



ECHO OF MARY

Queen of peace

159

September-October 2001 - [Info](#)

Our Lady's message 25 July 2001:

Dear Children, In this time of grace, I invite you to come even closer to God through your personal prayer.

Make good use of the time of rest and let your souls and eyes rest in God. Find peace in nature and you will discover God the Creator to Whom you will be able to give thanks for all creatures; then you will find joy in your heart. Thank you for responding to my call.

Rest in God!

This is time of grace; time in which God is found. Mary continues to remind us, so we can all understand its importance and take advantage of it, and so that this immense gift of divine mercy might not be spent in vain. The entire course of our life is time of grace because for as long as we live we are given the chance to accept Love Incarnate; however, this particular moment in history is a very special time of grace.

It is true that the moment of saving grace can be bestowed upon us by Jesus Christ when our life is coming to an end, even as we breathe our last breath, but why not live all our days in communion with Him? We need to free our minds and hearts of that old suspicion which the tempter instilled in hearts, and learn to trust God and believe in His Paternal Love, and surrender ourselves to Him; and we will discover the supreme beauty of communion with God! Life in God isn't subject to death and is not perturbed by worldly events - and the more we taste this, the more we experience eternal life already on this earth.

God's call is one of joy - independent of the happy or sad events of our existence. Holiness is life in God, and this isn't reserved for just a chosen few, but is offered to us all. Only the refusal on our part to surrender to God can impede us from reaching holiness.

Our Blessed Mother never tires to call us to surrender to God, to decide for Him! Also in this message Mary is asking us to surrender to Him when she says: rest in God. The cure is the same; it's up to the sick person to decide for it.

Mary is calling us to come even closer to God through personal prayer - but personal prayer can't be a sterile string of formulas that don't involve the heart. On the contrary, it must be true conversation between God and His child so that the distance which separates the two

gets closer all the time, to the point where we disappear in Christ.

If our relationship with God expresses the relationship between Jesus and the Father, then the communion between us can't be limited to a particular moment or circumstances, but must involve our entire existence. Our every action and thought will originate naturally in God and will be accomplished in Him. And in this communion we will rest in God.

Come to me all you who labour and are burdened, and I will give you rest (Mt 11:28).

Taking rest in God allows our souls and bodies (our eyes) to discover the Creator, and then in our hearts is born praise and thanks for all creatures, and we are able to recognise His presence in nature. God's sweet presence invades our own persons and consoles us as we open our hearts to His Spirit and His Word - as Mary of Bethany did (Lk 10:39).

Return to your resting place, my soul; for the Lord has treated you kindly. He has rescued me from death, my eyes from tears and my feet from stumbling. I shall walk in the Lord's presence in the land of the living (Ps 116:7-9).

This return of the soul to God is certainly the best way to make good use of the time of rest, as our blessed Mother suggests we do in this message.

Nuccio Quattrocchi

Our Lady's message of 25 August 2001:

Dear Children, Today I invite you all to decide for holiness. May holiness, my Children, always be given first place in your thoughts and in every situation, at work and in your speech. That way you will put it into practice a little at a time; and step by step prayer and the decision for holiness will enter into your family.

Be true with yourselves, and do not bind yourselves to material things, but only to God. And don't forget, my Children, that your lives are as fleeting as a flower. Thank you for responding to my call.

Holiness above all else

Mary's invitation is clear and precise: I invite you all to decide for holiness. The Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC) teaches: "Created in a state of holiness, man was destined to be fully 'divinised' by God in glory. Seduced by the devil, he wanted to 'be like God,' but 'without God, before God, and not in accordance with God' " (398). This old attitude is still part of man's story. Jesus came into the world to bring men justification and life (Rm 5:18), and to allow man to be reconciled with God, but this possibility is, in any case, subject to our free will - we can accept it or refuse it.

The whole of man's history has been the story of our combat with the powers of evil, stretching from the very dawn of history until the last day (Gaudium et spes 37; CCC 409). In this terrible battle Mary's role is essential and decisive: I will make you enemies of each other: you and the woman, your offspring and hers. It will crush your head and you will strike its heel (Gen 3:15). The salvation of the world began when Mary brought Jesus into the world, and it is through Mary that it must be consummated (Montfort's True Devotion to Mary, 49). Mary is calling us to holiness.

All the messages given at Medjugorje are a continuous call to holiness. Prayer and fasts are

means of attaining holiness, and surrender to God is the scope of holiness. May holiness, my Children, always be given first place in your thoughts and in every situation, at work and in your speech. It is unthinkable that we could be happy with anything less. We either use all our efforts to tend towards holiness, or God is reduced to a mere idol or optional. Even religious practices can be deceiving if they benumb our souls and consciences. The aim of any religious practice is holiness; that is, the life of Christ in us.

Unless we turn to the Father in the way Jesus Christ has taught us, how can we think that we'll be acknowledged as children? If Christ does not abide in us what can we give to others? If the light of Christ does not shine in our eyes, and through our behaviour or in our speech and our daily actions, then what good has our baptism been to us? If our prayer is not Christ's prayer, then what is it worth?

Holiness is not difficult if we truly decide for it, and if we withdraw ourselves from worldly submission: be true with yourselves, and do not bind yourselves to material things, but only to God. It is not that which binds us to God that limits our freedom, but that which binds us to material things, for this distracts us from God.

Mary encourages us to reach out for holiness: you will put it into practice a little at a time; and step by step prayer and the decision for holiness will enter into your families. Mary's invitation is for everyone; only our refusal can be impediment to it. Our life is as fleeting as a flower, but if we want it to it can be sweet scent for heaven!

N.Q.

Globalization and the prophecy of poverty

Last year at Tor Vergata (Rome) during the World Youth Day meeting we heard the Pope say: Dear friends, you won't accept a world in which other human beings die of hunger; in which others never learn how to read and write, in which others remain jobless. You will defend life in every moment of its earthly development; you will make every effort to make this earth more livable for everyone. This reflection is, unfortunately, still waiting to be realized; it still awaits concrete responses, particularly when we think of the violent political protests which accompanied the last important international summit.

For years the globalization of markets has been underway. This economical development (through technological innovations such as computer sciences and internet, and financial innovations such as the stock exchange and a single currency) has made various nations economically interdependent, so that the economical choices of one nation or of a great multinational corporation affect (for good or for worse) the economy of the entire world. Globalization, in itself, is neither good nor bad, since it can generate both positive and negative aspects, indeed, both aspects are present and intertwine in a complex way. Positive aspects include a broadening of minds, the spreading of democratic values and a state of wellbeing for all, the development of poor countries and a more tolerant and multi-cultured society, and the end of dictatorships.

