take Communion?" If you do not receive an immediate answer, remember that the Lord always speaks in a veiled manner: the wait strengthens our faith and humbleness. If your question is straightforward, the reply will come, perhaps during the day.

Practise the prayer of listening.

Ask the Lord every day to give you the grace to be able to pray, to know how to listen to Him, and repeat: "It doesn't matter what I want, it only matters what You want," and a flower, the most beautiful one, will blossom from your prayer.

Q. I belong to a Charismatic Group, but the prayer is lengthy, confused and there is a lot of gesticulation.

A. Prayer must be contact with God. Ask yourself after prayer in the group if you communicated with God, heart to heart. You probably won't have, because of the environment. It is good to participate in community prayer, but remember that first you need to communicate with Him in the secrecy of your heart. To pray well in the group you should get used to praying for half an hour each day with prayer of silence.

Without personal prayer everything is arid. All that crying out does not remove your faults; it doesn't let you descend into your conscience. You have to descend into your conscience and listen well to what God wants from you, and you can only do this with the prayer of silence. With personal prayer your

participation in the group will be sincere and real.

Q. I pray a lot, but I have the habit of naming people and their problems one by one to God to ask for His help.

A. You need not worry about that because God does not need information, however, it is good that you care and implore the Holy Spirit upon others so that He can act in them. It is a good thing when you pray in particular for another person to ask the Lord, for instance, what you can do for them, so that your prayer is concrete.

Q. My life is concentrated on God, but I cannot pray the way you suggest.

A. It is good to communicate with God all day long through your work and your encounters with other people. The important thing is that you communicate profoundly with God every day. Do not pray only while you work. You must listen to God and give a part of your day to Him; at least half an hour. You must say: "my prayer is put to good if I listen to God." You need to understand what the Lord asks of you at home and at work.

How faith stayed alive in Armenia and Russia

A deacon of the Armenian rite at a meeting in Rome said: "We went to Armenia in 1988 after the earthquake to lend a hand. We knew that the Catholic faith was still alive in Armenia, despite the hostility of the Communist regime - at the time it was calculated that Catholics numbered about 80,000. Today, this number has grown to at least 300,000.

They had been without pastors for at least 30 years, after the last Catholic priest died. We managed to find his grave site; on the tomb was written: "The priest who recited the Rosary." We later found out the reason for that inscription. The Rosary, which recalls the mysteries of salvation, was the only practice they still retained. We tried to make contact with them, but for them we were strangers and they didn't trust us. However, when we turned up with Rosary beads in our hands, their mistrust disappeared immediately. With their cultural simplicity and poverty, the two elements which indicated one was a Catholic were the recitation of the Rosary and faithfulness to the Pope of Rome.

Now things are slowly picking up again with the presence of priests who are helping them rediscover that faith which they had entrusted over the years to the simple but solid chain called the Rosary."

(Fr. Muraro, professor at Angelicum University, Rome)

Cardinal Messner experienced a similar situation in Russia where after decades of atheism, the faith was kept alive in many families thanks solely to the Rosary.

Power of Blessings

What Jesus told Teresa Neuman, stigmatized German mystic whose sole nourishment was Eucharist

"Dear Daughter, I wish to teach you to receive my Blessing with fervour. Try to understand that something great happens when you receive a blessing from one of my priests. A blessing is the overflowing of my Divine Holiness. Open your soul and let it become holy through my blessing; it is heavenly dew for the soul, through which everything can be made to bear fruit. With the power of a blessing, I give to priests the power to open the treasure of my Heart and to pour over souls a shower of graces.

When the priest blesses, it is I who blesses. It is then that a boundless current of grace flows from my Sacred Heart to the soul to the point of fulfilment. So keep your heart open so as not to lose the benefit of a blessing. Through my blessing you receive the grace of love and help for the soul and body. My holy blessing contains all the help needed by mankind. It is through it that you receive the strength and the desire to seek good, to escape from evil; to enjoy the protection given to my children against the powers of darkness. It is a great privilege to receive a blessing; you cannot understand how much mercy is given you through it! Hence, never receive a blessing in a half-hearted or distracted manner, but with your complete attention! You are poor prior to receiving a blessing, and rich after having received it.

I am sorrowed that the Church's blessing is so little appreciated, and so rarely received. Good will is strengthened by a blessing; initiatives receive my special Providence; weakness is boosted by my power; thoughts and intentions are spiritualized and all bad influences are neutralized.

