



# ECHO OF MARY

## Queen of peace

### 145

May-June 1999 - [Info](#)

## Our Lady's message of 25 March 1999:

**Dear Children, I invite you to prayer with the heart. In particular, my Children, I invite you to pray for the conversion of sinners, of those who pierce my Heart and the Heart of my Son Jesus with the sword of hatred and daily blasphemy.**

**Let us pray, Children, for those who do not want to know God's Love, though they are in the Church. Let us pray that they convert, so the Church may rise in love. It is only through love and prayer, my Children, that you can live this time which has been given to you for conversion. Place God first, and then the Risen Jesus will become your friend. Thank you for responding to my call.**

## Pray for sinners, so the Church may rise in love

At the time of the message we were preparing for Easter, and in her concern for all people Mary was asking her children to take part in the redemption with a double commitment. 1. In February's message she called us to meditate with her on the Lord's Passion and to take part in His suffering by offering something of our own.

2. In this message Mary calls us to care about the conversion of sinners (in and out of the Church) who pierce both Jesus' heart and her own. In choosing to sin they hurt themselves with a life of unhappiness and a future of eternal damnation. Mary, mother of mercy, knows how God loves them and how much they cost Jesus; and she doesn't want her Son's blood to be spilt in vain.

Again she asks us to pray with the heart, while remaining in silence under God's gaze so we can hear what He has to tell us, and let ourselves be penetrated by His sentiments. Then we will understand His love for sinners and we will pray for their conversion.

Mary mentions two sins in particular: hatred and daily blasphemy. Blasphemy is not just insulting God, but is also the public exclusion of God from human events and projects. Consequently we have the nonsense that circulates about God and His law. Partly because of this individual blasphemy goes practically unnoticed. But the Word of God is clear: when Moses was told that a person in the camp had blasphemed, he asked God what should be done, and God replied: Let him be stoned (Lev 24:10). Oh you who blaspheme, is that how you pay back your benefactor?

Hatred is the consequence of ignoring God the Father and His love for all men. From hatred comes discord and division, and is blind to everything and everyone, said Mary on 31st July 1986. It blinds man to the point that he is unable to see the difference between good and bad. Perhaps She was thinking of the genocide in Kosovo. Hatred generates conflicts, social struggles and irremediable divisions even within

families. Just see how easy it is today for man to kill. Next to hatred comes aversion for others, envy and jealousy. Forgiveness is the great medicine with which God's grace heals. Father, show atheists, nonbelievers and blasphemers how you love them!

My Children, let us pray for those who do not want to know God's love, though they are in the Church. Hence there are those who are "far away" who do not know God's love (Mary to Mirjana), and those in the Church who do not want to know God's love. These are content to formally "belong" to the Church and be socially involved, but do nothing for the conversion of their own hearts. These people honour me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. What could the reason be? God's love is binding, in which we have obligations both towards ourselves and others. Don't some also refuse the apparitions because they would feel obliged to convert? Hence the break amongst Christians, members of the same Body. What sign can we be for the world if Christianity means to love one another? Where is the fire that Jesus came to light in the world?

Let us pray that they convert and the Church may rise in love. Our Blessed Mom had never used such a hard expression. May it be a stimulus for us all; but for the Church to rise, each of us must first rise. This time was given to us for conversion, Mary says with the apostle Paul (cf. Rom 2:5). Love is the end and the proof of conversion. It is only through love and prayer that we can live this time of »» grace. If we put God first in our lives all this will come as a consequence, and we will truly rise and with us also the Church will rise.

Fr. Angelo

## **Our Lady's message of 25 April 1999:**

**Dear Children, also today I call you to prayer. My Children, be joyful bearers of peace and love in this world without peace. Witness with fasting and prayer that you are mine and that you live my messages. Pray and seek.**

**I pray and intercede on your behalf before God, that you may convert and that your life and behaviour may always be Christian. Thank you for responding to my call.**

## **Be my witnesses and joyful bearers of peace**

The world's destiny seems to be in the hands of the powerful and their deadly weapons. Appearances, however, can be misleading, for after Jesus' Passion and Death, He rose, and before His "army" of little, humble, meek and suffering people, he will destroy also his last enemy: death (1 Co 15:26).