Negative aspects - and these are the most obvious - include a concentration of economical power in the hands of a few big multinational corporations, and the increase of the so-called scissor effect which widens the gap between rich countries (the North of the world) and poor countries (the South of the world) where the rich get richer and the poor get poorer. This

happens because wealth is founded more and more on finance (the investment of funds) and always less on the work force. A kind of scissor effect can already be seen within many rich countries if we consider the difference in money earned by a teacher and a notary, by a social worker and a financial analyst, or by a blue collar worker and a soccer player. The value of work is no longer determined by its social use, but by its capacity to produce more wealth - virtual (imaginary) wealth as in the case of the Stock Exchange, or attracting an audience. Another negative aspect is the primacy of economics over politics (that is, over the interests of the community) where economical interests determine political decisions, therefore the needs of the community are not given proper consideration.

Humanly speaking, there is no stopping globalization, so it doesn't make sense to just criticise without thinking up ways that can correct wrong situations, with concrete, not idealistic ideas.

This is why we Christians feel the need to question ourselves about what the Pope calls globalization of solidarity. Above all, this means not running away from reality (for instance through an incorrect form of spirituality), but trying to understand and reflect on the signs of the times.

Faced with the misery of millions of poor people - be they in the Third World or in our city streets - we have to demand that the political institutions and economical mechanisms of our societies use a sense of responsibility and solidarity to allow not only for economical development but also for the development of human dignity and for respect of the environment.

Apart from this, we must each ask ourselves what we can do as individuals and as families. Besides the need for macro-economical changes (of the political institutions and economic systems) a micro-economical revision is also required. This means to consider that day-to-day behaviour by which people become cogs in a complex mechanism where all unknowingly become both victims and executioners.

What we need in this highly consumeristic society is to rediscover the practice of evangelical poverty where attention is paid to the needs of the poor, and the lifestyle of all is more sober. In these days evangelical poverty comes as a prophecy and has much to say to the world. It can be practised by everyone and it brings good to everyone, as it isn't just a question of condemning the wrongs in the world, but of constructively proposing new life styles.

Tithes (giving a part of one's earnings to charity), sponsorship of orphans in missionary lands, fair trade initiatives, the boycotting of companies whose earnings come from the exploitation of others, and a lifestyle that makes distinctions between what is useful and what is superfluous, are just some of the ways which are already practised in Catholic environments, and which contribute to the creation of social justice.

Mirco Trabuio

Apparitions of Kibeho

The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith has acknowledged that the apparitions of Our Lady in Kibeho, Rwanda in 1982 and 1983 were authentic. These are the first Marian apparitions in Africa, and they are also the first ones to be officially approved by the Church

for quite a few decades (the last ones being those of Beauraing and Banneux in the 1930's). It might be a sign of the times, that after the frequent "visits" last century to western Europe (Lourdes, Fatima, La Salette, Banneux, Montichiari, etc.) she has appeared in Africa. Five centuries ago she appeared for the first time in South America (Guadalupe), which then became the continent with the greatest concentration of Christians in the world.

At Kibeho the apparitions began in November 1981 when three young local women (Alphonsine, Nathalie and Marie Claire) saw Our Lady; She appeared to them with the name "Nyina wa Jambo" (Mother of the Word). The local bishop, Mons. Jean Gahamanyi, kept a watchful eye on the events from the beginning, and on noticing the phenomenon of the proliferation of alleged visionaries in the region of Kibeho and in the rest of the country, he set up two study commissions in April 1982.

In 1988, it became clear that many were the good fruits which the apparitions were bearing, and so public devotion at Kibeho was approved. The name given to the Marian Shrine at Kibeho is "Shrine of Our Lady of Sorrows."

There are some similarities in the apparitions of Medjugorje and of Kibeho, in that both began in the same year (June 1981 for Medjugorje, November 1981 for Kibeho), and Our Lady appeared to a group of young people in both countries, and some years after the beginning of the apparitions both former Yugoslavia and Rwanda were struck by ethnic conflicts. The fundamental message of Kibeho, like that of Medjugorje, is a call to conversion, prayer and fasts.

We of Echo unite our prayer to that of Mons. Bigirumwami. When the apparitions began he expressed his desire that Kibeho might become a centre of prayer and conversion, and a fount of blessings for the entire African Continent.

M.T.

* China, Indonesia, Sudan, Nigeria and Turkmenistan are the countries where religious freedom is least respected. This is what emerges from the annual report by Aid to the Suffering Church presented in Rome last June. The severest cases are in China where repression of religious groups is the cruelest.

* Canadian Missionary killed in Jamaica. Jesuit priest, Martin Royackerzs was involved in a project for agricultural development of the local area. He fell victim to conflicts between armed bands from opposing political factions who have killed 543 people since the beginning of the year; of these 3 were priests.

The Queen stands at your right hand, arrayed in gold

Thus the Church sings today, as she admires the miraculous event of the Assumption into Heaven of the Virgin Mary. This solemnity, set in the middle of summer, is a favourable occasion for meditating on the realities that go beyond earthly life. Contemplating Our Lady in heavenly glory, we understand better that our everyday commitments and efforts must not completely absorb us, because the horizons of life are not limited to the earth. In Her we see the complete fulfilment of what the Heavenly Father promised to those who faithfully serve Him, spurring their faithfulness, if necessary, even to the supreme gift of their lives.

John Paul II greeted the Blessed Virgin Assumed into Heaven on her feast day, 15 August, and on this occasion he also recalled the 60th anniversary of the death of St. Maximilian Mary Kolbe, priest and martyr from Poland, who offered his life in exchange for that of a fellow prisoner, a father of a family, in the concentration camp at Auschwitz. After

indescribable sufferings, he was finished off with an injection of poisonous acid and, the next day, his corpse was burned in the crematorium ovens.

The Pope continues: His extraordinarily generous gesture can be symbolically considered a "gift to the family" whose fundamental mission in the Church and in society he understood well. May the memory of this martyr of charity help believers to follow Christ and His Gospel without hesitation or compromise. St. Maximilian, a devoted son of the Virgin Mary, encouraged families and youth in particular to find in the Mother of God a support in difficult times and a sure guide to holiness.

