

Listen today to what he says; and harden not your hearts. (Ps 95) A clean heart create in me O God, and a steadfast spirit renew within me. (Ps 51)

Our Lady's message of 25 February 1993:

Dear children, Today I bless you with my motherly blessing and I invite you all to conversion. It is my wish that each one of you make the decision to change life and that each of you work more in the Church - not with words or thoughts, but with your example. Your life should be joyful testimony of Jesus.

You cannot say you are converted, because your life has to become conversion every day. To understand what you should do, dear children, pray; and God will make you see what you really need to do and where you need to change.

I am with you and I place you all under my mantle. Thank you for having responded to my call.

A motherly blessing that accompanies us on the path to daily conversion

Mary's blessing in the opening of the message, and the assurance of Her presence at the end, are not just said for the sake of saying them, even though said with motherly love. With Her blessing and presence, Mary wants to open the walk of our Lent, or of **our conversion**, like the blessing of Moses and Aaron opened the journey of God's people in the desert (Nb 6:23).

The **blessing** is a communication of God's might and of His grace to our souls, because good intentions (the divine will) are realized when we are truly open to it (the blessing). The blessing is for our **conversion**, for us to change life, to stop following our whims, to start doing God's will in the time that has been given to us as grace.

Conversion, however, is a gift that comes from God. It is He Who calls us: *Call us back to you Lord, and we will return. Make us convert, O God our salvation.* What we have to do is open our hearts to Him, so the **first step in our conversion is returning to prayer**, to accept His grace. *We appeal to you not to receive the grace of God in vain.* For, now is *the favourable time*, now the *days of salvation.* (2 Co 6:2)

If in prayer I see myself the way I really am, then I see my sins, vices and weaknesses that I am unable to defeat if not through He Who defeated temptation for me. That is why we cannot have conversion without **prayer that opens our eyes** and gives us Jesus' strength to defeat the temptations that assail us so untiringly.

What Our Lady is asking us to do for our conversion is to step out of ourselves, out of our egotism, to **look at the needs of the Church**, of which we are part. Do we realize that this Church, with her pastors, priests, faithful, unfaithful, the distant, is the Body of Christ, and we are all members, that we have to help one another? It is up to us to make the Church shine out before the blinded eyes of men, as a mystery of salvation: *that they may see your good deeds and glorify your heavenly Father* (Mt 5:16).

Our Blessed Mother is inviting us to work in the Church as **an example**, that is, **give testimony to the life and joy of Jesus in us.** Men don't know what to do with nice words and thoughts (ideas, criticisms, recommendations), with people who make others work, or who work only to receive praise.

You cannot say you are converted. We

If we have died with Christ, we shall also live with Him. (2 Tm 2:11)

are quick to say, after returning to the Church for example, that we are converted. This is just the beginning of one's conversion, the beginning of one's walk - it can't stop there. One's ways have to change. One's values, or rather idols, have to be substituted by other values, by total submission to God's will, by humbleness, poverty, obedience, donation of oneself. It's a hard fight, like Jesus' in the desert; and your old habits will keep on appearing and you have to keep on fighting.

Only through remaining before God, in **profound prayer**, in adoration, will you be able to **discover what you need to change.** Contrary to this we'll believe we have found peace, but it will be a false, superficial peace, where things only seem to go right. When our heart is open to God, unconditionally, we will **understand what we really need to do and where we have to change.** And then we will even be able to do what would otherwise be humanly impossible, for nothing is impossible for God.

What joy, what peace, when Mary assures us She will always be with us. She is always ready to fix things up for us and to help put us back on the way after we've been distracted!

Fr.A.

Father we thank you for your infinite love, for giving us a Mother.

Fr. Slavko's comment: Our Lady explains to us why we should convert and change: so our lives can be **«joyful testimony of Jesus.»**

It has been said that a sad Christian is a sad Christian indeed. One who lives God's love, for God's love, will surely have joy also in times of difficulty, problems and sickness. That doesn't mean he/she will be laughing. It is a joy that gives inner strength, that helps you carry your crosses. Our Lady is asking us to make this change, and we will become joyful testimonies of Jesus. That way people will understand that we have met God that lives, God Who has risen in Jesus; they will believe when they see our faces, when they see our behaviour, when they see the joy that irradiates from us. (...)

Lent: there is no conversion without confession

Our Blessed Mother in Medj.: *You have to invite the people to confess every month, in particular on first Saturdays. I have not spoken (about this) here yet. I invited the people to confess frequently. I shall give you still more messages for our time. Be patient, for the time has not yet come. Do as I have told you. Many are those who do not observe (my messages). Monthly confession shall be a remedy for the Church of the West. (6 Aug. 1982)*

Confess on the eve of great feasts, even if you confessed not long before and you have committed only minor sins. (31.12.83)

Our common Father guides us on the path that leads to Easter - it must be through the Cross

Lent: Pope speaks out on behalf of our brothers condemned to live in the desert

Listen to the voice of Jesus, tired and thirsty - in our poorest brothers, He relives the torments of His agony

The theme of the Pope's Lenten message for 1993 is the **desert**, a place with a profound religious sense, but at the same time it's also a threat to the lives of many.

After mentioning the events surrounding the lives of Moses and John the Baptist (which in great part were in the desert), and the life of Jesus, Who "opened His mission by taking on the condition of a man in the desert who is hungry and thirsty," he continued: "Listen to the voice of Jesus, Who tired and thirsty by Jacob's well, asks the Samaritan woman: *Give me a drink* (Jn 4:7). Contemplate Jesus nailed to the cross and dying - with a whisper of a voice He says: *I am thirsty* (Jn 19:28).

Christ is repeating this appeal today, He relives the torments of His agony in the poorest of our brothers. While He invites us this Lent to **advance along the paths of love and hope - in Christ's footprints**, the Church makes us understand that Christian life involves **detachment** from surplus goods; she helps us **accept poverty** that frees us; she lets us discover God's presence and **accept our brothers** in tireless solidarity in a **growing communion**. ... Meditate with all your heart and with hope the following words said by Jesus: *Come, you whom my Father has blessed ... for I was thirsty and you gave me drink* (Mt 25:34-35)."

These reflections that opened the Pope's message become an appeal for all members of the Church, "to look upon the women and men tried by the dramatic desertification of their lands and upon all those who lack this basic but indispensable element called water.

When the goods of the earth are not respected, people act unjustly, even as criminals, for the consequences are poverty and death for many brothers and sisters. ... The risk is that to future generations in many parts of the world we will leave in inheritance the drama of thirst and desert.

May the active **generosity** of the sons and daughters of the Church, and of all men and women of good will, **speed up the coming of Isaiah's prophecy**: *Streams will burst forth in the desert, and rivers in the steppe. The burning sands will become pools, and the thirsty ground springs of water* (Is 35:7)."