I have given to my blessing endless powers; it comes from the infinite love of my Sacred Heart. The more my blessing is given and received with zeal, the more it is effective. Whether the blessing is being given to a child or to the entire world, it is much greater than a thousand worlds.

Think that God is immense, infinitely immense; and how little things are when compared to Him! The same happens when only one person or great crowds receive a blessing; it doesn't matter how many receive it, for I give to each person according to the measure of his faith. Since I am infinitely rich with every good, you can receive without measure. Your hopes are never too great, and everything will surpass your deepest desires!

My Daughter, protect he who blesses! Hold in high esteem blessed things and you will be pleasing to me, your God. Each time you are blessed, you are united more closely to me; you are once more made holy, healed again, and protected by the love of my Sacred Heart. I often keep hidden the results of my blessing so that they are known only in eternity. It may often seem that a blessing is not effective, but instead its influence is wonderful. Even seemly unfruitful results are a blessing obtained from a holy blessing: these are the mysteries of my Providence which I do not desire to make known.

My blessings very often produce unknown effects upon a soul. Hence, have great trust in this outpouring of my Sacred Heart and reflect seriously on this favour (that is, that apparent results remain hidden).

Receive the holy blessing with sincerity of heart, for its graces only enter in a humble heart! Receive it with good will and with the intent to become better; and it will enter in the depths of your heart and produce its effects. Be a child of the blessing, and you too will become a blessing for others."

Youth Festival "Return to the Father"

Held in Medjugorje from Saturday 31 July to Friday 6 August, many were the youth from around the world - 15,000 is the estimate - who turned up for this tenth edition of the Festival, the theme of which was: "God the Father, Fount of Life." In particular, great crowds came from the East (Poles, Czechs, Slovaks, Hungarians and Rumanians), and there was also a large number from Lebanon. The priests were so many that they did not fit on the steps of the outside altar, so that for the celebrations they filled even the side steps.

Each day began at 9 am with morning prayers. This was followed by talks and witnessing till midday when the Angelus was recited. In the afternoon, at 4 pm, the same speaker from that morning continued his relation; and this was followed by a visionary's witness. This year Vicka was absent because she was in Italy for health reasons, and was greatly missed.

At 6 pm the usual evening programme began with two parts of the Rosary. This was animated by the youth in all the various languages. Mass was concelebrated at 7 pm and the main celebrant was always one of the young priests whose vocation was tied to Medjugorje. All the pilgrims present in Medjugorje participated in this evening Concelebration since the language Masses held usually in the mornings had been suspended during the Festival.

Eucharistic Adoration began at 10 pm, however the Blessed Sacrament was exposed day and night in the Chapel of the Kraljce Mira Community and this was nearly always filled with faithful.

On Wednesday 4th August, after Holy Mass, the benches were turned around and we watched the show put on by Sr. Elvira's "boys" called "I was wounded; but now I live and give glory to God."

Adoration on the last evening (5 Aug.) was very suggestive and many were present. Expressions of gratitude were offered up to Our Lady during this for her birthday. During the night the youth began to climb their way up Krizevac to remain in prayer prior to Holy Mass which was celebrated at day break on 6th August. The Mass began with the reading of the Gospel of the Transfiguration in the various languages, and at the end of the Mass, the beautiful message of 25 July was read out in the many languages.

Untiring animator and coordinator of the Festival was Fr. Slavko, assisted by Fr. Cosimo Cavalluzzo; and as usual, Agostino directed musicians and singers in delightful accompaniment.

The encounter of hearts of which Our Lady spoke in her message of 25 July last was tangible for all to feel. It was seen in the way the young people remained attentive during the many meetings, and in their joyful and spontaneous participation in the songs. These were often accompanied by gestures, so that at times all one could see was a mass of hands lifted up to the sky, clapping and waving to the rhythm of the music; and it made me think of the first Christians described in Acts: "they were as one heart and one soul."

Following is a brief summary of the four main interventions:

Life is gift from God the Father

The talk by Jo Criossant was intense and moving (she and her husband founded the young religious family known as "The Beatitudes").

She quoted Genesis 2:18, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him." When Adam wakes up he looks at and admires the woman; she looks at and admires him; and God looks upon and admires the two of them. It is an extraordinary exchange which helps us to understand more fully Adam's exclamation: "This at last is flesh of my flesh:" Adam sees in the woman his own identity.

Man cannot find his own identity or discover the mission which is proper to him without first seeking his own roots.