Knight of the Immaculata

He would call Our Lady by the sweetest of names to express his deep love for Mary Immaculate to whom he dedicated his life and all his apostolic activities. He sought to combat religious indifference and conquer all souls for Christ through Mary.

Raymond Kolbe was born in Poland in 1894, and despite his special talent for mathematics and physics and his great interest in astronomy and the prospects for space flight, he desired becoming a priest. In 1910 he was invested in the Franciscan habit and took the name of Maximilian Mary. He was ordained a priest in 1918, and although he was supremely intelligent, he had no trouble recognizing the supremacy of faith over reason.

When he was in Rome studying, he happened to see a procession by freemasons who were proclaiming the victory of Satan over the Church: "Satan must reign in the Vatican and the Pope become his servant." This convinced him that the only way to follow was for Christians to place themselves at the service of Mary Immaculate whose task it was to crush the devil's head. For this purpose he founded the Knights of the Immaculata. The programme for the Knights was simple: "To do all you can for the conversion of sinners, heretics, schismatics and so on, above all the Masons, and for the sanctification of all persons under the sponsorship of the Blessed Virgin Mary." (From St. Maximilian's own writings contained in the Directives, ed. note.) Furthermore, each member wears the Miraculous Medal and daily prays the simple prayer inscribed on it.

The Knights, also known as the Militia of the Immaculata (MI's), are present all over the world. It was Fr. Kolbe's desire that his Knights be in the fields of education and publishing, and the arts and sciences: "the Militia should be everywhere, that all might be healed, all strengthened and all developed, through the intercession of Mary Immaculate, for the greater glory of God, and for the good of the community."

How could such an enormous project be realized? Auditoriums grew too small, and the need for a printed form of communication became obvious. The Knight of the Immaculata went into print, and soon the brothers were given land and they bought presses; hence the first City of the Immaculata (40 km from Warsaw) came into being. Its publishing apostolate was dedicated to spreading the glory of God and His Immaculate Mother. About one thousand religious lived in the city, and though it was required of them to be very poor, only the best machinery available on the market was good for the apostolate. Fr. Kolbe himself said: "The best inventions are meant to serve her most of all...", and: "the vehicle of the missionaries should be the latest model airplane." In the new "city" hundreds of thousands of copies of

eight publications were printed. "We must inundate the earth with Christian and Marian publications, in all possible languages, in every part of the world," said Fr. Kolbe, "and wrap the world in bandages of paper bearing words of life so that it might find the joy of living." Full of initiatives and energy, and a good organizer, his projects took shape with the help of Providence, including a "city" also in far away Japan (early 1930's). Yet, it wasn't for these virtues that he made the ranks of the saints. With the outbreak of World War II his publishing apostolate became the target for many attacks, and Fr. Kolbe was arrested on numerous occasions. His 'city' became a shelter for many: Jews and Christians alike.

"I am going to serve the Immaculata in another workfield," he told his friends when he was arrested and sent to Auschwitz in May 1941. Priests were singled out for exceptionally cruel treatment and made to work much more than other prisoners; and because Fr. Kolbe openly admitted to being a Catholic priest, he was made to suffer more, including being beaten, and given the dirtiest and heaviest work; but his union with the Virgin's Heart gave him the necessary strength to bear it all.

After some time spent in the infirmary (besides the inhuman treatment, he also suffered a lung inflammation) he recovered well enough to be transferred to Block 14 and assigned to farm labour. But one night in July, one of the prisoners was missing; and at Auschwitz this meant that for one escapee ten would be sent to the starvation bunker. Of the ten chosen, one - a Polish sergeant - cried out: "What will be of my family?!" The Catholic Priest from Poland was moved, and offered to die in his place. The miracle is that his sacrifice was accepted, and the sergeant's life spared!

Nazism aimed at destroying all types of human solidarity; and a concentration camp was to demonstrate that the "ethics of brotherhood" was based on cowardice, that true ethics was a question of race, and that the inferior races were not even human. With Fr. Kolbe's sacrifice death is given new value through his voluntary offering for the sake of another person.

The long agony became a privileged occasion to give glory to God. Stripped of all their clothes and left to die in the dark cell, they were given no more water or food. Instead of lamenting the prisoners could be heard praying and singing Marian hymns, to the amazement of all, including the guards.

At the end of two weeks only he and another three were still alive. The bunker was needed for more victims, and on the eve of the Assumption - one of the Marian feasts he loved most - they were given a lethal dose of carbolic acid. A guard witnessed: "When I opened the door he (Fr. Kolbe) was no longer alive, but it looked as though he was. He was still resting against the wall and his face was radiant in an unusual way. His eyes were open and his gaze fixed - as though he were in ecstasy. I will never forget it."

There is no doubt that St. Maximilian Kolbe's sacrifice and self-offering were heroic acts! His was not a gesture guided by impulse, and he was not the type of person who accepted his sort with resignation. Fr. Kolbe offered his life and accepted to die after having spent all his energies for the building of a new world. His martyrdom sprang from heroic virtues habitually practised.

Stefania Consoli

* Capital punishment abolished in Cile. The news was announced by Arch-bishop Ossa who says it is "an important step towards the protection of the human person."

* "Words cannot describe the experience of returning to reality after conversing with Our Lady every day for 5-10 minutes," said visionary Ivan, in an interview for a Croatian paper. "At times I need several hours after the apparition 'to come back down to earth.' Our Lady is generally very happy, but she becomes so sad when contemplating young people on drugs, and families breaking up, and the many difficulties of today's world. Our Lady stresses the need to work so these situations are healed.

"Return to the primitive fervour" Contemplate God's love in Creation

In numerous messages Mary has called us to "give glory to God the Creator in the colours of nature," for our most Merciful Father who "speaks to us of His beauty through the smallest of flowers, and of the depth of His Love with which He created us" (25 Aug. 1999).

The Gospel too invites us to turn our gaze to the great book of Creation to see the many signs of God's Love which tell of His glory even through the most humble of creatures, such as the "lilies of the field" (Mt. 6:28), which reflect the beauty of the Creator much more than the rich robes of an earthly king. The robes of the latter are man-made, and the divine love in these was radically tarnished by the original sin. It is true that all creatures reflect the Love of God, One and Triune, who "gives men an enduring witness to Himself in created realities" (Dogm. Constit., Dei Verbum, 3). For: "God created the world to show forth and communicate his glory" (CCC 319).