Some practical advice for Lent:

I give you advice. I would like you to try to conquer some fault each day. If your fault is to get angry at everything, try each day to get angry less. If your fault is not to be able to study, try to study. If your fault is not to be able to obey, or if you cannot stand those who do not please you, try on a given day to speak with them. If your fault is not to be able to stand an arrogant person, you should try to approach that person. If you desire that person to be humble, be humble yourselves.

Show that humility is worth more than pride. (20 Feb. 1985)

Pope confirms the churches of Africa, and confronts the persecutors

Draw force from the Eucharist for your cross, for humanity. Like your martyrs, be faithful to your Baptismal promises

During the Audience of 17 Feb., John Paul II spoke of his recent voyage to Benin, Uganda and Sudan (defined a pilgrimage in the wake of the Saints and the Beatified). He had already explained the importance of this voyage during the Angelus of the 14th Feb.: "that continent, so tried, is an enormous potential of humanity and values that the whole of humanity could draw from for its own good."

Christian love is expressed on the cross

The potential the Pope was talking about is the power of the offered love experienced by the Christian communities in the African lands. In KHARTOUM, the Pope said: "In this part of Africa I can clearly see the Mystery of the Calvary being reproduced in the lives of most Christians. What answer can I give you? With what words can I console you? Soon we will be celebrating the Eucharist, a sacrifice accepted for the salvation of the world. With lasting trust we proclaim our faith: *You redeemed us with your cross and your resurrection; save us, o Saviour of the world*. Brothers and sisters, if there is a message that the Pope wants to leave you with, it is this: Let the Paschal Mystery be the centre of your lives!"

The centre of our faith is: "the Paschal Mystery of the Passion, Death and Resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ, which represents the certainty and wealth of the Church. It is the fount of our strength and our hope. When human justice fails, it alone can heal our wounds and give meaning to our efforts. In the Eucharist we are about to celebrate, I will keep you here with me, and remind God our Father of your commitment to the faith, of your work in the name of charity and your constant hope. The entire Church entrusts you to God's loving providence, so full of love, in the knowledge that *the Spirit intercedes for the holy ones according to God's will.*"

Christ's prayer for unity

We would like to point out how the Pope often uses the theme of Crucified Christ centred in the lives of the faithful. In BENIN (Parakou), he said: "Christ prayed to the Father in a sorrowful hour, before being offered in sacrifice for the human race. In his priestly prayer he fervently asked that the union of his disciples to him and the Father would make men believe and see how they are loved by God. Does not the Gospel say that he spilt his blood on the cross for the reunification of God's dispersed children? (Jn 11:52)" So prior to Christ's supreme act, is the immense space that allows for our imitation, for "it is up to us now to make this word ours, for it is a source of life and a fount of joy: *I speak this in the world so that they may share my joy completely.* (Jn 17:13)"

Christian task is conversion and donation of self

Living the Paschal Mystery, the Pope explained, requires the constant and persevering practice of personal conversion and generous donation of oneself, like Jesus the Good Shepherd. The Pope said in his homily while in Gulu (UGANDA): "In carrying out the Prophet's words, Jesus, the

Good Shepherd, shows how he cares for all those who belong to his herd. He is our defender, he protects the whole community, the whole herd, everyone that belongs to him. He even risks his own life to defend us, unlike the mercenary who only cares about saving himself." **The Pope told all - priests, lay people, youth and families - about the necessity of building up the unity of the Church and the peoples.** "The only fight that can be justified by religious motives, the only fight worthy of man is the moral fight against the disorderly passions of man himself, against everything contrary to peace and reconciliation."

No-one is excluded from manifesting the fruit of Christ's light in their own lives, and all are invited "not to barter spiritual values with materialism which is unable to satisfy man's heart." He gave the example of the recently beatified **Josephine Bakhita**, whose picture formed a backdrop for the Pope's visit to Sudan. Of her the Pope said, "a woman of faith and strength, who placed all her trust in Christ, without reserve." But the Pope also warned against another tendency, all too frequent in similar circumstances (Bakhita was captured and sold as a slave, bought by an Italian family, came to know God and eventually became a nun): *"The Lord has forsaken me, the Lord has forgotten me.* (Is 49:14) And God replies: *Can a mother forget her infant, be without tenderness for the child of her womb? Even should she forget, I will never forget you. See, upon the palms of my hands I have written your name.* (Is 49:15-16) Yes, on the palms of the hands of Christ, pierced by nails. The name of each one of you is written on these palms."

A word for rulers - During his visit to the President of Sudan, where persecution of Christians is subtle, the Pope often spoke of respect for minority groups, Christian and non, as a moral duty of all governments.

Imitation of martyrs: a lesson for all faithful

All Christians are called to take heed of what the Pope said during his latest voyage. In particular, in Kampala (UGANDA) on 7 Feb., the Pope said for all Christians: "St Paul says clearly: *Take no part in the fruitless works of darkness* (Eph 5:11). You have renounced Satan and all his works. You have been saved through the spilling of Christ's blood, so you should never deny Him by adoring idols or by giving up your Christian life for the empty promises of a death culture. *If once you were darkness, now you are light in the Lord.* (Eph 5:8)

May the martyres be your inspiration! They did not profess Christ just with words, but manifested their love for God by observing His commandments, reflecting the image of Christ with a spiritual force that still today attracts people to Him. In their lives and in their death, the martyrs revealed the power of the cross, the force of a faith that was stronger than fear, a life that wins over death, hope that lights up the future, love that reconciles the worst of enemies."

In the Angelus that followed Mass, the Pope entrusted the Christians of Uganda, and with them all Christians all over the world, to *Maria Regina martyrum*, so they could be inspired "to offer their lives with a sacrifice acceptable to God."

Participate with your Easter to renew the world!

Letter to those who offer themselves and those who have replied to Her call

Peace to you sister, peace to you brother! God created the world. God holds the world up. Through His Son, Jesus Christ, God redeemed the world (Col 1:13-14) and God continues to redeem the world (Col 1:24). In every era of our history God acts in the world. That is why He needs helpers. You promised to offer Him your life, unconditionally, through Mary's Immaculate Heart. At the beginning of this Lent, I am asking you again, in the name of Jesus: **Are you ready to give your life, unconditionally, for the salvation of the world?** If your answer is yes, take heed of the following conditions:

a) Nourish yourself! Before His public manifestation, Jesus prayed and fasted for 40 days, secluded from the rest of the world. He was in perfect union with the Father. That is how He was able to defeat the Evil One. So He was then able to start the battle against evil and carry it through to the end. He withdrew from the world to nourish Himself, and then started work. The same thing goes for you: withdraw from worldly interests and enter a perfect relationship with the Father, nourished by the Live God. Prayer for you has to mean being filled with God, to make you strong. If you do not pray like this and be united to Him, you will be unable to carry on.

b) Go ahead! Encountering the Live God opens the way to life. It is only through going on that you can communicate with Him. So you either go ahead, or your heart hardens and it becomes a type of slavery.

c) Feel God present in your heart! Our first ancestors clearly knew what God expected of them. When they were put to the test, it was if they were deaf, because their hearts lacked that live relationship with God and His mission. You have to enter this relationship. Your prayer, your inner world, needs it, so you can hear what God wants of you in every moment.

d) Follow the liturgical letters! Read them, reflect upon them and pray, drawing inspiration from them. The Word of God has to become life for you. Be extremely happy.