God the Father wants you to live

American priest Tim Destre made us laugh then cry with his stories. We recall one in particular about a dear friend and fellow student from the seminary, Brian, whose family was very rich. As a young man, however, Brian was involved in a life of drugs, sex and alcohol; that is till he entered the seminary. When he later met Mother Teresa of Calcutta, he became a missionary, working amongst the people of Cambodia, and it was here that he lost his life for love of God and his brothers and sisters - killed by the Khmer Rouge.

Fr. Tim concluded: "Many think that they can live up while they are young, and convert in their old age;

but we cannot plan our future, for God doesn't want us to live for ourselves, but for the others and for Him. Our Lady came to tell us that if we believe we will also live. And we say to her: "Teach us the way to change our life." In truth, she has been doing precisely this for 19 years, but we have yet to understand.

This is the day for conversion; the hour of salvation. To enter into Paradise one must convert whilst still on the earth. Paradise is the place where people love God in a perfect manner, while Hell is the place where man loves only himself. When placed before life and death, we choose life; eternal life."

The Father's Love heals you

Sr. Elvira spoke with her usual exuberance on the encounter between the merciful Father and his wounded child.

"When we read of the Father's love for His child, we experience the Word of Life. A young person's weakness, poverty and sin should be contemplated at the foot of the Cross where human misery was embraced and kissed by the Father's divine mercy. That is what I contemplate every day. God wants to be a merciful Father; He wants to free His children of the burdens created by human condition.

It is He Who chooses us; it is He Who loves us. So let us let this passionate God embrace us! The Community walks towards these open arms. We are asked to recognize ourselves as sinners. Our Lady tells us to lose our heart in His Heart, and our wounds will be transformed, and we will become witnesses of God's greatness. If we wait to become holy and perfect, we will never witness God's mercy. Our God already rejoices and dances at what is to come, and He will increase His glory in man's heart.

But my young people, you must precede us old people. Remove your fears that come from contemplating nothing else but your own sins! Say stop to the humiliations and complexes within you! Jesus will transform your sin into a garden of flowers, and life will be in you!"

Mary at the service of life

Fra Jozo Zovko, with zeal and inspiration, said: "Mary is building up a new world and she began with the young people. All this here is new Church; it is what today's world needs. We do not want a Godless world. Look at St. Benedict; it was only when he went down on his knees that Europe began to be lifted up again. As long as the Church gathers up prayer the enemy cannot use his weapons against her. Writing about evil is not enough. Our Lady did not desire a scientific institute, but a world which prays. You are called to carry the light into the world. Do not fear those who have been taken by the darkness, for they await the light. If there is need to suffer, do not fear; not even Jesus was spared.

Our response is great and strong; these are our times. God knows how to change the world, but He needs you. So, young people, become renewers of the Church, the prayer life of which has run aground.

Become young people who pray. Those who pray believe not that they can change the world, but that God changes the world and does miracles. I invite you to make a promise to Our Lady: decide to be part of Her plan. I invite you all to pray with the heart. Don't think that you are not necessary."

Father de Sanctis spoke to us about encountering God the Father through Mary, and thanks to his past experience with ballet, he cheered our hearts with a dance or two and some of his famous songs.

A young man named Andrea told us: "As I walked around Medjugorje I noticed the people in prayer; it was as though they were enveloped in a cloud of peace and inner silence. In Medjugorje I found prayer, strength and hope in God."

Our Lady came to tell the world that God exists and that life is found in Him; that those who find God also find peace and life. She came to ask man to be at peace with God and with others, and the means we

are given to achieve this peace are: the Rosary, Holy Communion, Confession, fasting, the Bible. So what else can we say but: pray, pray, pray! (Photo and article courtesy of A. Bonifacio and M; Ballabio))

Eucharistic Jesus charms youth

Emanuela tells: "I recall the moments of adoration in the evenings as the most beautiful. In front of Eucharistic Jesus all was quiet. In the silence of the evening a gentle breeze caressed our beings and a profound peace filled our hearts. Though there were thousands of us before Jesus, we each felt as though we were alone with Him. Jesus, Love in person, was there for me, He gave Himself for me, He wanted me, He spoke to me, listened to me, and consoled ... me!

That was the secret of that profound peace! From the very first evening, Jesus made us feel His presence. Before Him we understood how great was the Father's love for each of us!