From the Queen of Peace's Immaculate Heart an eternal song is lifted up to God and glorifies Him. The Father pours into her Heart the grace and truth which gushes forth into the world through the mystery of Creation. "Dear Children, Today I invite you to go out amidst nature, because there you will encounter God the Creator... I invite you to thank God for everything He gives you. In thanking Him, you will discover the Most High and all the good which surrounds you..." (Message 25 Oct. 1995).

Our Lady invites us to glorify the Father's Love by contemplating Creation with sentiments of filial gratitude and thus be able to fully accept the blessing of heavenly joy which flows through Mary's Immaculate Heart. This will make us able to see the glory of the Trinitarian Love in all creatures: "My Children, rejoice for everything you have. Then, in your lives, you will be able to give thanks for everything and discover God in everything, even in the smallest flower." (25 April 1989).

Our blessed Mother constantly reminds us that God speaks to His children through nature, ever calling them to accept the truth and salvation: "...God desires saving you; He sends you messages through people, through nature, and through many other things to help you comprehend that you must change direction in your lives..." (25 March '90). "My Children, you seek signs and messages, but you can't see how God, with the rising of the sun each morning, calls you to convert and to return to the journey of truth and salvation" (25 September 1998).

Our Lady invites us to see in nature the reflection of the original perfection which belonged to our relationship with God the Creator and draw from it light and inspiration for our journey to holiness: "Dear Children, I invite you to open yourselves to God. See how nature flourishes once again, giving life and fruits? In the same way I invite you to life with God

and to total surrender to Him" (25 May 1989). "Dear Children, Today I invite you to awaken your hearts to love. Observe nature and see how it is awakening. This will help you to open your hearts to the love of God the Creator" (25 April '93).

In her messages, Mary - like Jesus in the Gospels - often uses vivid images from the realm of nature to speak of God's love for us, from which we see the flame of celestial love pervading Her Immaculate Heart as she contemplates the beauty of divine Love in creation. "I would like you to be a flower which blossoms at Christmas for Jesus; a flower which does not cease to blossom when Christmas is over" (21 Dec. '84, through Jelena). "May the wheat fields speak to you of God's mercy for all creatures" (25 Aug. '99).

Our Blessed Mother, it seems, has a preference for flowers, as these, with their many forms and colours and dazzling beauty reflect the harmony, beauty and love of God. Mary has often asked us to be flowers which she can offer to God: flowers scented with virtues, flowers opened out to God's saving warmth and to the fullness of life radiating from the sun of grace: the Most Merciful Father: "Dear Children, Today I wish to tell you to open your hearts to God just as the spring flowers crave for the sun" (31 Jan. '85). "My Childen, I wish for you to be a wonderful bouquet of flowers for God on All Saints Day" (25 Oct. '94). "My Children, I wish to make of you a beautiful bouquet of flowers, prepared for all eternity..." (25 July '95).

Nature is permeated with God's Love; through its soothing balm God wants to heal man's wounded and restless souls, and fill them with peace. For this reason also in her latest message Mary urges us to encounter the Father's Face through the living experience of divine love in Creation: "Find peace in nature and you will discover God the Creator to Whom you will be able to give thanks for all creatures; then you will find joy in your heart" (25 July 2001).

So that it be a privileged means through which God's pure love can flow onto the world, all of Creation is radically involved in the great cosmic battle between Light and the powers of darkness which would like to destroy everything that expresses the life and glory of God. In fact, the Apostle reminds us that: "the entire Creation is groaning in one great act of giving birth ... we also groan within ourselves as we wait for the redemption of our bodies" (Rm 8:22-23).

Mary doesn't hesitate to unmask Satan's real intentions. Through his numerous followers he wants to destroy the planet's environment and equilibrium: "Satan is strong and wants to destroy not only human life, but nature too and the plant on which you live. Therefore, my dear Children, pray so that through prayer you are protected with God's blessing of peace" (25 January 1991).

This is why the Queen of Peace calls us to don the regal dignity of children who do not limit themselves to accepting and enjoying the grace and blessing freely bestowed on the world by the Father, but are ever ready to place themselves in His hands to be active and effective instruments of salvation for the sake of their brothers and sisters all over the world and for all Creation.

Might she, our Blessed Mother, obtain for us the gift of being able to respond to this call, and that our response be sincere and profound. And might the flame of love burning in Mary's Immaculate Heart destroy our misery and divisions which make our hearts dull, impeding the light of the Lamb to shine on the new Creation.

Giuseppe Ferraro

Solidarity

Artificial limb for Edina; but who can give her a house?

North of Jevesinje, a Serb city in Bosnia (about 41 km from Mostar), lie 12 Muslim villages. The population was decimated by the war, and the survivors became refugees. The poor homes of these people - hard working and pacific people - were completely destroyed because of ethnic hatred. Two years ago the former inhabitants were allowed to return to their homes, and with the help of some European organizations who provide building material, they are slowly building their homes up again. The families that have returned are of a certain age; there are no young families with children because there still aren't any schools. A year ago when we asked how we could help they requested especially seed and farming tools.

Last April I was taken to visit a family from here which still lives in Mostar as refugees. They live in very poor conditions, in little more than two small rooms. The eldest daughter, Edina is 29 years old. Six months ago when she went back to the village to see if something could be done of what was left of their home a mine in the street exploded, and she lost a leg. It wasn't an old mine that had been forgotten, but one that had been put there recently, five years after the war had finished!

I promised I would try and help. Now I am happy to say that with just a little more than 3 million lire we were able to arrange an artificial limb which she is now wearing, enabling her to walk, and giving her the possibility of finding a job. Edina is happy and needless to say very grateful.

Next pilgrimages of charity: end September and end October.

Our address is:

Alberto Bonifacio, Centro Informazioni Medjugorje, Via S. Alessandro 26, I-23855 Pescate (LC). Phone Italy 0341-368487, fax 0341 368587

News from the blessed land

Medjugorje Youth Festival

Grow with Mary in Wisdom and Love

"To love and be loved is man's foremost and greatest desire. There is not even any need to say how important it is to be loved and accepted by one's family, which is the school of life. Lack of love and acceptance within a family causes deep wounds. It is largely known that from conception a baby is able to perceive whether or not he has been accepted with love. Hearts which are open to love will first show, then demonstrate one's love within the family. Love will save the family from disorder and hatred, and restore to it the spirit of prayer.

Through prayer God gives us the strength to love one another."

