

Echo of Mary Queen of Peace

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Ph/fax +39 (0)423-470331 - Email: info@ecodimaria.net - A translation of the original Italian: EcodiMaria

181



Our Lady's message, 25 March 2005:

“Dear Children! Today I call you to love. My Children, love each other with God's love. At every moment, in joy and in sorrow, may love prevail and, in this way, love will begin to reign in your hearts. The Risen Jesus will be with you and you will be His witnesses.

I will rejoice with you and protect you with my motherly mantle. Especially, my Children, I will watch over your daily conversion with love. Thank you for responding to my call.”

Witnesses of the Risen Jesus

“Dear Children, I call you to love,” says Mary in her message on Good Friday in the year 2005, and John, the Apostle of Love, who was with Mary at the foot of the Cross to receive Jesus' last breath, also says to us: *“Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God, and he who loves is born of God and knows God. He who does not love does not know God; for God is love.”* (1 Jn 4:7-8). Love is there, hanging on the Cross: *a stumbling stone* (Rm 9:32), and *sign of contradiction* (Lk 2:34) so that what is hidden is revealed. Now we know who our God is: the Death and Resurrection of Jesus have revealed it to us. The Light of the Spirit which flows out from them enlightens the mystery hidden for ages in God (Eph 3:9).

“My Children, love each other with God's love” specifies Mary. This is important in today's world where love seems to have lost its original meaning. The love of God is the love Jesus revealed to us with His Life; it is the love described by Paul in his famous *ode to Love* (1Co 13).

“At every moment, in joy and in sorrow, may love prevail and, in this way, love will begin to reign in your hearts.” Put love in all circumstances of happiness and sadness. The love which comes from God, in fact, doesn't depend on life's events. Quite to the contrary, life's events take on meaning and value thanks to the love with which they are lived. For if we live events in the love of God they will be enriched with His saving power, evil will be disarmed, and life's events will be injected with good. And love will begin to reign in our hearts; the Kingdom of God will begin to grow in us and around us.

“The Risen Jesus will be with you and you will be His witnesses.” To be witnesses of the Risen Jesus means to allow Jesus to live in us. It isn't enough to say you believe in God; you must say which god you believe in. It isn't enough



... YOU ARE PETER!

to say that you believe in the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, and not even that you believe in God incarnated in Jesus, if this then remains a mere verbal declaration that doesn't affect your way of living.

It isn't enough to say that you believe in the God of Love if you then doubt His Love, if you don't love your neighbour with the same love that God loves us, if you are not able to love your enemies, and unable to give and ask for forgiveness. Of course, all this isn't easy, and may seem beyond our reach; but we have the Church, the Sacraments, and the ordinary and extraordinary graces that God never fails to lavish on us. We have Mary; she is truly our Mother, who guides, supports and intercedes for us. We need to seriously decide to let Jesus live in us. Mary will **rejoice with us and protect us with her motherly mantle.**

We can begin with small steps; the important thing is that they are motivated by a sincere desire to surrender oneself to God. And we can let Mary be the guide of **our daily conversion**, as we live our baptism day by day. She will **lovingly watch over** this daily decision of ours for the Risen Jesus, and the small things that we are able to realize for His sake will blossom into conversion and love, and even if they don't mean much for the world, they will be infinitely pleasing to God, for they will mature into fruits of the Resurrection.

Nuccio Quattrocchi

Our Lady's message of 25 April 2005 :

“Dear Children, Also today I call you to renew prayer in your families. By prayer and the reading of Sacred Scripture, may the Holy Spirit, Who will renew you, enter into your families. In this way, you will become teachers of the faith in your families. By prayer and your love, the world will set out on a better way and love will begin to reign in the world. Thank you for responding to my call.”

Pray and Love

We have seen great events, yet no matter how moving they may be, they cannot change our life. Wasn't this so for the tsunami? And perhaps it is so also for the great crowds that filled the Vatican for John Paul II's death and for the election of Benedict XVI. Emotion, even when sincere, is sterile if it doesn't bear the fruit of conversion: much like the seed that falls to the side of the road or amongst the stones or thorns (cf. Mt 13:18-23). Emotion on its own isn't enough, though it can serve as a starting block. No matter how lofty man's feelings or qualities, they are worthless if they cause him to depart from God's designs. *“God created man in his own image; in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them”* (Gen 1:27). *Of all visible creatures, man (male and female) alone is called to share, by knowledge and love, in God's own life* (Catechism Catholic Church, 356).

Man's dignity lies precisely in this call. To seek the reasons for human dignity elsewhere would be to disfigure the divine image of which man is bearer, and to declass him, placing him on the same level as other living creatures. To forget or not acknowledge the divine origin of man is what is behind all forms of public and private violence, of tyranny, of injustice, and of every sin against man and against God. What can be done? We can take Mary's calls seriously, and *decide for God*; choose Him, and live for Him.

“Also today I call you to renew prayer in your families.” The call is especially to renew prayer, which is not only to begin again to pray, but to pray wholeheartedly. It's not easy, but it can be learnt if we persist: by praying one learns to pray. Our Lady also stresses “prayer in the family.” This makes us think of Jesus' words when He said that if two or three of us are united in His Name, He is in our midst (cf. Mt 18:20), but it is equally true that the family is the fundamental cell of society, and as such it is there that the process of social healing must begin.

THANK YOU PAPA WOJTYLA!

“By prayer and the reading of Sacred Scripture, may the Holy Spirit, Who will renew you, enter into your families,” Mary most wisely suggests, and most certainly hopes. Prayer and reading of the holy Scripture cannot be separated since it is through Scripture (OT and NT) that we know the God to Whom we pray. Our God is the *God of Abraham, of Isaac, of Jacob*, and He revealed Himself to us in Jesus Christ, Who says: “*He who believes in me believes not in me but in him who sent me*” (Jn 12:44-45), and “*he who receives me receives him who sent me*” (Jn 13:20).

“**May the Holy Spirit enter into your families and renew you.**” If we take Our Lady’s call to prayer seriously, the Holy Spirit will enter into our lives and families and will renew us in love. He will give to us Jesus, and present us to the Father. The family, then, will be a model of the Trinitarian mystery of Divine Life, as JPII said in his Letter to Families (no. 6). With the new life that the Holy Spirit will instil in us we shall be able to **teach the faith in our families**, and to collaborate in the construction of the civilization of love which JPII prophesied in his Letter to Families. *N.Q.*



Feast of Mercy

Jesus first spoke of his desire for the feast of the Divine Mercy to Sr. Faustina in 1931: “*I desire that there be a feast of Mercy. I want this image, which you will paint with a brush, to be solemnly blessed on the first Sunday after Easter; that Sunday is to be the feast of Mercy*” (Diary, 49). In the years that followed Jesus spoke again about this request in 14 other apparitions.