1st Sunday: Turn away from sin!

Once there was harmony between the Creator and all creation. Everything went well. Now this harmony is turned upside down. The world is in danger. God is inviting man, whom He made master of the world (Gn 1:28), to turn away from sin. The renewal of the world passes through man. Look into your heart. See your sin. Throw yourself into God. Throw out Satan, sin and all his works from your heart. Throw yourself down before God with all your being. Decide to fight against evil. To do this, you will have to work hard all this week.

2nd Sunday: Leave your old situation behind you!

In the Transfiguration Jesus opened the way for the Apostles. They saw the goal, but Jesus did not permit them to remain on Mt. Tabor, but made them continue on their way to Jerusalem. In the Transfiguration Jesus showed the way to you too, He, Who defeated death and made His life and immortality shine out through the Gospel (see 2Tm 1). This cannot happen without effort and sacrifice. **We have to sacrifice our old habits and abandon them.**

After the Transfiguration Jesus showed the way full of thorns to the Apostles, and St

Paul invites Timothy to suffer with him for the Gospel. Be practical and decisive in abandoning your old habits. When you will come out of yourself is when you will be able to see the promise. (Gn 12:1-49)

3rd Sunday: Clean out your heart!

Are you perhaps starving, dying of thirst or unhappy? Are you looking all over the place for solutions? Is your mind full of fantasies and daydreams? Everything is within you. Open yourself to Jesus, so He can look into your heart. Establish a live relationship with Him. There is no need to wait for anyone, not even the Messiah, because He is here: *It is I, Who talks to you.* (see Jn 4)

Open your heart and pray with hope. St Paul says: *It is not easy to die even for a good man - though of course for someone really worthy, a man might be prepared to die - but what proves that God loves us is that Christ died for us while we were still sinners.* (Rm 5) If you let Jesus reach your inmost self, a fount of life will gush within you to quench your thirst and that of others. Through you Jesus will save sinners too, because you offer yourself for them.

4th Sunday: Open yourself up to the surprise!

Look at the black marks in your life and in the lives of others. God's works are manifested in these black marks (see Jn 9). Open yourself to what God wants to show you. In the end you will understand better than the teachers. Look at where you have stayed behind, where you have been unsuccessful - God has a call for you that can't be seen through science, force or success. God looks in the heart. He surprises (see 1Sm 16). Leave aside everything, well or bad, so you can discover that call, in which Jesus contemplates you.

5th Sunday: Follow Jesus to the end!

Do not say: "It's late ... it's impossible ... it frightens me." Jesus knows the way. He is the master of the past, the present and the future. Don't be afraid to look at death (all that you lived as a "dead" person) in the face. With Jesus in your heart you will see that death is something different. Jesus goes with easiness and joy towards the death of His friend Lazarus. He plays with death (see Jn 11). For you this is impossible. Yes, for man it is impossible. Not even the Apostles could do it. They followed Jesus. You do the same. Show Jesus the tombs (on your own you will find the tombs of your life), let Him go ahead and you follow Him. He will guarantee you success. *I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even if they die, will live. Whoever lives and believes in me will not die in eternity.* Do you believe this?

6th Sunday: Be totally surrendered!

This week's liturgy is the summit: it is union with the Father. Jesus reached His summit, but He shows you the way to the top and leaves you with grace. I shall show you three steps to help you reach this union:

a) Listen - obey (Is 50:4-7).

If you put God's word into practice, your ear will become more and more receptive. God will communicate with you to show you what life is and you will open your heart to it. If in your heart you obey unconditionally, your heart will open up to God unconditionally. This leads to communion with God.

b) Be as humble as humbleness will permit - even when humiliations and misunderstandings are unfounded and hard

to swallow. This elevates your soul to communion with God (Ph 2:6-11).

c) Be surrendered to God when you despair! On the cross Jesus felt all the weight of desperation. The human being fell to bits in that terrible slow agony, and Jesus expresses His feelings to the Father: *My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?*

He offers this to the Father too. The act of offering to the Father when you are feeling desperate is the height of donation. Jesus leaves everything up to the Father, there is no room for negative feelings in Him. If you grow as a person, bit by bit, and with love you donate yourself to the Father when you despair, you will eliminate the last obstacle on the way to the Father.

The Father has no need for your martyrdom. What He wants is your continual growth, your victory over sin and Satan. He is waiting for you.

Throw yourself into the Father's arms, your Creator. And God, through you, will renew the world. And the peace of salvation will flow through you.

I WISH YOU A BLESSED AND HAPPY EASTER!

May the Lord bless you and keep you. May the Lord let his face shine on you and be gracious to you. May the Lord uncover his face to you and bring you peace. And the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit descend upon you and remain with you always.

Br. Tomislav Vlastic' 16 Feb 1993

The fertility of the Medj. tree New families in Mary for the joy of the Church

We already know of various Marian communities that have blossomed from the messages of the Queen of Peace. The first one formed was the **Oasis of Peace**, founded by Fr. Gianni Sgreva, now in Rome, and also S. Polo Sabino, in Medj., in Sardegna and Pedara. Members of this community come from all over the world, making it a very international one.

There's the **Queen of Peace community** (Entirely yours, to Jesus through Mary) guided by Fr. Tomislav, in Lama di Peligni, made up of Croats and Italians. In Foggia, there are the **Servants of Mary**.

We have learnt of another two, which makes us rejoice. They have so far have remained unknown to most of the world, and intend remaining as hidden as possible, even if we learnt of one of them through the Pope. In fact, in the Angelus on the day of the Immaculate Conception in 1992, his greetings went to the Roman Youth Community: "**House of Mary**," because it was they who had lent their services for the "homage to the Virgin" (in Piazza di Spagna).

This community is made up of family groups (who live in the community) and also a group of young women who have offered themselves to Christ. This community is the fruit of a large group of consecrated people in Lignano.

Now there is another Community, for "**offered souls**." They are being guided by a hermit (Fr. John Bozzo) who has lived in seclusion in the Sanctuary of Reggio di Vernazza for more than 10 years. It began with a group of young men, now there are also some families. A separate house will be built for the families.

An unfailing message: I AM WITH YOU

Through praying (I couldn't have done it without it), I have noticed a wonderful thing in the messages given by Our Lady at Medjugorje. It was a gradual discovery, and not just of the *infinite love* Our Mother has for each one of us, but of the *wisdom* in Her teaching method.

Her messages, over the span of nearly 12 years, are graduated in the sense of length, profundity and intensity. She is very delicate in Her expressions, for example She never says "I want" or "you have to," but "I would like" and "I invite you."

She insists, like any mother would, on things that are essential for the good of Her children; Her words are always encouraging, even if She suffers for the delay in the response of Her *dear children*; She warns us with decision, but never frightens us; Her teachings always leave space for personal research; She convinces with sweetness, patience and faithfulness; She says how She needs our help, that we are responsible for our spiritual growth; She waits for our response and She thanks us.