We like this introduction to our comment on the 12th edition of the Youth Festival held in Medjugorje from 31 July to 6 August last. These words were said on a different occasion by Fr. Slavko. It was his idea to start the youth festivals. Fr. Slavko's words help us understand the importance of love in our lives and of the family as a privileged place where love is born, is able to grow and bear fruit.

During the course of the festival the young people were asked to reflect on the various aspects of these themes, and to pray every day for a particular intention: for fathers, mothers, children, siblings... The intention was backed up by Mary's messages: "... above all love your families" (6 June 1985), "... discover love in your hearts and your families" (25 Nov. 1995). Mary understands how important it is for us to comprehend her invitation to love and to participate in the process of love which is awakened. That is why she repeats that she loves us with her motherly love. Motherly love is particularly active and is the necessary condition for the creation of new life. Without this love life cannot begin or survive.

Love is also fount of peace... This year was declared Year of Dialogue. In his message for the world day of peace entitled: "Dialogue between Cultures for a Civilization of Love and Peace," the Holy Father invited the whole world to take "concrete steps to promote peace and comprehension among peoples." In particular, the Pope says to the young people whom he calls "humanity's future" and "living stones in the building of the civilization of love": "I treasure in my heart the memory of the emotional and hope-filled meetings which we had during the World Youth Day in Rome. Your participation was joyous, sincere and reassuring. The Lord gave me the grace of contemplating - through the multicoloured mosaic of your different languages, cultures, customs and ways of thinking - the miracle of the universality of the Church, of her catholicity, of her unity. Through you I was able to admire the marvellous coming together of diversity in the unity of the same faith, the same hope, the same love."

The same thing can be said of the Medjugorje festival, where 10,000 young people from five continents crowded the esplanade behind the church. Simultaneous translations were offered to them in 15 different languages, but in truth, 22 different languages were being spoken during the festival. It seems that the Pope's words were directed precisely to these young people: "Dear young people of every language and culture, a high and exhilarating task awaits you: that of becoming men and women capable of solidarity, peace and love of life, with respect for everyone. Become craftsmen of a new humanity, where brothers and sisters - members of all the same family - are able at last to live in peace."

Our Lady teaches that if we want to build a new world, then everyone must cooperate: families, groups, the entire Church and the whole world. We read specifically in the message of 6 June 1985: "Dear Children, soon people from all nations will be coming to this parish. Now I invite you to love: first of all, love your family members, and then you will be able to love all those who come here."

Everything Our Lady says, she says in the Name of God, as was once pointed out by Padre Slavko. Mary is the prophet and the queen of prophets, and a prophet is one who speaks in the name of God. So we can say that the words of the prophets don't mainly concern future events, but are mainly the expression of God's will for us. So that every mother and father are above all prophets who make known to their children God's will, and His love and mercy, and His plans for them and the world. To Mary God entrusted those plans which can

be fulfilled only with our collaboration: "With your prayer you have helped my plans to be realized. Continue to pray so that these plans might be fully realized" (message of 27 September 1984).

On the high altar many "witnesses of love" - priests, religious, young people, the visionaries - told how the encounter with God's Love changed their lives and how it continues to transform them and those they meet. In particular, Sr. Elvira from the Comunità Cenacolo urged the young people to help each other understand that true love is love which urges you to offer yourself for others.

Called to be light

How does a young person feel when he or she is called to discover God's love? We asked a member of the Beatitudes Community, Br. Jean Uriel Frey, to tell us about his conversion which began in Medjugorje, and about the way in which he uses his "treasure" to help others.

My name is Jean Uriel. I'm Swiss. I was born in Lucerne, in the German canton, 32 years ago. I first heard of Medjugorje 12 years ago when my older brother asked me to come here with him on pilgrimage. I agreed to come without knowing anything about the place. I clearly remember, as though it were yesterday, that on my very first day here I could feel the grace of God in me. At a certain point I was behind the church on my own; and it was then and there that I met God's love and immense mercy. I cried all the tears I possibly could - out of regret and sorrow, but also out of gratitude for the Father who loved me for what I was.

That moment - that experience - is branded in my heart forever. Not immediately, but little by little, the Lord was able to work on my heart. I gradually discovered the role of the Blessed Virgin in the Church and in my life. I enrolled in Her school in search of my vocation. Some years later I felt called to the priesthood and religious life in the Beatitudes Community where I have now lived for 7 years.

I have been to Medjugorje a number of times. Right now I am here with a group of 170 young people from France, including a few from Germany and Italy. We came for the Youth Festival. The thing that strikes me immediately each time I come here is the sensation of being enveloped by Our Lady's presence. When I approach the church and see the young people praying around the rotunda I have the impression that they are wrapped in Mary's mantle, and that all are given the grace of feeling that they are God's children.

Q. What do young people look for in Medjugorje, and what do they find?

Deep down, young people seek God, even if they don't say so. Many have told me that they came by chance without knowing why they came, but I think they do desire finding something that can explain the meaning of their life; it's just that they don't know what to call this "something". I think the majority of young people become certain in Medjugorje that God deeply loves them just the way they are...

At the same time they discover that this Father is full of goodness and love and that He has also given them a Mother to help them in their faith journey. In Medjugorje, they also find a Church which is close to them, a living and fraternal Church. At the Youth Festival young

people breathe in the same atmosphere of the World Youth Day which is characterized by so much diversity - people from all over the world, and different types of prayer groups, and all of these are linked by the same grace, the same faith and the same certainty of being children of God and of the Blessed Virgin.

Q. How do young people like to pray?

I am very surprised, because this year I have realized that the prayer, particularly in this youth festival, is marked by great simplicity and openness. I am happy to see how the organizers welcome different types of preachers, and how the preachers make up a single, harmonious body, without distinctions and without competition. There is a sense of great freedom and people are helped through song and prayer which involves the whole body, and through gestures. Young people respond well to this because it enables them to express in a natural way their inner feelings.

Generally speaking, though, it isn't easy to get young people to sing when these are still discovering the Church. For example, some weeks ago I was at a meeting in France; there were 400 young people attending. On that occasion it took a couple of days to get them to join in the praise of God with songs and gestures. Here in Medjugorje, though, I got the impression on the very first day that it is easy for everyone to follow this way of praying. It is a wonderful gift by God that everyone here should be able to experience this type of spiritual infancy.