A great promise accompanies this feast: “*Whoever approaches the Fount of Life on this day will be granted complete remission of sins and punishment*” (300), said Jesus. “*I want to grant a complete pardon to the souls that will go to Confession and receive Holy Communion on the Feast of My Mercy*” (1109).

This is a special grace granted to those who worthily receive Holy Communion on this day: “complete remission of sins and punishment.” This grace, explains Fr. I. Rozycki, “is something decidedly greater than plenary indulgence. The latter, in fact, consists only in remission of temporal punishment for sins. Instead with these promises, Christ has raised this grace to the rank of a “second baptism.”

“When I am lifted up from the earth I shall draw everyone to me”

Jesus said this to announce that incomprehensible and unexpected moment of salvation when from the Cross He would have drawn the gaze of every man to Himself: the pagan gaze of the Romans, the homicidal gaze of His crucifiers, the indifferent or curious gaze of passers-by, the repentant gaze of the thief on His right, the contemplative gaze of His beloved disciple, the loving and sorrowful gaze of His Mother. And Jesus, “*who had no form or comeliness that we should look at him,*” (Is 53:2) touched hearts and changed them.

The same can be said of our former and beloved Papa (Pope in Italian), John Paul II, who in his last days of life, while his body became ever more deformed by his illness, drew the attention of the entire world. The eyes of all were on him, on his suffering, and on the window where at times he appeared to grant a gesture of blessing, a smile – with the little strength he had left.

It was on his cross which he carried with dignity, or rather, with the mysterious regality born from immense humility that all eyes were turned: Christians and non-Christians, believers and agnostics, the elderly and the children... The world almost came to a halt as it watched the old Pope take the final steps to the top of his Calvary; to see what it’s like to die in peace from upon the cross of one’s illness after having totally surrendered one’s life into the hands of the Father.

Mystery of faith, mystery of the Cross...

The Holy Father lived this mystery to the full, and his life was a great lesson for us all. To the young people gathered in Rome on Palm Sunday in preparation for the World Youth Day, he said: “*My dear young people, this combined feast possesses a special grace, that of joy united to the Cross, which in itself sums up the Christian mystery... Be witnesses everywhere of the glorious Cross of Christ. Do not be afraid!*”

“Everywhere” Karol Wojtyla was a witness, thanks also to the cameras zoomed constantly in on him and on his suffering which he bore with faithfulness. One only needed to see him on Good Friday as he watched the Way of the Cross procession from his chapel, and tightly held the cross in his hands and with the face of Jesus just inches away from his.

“*When I shall be lifted up from the earth I will draw everyone to me!*” It seems paradoxical that in the moment of greatest weakness and powerlessness one is all the more observed and admired, and all the more powerful.

“I am glad...”

“*I am glad; be glad too. Let us pray together with gladness. To the Virgin Mary I entrust everything gladly*”: are the words it

has been said he wrote to those who worked with him. Like a slaughtered lamb, his throat had been cut a few days before – and a tube inserted to help him breathe more easily. The operation impeded him from speaking, from telling us how much he loved us.

As a “mute lamb” he let himself be led by God to the last station of his *Way of the Cross*. A pope whose voice was mutilated, was nonetheless heard by the whole world in a very clear and audible manner. His silence was eloquent; sonorous I would say. It spoke to hearts in the silent language of LOVE – as Jesus did in the last act of His Passion.

“I am glad,” wrote the Pope, almost as if to say that in that moment he was using his cross as a trampoline to dive into the embrace of the Eternal God: his joy and delight.

Easter of Mercy

John Paul II died on a Saturday (2nd April 2005, Year of the Eucharist). Saturday is Our Lady’s day, and being a first Saturday, even more so. When he was born into eternal life it was Saturday evening which liturgically is a Sunday, and that Sunday, 3 April, was Divine Mercy Sunday! This is not a coincidence, but clearly a sign from God. He had always been devoted to the message of mercy God sent to the world through Sr. Faustina Kowalska, the Polish nun who in the early 1900’s began spreading devotion to Divine Mercy and had revealed that the Lord had asked that the second Sunday of Easter become Divine Mercy Sunday.

The then young Karol Wojtyla, on his way back from work in the factory, would stop every day to pray in the chapel where the nun received these revelations from Jesus. He took his love for this mystic with him to the Vatican; and with courage he confirmed the divine request. The Holy Father thus fulfilled his dream five years ago when he canonized Sr. Faustina and proclaimed the second Sunday of Easter as Divine Mercy Sunday. (In 1937 Sr. Faustina was granted to “see” the institution of this feast; see her Diary, 1044-1048.)

The Holy Father died at 9.37 pm on Saturday 2 April. In his room, the celebration of Holy Mass for the feast of Divine Mercy had begun at 8 pm. After having received Holy Viaticum, and once again, the sacrament of the anointing of the sick, he pronounced *AMEN*. He then departed for his eternal abode. How could we not see in all this the hand of God?!

Joseph Ratzinger, commenting these last moments of JPII, said: “The light and strength of the risen Christ radiated onto the Church in that type of ‘last Mass’ that he celebrated whilst in his agony. It culminated in the Amen of a life totally offered, through Mary’s Immaculate Heart, for the salvation of the world.”

Here I am. I am the servant of the Lord

When the Pope’s corpse was carried

triumphantly into St. Peter's, passing through the crowd that had gathered there to applaud him, the Church was celebrating the feast of the Annunciation. On this day the Word of God took off His divinity to enter the womb of the Virgin and took upon Himself our humanity.

On this same day the Holy Father was stripped of his humanity so he could enter the maternal womb of the Church and the divinity reserved for saints. Then, the divine Word entered Mary so He could speak to men; now, John Paul was entering the Church, of which Mary is Mother, after having spoken much to men. Italian journalist, Antonio Socci, recently wrote: "He committed himself faithfully to love. His life was a "totus tuus" to the end. Every day of his life he renewed his declaration of love to the eternally youthful queen: Mary. When the operation amputated his voice, he woke up and wrote: 'But what have they done to me?' adding: 'In any case, I remain wholly thine'."

The six visionaries from Medjugorje tell that one day in their presence **Our Lady tenderly kissed an image of Pope John Paul II** (on the wall of the room), and said that she herself chose him for the Church and the world.

The seed that dies bears much fruit

Many prayed. Perhaps everyone prayed - in one way or another. Even a thought of appreciation or affection sounded like a prayer in God's heart. The first great fruit of his death is this: that people prayed, the world prayed. The world was talking of God, of the Gospel, of the example of this Polish Pope's heroic

faithfulness and courage. There was no compromise or half-terms in this man who spoke of Christ, who brought others to Christ.