The Holy Spirit led us out of our darkness into the Light. We experienced the darkness within us; the sadness caused by our sin; the misery caused by our weakness ... but then, in front of Jesus, we found the courage to hand everything over to Him, so that our sadness became joy; and our hearts were purified by confession.

To open our hearts to God we need to learn to offer everything to Him. We need to learn to love ourselves just the way we are, as Jesus loves us. After we will be able to love also others, and to forgive, and we will know how to love our parents, our past and our own life.

The priest who led the Adoration told us that we must also cancel from our minds that severe and negative image of the Father, especially if we have negative experiences with our earthly father. Our heavenly Father's love is without limits!

Another evening, Fr. Cosimo invited all those youth who felt in their hearts a call to total donation of self to God, to stand up and offer their lives to Jesus so that He would be the only true Master and Light of their lives. Then he invited all the engaged couples to consecrate their love to Jesus and to ask Him for the strength and courage to live their conjugal love in a Christian way, with God as the centre of their life.

On the evening of Tuesday 3 August we prayed, adored and accompanied Eucharistic Jesus around the streets of the village as a testimony of Jesus' live and real Presence amid us and within our hearts.

The visionaries also witnessed, and of these Mirjana made us feel all the love Our Lady has for us, saying that our Blessed Mother always remembers to pray for us and for non-believers, and that because of her love she gave us five basic messages ("five stones"). These are: prayer with the heart, the Eucharist, the Bible, fasting and monthly confession.

Jakov spoke to us about the day Our Lady told him she would not appear to him anymore except on Christmas day. "It was the worst day of my life; I thought I would die, but then I understood the importance of feeling Mary in one's heart each day."

[We all thank God for having given to Jakov and Annalisa their third child, Miriam, born in Italy on 8 July.]

Marija spoke to us about the first days of the apparitions: "There was a discotheque in Medjugorje that burnt down just a few days before the apparitions began. For the young people who thought they had no where else to go, it was as though Our Lady was inviting them to begin to climb the hill of apparitions, and thus the first prayer group was born.

When the police stopped us from going up the hill, she called us to the fields. Once, at 10.30 pm in a field close to our house, nearly the entire village turned up. We prayed the Rosary and Our Lady

appeared, and she said we could touch her: "You visionaries take their hands and come to me." So that is what we did; they touched Our Lady and everyone felt something - warmth, cold, the scent of roses, an electric shock. But we saw that when the people touched Our Lady's mantle it became stained, so we began to cry and asked what it meant. She said: "These are your sins." And in that moment Our Lady invited us for the first time to go and confess.

We often noticed the kindness and discretion of Our Lady. When she had something to reproach us about she never let the others hear. It was clear that she knew everything about us, even our most intimate things.

Our Lady also told us that when we speak of a third person we often stress that person's negative side, and added: "Have you ever found anything in nature that doesn't speak of God? God can be found in each of His creatures, and in people who are less perfect." Mary then invited us to climb Krizevac two at a time with the person we liked the least. Once we had reached the top we became aware that we had made a new friend..."

(A. Bonifacio)

Cardinal and 3 Bishops from Ecuador

Card. B. Echeverria Ruiz and Msgr. V. Maldonado made a private visit to Medjugorje from 26-28 June. At the same time two other Bishops from the same country were present: Msgr. G. Pavon Puente (Tulcan) and Msgr. Altamirano (Quito).

Card. Ruiz was enthusiastic: "I had known about Medjugorje for a long time but was only able to visit now. I particularly noticed the atmosphere of prayer and the way the liturgy is animated by the Franciscan community, in a spirit of true evangelization. Here there is time for prayer, for Holy Mass, for a sincere and profound confession... I understood, while praying the Rosary in the church, that the main thing of Medjugorje is not the messages, but Mary's living presence. Here God speaks through her to all His peoples, and this is a singular occasion for conversion for the entire world, starting from Europe. Seeing the number of faithful who make use of the sacraments is a clear indication as to what is most important in the pastoral care of God's people."

Msgr. Maldonado confirmed: "Medjugorje truly is a place of encounter between God and man! Here one finds the true fount of salvation. We are all in need of conversion to be able to carry out our duties and help others find the way which leads to God. Here I have understood with greater clarity Mary's role in the life of a Christian."

170 Priests at 4th Int'l Retreat held in Medjugorje from 30 June - 6 July. Under the direction of Fr. Slavko, participants from ten different countries considered the theme: "The Priest at the service of Life." Other speakers were Fr. Cosimo Cavalluzzo, Msgr. Philip Reilly (who spoke on unborn life), Dr. Sanchez (medico and deacon, he spoke of inner healing), Sr. Elvira and Fra Jozo Zovko.