But what struck me the most were the assurances contained in Our Lady's messages. For example, how prayer is necessary for us, how much God loves us, and the guarantee that She will always be with us. I took a closer look at the messages and as I went through them, I was invaded by a feeling of warmth and security.

We know how small children depend on their mother and are quietened by her voice and her presence - even if she is not in sight, just knowing she is there is enough to make them happy. We want to be those *dear children* who are trying to return to that state of childhood in their hearts. Our Lady is pleased by our efforts to become such, as it lets Her guide us and help us grow.

Our Lady often reminds us of Her constant motherly presence which reflects the loving presence of Her Son Who said: *I am with you every day, till the end of time.*

What I like most is what comes after this statement, in a confirmation of Her role and mission as Mother of Christ and Mother of all men. Following are some examples:

25.11.87 I am with you and my desire is that you believe that I love you.

25.02.89 I am with you and I watch unceasingly over every heart that is donated to me.

25.05.89 I am with you and wish to continually introduce you to the joy of life.

25.10.89 I am with you and wish to teach you how to pray from the heart.

25.05.90 I am with you and wish to help you make renouncements and mortifications and so understand the wonder of life in those people who give themselves to me in a special way.

25.11.90 I am with you and as each day passes I offer your sacrifices and prayers to God for the salvation of the world.

25.04.92 I am with you and your suffering is mine.

25.09.92 I am with you also in these troubled days whereby Satan wishes to destroy everything that my Son Jesus and I have been building.

25.11.92 I am with you to teach you and lead you to a new life, of renouncement and conversion.

25.01.93 I am with you and I am guiding you towards a new time.

Maria P.

Do not confuse the essential with the extraordinary Two sure beacons: the Word of God and the Pope

"You have the Old and New Testament and the Pastor of the Church to guide you; that is enough for your salvation" (Dante)

The more we go ahead, the more we realize how generous God is in sowing His extraordinary spiritual gifts to people and places, all so different from one another. It is a sign that *the one and only God goes on working, and so do I*, says Jesus (Jn 5:17).

The reasons these supernatural manifestations are so attractive are understandable. The spiritual poverty of many Christian environments and the lack of good formation for Christian living based on the Word of God, favours the rush to extraordinary communications or manifestations which the world is so full of these days.

Now we cannot underestimate God's gifts (He knows why He grants them), but the risk is that communities/people stop at what is showy and attractive (psychologically), looking for people or mystical phenomena to lean on and base their lives on, and neglect the only true teacher, the Church, which alone can supply us with all we need for our salvation. Real gifts are given so others are awakened to the grandness of the Lord's heritage which Christ left to the Church.

God's people are meant to enjoy all the charismas of the Church which are an harmonious part of her, not just certain phenomena. In fact, *God appointed some as apostles, others as prophets, others as evangelists, others as pastors and teachers, to equip the holy ones for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of faith and knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the extent of the full stature of Christ.* (Eph 4:11-13)

If a person receives extraordinary gifts, like prophecy, teaching, tongues, miracles, the sole reason is to serve the Church, not for drawing attention to oneself. It doesn't mean that person has the exclusive right to hand out truths and secrets, like some people must think, who fear they'll be in trouble if they don't do as such and such seer said or does. Like that God's gifts become stumbling blocks and cause for division and end up damaging the Church terribly. The essential falls out of sight and secondary things move up front and that gives us cliques and sectarianism that destroy one another. Paul was right when he said that siding for Apollo or for Peter or for Paul was like dividing Christ's body. (1 Co 1:12)

It's a type of mystical star worship that makes many groups abandon Medjugorje or Fr. Gobbi's movement due to the novelty of Vassula: *just like children, swept along by every wind of teaching* (Eph 4:14). There are Medjugorje groups in Italy too that have broken up or changed direction in search of more sensational manifestations - these will die too sooner or later.

But what have we done with what God wanted to tell the world through authentic signs and that converted so many people? Is it up to us to pick and choose the supernatural calls we like, or should we "get down to the bottom" of what God has given us? With all this chopping and changing, going from one novelty to the other, people are fooled and lose the way.

Some may say that we are no different

since we follow Our Lady's messages. The difference is that we do not consider the messages as indispensable for our salvation, but only as a loving and authoritative stimulus to enter the door of salvation which is the Church, established by Jesus: *Those who listen to you, listen to me.* The Blessed Virgin came to Medjugorje to remind us about the ordinary means of salvation - that we convert through prayer, fasts, the Eucharist, the Word of God and confession. She has often said that She wants nothing for Herself, but rather, after having showed us Jesus, She withdraws from us to take us to the maturity of being perfect in Christ (Col 1:28), like John the Baptist who said: *He must grow greater, I must grow smaller.* (Jn 3:30)

Now in particular, with the inflation of mysticism (natural reaction to the secularism and rationalism that has entered the Church), we especially need to keep our eyes on **two essential and indisputable beacons** for true Christian life, that Our Lady indicates to us: **the Word of God and the Papal ministry.**

The Word of God is firm as the heavens (Ps 119), while human words are too easily conditioned by personal and external facts. *Your Word for me Lord, is life.* We have to go back to realizing that the Word of God, the Church and her Pastors are a necessary part of our Christian living, and that Peter is a common Father to us all and if we ignore it we are illegitimate children, we are lost sheep.

That is why the Holy Father's words are so decisive for us. His faith, according to Jesus' prayer, will not fail (Lk 22:32), and he shall remain the true, firm rock on which the Church is built (Mt 16:18), while everything around will fall.

And as we have often said, **Mary's messages** are of an **ecclesiastical and biblical dimension.** They lead us to the Church because they are authentic. If you do not enter through this door, you cannot be part of Jesus' flock. *Fr.A.*

Our Lady's miracles in the missions

2 years ago, here in our mission in Betania on the outskirts of Belo Horizonte (Brazil), we started getting together with people with a need for spiritual growth, to pray together and get to know God better.

For these people, often with very heavy burdens, the meeting with Christ Who saves is the beginning of a profound conversion and a radical change of life. We are witnessing real miracles: parents who after a hard day's work give up their well-earned rest to work for the community: evangelization and charitable deeds. The poor are helping the poor in a solidarity contest.

One of the greatest miracles is the great number of people who come every first Friday from 10 pm till 5 am Sat. mornings to pray, praise, intercede and stay with Jesus and Mary. Our Lady is truly present during these nights of "madness," where adults, young people and children give up their sleep to stay with Her. The reading of Her monthly messages has brought us to living a special communion with those who love and listen to Her. Many hearts have opened and the desire to pray is stronger all the time.

What a gift a Bible would be for these people! (...)

Fr. Enrico P.

MEDJUGORJE - DAY BY DAY

From Sr. Emmanuel's diary

* **After the great departure**, the return to Medj. has now begun: Vicka, Jakov and Mirjana are here with us, while Marija and Ivan are expected to return at the end of the month. It seems that Ivan's trip to Australia, New Zealand and the Philippines, together with Fr. Slavko, is reaping much fruit.