Above all, Mary invites us to pray so that we might have peace. War has its roots sunk deeply into our hearts, as far as the original sin when man first broke with God. Peace is a pure gift from God; it is the fruit of Jesus' death and resurrection: Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you (Jn 14:27). It is a gift which man can accept or refuse, and as with all God's gifts, it grows when shared. If it is not shared it wanes and is eventually lost.

The Risen Jesus presents Himself to the community with the prayerful greeting: peace be with you. We too, in prayer, can accept God's peace and feel it reverberate in our heart to make us become joyful bearers of peace and love in this world without peace. To bear Jesus' peace and love means to possess and to communicate His Life to others. His Life is grace, but a person who has sinned cannot have peace,

nor can he pray efficaciously for peace, or give it to others.

Thus, more than talking, or offering material help, one must witness Jesus, and announce His life. To conform to Jesus, the meek and immaculate lamb, is beyond our strength; it can only come as a gift from the Father and His Spirit. If we make Mary's "Fiat" ours, and Jesus' "yes" ours, we can be as lambs amongst wolves, grains of wheat buried in the earth to give fruit, bread which fills those who hunger for justice. This is what Christian behaviour involves.

Since Mary, though, is Queen of Peace, peace and salvation will advance under her motherly glance. This is why she wants her children to be her witnesses in the world, and even more so, she wants it to be clear to others that we belong to her by wearing the distinctive sign of her messages, in particular prayer and fasting.

Fasting implies sobriety in all one's behaviour, so it is the antithesis of the race to success, to wealth, and to power, and thus to the overpowering of others. Fasting means to be essential, thus, together with prayer, it is a necessary element required to seek God, just as it is to seek peace: Pray and seek.

Mary is with us, she tells us once again. She prays and intercedes for us so that we may convert and that our conversion be serious, continuous and persevering. That will make us salt of the earth and light of the world.

Nuccio

## **Divine Mercy: age-old revelation is always new**

**There is a profound tie between the devotion to the Divine Mercy (which has particularly marked this century) and the call by the Queen of Peace, which, when accepted, represents its highest and fullest expression.**

## **"Dives in misericordia" God's merciful love revealed in Scripture**

To understand the meaning of the devotion to Divine Mercy, we quote from the great Encyclical which John Paul II released in the second year of his pontificate to proclaim to the world the greatness of the Father's merciful Love. "Dives in misericordia" is especially pertinent in this last year of preparation for the Great Jubilee.

Above all, the Pope says: "God, rich in mercy, is the One Whom Jesus revealed to us as Father. In His own flesh, He made Him known to us" (cf. Jn 1:18; Heb 1:1). The Pope continues, citing from the Old Testament: Already in the OT love is made known through the mercy the Lord has for His people: He is their Father.. and He is also the husband of her to whom the prophet gives a new name: "beloved, for she has obtained pity" (Hos 2:3). It is through mercy that the primacy and superiority of love over justice are made known.

**The Name of God** - In the OT there is a passage in which God reveals His Name to Moses who asked Him to be merciful with the people after they adored a golden calf, and to renew His Covenant with Israel. "Then the Lord passed before Moses and proclaimed: The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin..." (Ex 34:6-7). However, the OT is full of examples of the Lord's mercy. Psalm 103 says: "As the heavens are high above the earth, so great is his steadfast love... As a father pities his children, so the Lord pities those who fear him." Psalm 136 repeats:

"his steadfast love endures for ever."

Only Jesus, though, fully reveals to us God's identity: "Whoever has seen me has seen the Father." The Pope continues: Divine justice revealed in Christ's cross is born from love and in love it is fulfilled. The divine dimension of redemption is actuated through giving the creative force in man back to Love, and it is thanks to this that he gains new access to the fullness of life and holiness which comes from God. In this manner redemption bears within itself the revelation of mercy in its completeness.

Through the cross on Calvary we see how the One who loves desires to give himself. Also man is called by Christ's cross to give not only himself to God, but also the entire visible world so it can participate in divine life. The entire Gospel points to the reality expressed by John: "God is love" (1Jn 4:8-16).