The declaration drawn up at the end of the seminar speaks of: " a new trust in God's fatherly love for us all," and: "a new conviction and desire to witness God's love through our priesthood." Participants were urged to draw strength from Eucharistic Communion and prayer so that a process of healing of inner wounds could begin and enable them to become defenders of life.

Holy Mass, the Rosary, adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and of the Cross, the Way of the Cross on Krizevac, Confession and the visit to the Hill of Apparitions all enriched the spiritual life of the priests

present at the seminar. "Satisfied for what we have experienced, we return to our daily life with profound gratitude in our hearts towards God the Father, fount of life, who granted us to meet each other here at Mary's school. The Mother of Life, she taught us to serve, protect, respect and love each life and to recognize it as the greatest gift from God the Father."

Sr. Emmanuel commented: "In this period of priestly crisis Medugorje is an oasis. At Mary's school priests are able to find the meaning of their vocation and the joy of belonging to God. Many have witnessed that without Mary's help they would never have been able to go on. Many prayer groups have become aware of the need for priests to be spiritually nourished, so pay the way for priests and seminarians to come here." (Press Bulletin)

Ivan's prayer group is saddened by the loss of one of its members. On 4th July following the Mass to celebrate the 17 years since the group's formation, Nedjo the guitarist of the group suffered a heart attack on his way home. His wife (one of Vicka's sisters) was with him. Nedjo was 36 years old and father of 4 children. Lately, he had often spoken of death in the family, and this brings to mind Marthe Robin, the French mystic, who said with regards to the sudden death of a young man: "God prepares a soul for death unconsciously."

Humanly speaking, one would rebel before the death of a young person and father of small children, but as Vicka points out, "God knows why He has asked us for this sacrifice." We ask God to give us the trust in His ways which often are not ours. One day we will understand the reason for certain events and we will thank Him.

"Do not fear! It is me!"

Authorities from Hebei near Peking, continue in their harsh repression of the non official Church. Persecutions in China

On 3 May last (feast of Our Lady of Fatima), a priest was arrested whilst celebrating Mass and a few hours later was found dead in a street of the Capital. A few days later a seminarian from the underground Church was arrested whilst visiting a family. Tortured, beaten up, and tied by his wrists to a rope and left hanging for three days, he was forced to drink a liquid which caused acute pain in his intestines. He was released after three days without any medical assistance.

On the Sunday of Pentecost police from the same city tried to arrest another priest who was celebrating Mass, but he managed to escape. The four lay people who were assisting him, however, were arrested and sent to a "correction camp."

These are just some of the cases signalled by the Fides agency which last January announced that persecution of "non official" priests was expected to worsen.

The repression by the government of Hebei does not regard only Catholics, but also Protestants, Tibetans, Buddhists and Muslims. With the 50th anniversary of the foundation of the Republic of China coming up, the government has decided to eliminate all organizations which do not subject themselves to its control.

Nonetheless, the number of conversions to Christianity continues to grow. Amongst these there are even members of the Communist party; a sign that Communist atheism is running out of steam. President Zemin recently criticized those who believe in "superstition," urging them to adhere to "historical

materialism," and condemned those who lapse into what the government calls "religious idealism."
(From Avvenire, 7-7-99)

Sudan's "forgotten Christians"

More than a million Christian refugees, ignored by the world, escape from the atrocities of civil wars in Ethiopia, Eritrea and South Sudan. Most of them are cramped in a refugee camp near Khartoum, the hottest part of Africa, and are without food, water and clothing. They live in mud huts, poor shacks and torn tents. That is not all; after having been sent away from their own land they are also forced to abandon their religion. The Islamic government of Khartoum, in fact, uses every means to convert them to the Muslim religion. The children, in particular, are forced to go to the school of Islam where they receive lessons on the doctrine of the Prophet.

Bishop, Msgr. Paride Taban, tells: "Christian villages are destroyed, the children kidnapped and enslaved, and many ask: 'Isn't there anyone to help us?'" It would only take a little bit of good will on our part to offer a solution to the tremendous need of these people.