* **The village is still very quiet.** It's fame for being such a well-protected place has reached the international political environments and now the UNO has decided to send 200 Spanish UN soldiers to Medj. They have the task of protecting the convoys heading into Bosnia, which doesn't make a lot of sense given the distances, but the reason is: "It is the quietest place in the territory, and that's what our men need." The Spanish soldiers, on their part, are amazed at learning that Our Lady has been appearing here for 11 years! It's really incredible how atheist politicians see Medj. as a sure refuge, yet many of our Christians still haven't recognized it as an oasis of peace donated to us from heaven.

* **Vicka** told us yesterday: "**We are living a time of grace, but many people cannot see this. They let the fear of war occupy first place in their hearts, and worry about material things, about money. They're blind and can't see the evidence that here we have neither death, nor destruction. We have to let the messages occupy first place.** Only this way will we be able to discover how this time is time of grace."

* **Jelena** called in after Christmas and told us a little of her life and her inner locutions. Together with these she is also aware of "visions" in her most inner soul. It's as if she is always immersed in profound contemplation, even though she is a student. Her latest discovery is that she "saw how the Blessed Virgin, during her earthly life, never stopped praying the Rosary."

We said it couldn't be, "how could she repeat Hail Mary to herself?" Jelena replied: "No, of course she didn't greet herself, but in her heart she continually meditated upon the life of Jesus and in Her heart She followed Him everywhere. When we meditate upon the 15 mysteries don't we do the same? This is the real spirit of the Rosary, not just reciting a lot of Hail Mary's."

Thank you Jelena, you have truly helped us understand why the **Rosary is such a powerful weapon** in the fight against Satan. When a heart is turned to Jesus and full of all the wonderful things that He does for us, Satan is unable to find space. ***

* **Ivan and Fr. Slavko** have returned after a long apostolic voyage to Australia, New Zealand and the Philippines. Wherever they went they were greeted by great crowds. Sonia Vadjal writes: "Holy Mass was celebrated in the Croatian Centre here in Melbourne. It was just like being in Medj, so full of joy. Fr. Slavko's homily was beautiful and so moving. What a precious gift for Australia to have Medj. come here!"

* **Marija and Fr. Leonard's** voyage to Brazil also bore much fruit. Fr. Enrico from the Villaregia missionary community in Belo Horizonte wrote to say they were greeted by the Cardinal of Rio, and the cathedral was overflowing with people for the meeting. More than 5000 people attended.

* **Vicka** was in Holland for a brief mission with Fr. Petar.

Vicka says how to improve our prayer

During his recent visit to Medjugorje (22-26 Jan), Alberto Bonifacio noted down a brief reflection by Vicka for us:

Our Lady has recommended that we pray the three parts of the Rosary every day, but She didn't say we had to say them one after another, in a hurry, almost mechanically. She wants us to pray them a little at a time, and every day a bit more. For instance, the first day we can say just the Our Father with the heart, the next day the Holy Mary too, and so on, so that little by little we will open our hearts. Then the day will come that we will be able to pray with love and joy.

Our Lady gave us a beautiful example: we all have flower pots in our homes, and every day we water them and see that one day a rose blossoms. It is the same with our heart. By praying every day, it grows like this flower. If for two or three days we do not give it water, the flower will shrivel up and die, and **the same thing happens with our heart when we do not nourish it with prayer - it closes up.**

Prayer done with the heart cannot be learnt from studying or through reading. It can only be learnt from living it. God and Our Lady do not expect great things from us, but that little by little we learn the meaning of thanksgiving.

LATEST NEWS! There is a good number of pilgrims in Medjugorje, with about 100 French-speaking pilgrims from France and Belgium, quite a few English-speaking pilgrims and about 40 Italians. The arrival of these pilgrims reminds us of Spring which will soon be here.

The political situation is disastrous for Bosnia. Things are quiet here, apart from the occasional shelling in Mostar. We hope things will be resolved within the next few months, but let us never forget what Our Lady has been telling us for **11 years and 8 months** about how to obtain peace. May it be that this terrible lesson shall become a great message for the whole world: **change if we want to avoid a disaster.**

(Fr. Slavko 25 Feb. 1993)

Cold, hunger and war in Bosnia

There seems to be no end to the tragedy of the populations in former Yugoslavia. As things worsen, new links to the chain of misdeeds are added. Who can put a stop to the spiral of hate and revenge that exists between these different populations, without God's intervention?

CROATIA - Fighting continued during the month of February between the Serbs of Crajna and the Croats that "freed" the land behind Zara so they could pass between the north and south of Dalmatia. By miracle, two catastrophic episodes were avoided.

1. The Serbs mined the dam of Peruka on the Cetina river. They wanted to blow it up so the water would sweep away every living thing in the valley below, but it was evacuated in time and the people are safe. The area, however, now has no electricity.

2. The Serbs loaded up a train with dynamite - it should have gone full speed into the port of Zara to blow up the chemical plants there (no-one was aboard), but it derailed and exploded in a tunnel 15 km out of town (due to bombs laid by themselves).

By this we can see with what spirit they

are preparing for peace, if it is not God who prepares for peace.

BOSNIA - The tragedy of Sarajevo continues, with bombs that continue spitting fire, in freezing cold conditions and with no bread to eat. In fact, the citizens did not accept the humanitarian help for a few days out of solidarity for the Muslim population of east Bosnia (200,000 people) who were surrounded by Serbs and with no way of receiving help. 400 died of hunger. A further 60 in Goradze and another 6,000 wounded could die for lack of medical assistance. These people have had no more than 15 g of food a day per head for months. In some villages, no new-born children have survived. The USA now wants to launch supplies from the air, but indignant Serbs say they will shoot at any US plane that flies above their territory.

The bishop and priests of *Banja Luka* cry out for help. Three have been killed, nuns tortured and sent away from their convents, women and girls raped and half the Catholic population forced to leave their homes (ethnic cleansing). Hundreds of faithful are in the concentration camps and 83% of the churches are destroyed.

Open our hearts and arms to the innocent children

A lesson in life: "Help the Bosnian women decide not to abort; Christian families take in the innocent babies."

"Every day, not far from our borders, the world witnesses how men and peoples are tormented, and human dignity is brutally violated, especially that of the women who have to undergo humiliation and rape, and of the children who are unable to defend themselves. My pressing appeal goes to all those who hold public responsibilities to do everything they can in their power to make peace and justice reign again." (25 Feb. '93)

In a letter to the Bishop of Sarajevo, the Pope called for "the entire Catholic community to remain close to the Bosnian and Croatian women so gravely offended, and to their families, to help them transform the act of violence into an act of love and acceptance. In such a painful situation, it is necessary to help them distinguish between the act of deplorable violence that was forced upon them by men who had lost all sense of reason and conscience, and the reality of the new human beings that will come to the world anyway.