Divine love and human love - Merciful love cannot be compared to human love (message 20.11.86).

Merciful Love is Trinitarian Love; that century-old mystery of communion between the Father and the Son in the Holy Spirit offered to man in Jesus' paschal mystery. "Obedient to the Father until death on the cross, he is exalted by God with a name above every other name" (cf. Phil 2:8).

The gift of communion with Trinitarian life is continually offered by the Church through sacramental grace. In this time of special grace, it is also obtained with particular intensity through the intercession of the Queen of Peace for those she has chosen to be instruments of the Father's mercy for the world's salvation. Thus, by offering their lives, they become "joyful hands outstretched by the Father towards those who do not believe" (25.11.97), or those who have not known God's love.

### **Sublime "revenge" by Merciful Love in century where Satan is most active**

Without a doubt our century has been placed "under the sign of the divine mercy," said the Pope at Sr. Faustina's Beatification ceremony. This century has seen such abysses of violence and darkness as was probably never seen in previous ages. Just think of the death camps; the gulags; the 50 million who died in WWII; the victims of Stalin and Hitler; the recent wars in the Balkans; the rapid expansion of ideologies which go against God and against man; and atheism in its practical and theoretical forms which dominate entire (traditionally Christian) regions of the world.

At the same time, in this our century, there has been an enormous multiplication of great spiritual signs and lights of grace. This is the surprising "revenge by God" which confounds the wise of this world and seems to proclaim the victory of God's merciful love over all evil powers which work in man.

### **Great witnesses of merciful love in the 20th century**

Amongst all the great heralds and witnesses of this love roused by the Holy Spirit, special light is radiated by St. Therese of the Child Jesus (though she died 1 Oct. 1897), who offered herself as a victim of love to the Holy Trinity for the world's salvation. The development of the devotion to merciful love in this century definitely owes much to Our Lady's apparitions in Fatima from 13 May to 13 October 1917. These represent a fundamental stage in the great cycle of Marian apparitions beginning with the Miraculous Medal in 1830 in Paris.

The essential contents of the messages of Fatima were given to the young visionaries starting from the first apparition on 13 May: "Do you want to offer yourselves to God in reparation of sins and to petition for the conversion of sinners?" Upon their affirmative answer Our Lady opened her hands to effuse upon them a light so intense that it penetrated their souls. It was the gift of particular fullness of Trinitarian love which can be accepted only by those who decide to offer themselves unconditionally to God, as

Mary did.

Hence, the essential condition to fully accept the gift of God's Mercy is to become not only a passive object of mercy, but an active instrument of this love. That is, decide to offer one's life to God in an unconditioned way so that He can give Himself to us, and through us, fulfil His plans of salvation for many of our brethren. It is the great divine call of offering one's life for the world's salvation, and is the heart of the spiritual call by Our Lady at Medjugorje.

Another great herald chosen by God to proclaim to the world the infinite Mercy of the Father was Sr. Faustina Kowalska (1905-1938) who was beatified the Sunday after Easter in 1993. Other great witnesses of God's merciful love in our century have been Madre Speranza (Mother Hope) from Spain (born 1893) who lived and worked in Umbria, Italy where the great Shrine of Merciful Love is now built; St. Maximilian Kolbe who worked to spread devotion and consecration to Mary Immaculate (he died in Auschwitz); Padre Pio from Pietrelcina, who was very recently proclaimed Blessed and is known worldwide; and St. Leopold Mandic, of whom we talk in a following article.

### **Call by Queen of Peace in Medjugorje**

The spiritual sign which fully expresses the great design of grace with an extraordinary effusion of the Merciful love in the later decades of this century is represented by the continued presence of Mary in various places; above all through her apparitions in Medjugorje. Of these, Mary says, the messages contain the source of all graces (8.5.86). It is from here that rivers of light and life have continued to flow for all mankind for nearly 18 years.

The main message of Medjugorje, which is a continuation of that of Fatima (25.8.91), is centred on the call for those chosen by God to offer their lives to Him through Mary's Immaculate Heart for the world's salvation: I want you to understand that God has chosen each one of you for his plan to save mankind (25.01.87).