Refugees seek not only water and food, but especially Christian doctrine. Children, in particular, are still able to smile for the trust they have in the Church. The people are asking for Bibles, teachers, schools and the sacraments. At Easter hundreds were baptized despite the danger of persecution. Despite the misery, the Church of Sudan continues to hope and is an example for us all. Jesus is there, present among the poor, and is waiting for us. (From Fides)

Catholics in Kosovo live on

During the war no one ever spoke of them. They represent about 3% of the population (in numbers that means about 60,000) and are nearly all Albanian, except for 1,500 Croatians. They live in 23 different parishes and are assisted by 37 priests. Faithful to the principles of the Church, they have openly declared to be in favour of ethnic groups living together, and for this have been victims of violent attacks by Muslim Albanians. Msgr. Mark Sopi, 61 years old and auxiliary bishop of Prizren, decided to remain in his place as dean of the seminary so that with the help of a few nuns he could encourage survivors. Also the bishop of Pristina, Msgr. Joakim Herbut, remained in his place. "I ask for a prayer for the priests still in Kosovo," said Ibrahim Rugova, leader of the Kosovars at a prayer vigil for peace in the Balkans held in the Basilica of Santa Maria in Rome.

Translator of Echo in Albanian, Robert Prendushi, informs us that a Catholic from Djakovica has asked for copies of Echo in Albanian for his large prayer group; likewise for another parish in Kosovo. May the Queen of Peace guide these brothers and sisters so they become instruments of peace among people who destroy each other because of hatred.

Save sinners from eternal damnation The secret of Fatima

Our Lady's messages to Mirjana in particular have helped us to see how Mary cares for distant souls, that is, for those who do not know God's love. And this confirms Mary's words in Fatima.

The secret of Fatima is made up of three parts. Two of these are known; the third part was written towards the end of 1943 and is kept in the Vatican's secret archives. Many have asked about the first two parts (the third part has never been revealed; that which circulates is fruit of imagination).

This is what Lucia wrote in her memoirs for the Bishop of Leiria:

The first part of the secret was the vision of hell (13 July 1917). Thankfully this vision only lasted for a moment, otherwise I think we would have died of fright. We immediately lifted our eyes to Our Lady who said to us with a tone of goodness mixed with sadness: "You have seen hell where the souls of poor sinners fall. To save them, God wishes to establish the devotion to my Immaculate Heart." This is the second part of the secret. Often the great promise of the Fatima message is tied to the intercession of Mary's Immaculate Heart.

Mother's Heart speaks to Her children to save many from perdition

Our Lady said that through this consecration many souls would be saved and that the war would soon finish, but that if men did not stop to offend God an even worse war would break out during the pontificate of Pius XII. "To stop it," added the Virgin Mary, "I will come to ask for the consecration of Russia to my Immaculate Heart and communion of atonement on the first Saturdays. If my requests are accepted Russia will convert and peace will be had; otherwise, Russia will spread its errors to the world, and will promote wars and persecution of the Church and the Holy Father." (This promise of her return was fulfilled on 10 December 1925 when Our Lady appeared to Lucia at Pontevedra in Spain.) "The good will be martyred, the Holy Father will have much to suffer, various nations will be destroyed. In the end my Immaculate Heart will triumph. The Pope will consecrate Russia to me and it will convert and a period of peace will be granted to the world."

I do not think that all the conditions for the consecration of Russia have been fulfilled; and for this the world continues to suffer the consequences of atheist communism which in God's hands is a scourge to punish the world for its sins.

Jacinta's love for sinners

I recall that Jacinta was easily impressed by the things revealed in the secret. She was so horrified by the vision of hell that no penance or act of mortification was too much for her. Certain pious people do not like to talk to children of hell for fear of frightening them, but God did not hesitate to show it to three of them, one of whom was only 6; and He knew they would have been horrified. Often Jacinta would exclaim: "How horrible it is in hell! How much compassion I have for those who go there!" Shaking all over she would kneel down and recite the prayer Our Lady taught us: "Oh my Jesus, forgive us our sins, save us from the fires of hell, lead all souls to heaven, especially those most in need." She would remain for a long time in prayer and invite us to do the same. "Francisco, Lucia, are you praying with me?! We must pray a lot to free souls from hell! So many go there!" At other times she would ask: "Why does Our Lady not show hell to sinners? If they saw it they would sin no more so as not to fall into it! You must tell Our Lady to show hell to all those people," (those at Cova d'Iria during the apparition), "you'll see how they'll convert." And then she would reproach me: "Why didn't you tell Our Lady to show hell to the people?"