Wednesday: what an audience!

This was the headline spread across the front page of *L'Osservatore Romano* (newspaper of the Holy See) accompanied by a photo of his mortal remains. Next to this was a photo of the "river" of pilgrims who had come to pay homage, and who streamed into St. Peter's for days. They came from every part of the world, and regardless of the fatigue they lined up for as many as 24 hours to spend mere seconds in his presence, to greet and thank him, and to thank and bless God for the gift of his papacy, and to pray for his intercession.

That Wednesday - the day John Paul II used to hold general audiences - he held a "universal audience." The hall was the world and the audience was the entire universe. His mouth may have been sealed, but his silence spoke out loud. *L'Osservatore Romano* commented: "This Wednesday audience will never be published in the papers. To read it you need to leaf through the pages of the dictionary of the heart. To understand it, you need the grammar of the faith."

Recapitulated in Christ

The two million people present for the funeral filled St. Peter's, the side streets of Vatican city and the major squares of the city of Rome where maxi screens had been set up. Two hundred foreign delegations - sovereigns, heads

of state, and Religious dignitaries - were as a garland to the simple wooden casket. On its top there was an open Gospel, and the wind blew its pages open, from beginning to end, from end to beginning, continuously, until it finally closed; as if to say: all is finished; every word has been said.

The world was gathered around him. Even the powerful of the world appeared small and defenceless before the one true "Great." But it was not a lifeless body that drew all these people to St. Peter's, even though this body belonged to one of the greatest men of the 20th century. It was Another One that drew them. It was the same Person that JP II never tired of indicating: "open wide your doors to Christ!" and in the end, he managed to "recapitulate all in Jesus" as they watched, attentive, over his lifeless body.

Sainthood immediately!

Many banners were flying amongst the faithful the day of his funeral, accompanied by shouts of "santo subito!", almost as if to force the Church to make him immediately a saint, by popular acclamation. In his homily, Cardinal Ratzinger - now Pope Benedict XVI - seemed to anticipate this possibility: "We can be sure that our beloved Pope is now at the window of the house of the Father. He can see us and is blessing us. Yes, bless us Holy Father! We entrust your dear soul to the Mother of God, to your Mother who took you by the hand every day and is now leading you to the eternal glory of her Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen."

Stefania Consoli

News from the blessed land

Our Lady to Mirjana:

"I ask you to renew the Church"

The day that the Holy Father died - Saturday 2 April - coincided with the day **Mirjana Soldo** receives a monthly apparition of Our Lady. It is usual for Mirjana to pray together with Our Lady for non-believers during these apparitions of the 2nd of the month. The large gathering of faithful prayed fervently for JP II's health on this particular occasion.

At the end of the apparition Mirjana told the crowd: "Our Lady blessed us all with her motherly blessing. She told us that the greatest blessing we can receive on the earth is that of a priest. She also blessed all the objects we brought with us (for this purpose). Our Lady then said: 'I now ask you to renew the Church.' I said to her:



'This is asking much! Am I able to do it? Are we able to do it?' And Our Lady replied: 'But my dear Children, I shall be with you! My apostles, I shall always be with you and I shall help you! Above all, renew yourselves, renew your families, and then all will be easier.' Then I said to her:

'Mother, only remain with us!'

Mirjana said that she asked after the Pope but that Our Lady did not reply. Instead they prayed together for him.

Pope appeared to Ivan together with Gospa

Ivan Dragicevic was in the parish of New Hampshire in the United States on 2nd April, and because of the different time zones when the apparition took place it was a few of hours after JP II had died. Ivan said that **during the apparition the Pope appeared to Our Lady's left**. He was smiling, young-looking and radiant with happiness. He was dressed in white with a golden cape. Our Lady turned to look at him, and they smiled at

each other, then she said to Ivan: **'my dear son is with me.'**

It is known that the Holy Father desired visiting Medjugorje. What Ivan saw was a mere glimmer of what will be his ministry at Medjugorje. In an autographed letter of the Pope to a friend of his in Krakow in which she testified to how Medjugorje had borne fruit in her life after a pilgrimage there, the Pope replied that every year, in his heart, he went on pilgrimage to Medjugorje, uniting his prayer to that of the numerous pilgrims.

Vicka in Rome for funeral

Vicka went to Rome for the funeral of the Holy Father, and prayed intensely the entire morning. Vicka had met John Paul II on various occasions, including the times she accompanied the sick and handicapped of Bosnia to receive his blessing, and the time she and her husband, Mario, visited Rome shortly after their marriage. Vicka has always invited us all to pray much for the Holy Father and for the Church.

Sr. Emmanuel

Habemus Papam!



It isn't that difficult to find an affinity with the presence of the Queen of Peace. When the solemn announcement was made - **habemus Papam!** - it was 6.43 pm **which is when Our Lady appears** at Medjugorje. Minutes later Cardinal **JOSEPH RATZINGER** appeared to the world for the first time in papal attire; his evident emotion allowing his profound sensitiveness to transpire. Not only, but it was in 1981 that the German Cardinal was nominated by John Paul II as **Prefect for the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith** where he loyally served for 24 long years next to the Holy Father as faithful custodian of the Catholic faith in a period when the integrity of delicate moral questions was being undermined. That was a particular year, for it was also **the same year that Our Lady began appearing** in the remote village in Hercegovina. We don't like to force the issue, but after a Pope who belonged "entirely to Our Lady" it is consoling to note traces of Her presence also in his successor.

Humble worker in vineyard of the Lord

"Dear Brothers and Sisters, After the great Pope John Paul II, the Cardinals have elected me, a simple and humble labourer in the vineyard of the Lord." These are the words with which the new Pontiff greeted the many thousands of faithful who literally ran to St. Peter's square once the chimney of the Sistine chapel began emitting white smoke. *"The fact that the Lord knows how to work and to act even with inadequate instruments comforts me, and above all I entrust myself to your prayers. Let us move forward in the joy of the Risen Lord, confident in his unfailing help. The Lord will help us and Mary, his Most Holy Mother, will be on our side. Thank you"*

A humble and tranquil first *urbi et orbi* appearance for a man known among the church hierarchy as one of the humblest and most modest of its members. The string of names he has been labelled with, such as the 'grand inquisitor,' simply don't fit him. And if he is feared and even "hated" by some, it is by those who seem to have mistaken the word "liberal" for "libertine," that is, those who want the Church to say yes to the world, to the flesh and to the Devil.