Mary invites us to be totally surrendered to God, to witness with our life God's love, to sacrifice our life for the salvation of mankind - and ensures us that the Father will give us the promised reward and she, the good Mother, will hold us by the hand: I am with you; do not fear... If you pray Satan cannot be a hindrance to you... Pray, and may the Rosary be always in your hands as a sign that you belong to me (25.02.88). This is a time of special grace (25.06.89). Mary invites us to be authentic instruments of mercy, to become bearers and witnesses of her peace in this world without peace (25.07.90). She invites us to discover the indelible spiritual joy of self-offering unknown to the world and tepid Christians, that our life may become joy (25.01.90).

Above all Mary reminds us that our life is meaningful and valuable only when given out of love: Do not forget that your life is not yours, but a gift with which you should give joy to others and guide them towards eternal life (25.12.92).

G. Ferraro

## **"Return to primitive fervour" Our Lady's teachings on Confession**

On the second day of the apparitions, 26 June 1981, Mary revealed to Ivanka the essential reason for her appearance on the earth: "...I wish to stay with you to convert you and to reconcile the entire world." That

same day, on her way down from Podbrdo, Marija saw the Blessed Virgin in tears. She was repeatedly saying: "Peace, peace, peace. Be reconciled. Reconcile yourselves with God and with each other. For this you must believe, pray, fast and confess!"

The call to conversion is the core of Mary's message in Medjugorje. The surest way to remain on the way of conversion - to continue the "metanoia" (change of thinking) is the sacrament of Reconciliation. Mary repeatedly insists on the importance of a frequent and systematic practice of this sacrament: "You must invite Christians to confess once a month, above all on the first Saturday of the month" (6 Aug. 1982). That same day, the Feast of the Transfiguration, Mary pointed out its healing effect on spiritual ailments of which the Western Church suffers: "Monthly confession will be the remedy for the Western Church. Tell the Western world!"

In December 1983 Mary added: "Entire portions of the Church will be healed if the faithful confess once a month."

On the eve of the Feast of the Annunciation 1985, with all her motherly concern, Mary called for confession prior to all the important liturgical feasts: "Today I am requesting you all to go to Confession, even if you went only a few days ago. I want you to live my Holy Day deep within you; but you cannot unless you surrender yourselves entirely to God. So I am asking you all to become reconciled with God!" This message seems also to indicate the importance of a continued purification of heart to allow one to live in full communion with God.

The last day of 1983, in a message to Jelena, Our Lady renewed her call to confession to be able to fully accept the fruits of the new extraordinary holy year proclaimed by the Church. "For you I desire that this new year be truly holy. On this day then, go to confession and purify yourselves for this new year" (31.12.83).

Besides the importance of frequent confession, Our Lady also stresses the importance of a suitable inner disposition: "Do not confess out of habit, just to remain the same. No, that is not good. Confession must give new zeal to your faith; it must be a stimulation for it and bring you closer to Jesus. If confession does not mean anything to you, then in truth, you will convert with difficulty" (to Jelena 7.12.83).

This last message, grave as it is, serves as a warning to all those who treat confession lightly.

The spiritual practice of confession, when accurate and frequent, surely represents an element of fundamental importance in the realization of an authentic conversion. The contents of Mary's impassioned message can be found also in the Pope's Encyclical "Reconciliatio e paenitentia" which for unknown reasons seems to have been widely ignored by vast numbers of faithful, lay people and even priests.

Instead, in her motherly concern for the joy and peace of her "dear children," Our Lady exhorts all to return to the practice of general confession which today has fallen into disuse and even receives disapproval by some confessors. "Dear Children, I urge you, give to the Lord all your past, all the evil which has built up in your hearts. I desire that each of you be happy; but, with sin, no one can be" (25.02.87).