As images of God, these new creatures will have to be respected and loved, like every other member of the human family. ... Let it not be that to the horror of rape, we add another by murdering innocent creatures. Since these creatures are not responsible for these deplorable acts, they are innocent, and in no way can they be considered as aggressors. ...

The act of love of a mother accepting her child is what can break this spiral of violence. To the cruelty of hate and racism, we have to respond with the power of love and solidarity." The Pope follows with an invitation to **adopt the orphans and abandoned children.** "When the little ones are denied the support of those who generated them, it is a **gesture of great human and Christian value** to offer them the warmth of a new home."

The Pope also invites priests and the faithful to "promote a type of peace "from below" - the difficult walk to pacification will have to start from the worst hit families." (*Avvenire* - 27 Feb. 1993)

Why are we unable to pray the way we wish we could?

Fr. Tomislav replies to questions after an impromptu meeting in a country church (see Echo 100, page 7).

Q. *What do you say to a person who says they try to pray, but find it annoying and get nothing out of it?*

A. A question that needs a lot of time to reply to - all the years it would take to put it into practice. When we are before God, all our past life is put before us, so we need to see what it is that is keeping us closed to God's presence. "It annoys me..." Is a young man annoyed in the presence of his girl friend? Is a child annoyed in the presence of his/her mother?

The problem is that we say prayers without being open to God. Our Lady explained to us: Many of you pray, but you do not enter into your prayer. Entering into prayer means enjoying God's presence. At times, I find it difficult too, because I am often on the move, and my commitments make it so I only have a certain amount of time to dedicate to prayer. It's like saying: I want to earn a lot of money this month so I will only sleep one hour per night. It's impossible.

Prayer is a process of aperture to a new life, and that is why you need to have time and the strength for this new life. I live in a community that lives a state of continuous prayer. I feel the need to escape from everyone, to go hiding, so I can stay with God, to feel His presence more profoundly within me. *We have to have the courage to give more time to God, to rest in Him.* That is why it is important for every parish to have a prayer group, but not people that come to church out of duty. It has to be a group where people experiment God's presence and manifest His presence.

Q. *When a person takes that first step towards God's love, does God make them understand which path, which vocation, they should follow - like becoming a religious, or get married, etc? I know He respects our freedom, so are we responsible for our own choices then?*

A. We can use the example of a family. A mother and father love their children and take care of them. So a child is born and grows, learning how to trust, to love, to hope and become able to decide. The child receives. We too, when we are open to God's love, become more and more aware of His love and we become able to decide.

We are born twice in our life. The first time we do not participate in any way. We did not choose our parents, when to be born, the colour of our hair, but we received love. The second birth is when we are mature and able to donate love, but it involves a separation. We don't need our parents anymore so we leave, we know how to live on our own. This shouldn't happen in our spiritual life, but it does, nearly always: I don't need God in my life.

The second birth in our spiritual life will be more mature if our hearts are open and able to receive love. God loves us first. The more we are open to God, able to receive Him, contemplate Him, and allow Him to contemplate us, the more we will receive light and know which steps to take and we will receive the strength to decide. Otherwise we will find ourselves unable to correspond to the Father's love. I'm certain that when we are able to love others the way Jesus loves us, we will know which decisions to make, but before then, and it is important to remember this, no-one is able

to make the right choice, neither for marriage, nor for a religious vocation. Our relationship with God has to be very mature - God loves us and we love God - and we will make the right choices.

Q. *I'm in the army. How can I transmit the Christian message in the barracks where the majority blaspheme and go against God's will?*

A. That's a wonderful place for transmitting Christianity. When there is darkness, all we have to be is God's love - don't worry about preaching or convincing the others. Jesus taught us to remain hidden, silent and just love. If there's a place that lacks God's love it's there in the barracks, but this is something we have to learn in our families too. People ask me: "How can I convert my husband?" You have to love him the way God loves. "How can I make my child change attitude?" Love him the way God loves. Start this mission and you won't fail, because it is Love, not human means, that opens the way. Jesus didn't do a lot of preaching, but he did a lot of loving.

He stayed with us as Love in the Eucharist and He communicates this Love to us every day. I suggest that you love and be happy you are hidden. If they ask you why you're so happy, reply like St Francis: "I've discovered a treasure." There's not even any need to talk about God, but they will understand and one day they will ask you to show them the way to happiness.

Q. *If some people decide to get together to pray, but they lack a priest for guidance, what can they do?*

A. If you want to pray, it's easy. Just get together among yourselves and pray the way you know how. When hearts are open, God shows you what to do and helps you realize it. Priests and guides are a help, but they cannot substitute God Who is in your hearts. St Paul says that the Holy Spirit cries out in our hearts: *Abba Father*. Get together, pray the Rosary, read the Gospel, sing, try to be friends, brothers, sisters among yourselves. Develop God's love in you, and don't worry about the rest.

Let us conclude now with a prayer, but before we start, I would like to ask you all to pray for me. I guide a community of people who offer themselves for the world's salvation. This evening too, while I was talking to you I was thinking how I can't pray, but I must immerse myself in prayer more and more, because it is very important. Jesus is here with us, He is alive. This is no theory. His presence is live, like when He walked the earth. He is contemplating you, looking into your hearts and saying: "Give your problems to me. Let me take care of them. I have things in surprise for you. I will get to the bottom of your problems. I will free you, you can't free yourself."

Jesus I beg you, look upon all these brothers and sisters, pierce their souls. You came into the world and you love each one of us, like the way you loved Our Lady, the way you love our heavenly Father from eternity. Jesus, this evening these brothers and sisters are invoking your name. Come Lord Jesus. They are not invoking you so their problems will be resolved now, but to feel your presence. Come Lord Jesus!

Nothing impedes you, not even their sins. You are Love and they are looking for you. Come Lord Jesus and show yourself as Saviour of the world. I'm certain these brothers and sisters want their lives to become lives of prayer. Come and manifest

yourself and they will discover prayer, because discovering you is discovering prayer.

O Jesus, you know our hearts. Often we would like to, but are unable to carry out (your will). Remember that you came to the earth because it was impossible for us to go to heaven. Come Jesus and descend into the depths of our hearts. Do what we can't do.

Thank you Jesus, because you are here with us, you are contemplating each one of us. Thank you because you are breaking and destroying many chains in people's hearts. O Jesus, I thank you because I know your eyes are bringing much love and light to our hearts. Your love heals souls, hearts and bodies. Your love for us made you give food to people, made you heal people. Thank you Lord because your love is nourishing the faith of our brothers and sisters, and you can thus act in them.

Thank you Jesus for the trust that is growing in their hearts, that are opening up and want to believe you are our Saviour. Thank you Jesus for I know you are healing some people gathered here tonight. Touch their hearts so they may be truly open, infuse the grace of faith and trust in them.

I bless you Jesus, Good Shepherd, no-one will be excluded from your touch tonight. I see you here and you want something from us - you want our sins. Please Jesus, teach these brothers and sisters to hand over their problems to you. Thank you Lord Jesus for their hearts that are becoming more decisive and want to enter your salvation.