Wojtyla's right-hand man

John Paul II had immense trust in Ratzinger's clear-sightedness and fidelity, and his ability to deal with the threats on the orthodoxy of the faith. In the writing-up of numerous apostolic documents the wisdom of the Bavarian theologian supplied the creative and humane Polish Pope with the framework on which to weave important

messages for the Church and the world. Their coupled efforts bore much fruit, yet one of the other names Card. Ratzinger was labelled with was "the cooler for Wojtyla's ideas" as if to say he were less communicative and more prudent. Of course, it doesn't fit either, and the demonstration that the labels were mere labels was given us during the Pope's last days, and during the days between the death of JPII and the conclave which elected Joseph Ratzinger as Peter's successor. Ratzinger, deacon of the College of Cardinals, competently saw to everything with calm, grace, charity and humility. We also saw his devotion to Christ and the Church, above and beyond his own desires and will.

"Let us pray that the conclave be brief"...

... Card. Ratzinger had said to journalists, and it was. He was a favoured candidate, but it surprised everyone that he should be elected so quickly, **in just over 24 hours!**

He is the Pope of a Church who feels with renewed vigour that the missionary mandate from Christ is more current than ever. So far we know him to be extremely intelligent, a highly appreciated theologian, writer, and teacher. Now we shall look up to him as the father we lacked after experiencing what it's like to be orphaned after our beloved John Paul passed away. I believe the new Pope will surprise us with sentiments that perhaps he was unable to fully express in the role of *guardian*, such as his warmth, gentleness and friendliness, his love for simplicity, his sympathetic character and his sensitivity for the beautiful expressed in his passion for piano. And of course, he is good, a quality which Pope Wojtyla highly appreciated after his faith and intelligence which he loyally placed at the service of the Church.

I shall call myself Benedict XVI

His choice of name was cause for more surprise. Italian journalist, Vittorio Messori, explains: "Paul VI proclaimed St. Benedict of Nursia patron saint of Europe, so choosing this name is a **reaffirmation of Europe's Christian roots** which the EU chose to exclude from its Constitution."

At his first Wednesday audience Pope Benedict referred to his predecessor Pope Benedict XV: "a true and courageous prophet of peace," who sought first to avert WWI and later to limit the slaughter. "In his footsteps I place my ministry, in the service of reconciliation and harmony." He then spoke of St. Benedict co-patron of Europe and founder of the religious order that "exercised an enormous influence on the spread of Christianity throughout the European continent," stressing the importance of Europe's Christian patrimony, "which cannot be renounced."

Coincidence or prophecy?

The **XX World Youth Day** will be held in Germany (Cologne, 16-21 August 2005, Year of the Eucharist). Benedict XVI will be going back to his homeland to receive youth from all over the world. Our beloved JP II had given them the appointment three years previously at the last international appointment in Toronto. That time he didn't say "I'll be waiting for you there," as he had done the

other times, but: "Christ will be waiting for you there." Together with Christ, Pope Benedict will be there, "playing on home-ground." He will certainly find the way, with Christ, to win over youthful hearts.

Persecuted and persecutors

The horrors of the last century left profound scars in the memories of many peoples. Nazism, in particular, heavily inflicted mortal wounds in those who suffered under its insanity and arrogance, especially Poland. In His utter goodness, God desired redeeming the persecuted in an unexpected way by calling a Polish Pope to be the guide of His Church. God's justice, however, goes hand in hand with His mercy, and today the Lord has wanted to redeem also the persecutors by choosing a Pontiff from the Germanic land which also suffered under the counterattacks of the Nazi fury. The Lord has thus raised both peoples to the same dignity, and has reaffirmed his universal paternity. Not taking into account merits and demerits, He is always ready to stoop down to all His children.

The world weeps... the world rejoices...

For days, leading up to the funeral mass, the streets of Rome leading into Via della Conciliazione and St. Peter's Square overflowed with pilgrims, saddened but composed, who had come from all round the world to pay homage to the mortal remains of their beloved Pastor. Only days later, the crowd that rushed to St. Peter's on the afternoon of the **19th April to hear the announcement of the new Pontiff** bore expressions of joy and expectation, hope and new life. It all happened during the period of Easter which is time of reawakening and of newness. John Paul II died as a wheat grain to bear more fruit. Benedict XVI is the first among many on this fertile branch, given to us that we may all be nourished.

The world applauds!

The world applauds, and already he has surprised everyone with his unexpected and out-of-the-ordinary visits to the apartment where he used to live as Card. Ratzinger. With his great humanity, openness and simplicity in dealing with people, he is conquering hearts, and his sheep are coming to know and love this gentle and dedicated shepherd who has said that his programme of the governance of the Church is to assure obedience to God.

On the day of his installation, Benedict was radiant, alert, aristocratic yet humble. He continues to ask for prayers, for support and for friendship that he might be able to meet the responsibilities of his new mission. He is a man who chooses his words carefully; those in his homily are clear, even sharp, and leave no space for compromise. For years Pope Wojtyla attracted hearts and helped them open up to God. Today this Pope will give formation to these hearts through the wisdom of his teaching which all can comprehend.

Let us welcome him into our hearts to sustain him in this important and burdensome task. Let us pray for him and offer him our love. It will be our way of saying thank you to God for not abandoning us. S.C.

Benedict XVI: *Sustain me!*

From his first homily

“Do not fear!”

“In my soul there are two contrasting sentiments in these hours. On the one hand, a sense of inadequacy and human turmoil for the responsibility entrusted to me yesterday, and profound gratitude to God Who does not abandon His flock, but leads it throughout time. This intimate recognition for a gift of divine mercy prevails in my heart in spite of everything. I consider this a grace obtained for me by my venerated predecessor, John Paul II. It seems I can feel his strong hand squeezing mine; I seem to see his smiling eyes and listen to his words, addressed to me especially at this moment: *‘Do not fear!’*”

May Christ make up for my poverty

Surprising every prevision I had, Divine Providence called me to succeed this great Pope. If the weight of the responsibility that now lies on my poor shoulders is enormous, the divine power on which I can count is surely immeasurable. The Lord wanted me as his Vicar ... I ask him to make up for the poverty of my strength, that I may be a courageous and faithful pastor of His flock, always docile to the inspirations of His Spirit.

Let not shine my light

In undertaking his ministry, the new Pope knows that his task is to bring the light of Christ to shine before the men and women of today: not his own light but that of Christ.

I affectionately embrace young people

To the young people, the privileged interlocutors of John Paul II, I send an affectionate embrace in the hope of meeting them at Cologne at the next World Youth Day. With you I will continue to maintain a dialogue, listening to your expectations in an attempt to help you meet ever more profoundly the living, ever young, Christ.