The same call, accompanied by moving spiritual tenderness, is contained in a beautiful message on preparation for Christmas. "Dear Children, also today I invite you to prepare your hearts for these days in which the Lord particularly desires to cleanse you of all your past sins. You cannot do it on your own, my Children, so I am here to help you. Pray, my Children. Only this way will you be able to see all the evil that is in you, and offer it to the Lord so He can purify your hearts completely" (4.12.86).

It should also be noted that Mary indicates confession as a necessary means to fully accept the gifts of peace, truth and joy which Jesus wants to pour out onto the world through those chosen by Mary. "Jesus desires to fill your hearts with peace and joy. You cannot have peace if you are not at peace with Jesus; that is why I invite you to confession, that Jesus may be your truth and your peace" (25.1.95).

Confession is surely the most effective spiritual means to radically disarm the enemy who - it is understandable - does all he can to discredit and hamper confession. Thus, in these times of the decisive and final confrontation between the children of the Light and the children of the darkness confession is both a privileged instrument of light in the hands of the Woman dressed in the sun, and a precious fruit of the spiritual battle that She herself untiringly wages against the "father of lies."

It should not be forgotten, either, that the Queen of Peace has indicated that victory is had through her Immaculate Heart. "Pray then, my Children, so that you will have the strength to put into practice everything I tell you. I am with you and I love you" (25.1.95).

B.F.

## **Feast of Divine Mercy**

Divine Mercy Sunday was celebrated on 11 April in St. Peter's Square. Cardinal Angelini presided at the solemn Eucharistic concelebration attended by nearly 40,000 people from around the world. In union with the Holy Father's intentions, they prayed for peace in Kosovo.

The Pope said: "This Sunday - the Octave of Easter - is also called Divine Mercy Sunday. In this year dedicated to God the Father it is an excellent occasion to enter into the authentic Jubilee spirit. I am very pleased that many priests and faithful have gathered this morning in St. Peter's Square for this celebration.

I warmly encourage you to be apostles of divine mercy, like Bl. Faustina Kowalska, wherever you live and work."

## **Apostle of Mercy St. Leopold Mandic**

A Capuchin, he incarnated the parable of the Merciful Father who awaited his prodigal son. Hence, the Pope's call to confession in the Holy Year makes St. Leopold an exceptional model of that ministry through which the Father wants to unveil His Heart to His sinful children.

The cell of mercy - St. Leopold, Croatian, was born in Castelnuovo on the Dalmation coast in 1866. Only 1.35 metres tall, he suffered poor health and limped because of arthritis which deformed his feet; because of his speech impediment he was assigned permanently to the confessionals. The convent in Padua where he lived and confessed for 30 years and where his incorrupt body is kept has become a place of pilgrimage.

In that cell he heard confessions for 30 years, for 10-15 hours daily. However, the city of Padua took some time to notice how great he truly was. St. Leopold said of himself: "I really am quite ridiculous." And that's what the other monks, and the people thought of him. Even the children made fun of him and used to put stones in his hood. They would call him "an ignorant confessor, too indulgent, who absolves without discernment." But the people of Padua, and not only, gradually started lining up outside his confessional. Some had even been sent by Padre Pio who would say: "You have a saint in your city; why come to me?!"

Shortly before he died, St. Leopold prophesied: "The city will be bombed many times and this convent severely hit, but not this cell. Here in this cell God the Master has used much mercy. It must remain as a monument to His goodness." The bombings of 1944 destroyed the convent, but St. Leopold's confessional cell remained intact.

What went on in that cell? If a person was hesitant, St. Leopold would quickly get up to greet him with open arms and say: "Please sit down; don't fear. You know, I'm a monk and a priest, but I'm a real wreck. If it weren't for God the Master (St. Leopold always called Him this) who holds my reigns, I'd be worse than others..."

He didn't take the Sacrament lightly, though, and at times would keep people at length to help them confess. Neither was he mild of character when someone tried to excuse or minimize his sins. On the other hand he was extremely sweet when the penitent humbly acknowledged his sins. The following episode explains it all. One day a man continued to defend himself for his many sins. Fr. Leopold tried everything with him, but in vain. Faced with the penitent's derisive manners, he stood up and exclaimed: "Go away! Get out! You have sided with the damned!" The man turned pale with fear, went down on his knees and cried bitterly. St. Leopold then helped him back up, embraced him and said: "See, now you are my brother again."