On other occasions Jacinta would ask me: "What sins do those people commit to go to hell?", and I would reply that perhaps they didn't go to Mass on Sundays, or that they stole, or cursed. "How much compassion I feel for sinners! If only I could show them what hell is like! Listen," she would say, "I am going to heaven, but you are staying here, so if Our Lady lets you tell everyone what hell is like so they won't sin any more and go to hell."

When, as an act of mortification, she did not want to eat and I would tell her to, she would exclaim: "No! I offer this sacrifice for sinners who eat too much!" And if it happened that she heard some of those

horrible words that some like to use, she would cover her face and say: "Oh my God! These people can't know that by saying these words they could go to hell! Forgive them, my Jesus, and convert them. They certainly can't know that they offend God. Oh how sad my Jesus! I will pray for them."

I have been asked if Our Lady ever told us what type of sins most offended the Lord; Jacinta once mentioned sins of the flesh. I am convinced that because of her young age she did not fully understand the meaning of this sin, but that doesn't mean that she did not understand its importance, given her great sense of intuition.

On 13th June 1917 Our Lady told me that her Immaculate Heart would be my refuge and the way which would lead me to God.

When she said these words she opened her hands and the light which radiated from them penetrated our chests. I think that the scope of this light was to infuse in us a special awareness and love for Mary's Immaculate Heart.

Consecration to Mary's Immaculate Heart

The call to consecrate oneself to Mary's Immaculate Heart is not a human invention, but comes directly from the Blessed Virgin Mary. "Satan is strong, therefore, my Children, come close to my Motherly Heart with unceasing prayer."

On 25th Oct. 1988 the Queen of Peace said: "I would like to bring you closer to Jesus' Heart (...) I also invite you to consecrate yourselves to my Immaculate Heart (...) so that everything may belong to God through me. Thus, my Children, pray so you may understand the value of this message." (An error in the original translation where 'message' read 'messages' distorted and weakened this exhortation.) The message concluded with: "Satan is strong; and so my Children, come close to my Motherly Heart with constant prayer."

Consecration to Mary's Immaculate Heart is a mystery, and like all mysteries, is revealed only by the Holy Spirit. That is why Our Lady adds: "pray to understand the value of this message."

St. Louis de Montfort, at no. 64 of his "Treatise on True Devotion to Mary" writes: "Oh my sweet Master, is it not an astonishingly pitiable thing to see the ignorance and the darkness of all men here below in regard to Thy holy Mother?"

John Paul II, who is deeply devoted to the Virgin Mary (in fact, his motto is Totus Tuus, which means "All Yours Mary"), said during his visit to Fatima: "To consecrate the world to Mary's Immaculate Heart means to draw closer through the Mother's intercession to that very fount of life which gushed forth on Golgotha; it means to put oneself again below the cross of her Son. More again, it means to consecrate this world to the pierced Heart of the Saviour and bring it to the very fount of its Redemption..."

To consecrate oneself to Mary's Heart thus means to get to Jesus more quickly; to get to the Son through the Mother so we can live with Him a personal experience of friendship and love.

Singular event in defence of life: Appeal from Guadalupe

In response to the Holy Father's appeal in the encyclical *Evangelium Vitae*: "What is urgently called for is a general mobilization of consciences and a united ethical effort to a great campaign in support of life" (EV 95), "The Guadalupan Appeal" will be held from 27-31 October next at the shrine of Guadalupe in Mexico City. It will be an event of religious celebrations and scientific studies, and it will culminate in the act of Consecration to Mary in defence of life. In fact, in his encyclical the Holy Father stressed the utmost importance of Mary's "experience as the incomparable model of how life should be welcomed

and cared for" (EV 102).

The event is promoted by many institutes, such as the Pontifical Council for families, the Academy for life, Catholic medical associations, Catholic jurists, and "Defend Life with Mary," which first gave form to the project.

Precisely where Mary appeared with a thong around her waist (a sign of pregnancy for the indigenous people) a solemn act of reparation will be offered up to God with the Consecration to the Woman clothed in the Sun, who fights the dragon and defends life. This will hinder the evil one who in this era has built up a culture of death and moved great strategies against life.

René Laurentin stresses the importance that in our response to the Guadalupan Appeal we be united in our recourse to Mary to stop the advance towards self-destruction.

The programme includes: on the 27th, a conference by Fr. Daniel Ange and Holy Mass celebrated by Cardinal Trujillo. On the 28th, presentations by the various associations involved. On the 29th, speakers include Msgr. Elio Sgreccia (from the Pontifical Academy for life), Hon. Carlo Casini and Sr. Elvira Petrozzi.