ON DAY OF INSTALLATION

On the 5th Sunday of Easter, Benedict XVI presided over Holy Mass for the official beginning of His Petrine ministry. There were half a million faithful present for the occasion:

Unheard-of task: but I am not alone

And now, at this moment, weak servant of God that I am, I must assume this enormous task, which truly exceeds all human capacity. How can I possibly do it? I can say with renewed conviction that I am not alone. I do not have to carry alone what in truth I could never carry alone. All the Saints of God are there to protect me, sustain me and carry me.

The Church is alive!

During those sad days of the Pope’s illness and death, it became wonderfully evident to us that the Church is alive. And the Church is young. The Church is alive – she is alive because Christ is alive, because he is truly risen. In the suffering that we saw on the Holy Father’s face in those days of Easter, we contemplated the mystery of Christ’s Passion and we touched his wounds. But throughout these days we have also been able, in a profound sense, to touch the

Risen One. We have been able to experience the joy that he promised, after a brief period of darkness, as the fruit of his resurrection.

My programme of governance is to do His will...

At this moment there is no need for me to present a programme of governance, because my real programme of governance is not to do my own will, not to pursue my own ideas, but to listen, together with the whole Church, to the word and the will of the Lord, to be guided by Him, so that He himself will lead the Church at this hour of our history.

TWO SYMBOLS AS PAPAL SEAL

The **Pallium** placed on my shoulders symbolizes the authority of the Bishop and of his union with the See of Peter. It is woven in pure wool, with five red crosses on it to symbolize the five wounds of the Crucified One, and three long pins to symbolize the nails which pierced His hands and feet.

It is the Yoke of Christ upon my shoulders

This ancient sign is an image of the yoke of Christ, which the Bishop of this City, the Servant of the Servants of God, takes upon his shoulders. God’s yoke is God’s will, which we accept. And this will does not weigh down on us, oppressing us and taking away our freedom. To know what God wants, to know where the path of life is found – this was Israel’s joy, this was her great privilege. It is also our joy: God’s will does not alienate us, it purifies us – even if this can be painful – and so it leads us to ourselves.

I take the sheep upon my shoulders

The lamb’s wool represents the lost, sick or weak sheep which the shepherd places on his shoulders and carries to the waters of life. The human race – every one of us – is the sheep lost in the desert which no longer knows the way. He is the good shepherd who lays down his life for the sheep. What the Pallium indicates first and foremost is that we are all carried by Christ. But at the same time it invites us to carry one another.

So many kinds of desert

So many people are living in the desert. There is the desert of poverty, of hunger and thirst, of abandonment, loneliness, of destroyed love. There is the desert of God’s darkness, the emptiness of souls no longer aware of their dignity or the goal of human life. The external deserts in the world are growing, because the internal deserts have become so vast. The Church as a whole and all her Pastors, like Christ, must set out to lead people out of the desert, towards the place of life, towards friendship with the Son of God, towards the One who gives us life.

Love, not power, redeems!

Love is God’s sign: he himself is love. How often we wish that God would show himself stronger, that he would strike decisively, defeating evil and create a better world. All ideologies of power justify themselves in exactly this way, they justify the destruction of whatever would stand in the way of progress and the liberation of humanity. We suffer on account of God’s patience. And yet, we need his patience. God,

who became a lamb, tells us that the world is saved by the Crucified One, not by those who crucified him. The world is redeemed by the patience of God. It is destroyed by the impatience of man.

Pray that I might learn to love God

At this moment I can only say: pray for me, that I may learn to love the Lord more and more. Pray for me, that I may learn to love his flock more and more – in other words, you, the holy Church, each one of you and all of you together. Pray for me, that I may not flee for fear of the wolves. Let us pray for one another, that the Lord will carry us and that we will learn to carry one another.

THE FISHERMAN’S RING

The **Ring** bears the imagine-seal of St. Peter. The boat and the net signify in a special way the ring-seal which authenticates the faith and stands for the task entrusted to Peter to confirm his brethren.

In a sea of suffering

We are living in alienation, in the salt waters of suffering and death; in a sea of darkness without light. The net of the Gospel pulls us out of the waters of death and brings us into the splendour of God’s light, into true life. In this mission to be fishers of men, we must bring men and women out of the sea that is salted with so many forms of alienation and onto the land of life, into the light of God. It is really so: the purpose of our lives is to reveal God to men. And only where God is seen does life truly begin. Only when we meet the living God in Christ do we know what life is.

Do not fear that He might deprive you of something!

Are we not perhaps all afraid in some way? If we let Christ enter fully into our lives, if we open ourselves totally to him, are we not afraid that He might take something away from us? Are we not perhaps afraid to give up something significant, or unique, something that makes life so beautiful? Do we not then risk ending up diminished and deprived of our freedom? No! **If we let Christ into our lives, we lose nothing, absolutely nothing** of what makes life free, beautiful and great.

Only in this friendship are the doors of life opened wide, and the great potential of human existence truly revealed. Only in this friendship do we experience beauty and liberation. So, today, with great strength and conviction, on the basis of long personal experience of life, **I say to you, dear young people: Do not be afraid of Christ! He takes nothing away, and he gives you everything.** When we give ourselves to him, we receive a hundredfold in return. Yes, open wide the doors to Christ, and you will find true life.

I renew my promise of fidelity

Like Peter, I also renew my unconditional promise of fidelity. God alone I intend to serve, dedicating myself totally to the service of his Church. To support me in this promise, I invoke the maternal intercession of Most Holy Mary, in whose hands I place the present and future of my person and of the Church. May the holy Apostles Peter and Paul and all the saints also intervene with their intercession. *Amen*

Ordained by Card. Ratzinger

Msgr. Bruno Forte recalls with joy and gratitude the day Card. Ratzinger ordained him as bishop: "He touched everyone's heart. The immense crowd rejoiced as he spoke of the beauty and truth of the faith. That evening I felt urged to say to him that if there were an election by acclamation, that crowd of thousands of faithful that evening would have acclaimed him Pope."

Mons. Forte, a theologian and esteemed teacher, is at present the Bishop of Chieti. Commenting Card. Ratzinger's rise to the Papacy, he said: "He will be the Pope of the truth of love, of which our present world is in so much need. It needs truth because the wide-spread relativism – particularly in the field of morals – is a worm in people's consciences; and the crowds of loners – characteristic of the post-modern society – are nostalgic and so in need of love."

In his homily prior to the Conclave Ratzinger himself stressed these same two elements, raised almost as a banner to mark his imminent pontificate: "Card. Ratzinger's true self continued to shine out," continues Msgr. Forte. "He didn't minimize any part of his character. He was totally honest, to the end. The two key words in his homily were truth and mercy! The truth isn't proclaimed to strike out against someone, but out of love for everyone. You don't truly love the others by discounting the Truth, for salvation and freedom come from knowing the whole truth."