At times he would confess even with a fever, or would skip his meals upon seeing the line up of people waiting to confess. Quite often, once the confessions were over, he would remain in lengthy prayer instead of sleeping. To many penitents he promised: "I will do penance for you; I will pray for you." Once he said: "If Crucified Jesus should reproach me for being over-indulgent, I shall say to Him: but You set this poor example for me. I have not yet become as mad as You as to die for souls!"

Apostle of Unity - Behind his vocation there was a secret. "When I was 22 years old," he said of himself, "I heard God's voice call me to pray and meditate for the return of the Orthodox to Catholic unity." He made a vow, and told everyone about it, hoping that his desire to return to Croatia would be fulfilled. At one stage it seemed it would. Rijeka became part of Italian territory and Leopold was to be sent there, but the people protested so much that the bishop of Padua begged the Provincial Father to keep him in Padua. One fellow monk queried his lack of disappointment, and St. Leopold replied: "After Mass a holy person came to me and said: 'Father, Jesus told me to tell you that each soul you help here in the confessional is your East.' " After that he would treat each person as though the conversion to unity by his people depended on that person. At Holy Mass, which he always offered for this intention, he would suffer physically for the break in unity to the point that his tears would dampen the altar cloth.

God granted miracles through his person, but he always said he had nothing to do with them. "What blame have I," he would say, "if people come with such faith that God the Master grants their requests?" And he could read into people's souls. Once it happened that a man who had not confessed for years had been taken to St. Leopold by friends. His intention was to line up as the others did, and then when everyone had gone he also would leave without entering the confessional. But all of a sudden St. Leopold came out of the confessional and went straight up to him, saying: "Come in, sir, I have been waiting for you." And once inside: "You didn't want to come, did you .. but don't worry, I'll tell you what you did..." And then after: "Is that what you did? And now you are repentant, aren't you. Then God forgives you for everything. Thank you for coming, for bringing me so much joy; but do come again. I'll be waiting for you. Come, and we'll be good friends."

Fr. Leopold died on 20 July 1942, while reciting the last words of the Hail Holy Queen. The bronze statue of the Saint near the confessionals in Medjugorje seems to protect and inspire confessors in their ministry of mercy.

Nicola



# The Jubilee, Year of Mercy

## What are we to do?

It had never occurred that a Jubilee be celebrated between two millenniums. Never before had a jubilee attracted so many people either, or that human society should have so many means of transport and accommodation as it does today.

The Christian Jubilee is derived from the Jewish one, though they differ in many ways. For Jews a jubilee was a special year of remission of guilt and sin, of return of lands to original owners, and liberation of slaves (Lev 25:10). Its scope was social.

Instead, for Christians the celebration of a jubilee (or holy) year is entirely spiritual in meaning. It is effecting reconciliation with God, and implies remission of sin and liberation from punishment due. How it began - In the year 1300 Pope Boniface VIII, inspired by his uncle Blessed Andrea Conti (a holy Franciscan), indicted a year of special prayer and penance to promote the sanctification of moral behaviour. It was the beginning of the new century and he announced that plenary indulgence would be granted to all who came to Rome on pilgrimage to pray on the tombs of the two great apostles Peter and Paul.

Originally occurring every 50th year, the Catholic Church has more recently observed years of jubilee every 25 years. These are known as ordinary jubilee years, but extraordinary holy years have also been indicted on special occasions.

The Jubilee of the year 2000 will be celebrated contemporarily in Rome and in all the Churches of the world. It will begin the night of Christmas 1999 with solemn celebrations in Rome, Jerusalem and Bethlehem. At the same time it will also begin in all Catholic Cathedrals. In St. Paul's Basilica the opening of the Holy Door will take place on 18 January to coincide with the Prayer Week for Christian Unity. [The "holy doors" of the four major basilicas of Rome (customarily bricked up) are opened for the duration of a jubilee.] The Jubilee will end on Epiphany (6 Jan.) 2001. Thus, Christmas time, during which we celebrate the birth of the Redeemer, is the core of the Holy Year.