Q. What do you tell young people who feel the call to be closer to God? How do you help them understand their vocation?

I have often noticed how here in Medjugorje young people are touched by profound experiences for which they are usually not prepared. I have met many, including a young girl named Veronique who came after being invited by a cousin of hers, and she didn't even know why she came. We were travelling on the same bus and she was very surprised. Everything seemed strange to her and she couldn't understand what we were doing. But when we arrived she too was immediately captured by grace and she discovered the beauty and joy of believing. In just a few days she has taken giant steps in the faith. Most frequently young people ask: what will happen after, once we are back home?

Our advice is to continue every day with a brief moment of personal prayer, and if possible to join a prayer group where it is easier to share experiences. After all, this is what Our Lady recommends in her messages. She has given us five instruments, but it isn't always easy for young people to fast. Being in a small prayer group can help them experience the grace received in Medjugorje so that little by little it can penetrate the roots of their lives and transform them.

I would like to add that our pilgrimage had a theme. It was: "Under the Holy Spirit's guidance" (cf. Gal 5:16). I see that here in Medjugorje Christian living is made easy. Young people say they find it is very committing, and we know ourselves that it is not always easy to follow Christ in our daily lives and with everything that the world proposes, but we also know that through Mary everything is made easier. Truly, this Mother takes us by the hand and helps us follow Christ. She, who is full of the Holy Spirit, helps us do everything with the strength of the Holy Spirit and not with our own strength.

Q. With charismatic prayer there is a lot of praising and expressions of joy. How do you talk to young people about the cross? How does your spirituality explain suffering as an element of co-redemption and salvation?

In our Community the Cross has a special place. In Medjugorje the most obvious aspect of the Festival is the joy and spirit of fraternity, but it is also true that we still haven't climbed Cross mountain. We will do that together with everyone else for the conclusive Mass. However, from past experience I know that pilgrims say how they are particularly moved when they do the Way of the Cross up Mount Krizevac, even if the climb itself is not easy. This for me is proof that Mary leads the faithful to Christ. As I said, I met Jesus and His love 12 years ago and at the time it was difficult for me to understand Mary's place in it all; I needed time. For me, her role is in the Church, but her only desire is to lead us to her Son and into the Father's embrace. So it doesn't surprise me to see many young people here discovering Christ's love in the Way of the Cross, because it was in His death on the Cross that God showed us how much He loved us.

Q. You are one of four children, and all four of you are consecrated to God..

God's works are never sensational. Each of us (myself, my two brothers and sister) was called to the religious life, but it happened in such a natural way. I have to admit that when people find out about it, they think it rather peculiar; some are even shocked, but each of us have our own story to tell. The Lord's ways are very gentle. He called us to different Communities - we all wear different "colours." These things can't happen from one day to the next; the Grace of God was at work in each of our hearts.

And I thank Him for this great gift. For me personally it is an immense joy, as I'm sure it is for my brothers and sister. I also thank God for our parents. They are ordinary people, but the extraordinary thing is that they were able to accept God's will for their children and didn't impede them from following their vocations.

Q. Is there something else you'd like to tell us?

I would like to invite everyone to enrol in Mary's school; to listen to what she wants to tell us. Today, the 5th August, here in Medjugorje, we celebrate her birthday (according to what she herself revealed in a message - ed. note), and I think that the greatest joy a mother could experience is to know that her children are serene. The only desire of the Blessed Virgin is for us to be happy. So we can experience this happiness of being God's children, we need to let ourselves be guided by her. She will give us the happiness that comes from knowing that Christ is our Saviour.

I would like to invite all young people to Medjugorje. They should come particularly during the youth festival. And to grown-ups I would like to say: offer a pilgrimage to Medjugorje as a Christmas or birthday gift, just as my big brother did for me the first time I came. I might not have come otherwise..

I invite you then to be creative and to promote these trips, to allow other young people to experience the joy of being loved by the Queen of Peace.

Transfigured by Love

The full moon shone brightly; its haunting white light on the stones of Krizevac illuminated

the way for the thousands of young people climbing the mountain of the Cross which would soon become mount Tabor. Up they went; praying, mindful of each other, till each found a place. At dawn Holy Mass would be celebrated beneath the enormous concrete cross overlooking Medjugorje. The prayer vigil, which began with the climb up the mountain at 3 am, marked the start of the last day of the Youth Festival.

Despite a pinch of regret for its imminent conclusion, hearts abounded with joy and gratitude for all the good received during these special days of August.

The intense aroma of wild herbs growing amongst the rocks of Krizevac - sage, thyme, mint and oregano - evoked the old memory of scented ointment used by the adulteress to anoint Christ's feet (cf. Jn 12). Here at the foot of the cross, Mary's youth, with their catching enthusiasm and innate capacity to let themselves be involved and guided by grace, were balm for Christ's body: that Mystical Body called the Church, so often wounded by the indifferent and lukewarm attitudes of those who call themselves Christians yet give so little of their time and their lives to their Lord!

Yes, these young people were aware of being vital members of Christ's Body. As they approach His heart they draw from it the love which is transmitted to others with spontaneity and sincerity in a smile, a gesture, or a gaze. Free as they are of conventions, they are moved exclusively by the desire to be authentic.

They come in search of their Head: Jesus, for He alone is able to accept them for what they are: fragile, weak, uncertain and fearful. The world, instead, would like to see these same young people strong, sure of selves and aggressive so that they can conquer their own little part of power in a society which is ever more individualistic and consumeristic, where even sentiments and one's own dignity become objects of consumerism. And in this jungle, Jesus comes to offer authentic freedom. In Him one feels free, and is able to discover one's true self and His true face. In Him one finds peace which lasts forever.

In Medjugorje, however, besides the Son there is also the Mother, present in a special way. It is She who welcomes them, taking them into her embrace and showing them the way to find the Emmanuel, the God with us. So it wasn't strange to see long lines of young people waiting to confess, or the joyful anxiety stamped on their faces as they waited to receive the Eucharist, or the looks of profound recollection as they knelt in adoration before the most blessed Sacrament. At Medjugorje Mary indicates the way of the sacraments, of God's Word, of sacrifice - the same way indicated by the Teacher - and the young people follow her.

The blazing sun burnt down on everything, but its heat could not melt the desire in hearts to put up with it all for the sake of being there; it was with this same spontaneity that Mary's young people faced every sacrifice, for in this acceptance things are made easier.