I bless you Jesus for loving us, our hearts can feel that only in you is salvation. We beg you, stay with us Jesus! We want you always with us, look upon us and never leave us. Contemplate us Jesus so we can be saved. We will try to remain faithful, but you remain with us for ever.

Thank you for your presence, and your Blessing descend upon all of us.

Consecration to Mary sows fertility and joy in the missions

On the 31st May 1992, we consecrated our mission to Mary. Since then the number of catechumens has increased considerably and catechism classes have doubled.

There are many reasons that make our brothers start on this faith walk. Some were let down by fetishes containing no force or truth; some had gone from one sect to another, thinking they could find a magic solution to their problems; others discovered God's love in the simple gestures of a generous brother; in all the joy of having found the one true God shines through.

Providence for us is a living Person, and we experiment this with our people every day. During a meeting for mothers in one of the poorest areas in town, our catechist Bernadette was talking about how God is generous with those who are generous. This woman (who is poor) had worked all day long picking corn - to cook and sell - but shared them instead with the women at the meeting, giving up the small profit she would have made. A simple gesture, but a big lesson.

The people always ask me when Echo will arrive. Often there aren't enough to go round so we make photocopies. One man with no other means, copies out whole articles in an exercise book so he can read them to others! (...)

Fr. Mario, Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire

From Vukovar: "Mummy, don't kill me!"

My name is **Anthony Kurevija**. I lived with my family in Vukovar, we had our own home. I have been gravely disabled since I was a young man, and my wife has had health problems for a long time too. We have 6 children. The first 5 births were without complications, the 6th one not so. This is what I want to write about, because this is where the battle of my life started.

In 1967 the Danube broke the banks and flooded Vukovar. An icterus epidemic broke out and we all got sick. My wife and the children had to go to hospital.

Just before she was admitted, my wife told me how she dreamt she heard a small but decisive voice anxiously cry out to her: "Mummy, don't kill me!" We couldn't think what it could mean, and concluded it was just a dream, nothing more.

At the hospital, the doctor told my wife she was expecting - it was a surprise for both of us. He added that the baby would be handicapped - perhaps deaf, blind, limbless or even all of these, and that she should abort, and as if to justify the abortion, he said we already had 5 children and neither of us had a job! My wife replied with decision: "**We are Catholics, and abortion for us is murder!**" The doctor insisted, saying his medical conscience would not allow him to bring the baby into the world. But what sort of medical conscience is it when it tries to eliminate a baby?!

After much insistence by the medical staff, and just as much denial on our part, the doctor in charge asked us to sign a declaration where we said we denied the proposal of abortion and assumed all the responsibility. We did not hesitate to sign the document. Then I went straight away to Fr. Majnaric, guardian of the convent in Vukovar, who congratulated us for our Christian choice in favour of life and **promised us his prayers.**

He then sent me to a doctor, who like us, was a member of the Third Order. She greeted me warmly and explained my wife's situation to me clearly, and also added that she knew of many similar cases where the children were born as healthy as could be.

On the 19th March 1968, in the hospital of Vukovar, my wife gave birth to a **healthy girl**, with not even a trace of jaundice, yet all the new born babes in the hospital were born with it. The Good Father had disposed for a happy event.

Life went on and brought us other burdens and crosses, till when, out of search for bread, we had to leave Vukovar on a terribly bitter walk that eventually led us to North America.

After many years and thanks to my pension, my wife and I thought it time to fix up our old house in Vukovar and move back home. The situation looked good, and in 1991 we voted in the referendum for Croatia's independence. We started making big plans for a definite return, but the devil had else in mind....

The shooting started - we remained till it became too dangerous. We certainly couldn't use a weapon to defend ourselves, given our age and health, so all we could do was get up and leave our home once more. So here we are again on the road to exile.

This time our departure wasn't so silent. All hell had broken out and we had to escape to save at least our lives. That we did, but how bitter it is to have to leave our city, our home! Our desire is to return as soon as

possible. But when will we get back? And where will we go? Will our home still be there?

Let be what will be, we are ready to accept everything that the Good God hands out to us, just as we have done so far. We are certain that His hand will protect us, just as it always has."

(from *Nasa Ognjista* - Jan./Feb. 1993)

Be filled with God's love to be freed of every negative feeling and become like Jesus - lambs that offer themselves

In Pescara between the 11-14 February, **Fr. Tomislav** guided a retreat for those who feel called to offer themselves to God through Mary for the salvation of the world and the realization of the Father's great plan of love for all humanity.

(There are 35 fraternities for these people in Italy. Angelo presented the experience of the one in Foggia. This fraternity has received approval by the local Bishop and can therefore be considered an example for the others.)

Fr. Tomislav affirmed: "A person who makes an offering of oneself has to make the Gospel become part of their life. There are two forces that accompany a person who follows the way of the Gospel: a positive force and a negative force. In fact, the Lord created man free and even God respects man's freedom. However He gives us indications to help us follow Him. The choice is up to us, so what we have to do is **eliminate the negativities** that arise in our hearts.

Negative feelings arise in the hearts of people who offer themselves, for example when they think that difficulties, sufferances, and illnesses are necessary for the salvation of others and so they need to be in a continuous state of sufferance. Without a doubt this way of thinking bears negative fruits. Doctors talk of somatization, and the same thing happens in our spiritual life: obsessions and fears can make us sick. Fanaticism is a sickness, being closed up against others and ourselves is a sickness. We have to eliminate from our ego all those things that impede us from opening ourselves up to God.

There is also a positive type of somatization. It's directing our life in a way that God's love in us consumes all our vices, our sicknesses and our trials. God's love was consumed on the cross; in offered souls, this consumation can come about in loving the cross. Only perfect love purifies everything.

When we adore the cross, Crucified Jesus, what are we adoring? Jesus or the Cross? If we adore the Cross, it will crush us; if we adore Jesus, Who defeated the cross (sin) then we will see our Saviour in the cross and He will save us. Jesus doesn't want sufferance in itself, but He permits sickness and pain so we can reach the light, and real joy. Jesus defeated wickedness with innocence, falseness with sincerity. That is what we have to look for, because through trials, He wants to lead us to purification of the heart.

Behind every wound is the lack of love. We have not received love and we are unable to give love. Dissatisfaction is fruit of badly channelled energy: a person shows his/her dissatisfaction through being envious, gossipy, angry, sick, etc. People that offer themselves have to be purified, channelled

by love. Superficiality and indifference is passive hate. **We can rise through the love of Jesus.**

Our soul needs love, it is in contact with the Spirit of Love, but our heart is like a filter: only Jesus' Heart and that of Mary's are able to support us and help us in a sincere conversion. People that offer themselves have to eliminate all their negative feelings, be ready for everything, even ending up on the cross, but feel supported by Jesus' love.

With the **positive force**, God's love is in our hearts, and it has to overcome all obstacles. Denying grace puts us in the dark. With Jesus' Passion and Death everything was consumed. For us this total love has to be the flame that burns everything. Love is descending on the earth, but enters prepared hearts. That is why we need to be totally immersed in God's grace.