This is the theologian, the pastor, the man and the believer to whom Providence wanted to entrust the keys of Peter. There are those who don't know him and who cannot see beyond the exterior aspects of his person, but those who know him, see how the truth which he loves so ardently will radiate from him for the benefit of many. And I am certain those whose hearts are not burdened by fears or prejudice will have no trouble in seeing this."

Msgr. Forte, a disciple, son and friend of Joseph Ratzinger, concludes: "May God, Who called him out of love to be our Pastor, sustain and accompany him at every step! The sea of history needs the boat of Peter, and the helm of Peter's boat is in good hands; they are hands available and open to the provident love and direction of the Eternal God."

Theologians: who are they?

If I wanted to describe the task of a theologian I couldn't find a better image than that of the explorers sent out by Moses to scout the land promised by God, and who came back from the land of Canaan loaded with its delicious fruits to awaken in the hearts of the Lord's people the desire to conquer, without hiding from them the difficulties they would encounter.

In a certain way a theologian is the one in a community of believers who must search the horizon, indicate the Homeland, awaken in the hearts of people nostalgia for the eternal, and urge them to never tire of seeking out the Mystery and to be impassioned and thirsty mendicants of the absolute.

Theology as such is not a cold and void doctrine; it isn't aristocratic love for wisdom such as philosophy. **Theology is the wisdom of love**, it is the attempt to bring to the word the experience of charity, and to make it contagious so that love is knitted into the daily lives of people and so it enflames humble hearts.

A theologian speaks of God's love. He makes sure the memory of the love story told by God on Good Friday is kept alive in the heart of the Church. That is why theology is best unfolded in an atmosphere of silence, adoration, and acceptance, so it can awaken the desire for things that are to come, that are new.

St. John of the Cross writes in one of his minor works that the Father spoke one word, and that word was His Son. This word He repeats in an eternal silence, and in silence it must be heard and constantly re-heard by the soul. Theology thus demands silence of adoration, and that the faithful humbly accept the Spirit within their hearts.

In this way alone, theology reveals the horizons in the darkness of the world, and indicates the Homeland of our future, the knowledge of which though certain is an "eventide" knowledge (St. Thomas) because what we know is like the evening shadows compared to the full light of the day, since the glorious day of love is yet to come.

We live in expectation of another time and another Homeland. We are pilgrims marching towards God's city, and this gives infinite hope to our heart. Kierkegaard, a great witness to the faith of modern times, said that a professor of theology is such because another died on the cross for his sake.

The Teacher is Christ, Who is alive in His Church, Who communes with His pastors. A theologian is one who searches for the Mystery in this Church that we love, to witness the gift received gratuitously, to light up the desire to seek anew so that ever again the story of love is brought to the lives of all.

Always love the Church! and the story of our love will be contagious and will transform the heart of the world. Always be a part of God's love story, and remain in the poor and crucified communion of this Church which for all its faults and lackings is the Lord's beautiful Bride.

I wish to conclude with an image which at first may seem odd, but which is a very old and very beautiful image. The fathers of the Church used to say that the **Church was the moon**. Why the moon? For just as the moon shines not with its own light but with the light of the sun, so ought the Church shine not with her own light. Instead, she must shine out in the night of the world with Christ's light. We do not point at ourselves; we do not proclaim ourselves. We indicate and proclaim Jesus, the Lord of our lives, the crucified Love of God who converted our hearts and made us His witnesses. In silence we contemplate and adore our Lord. So this then is the Church-moon... the story of the moon is the story of the Church!

Bruno Forte, bishop of Chieti Italy

Between Heaven and Earth

Suspended mid air; neither up nor down; neither in heaven nor on earth, but there, most mysteriously, in a dimension where one lacks both earthly support and the levity of heavenly things. This vital point where one is detached from everything, where the course of everything comes to a halt, is the dwelling place of our cross. It is here that we find ourselves when reality leads us down a different path to what we would have desired or expected. There we are, "between heaven and earth" - surprisingly suspended. **What is it that keeps us there?** What makes this unlikely equilibrium possible? Some hidden or unknown force? No. All it is, is one, little, yet very powerful word: "yes." It is our adhesion, liberal but decisive, to that uncomfortable position that makes it possible; as though our yes were a hook.

But why? For how long? For whom? cries out our heart in the hardest moments. Indeed, it is difficult to resist when your 'normality' is interrupted and you have still to 'land,' or attain the peace that is admirably born from dying to self. This malaise is beyond our control; it is not determined by us. It is a thing of God. He alone can control it. All we can do is wait and hope, invoke and believe, cry and love.

For indeed, in this suspended state it seems that only the heart is alive. The rest of the body seems surprisingly absent and silent, and is accompanied by a profound sense of loneliness and a certain detachment from everything else so that it appears that others have their feet firmly planted on the ground, and that heaven is further away than usual.

It is then that a subtle form of desolation appears at the margins of the soul, as a vulture ready to tear away the last shreds of peace. What ought we do? Give in to sadness and sorrow? Or should we rather muster up all our faith and turn our gaze over and beyond all our thoughts and feelings? Yes, for all we need do is shift our attention by a couple of inches and we will see that at that same elevation – suspended mid air – there is also Someone else.

Yes, He too is there - suspended "between heaven and earth," and His loving gaze is on us. He offers Himself for us knowing that the Father will gather up His intimate sighs and transform them into drops of salvation – for us and for others. He is eternally the Crucified One; the Victim without spot or stain. At every Mass He climbs up onto that podium of glory to continue bringing about new manifestations and fruit of his resurrection... each time again... each time alone, in a long and eternal memorial.

Relief quiets the heart, and the pang becomes oddly sweet. It is then that we see another foothold: the wound in His side, wide open. Initial fear becomes consolation; suffering: incomprehensible delight. Our position is the same, but now it has taken on meaning. And everything else loses importance, while infinity dilates the heart.

Stefania Consoli

The Sacred Heart

Furnace of Mercy

I come from Alto Adige, a region in the north of Italy, also known as “the land consecrated to the Sacred Heart” because of a vow made about two centuries ago by the people of then. I experience this consecration as a gift of grace, a source of protection and a profound belonging to this land which has its roots deeply planted in the Lord’s Heart overflowing with mercy. The vow was made to implore divine protection at a time of imminent invasion, and it consists in a promise to celebrate this annual Feast day with solemnity.