As the way to the cross got steeper it made the body ache; but the sound of the crowd singing and praying on the top made the going easier, and the desire to live those last moments of Grace which had invaded Medjugorje during the Festival grew deeper. In fact, the presence of Grace was so powerful it was almost tangible, even intoxicating; thanks also to Mary's young people who knew how to open their hearts to God and let Him fill them with His love. God is overpowered by a heart which opens unconditionally to Him; it attracts His love as though it were a magnet; and God cannot withhold Himself from a person who is not ashamed to express his thirst and his desire for the Father, Infinite and Eternal God.

And Mary's youth received the mandate entrusted to them by the Holy Father in preparation

for the next World Youth Day in Canada: "Be salt and light of the earth!"

As the eastern sky grew lighter with the coming dawn, sleepy faces shone with the joy and the satisfaction of being there on their very own "Mount Tabor": transfigured by the love of Jesus. Stefania Consoli

* "There is nothing more beautiful or more precious than the presence of the Mother of God amidst us," said Vicka as she commented on these years spent with Our Lady. "We really don't understand how many graces are given us because of her presence on the earth. As far as I'm concerned, the most important thing is to serve her, because Our Lady chose me amongst millions of other people; and I will never cease to thank her and spread her message with love.

Every day the Blessed Virgin renews in us love and hope and the strength to face everything. She comes for just a few minutes, but her presence is so alive, so strong in our hearts that we are totally taken. She talks with us, she moves, laughs, she remembers us on our birthdays... Her presence is physical, not just spiritual. We asked her why she was so beautiful, and she replied: "I am beautiful because I love. You, too, begin to love to be beautiful. But don't think that beauty comes from without; no, it comes from within your heart."

* Seminar for Priests - Medjugorje 2-7 July last. At this VI international meeting there were 243 priests from 36 different countries to meditate on the theme: "Priest, Servant of Divine Mercy." In the conclusive declaration the priests wrote: "We implore the Lord to give us the experience of forgiveness of our sins, so that we may give forgiveness to others." They also wrote to the Holy Father: "In Medjugorje we prayed for you. We now express our loyalty to you and our availability to serving the Church. May Mary, the Queen of Peace and Mother of Mercy, smile on you today. God bless you Holy Father!"

At the Festival Jelena told the young people about her journey of faith and prayer at Mary's school. Marijana (the other locutionist) was with her as if to say that Our Lady had chosen both of them as complementary instruments for the good of the prayer group and its members. To the group Our Lady once said: "I love this prayer group very much. All I want is that it open its heart and surrender completely to me, that it prays and fights Satan."

"As a child I prayed a lot..."

by Jelena Vasilj

I was ten years old when something new began within me; it was a gift from God which made it possible for me to inwardly hear and see Our Lady and Jesus. Perhaps not everyone knows that our souls are able to see and hear and that God communicates with our souls through these senses. God is a mystery for our physical senses, but He reveals Himself to all those who pray and believe. As a child I prayed a lot. Now my mother tells me that I was better when I was little; so that I must seek God now with that same fervour, otherwise I run the risk of forgetting Him.

In the gift I received there was nothing new or strange; there are many "spiritual" people in the history of the church who've had this same gift. For example, St. Terese of Avila, and St.

John of the Cross who called this gift "inspired theology." The fact that I too have received this gift doesn't mean I belong to a particular category of people. To the contrary; doctors are for ailing people, but these have to go to the doctor, they have to know that they are sick. So, as I said, this experience wasn't for me alone, but for the entire prayer group in Medjugorje which was under Our Lady's guidance. The Blessed Virgin asked these young people of the parish to get together and remain at her complete disposal for four years. I must say that Our Lady was very demanding, dictating precise conditions for us to follow for the sake of the group. St. Augustine said: "give me a heart that loves, and he will understand me..." We really did love Our Lady, and for this reason we trusted her, even if she asked so much of us - for example, not to waste time in front of the television, and to give up various vices. I remember when she even told us not to worry about our clothes, as we would be given everything.

Our Lady asked for inner freedom, explaining that the main reason for our spiritual closure is our concern for worldly things. Jesus also teaches that there are some who receive the Good Word (the seed) with joy but lose it because it is suffocated by concern for worldly things. The seed, you see, has already been sown, and if we don't know how to close our heart to the attacks of the devil, and jealously protect the purity and peace it contains, then it is quickly lost.

We can think of ourselves as being the earth which is opened up by the plough so the seed can fall into it, and then closed again by the plough so the seed can produce fruit. This means that we must open our hearts to God, and listen to His word; but when words of egoism come by our way, we should close our ears.

We spent many hours together in prayer; we went to Mass together, and to prayer vigils, and climbed Krizevac together. Our Lady asked us dedicate three hours every day to prayer, including Holy Mass.

Our Lady was with us every day. Marijana would turn inward and pray and receive the message for the group. Personally, I would often "hear" the voice during the prayer said together with the group. What did she teach us? To pray, to pray with the heart; to pray sincerely and always. She taught us that prayer is ardent desire of God, because God is our everything. We weren't given new ways of praying; for it is clear that prayer is what makes us new. She didn't teach us to pray so we could receive peace or find solutions to our problems; but she taught us to change within ourselves. For this reason, prayer is not only an experience that ends when the joy of praying ends.

Prayer is a journey, it is often an arduous journey. The first step is to be sincere with God. Our Lady told us that the fact that a prayer is answered or not depends on the person's sincerity. When we begin to pray - and this is at every Mass - we ought to acknowledge our own weaknesses. We turn to Him because we are little, and because we know God is great, and that He is much greater than our weaknesses. So acknowledging our littleness before God is not enough, but must be accompanied by the acknowledgement and trust in God's might and merciful love. Then the Lord can mend our wounds with His word and His body. The Word of God is a treasure which we must hold within our hearts. It nourishes and creates us from within. It must fill our souls, our senses, our memory; it must become "ours." We should often examine ourselves to see which words live in us, for often they are just our words. Do we know how to say no to negative thoughts, to evil; or do we close ourselves up in a monologue? Are we united to Jesus in our thoughts, or do we prefer our own thoughts? God remains in our heart only if His Word can teach us to listen to His voice.

Our Lady taught us that when we know how to listen we have to learn how to ask. The Holy Scriptures teach us to ask for and to seek, in particular, God's will.

Lastly, and most importantly, she taught us to give thanks. Our every encounter with God must become occasion to give thanks. Giving thanks is a sign of spiritual maturity; it means our spiritual vision is healing, that the Gospel is already rooted in our hearts, that we comprehend that this hot sun won't shine tomorrow because it's shining today, but because He wants it and allows it to shine. So Our Lady taught us to bless the Lord and to never forget that His works are good, and greater than any evil we might encounter.