On the 30th, speakers include René Laurentin and Cardinal Trujillo. The Holy Mass that will follow will be celebrated by the president of the Mexican Bishops. The Rosary in the afternoon will be held at the Aztec Stadium, and led by Cardinal Carrera, archbishop of Mexico City. The Meeting will conclude on Sunday 31st with Holy Mass and the Act of Consecration to Mary.

Missionaries: sentinels who announce new day

The 24th October will be the last World Missionary Day of this millennium during which the evangelization work of the Church has produced truly extraordinary fruits. The Pope said:

"Those who work on the outposts of the Church are like the watchmen on the walls of God's city, to whom we ask: Watchmen, what of the night? (Is 21:11); and we receive the answer: Hark, your watchmen lift up their voice, together they sing for joy; for eye to eye they see the return of the Lord to Zion (Is 52:8). Their generous witness in every corner of the earth announces that "as the third millennium of the redemption draws near God is preparing a great springtime for Christianity, and we can already see its first signs" (RM 86)."

The Apostolate of St. Joseph, London, which holds monthly masses for families on last Saturday of month, advises new phone/fax no. 0171-488-1113.

* Laurentin's latest and last update, "Medjugorje Testament", available in America through: Ave Maria Centre of Peace, POB 489, Station U, Toronto, Ontario M8Z 5Y8, Canada.

They also publish "Our Lady Weeps" by Bishop Grillo, a report on the statue bought in Medugorje that wept tears of blood in Civitavecchia, Rome in 1995.

* Main language editions of Echo of Mary available in Medjugorje at Miriam shop and Shalom shop near St. James church, and Ain Karim shop in arcade under International Hotel.

THE MAIL

I am moved by the expressions of gratitude and support since my last note in issue 146. Following are just a few:

* From **California**: Ron and Fran Venditti, who distribute thousands of copies of English Echo, write: "We can't express what Echo means to so many people! People here who find a copy 'by chance' write to ask to receive it regularly. A nun from Inida wrote to tell us that many receive inspiration from Echo and can't wait for it to arrive. Also a priest from India wrote to let us know how anxious they are to receive their copies!

When we read in Echo 146 of your state of health we cried, but then we understood that Our Lady knows how important Echo is, and she will protect it and you. .. You have our love and admiration!"

* From **Trinidad and Tobago**, Sr. Teresa Retout writes: "I do not fear for the future of Echo, as it is Mary's work, and she will provide workers to keep it running."

* From **England**: "Thank you for all you have done over the years in Our Blessed Mother's Name to bring souls to Her and to Her Son Jesus. Your Parish has become world-wide and it seems that the seeds you have sown will become a rich harvest of souls for others to reap. It is God's own work and it seems He is now saying to you, "Come and rest, my good and faithful servant." May His Peace and Joy pervade your soul and may Mary Queen of Peace give you rest in Her Motherly arms as she takes you forward towards your new future where there is no pain, nor fatigue." (June Simon)

* From **France**: "Thank you so much for all your wonderful work on behalf of our Blessed Mother and for your Echo which is such a life-line for us all. Thank you for your inspiration to us all." (Philip Vickers)

* From **Argentina**: "Echo is our spiritual nourishment. May the Holy Spirit give you the strength to carry on." (Hna e Renilda)

* From **Albania**: "Fr. Angelo, we are with you; also Our Lady and her Son are with you. God has put you to the test, but we are praying for you." (Nikola & family)

* From **Verona**, Italy: "The day we read of your poor health we got together to pray. Our parish priest even exposed the Blessed Sacrament. Echo does so much good." (Antila).

The secretary advises that we cannot respond with information on voyages, nor provide anything except Echo (we are not a publisher, nor a distributor, hence we have no statues, medals, holy pictures, etc.).

My heartfelt thanks to all those who wrote with well wishes and prayers for my 50th anniversary, and I apologize if I am unable to respond personally. It means that we shall be ever more united through prayer and sacrifice.

There is still nothing certain about the future of Echo. We must continue to pray to the Father, Who is pleased to listen to those who ask in the name of His Beloved Daughter.

May St. Michael the Archangel, prince of the heavenly army, and Our Lady of the Rosary protect us from all evil and obtain for us every good.

May the blessing of Mary Queen of Peace be upon you all, helpers and readers, in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

[Don Angelo](#)

Villanova M. 1 Sept. 1999

Only in that way can you love me and accept everyone around you.