As a child I always thought it very significant that the entire month of June should be dedicated to the Sacred Heart, and I like to think that it is not by chance that this month is preceded by the Marian month of May. It is as though Mary were preparing us for the June celebrations, for the Mother of God always leads us to her Son, and we, by contemplating the beauty, virtues and mysteries of her life necessarily contemplate also the mysteries of Him: both her Son and Creator.

We contemplate the Heart of Christ in the light of faith. It is a mystery which contains infinite facets of the sublime truth which will be fully revealed to us only in heaven. Here on the earth we must nurture our thirst for and our desire to know God, Who for first desired revealing Himself to His creatures out of infinite love for them.

This infinite, eternal and immeasurable love desired living in the finite, temporal and measurable world for love of us. He wanted to be with us on the earth, to live with us, to make Himself visible and perceivable for us. It was this ardent love that gave Jesus the strength to suffer His passion, and to urge Him to offer Himself up for those He loved, and to remain forever in our midst under the species of bread and wine.

The eternally burning fire of love which flows from the Father to the Son and from the Son to the Father in the divine Person of the Holy Spirit is captured in the Heart of Christ. The Sacred Heart is a well-spring offered to us, where we can find nourishment, life-giving water, comfort, repose, understanding.

This month of June in the year of the Eucharist particularly helps us consider the mystery of the Most Sacred Heart enclosed within the Eucharist, and how this mystery of infinite and boundless love was first closed up and hidden in the Heart of the Man-God, and now in the fragile consecrated host-wafer. When we eat this Body, Christ assimilates us into Himself; we are drawn into His Heart, washed in the torrents of His Blood, gently rocked with waves of amazing grace and mercy.

In our incapacity to express the depths of this unfathomable love by God for man, only prayer can come to our assistance, and the knowledge that our Blessed Mother, our patron Saints and the Angels who drink from the Beatific Vision praise, bless, thank, adore and implore on our behalf.

Francesco Cavagna

“Come and Adore!”

There are definitely many special moments to savour at Medjugorje, but contrary to what many may think, the most important one is not the apparition, but the celebration of Holy Mass, and Eucharistic Adoration. From the very early years Our Lady taught the Parish to give central place to Eucharistic Jesus, for He is the true heart of the Church. It can be said that **Medjugorje has indeed become a great Eucharistic cenacle** where Adoration is a live experience with God. Of course there is no sensationalism, for it all happens quite naturally and simply: all one need do is open his heart to Jesus.

Mary leads

In his last Encyclical John Paul II says that it is Mary who leads us to the contemplation of Eucharistic Jesus, and that at Eucharistic Adoration we see more clearly Mary’s role in our lives, which is to take us to Jesus and teach us to live with Him! The Queen of Peace first taught this to the Parish and then to pilgrims.

In fact, Our Lady’s third message to the Parish was dedicated to Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. Therefore, if Medjugorje has become such an important centre of prayer it is because it discovered the immense grace closed up within the Tabernacle: the living, real and substantial presence of the world’s Saviour.

Our Lady once said at Medjugorje that she didn’t intend making of Medjugorje just a place of prayer, but a place where hearts could meet. She remains with us when she says to her Son: “*See, they have no more wine!*”, and as He touches each of our hearts she is there to say to us: “*From now on do as He tells you.*”

One evening at Medjugorje

As one of the many young people who’ve experienced many of these Adorations at Medjugorje I’d like to share my experience.

The song, *Kumbaya*, begins in little more than a whisper and gets louder as the Blessed Sacrament is brought to the Altar. Then, at last, He is placed on the altar. He is here before each of us: the Sun of Justice has come to visit us like the dawn from on high. Within minutes an atmosphere of intense inner concentration and profound prayer pervades the air as eyes close and inner gazes turn to the heart to listen to the voice of the Divine Spouse. And in my heart I understand: “When we **adore the Eucharist it is as though each of us were alone with You Lord**. Just You and I, in intimate colloquy; just Father God with His child where the child surrenders himself up totally to the big and loving hands of his papa!”

The Spirit accompanies us...

“*O Light of Wisdom, reveal unto us the great mystery...*” goes a Liturgical Hymn dedicated to the Holy Spirit. This evening Jesus is here, alive and truly present, but for us to strongly believe we need the Gift of the Holy Spirit Who helps

us see beyond appearances. This is why we invoke the Divine Spirit, and when this invocation is sung in various languages I instinctively think of the Pentecost narrated in Acts (2:6): “*Each one heard them speaking in his own language.*”

“Also this evening we are invoking you, Finger of the hand of God, that You might touch and awaken our hearts!”

Between verses, sung in various languages, musical pauses provide the opportunity for the heart to dive deeply into God’s Love. The soul is filled with His gentle presence, and the spirit is quenched by the “living Water” which Jesus grants in such abundance. And then you understand the prayer of the heart to which the Gospa calls us so tirelessly.

... and He heals us

The instruments begin to play a sweet melody when suddenly I am aware of a girl next to me quietly crying. I think how wonderful it is that the **Spirit really does touch us and heal us in our most inner depths**. He heals where no human doctor is able to heal; and His sweet Presence makes us feel loved; and then we know what it is to be a child of God! and life suddenly takes on meaning!

As I remain in the Lord’s presence and try to Adore Him with all my being, **I feel accepted, loved and protected**. Jesus is no longer a name, but a Person Who I am beginning to know and Whom I desire knowing ever more! Prompted by Fr. Slavko I begin to consider His greatness, His faithfulness, and His presence in my life, and for this I give thanks and praise – and I learn that this is adoring Him.

In the light of the Holy Spirit a new world is opening before me, or rather, **I begin to see how God’s Love has been actively present in my life**. It is as if scales in my eyes begin to fall off, and the eyes of my heart begin to see God’s footprints left on the sand of my life.

Jesus is our life!

Here in the presence of Jesus, Light of our lives, we understand how much He loves us, and our trust in Him is deepened. We learn that nothing in our lives is too insignificant for Him, and that **He desires being our closest friend and confidant**. Prayer, this way, will not be repetitive because we will always have something to bring before Him, to confide to Him. Then, as we speak to Him, He lends us His eyes, and our difficulties take on a new dimension because we know that we aren’t alone, for He, the Almighty, is with us. At the end of Adoration, we receive Eucharistic Benediction as a seal to the joyful encounter with the Lord. He fills us with Peace and He sends us out to proclaim to the world that He is risen and is in our midst!

The source of conversions at Medjugorje is this profound encounter with the greatest friend of our hearts. Here, hearts are set on fire and are healed. Jesus desired remaining with us in the Eucharist so He could be part of our every moment.

All that is left to say is: *Venite, adoremus!* M.R.

Reflecting on Love...