As you see, I'm not a child anymore so I don't talk or comprehend the way a child would. I clearly see the treasure which Our Lady gave us. She gives it also today to us all. Gratitude and inner security is born in our hearts when we become aware of this, for it means to have the wisdom to know that you've discovered God's kingdom and that it really is worth-while selling all to buy this precious pearl. Truly, you shouldn't wait to be old to discover this mystery of divine life. The best time to give yourself to Jesus is precisely when you are young. Our Lady confirms this by choosing young people and children.

We have a saying here that goes like this: "ask your old-age what your youth did," and I add: not only your old-age, but your eternity will depend on your young days. We can't be like some who face life's problems on their own. We have to look beyond, in the knowledge that our "completion" is not found on the earth. It is good, then, if today you feel disappointed, if you've discovered that you can't count on yourself or on others. It's a sign that you're on the right road. Our God is a jealous God, and wants to be part of your life. Trust in the Lord and know that He guides us with His providence. Be joyful because He is greater than us, and because His wisdom is greater than ours. Rejoice because our God, in His tenderness, knows better than us how fragile we are!

Our Lady often speaks to us about time of grace. I think that our youthfulness is this time of grace because God gives us many gifts, especially the gift of love. A young person knows what love is, and he desires it; in fact, his friends mean so much to him. A young person accepts love without any difficulty; that is why it is wonderful to be young, but it is also risky because the world can change a young heart. When that happens the heart is wounded, but a heart can also heal. St. Augustine says: "tell me what you love and I'll tell you who you are." We really must ask ourselves where we've put our love, and where it's leading us. We can end up getting old before our time. With Jesus, you've got to have the courage to get up after a fall - knowing that He'll always love you.

We can do it; we weren't made to be happy with the world's left-overs. We were created for heroic acts. So we can't let ourselves be suffocated by the burden of the past. If solitude and suffering are part of the journey, we must remember that Jesus gives us food for the journey: His body in the Eucharist; and medicine for when we are wounded: confession; and He gives us strength: through being united to Him with our prayer with the family and friends. But Jesus must be central in our lives, otherwise everything will fall in around us.

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Eastern youth called to evangelize the West!

It may seem paradoxical that the sons and daughters of countries recently freed from the grasps of Communism and atheism, should be called to evangelize the west. Yet, Fr. Daniel Ange - French priest and founder of the "Youth - Light" Community - put great emphasis on the need for them to become missionaries in traditionally Catholic countries of the old continent where new generations are being denied the faith. In Medjugorje young people from eastern countries were the most numerous. Amongst them was a large group from Russia, finally able to come to Medjugorje and draw from the grace which Our Lady reserves for her children.

In Fatima, the Blessed Virgin asked for the Consecration of Russia to Her Immaculate Heart, knowing that this was the only means to open the way for the faith in a country with deep religious roots. "Our Lady can be compared to a river which flows over a land of changing colours. The water is the same, but its colour changes as it reflects the colour of the riverbed," explained padre Daniel Ange. In Russia, the Mother of God takes on hues which are both deep and original because of the great love this people has always had for her, particularly amongst the Orthodox faithful.

Medjugorje is everything now...

At the festival we interviewed a young woman from Moscow to know what it means to rediscover faith and hope in the Lord.

After the initial reawakening of my faith, I prayed exclusively to Jesus Christ. I didn't even think of praying to His Mother. Two years ago I was in Caucasia and while there I discovered that Our Lady would be pleased if I prayed to her too. So when I returned to Moscow I joined a Rosary prayer group. I started praying the Rosary regularly and I was rewarded with my first trip to Medjugorje.

Our pilgrimage included spiritual exercises with Fr. Jozo. I had already been to a similar type of meeting, but this was completely different. In a straightforward manner he taught us the meaning of Holy Mass and how to open our hearts to God. It was fantastic. I discovered the Bible and began to read it every day. I also began praying the three Rosaries every day, which was something really new for me! Now I couldn't live without it. Moscow is still without peace, but when I pray the Rosary I experience peace penetrating my heart. Sadly, there aren't a lot of young people in our group, because those with faith have no money, and those with money have no faith. We need to pray so everyone is able to come here.

Q. What does Medjugorje mean to you, and what would you like to give to others?

Medjugorje is peace, and love. I would like to embrace the whole world with this love. Medjugorje for me means everything. In Moscow life is frenetic so it's not easy to find the time and a quiet moment to pray. The festival is a very important moment. I invited a young

woman, a former drug addict. Her eyes shone when she experienced this peace and quiet, and now she too has started to pray and read the Bible.

Q. What do young Russians seek?

They seek the truth. Without conversion the void is immense, and that's why they seek drugs, career, money.. God is near them, but we need to help them discover this - that is what happens in Medjugorje.

Everyone knows that Russia has always been profoundly spiritual, and that its spirituality has been suffocated. The few who have the faith have a very deep faith. There are many problems, though, because things have changed so radically in such a short time. People feel the need for God but have trouble finding Him.

When you feel God's call, it is important to join a prayer group and stay with people who follow the Lord, because the temptation to give up your prayer life is great when - at home or at work - you live with people who don't believe or who live as though the Lord didn't exist.

Q. At Medjugorje Our Lady calls us to dedicate time to Eucharistic Adoration..

Yes, it's extraordinary! I belong to the Orthodox Church where adoration of the Blessed Sacrament is not foreseen. But on the very first day here I noticed how profound unity is created between God and us through adoration. Now there are a lot of churches in Russia which have reopened, and I will look for Jesus in the Tabernacle.

I bless God for Medjugorje and for His grace and goodness, but I don't want to keep this gift for myself; I want to share it with others.

Dear Readers,

With each passing year more and more people ask to receive the Echo. For this we are grateful to the Lord and all those who help us spread Our Lady's messages.

Some of you will have noticed a reduced number of copies in the last edition. Unfortunately, further rises in postal tariffs are obliging us to establish a new dispatching system, which we are still working on.

In the meantime, it is our desire that all copies are truly being given to someone, and that those left on tables in parishes, etc., are really being picked up by someone. Therefore, all those who receive multiple copies for distribution are asked to kindly help us in this regard, and eliminate any possible waste.

All are welcome to ask for a copy directly from us, but the request must be made personally.

May the blessing of the Queen of Peace reach all families, and may She protect each one in Her Heart.

Villanova, 28 August 2001

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