Trials strengthen love and the fruits of love are peace, trust, joy and hope. We have to accept Jesus with love and do as the Gospel tells us to do, through prayer and hearts that are open to the action of the Holy Spirit.

In my spiritual life I can do nothing for myself, it is God Who constructs and so I leave everything to Him. Through constant prayer one can become an offered soul, consuming oneself with Jesus in the Eucharist, fount of every good." (C.F.V.)

Ivan's visit to Australia

The visit of Medjugorje seer, Ivan, accompanied by Fr. Slavko and Milona von Habsburg was very successful. It is estimated that in excess of 22,000 people attended the various venues in NSW alone.

On 11 February (feast day of Our Lady of Lourdes), Mass was celebrated in St Mary's Cathedral in Sydney. It was filled to capacity, spilling out onto the pavements. Fr. Slavko led the Rosary - each decade was begun with small children, some in national costume and said in their national language. The Croatian child brought back memories of the Rosary in Medjugorje.

At 6.40 pm Ivan received the apparition in a side chapel. The Mass that followed was concelebrated by many priests, and in his homily, Fr. Slavko spoke of Lourdes, Fatima and Medj. and made particular reference to the dreadful war in his homeland and the attack on the Catholic faith. He reminded us how Our Lady said **wars could be prevented through prayer and fasting and that the conflict was a result of us not taking Her messages seriously.**

Ivan addressed everyone after Mass and told of the early history of the apparitions and explained that Our Lady came to remind us that real peace (so badly needed in our personal lives and by the whole world) can only be found in God, through prayer, fasting and the Word of God. Ivan said how She blessed all those present and their families with outstretched arms.

Message given by Our Lady to Ivan for Australia (23 Jan):

"Dear children, Transmit to all that I am happy and joyful to see you in such a great number. I call you, dear children, in a special way to pray for peace together with Me, and pray for the plans which I wish to realize in the world. Your prayer is necessary to Me, dear children; decide to do good, work at what is good. (Thank you ...)"

From the *Medjugorje Sentinel*

SOLIDARITY

Take care of your own kin

We have received an **urgent appeal** from the **hospital in Mostar** for sanitary and medical supplies.

Our brothers and sisters in Bosnia are in dire need. For this reason deliveries of supplies continue, despite the difficulties involved in making them.

Contact your nearest Medjugorje or Caritas centre for information on how to help. If you wish to send your donation through us, please indicate your intention. Make cheques out to Echo of Medjugorje and send to: Fr. Angelo Mutti, Casella Postale 49, 46100 Mantova, Italy.

In England, donations may be sent to the **Medjugorje Appeal**, Unit J Lambs Business Park, Tilburstow Hill Rd, Sth Godstone, Surrey RH9 8JZ, England. Ph. 03-8827675.

For sponsorship of Croatian and Bosnian children:

For Italy and Australia contact Matteo Rossi, Casella Postale 54, 54100 Massa, Italy. (Indicate "Croatian children.")

In Great Britain contact Kathy & Clive Goble - ph. 0812- 783068.

Your donations for the month of February:

Medjugorje in the East (Echo in the East, evangelization of Russia, seminarists, etc.): Lit. 12,927,000;

Bosnia/Croatia: Lit. 28,179,000 (of which 14,700,000 for the monks in Medj. from Fr. T. Munari's mission in Mexico);

Radio Maria Poland: Lit. 2,465,000; *Sahel*, etc.: Lit. 720,000.

All these donations have already been forwarded to their destinations.

The French edition of Echo received the following amounts during the year 1992:

for *Echo* approx. 83 million, for *Bosnia* 22 million, for *Croatia* 32 million, for the *parish of Medj.* 7 million, for *Russia* 4 million, for *Radio Maria Poland* 2.5 million, *other*: 6.7 million.

The power of prayer and fasts

Taken from *Letters from Medjugorje* by Wayne Weible. After Victor and Vivienne had been to Medjugorje they knew what they had to do so his atheist mother (in her eighties and not well) would find Jesus before her death:

"The message and mission for Vivienne and myself was clear: we had to fast and pray. (...) But when I told my mother that we intended to pray and fast for her conversion, she told us in no uncertain terms to mind our own business! (...) With our fasts every Wednesday and Friday, we set as an intention her conversion to Jesus. Our kids joined us. With this kind of 'attack' we knew it would work!"

Victor laughed, and squaring his chair around so that he was looking right at me, he added: "Do you know, within six months my mother joined the church!" (She died 10 months later.)

Echo is free, but lives on your donations. If you would like to contribute, please send your cheques to: Echo of Medjugorje, Casella Postale 149, 46100 Mantova, Italy. Money may also be transferred to our bank account. Make payable to Fr. Angelo Mutti, Banca Agricola Mantovana, Ag.4, Mantova, Italy - Acc. no. 26641-1. If you prefer, you can send your donation to your local distributor who will see to sending it on to us. Thank you and God bless.

Winter scene in Medjugorje. Behind the snow covered mountains: the Bosnian tragedy

ECHO IN OTHER LANGUAGES

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Daily bus service to Medjugorje from Trieste. Departure time 6 pm from Trieste. Arrival in Medj. 9 am the next morning. Where: at the bus station in Trieste (adjacent to the train station). Another bus leaves Medj. every evening at 6 pm arriving in Trieste at 9 am the next morning. Cost: about 50,000 lire one way.

Off the bookshelf:

"Medjugorje, the message" by Wayne Weible and his latest release: "Letters from Medjugorje."

Check your local Christian bookshop.

IN THE FAMILY

Our thanks goes to all those who support us in our efforts with their prayers and expressions of encouragement. We were particularly moved by a letter from the young Bishop of Pontagrossa (Brazil), **Dom Murilo Krieger**: "I received Echo # 100 (with extraordinary rapidity) and read every word of it - it was truly excellent! The material you propose for reflection is indeed rich and profoundly spiritual. Keep up the good work." (12 March 1993)

A letter from Algeria says: "We are now spreading Our Lady's messages among the Muslims." Moving testimonies also come from Africa.

We thank those who send in material for us to publish. We can't/don't always use it: lack of space, not in line with our spirituality, different subject matter, etc.

Colin Macnaught (director of the *Medj. Sentinel* in Sydney) has been very ill of late. Our thoughts go to him and his family. May Our Blessed Mother, for Whom they work, bless them with God's peace and joy.

Echo continues to be blessed. The Portuguese edition has now reached 60,000 copies and the French one 23,000 copies. The English and Spanish editions continue to grow. Thank you Mary for taking care of your instrument. Unemployment is spreading and our expenses are greater, but the money needed to publish the various editions of Echo has never failed to come in.

Blessed be the Name of the Lord Who takes care of the poor so they in turn may be of help to others.

With the help of Our Lady of Sorrows and St. Joseph, let us continue in our Lenten conversion so that at Easter we shall be joyful testimony of the Resurrection of Jesus. I bless you all in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.