Our efforts to encounter God would be in vain if God had not decided, in His infinite mercy, to manifest Himself to us despite our misery and our limits. For a human being the experience of God is very subjective and varies from one person to another. Nonetheless, I think that some experiences are common to us all and that certain stages in the journey towards God are compulsory. One of these is learning to love your neighbour, not with human love which is always imperfect, but with God's love.

It is fundamental for a Christian to allow the divine love to enter into his life, to allow himself to be filled with the Holy Spirit so he can pour out God's Grace onto others. Personally, I have managed on some occasions to conquer my own instincts and to behave in a "new" way towards a brother or sister. It was a very strong experience of God's presence in me, because it was clear to me that I wasn't able to do this in virtue of my own strength, but thanks only to the strength God instilled in me, after having asked for it in prayer.

An experience like this removes any doubts you may have had regarding the existence of Father God, or the infinite love of Jesus, or the power of the Holy Spirit. Your faith is strengthened because of this closeness and love of God, because you understand that it is God Who acts in you; that He gives you the strength to love as He does, and you see how He loves you so much that He helps you love others with His same love.

When we become one with Him in this way it suddenly hits us how we are children of the Father in Jesus Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit. We know how to love God, for Jesus Himself told us: "*Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you*" (Mt 5:43); "*He who does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for my sake will find it.*" (Mt 10:38.39).

Thus, God can be encountered through forgiving, and praying for those you don't like, and sacrificing yourself for others, and dying to self... which is possible only if we look at others through the eyes of God. When He looks at us He sees His beloved creatures, and He loves us just as we are, with all our wretchedness. If we look at others through the eyes of God, we will be able to love them unconditionally despite all their defects because it is thus that God loves us. And we will experience God's loving presence in us, and through us He will be able to reach out to others.

Massimo Bigotto

Our Lady to Mirjana, 2 May 2005:

Dear Children, I am with you to lead you all to my Son. I wish to bring you all to salvation. Follow me, because only in this way can you find true peace and true joy. My dear children, follow me.

Regenerating Parishes through

PERPETUAL EUCHARISTIC ADORATION

For information on how to begin contact Fr. Alberto Pacini at the Centre for Eucharistic Evangelization: Basilica S. Anastasia al Palatino, Piazza S. Anastasia 1, 00186 Roma, Italy. e-mail: alberto.pacini@tin.it

"Don't say I'm only a youth"

The prophet Jeremiah uses this expression, "*I am only a youth,*" when God calls him to become His instrument. Scripture teaches that God always chooses people to proclaim His Word and to fulfil His plan of salvation. And always the chosen people are hesitant and fearful at first because they feel inadequate and unworthy.

When Jeremiah said he was only a youth, he was talking of his lack of experience and his fragility. Perhaps he already had plans for the future. "I am young; I can't do it; it's too much for me, and besides, I have other things planned for my life..." Even though we desire the Lord's Grace, consolation, and forgiveness; we find it hard to think that God may need us. Never discouraged, He will continue to call us, especially if we are young.

If we are young, and if we have experienced His presence thanks to Mary's intervention, then we are called to go. Go where? The Pope has always invited us to go, as pilgrims, to the World Youth Day, and there he has always spoken to our heart. For the next WYD at Cologne in Germany, JP II gave this word to us: "We came to adore Him." The wise men overcame their hesitancy, and with youthful enthusiasm "they started off." Enthusiasm for the sought-after truth helped them overcome any lack of experience. The star, and the joy they experienced when seeing it, are signs of the help that the Lord grants to those who start off.

If you who read are young, and you have been won over by Mary, then you should recognize these same traits in your own life. There is need to start off, to leave the ordinary, to encounter the Grace of God.

The poverty and essentiality of this publication is evident. It was born though it lacked adequate means and the experience of professionals. Yet the Lord has always made us feel His presence and blessing. Therefore, I am not afraid to now ask you, young readers, to "pick yourselves up" and to depart. And where do I want you to go?

We recall that John Paul II, at the conclusion of the last WYD in 2002, said that Jesus would be in **Cologne** waiting for you. This year the Lord is especially waiting for you also at the **Youth Festival** with Our Blessed Mother in **Medjugorje** (1-6 Aug. 05).

But there is more. So many people still haven't heard of Medjugorje (though Our Lady has been appearing there for nearly 24 years!). Young people like yourselves still aren't aware of the grace of Medjugorje; so many don't know that Jesus is waiting for them in Cologne. There are still many who've never seen a copy of Her little Echo with which her Word is able to reach out and touch her beloved children around the world.

My proposal is that you **become a little instrument** of the same grace that saved you! Give form to your enthusiasm. If you dream of changing the world, start with small steps. **Try sharing the Echo with others:** with friends, fellow parishioners, the elderly, the hospitalized, the imprisoned, whomever you think. Help Mary to bring Jesus to all God's beloved children!

Fr. Alberto

From the Mail: "Preparing for WYD"

"At the last **World Youth Day** three years ago in Toronto, John Paul II didn't bid goodbye in his usual manner by saying 'I'll be waiting for you in...' , but he said: 'Christ will be waiting for you...' , and he didn't set the next WYD two years ahead, as usual, but three years ahead." BB reminded me, and I couldn't help notice the coincidence. Had WYD been held in 2004 the Pope may not have been there, so I'm glad it's being held this year as it means he will.

The Pope is a true father figure, and I see in this marvelous continuity the seal of the Divine Presence, of Father God Who wants us to know how much He loves us. He'll be present in the person of *papa* Benedict XVI. In a special way Christ will be present through the Sacraments, and through Grace. But I'm sure that JP II will also be present, to bless and intercede.

Pauline Davids

An Australian journal reports on the ever-growing presence of young Australians at WYD, including a national first this time with a past WYD pilgrim chosen to perform a song written for the occasion. "In proportion to its population Australia has been one of the most well-represented countries at the International WYDs," says AD2000.

"Although separated by distance in this great south land, Christ's love unites us. With thousands of others from around the world we will come to worship the Lord. He will continue to enflame our hearts, so we can be **light to the nations, and so His salvation can reach the ends of the earth.**" *Liz Mackney*

* Request for Rosary beads, medals, etc.

- 1) Agnes Kiairimu Muhia (Julia), Gaichanjiry Catholic Parish, P.O. Box 483, Thika, Kenya.
- 2) Moses Ekene, 6 Nimota St., Sari- Iganmu, Orile Lagos, Nigeria.
- 3) Judy Lambert, Divine Mercy Prayer House, 68 Dino 59A-5-5, P&T Colony, Vijayawada 8, Andhra Pradesh, India.

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*With the word of God in our heart,
and with fear and trembling,
may the presence of the Lord Jesus
shine through us; and we will be a
blessing, and we will be blessed.*

don Alberto

Pentecost, 15 May 2005