Fundamental conditions: reconciliation with God (confession, holy communion, special prayer), acquisition of plenary indulgence.

Indulgence tied to a jubilee can be acquired only once a day (but every day) and can be applied to oneself or as suffrage for the dead. Fundamental conditions are: confession, holy communion and the prayer said for the Pope's intentions which witnesses communion with the Church. Other special conditions are:

- 1) In Rome - a holy pilgrimage to one of the four major basilicas (St. John Lateran, St. Mary Major, St. Paul Outside the Walls, St. Peter); or to one of the following churches: Holy Cross of Jerusalem, St. Lorenzo al Varano, or the Shrine of the Divine Love; or to one of the catacombs; followed by participation in Holy Mass or some other liturgical celebration.
- 2) In the Holy Land - same conditions are observed by visiting the Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, the Basilica of the Nativity in Bethlehem, or the Basilica of the Annunciation in Nazareth.
- 3) In the Dioceses - same conditions are observed by making pilgrimages to a Catholic Cathedral or other church or shrine as might be indicated by the local bishop.
- 4) In every place (note the novelty) - by visiting for a certain period brethren in need, such as the sick, the imprisoned, the lonely and the elderly, etc. Another novelty is this: given that the spirit of the jubilee is the spirit of penance, indulgence can be acquired also through a generous act of penance such as giving up smoking or alcoholic drinks for at least one day, or by fasting. Another way is through a generous work of charity. Of course, these must be accompanied by the general conditions of confession, Eucharist

and prayer for the Pope's intentions.

**The real scope** - It is clear that such ample possibility during this Holy Year is aimed at offering the faithful the chance to put their souls and lives in order with the Lord. Hence, it is an impulse to help us become more consistent to, and to live in full those Christian values we profess.

The obligations listed above are all part of Jesus' teachings and are for our own good; that is, for our eternal salvation where the "Jubilee" will be total and eternal. That is why the Jubilee is offered to all, rich and poor, healthy and sick. Far from being an excursion, it is the start of a journey of true conversion, which involves penance and the remission of all punishment for past sins. It is the start of a new walk, a new life for the future. Fr. Gabriel Amorth

## News from the blessed land

### **Our Lady to Mirjana: "I want to lead you out of today's darkness."**

On Thursday, 18 March, Our Lady's apparition to Mirjana took place in the playing field at the Cenacolo Community. Many were present. The apparition took place at 10.14 am and lasted 6 minutes. Our Lady spoke to Mirjana about the secrets, but secrets remain secrets. Mirjana said Our Lady blessed all those present and of course all those united in prayer. The message was:

Dear Children, I desire you to entrust your hearts to me, that I may conduct you on the way which leads to light and eternal life. I do not want your hearts to be in today's darkness. I will help you; I will be with you on this way in which one discovers God's love and mercy. As Mother, I ask you to allow me to do it. Thank you for responding to my call.

In this message, as in all the other messages, Our Lady desires us to entrust our hearts to her, for she wants to lead us to the light and eternal life. Hence, we must let Our Lady guide us.

What is this darkness in our heart? If I cannot see the gifts Our Lord gave me, and I destroy them; if I cannot see my sin and negative behaviour, then I am enclosed in darkness. If I see only the wrong in others and am unable to see the good, then I am enclosed in darkness. To free oneself of this darkness means to enter into the light. Our Lady also ensures us that she is with us and wants to guide us on the way in which we can discover God's love and mercy. This is the intention for which Our Lady prays with Mirjana on the 2nd of every month.

"As Mother I ask you to allow me to do it." How can this not touch our hearts? The problem is our freedom. In the Name of the Lord Mary offers us everything that we desire: light, eternal life, love and mercy. She offers it all to us so we can be freed from the darkness, but we have the freedom to say "no" to all this.

This is the mystery of sin. So let us decide right now, and together with Mary say to the Lord: "Thy will be done."

Fr. Slavko

## "Defend Medjugorje!"

That is what the Holy Father told Fr. Jozo when he visited him, and it is also the exhortation shared by the 150 participants from 10 different countries in the Annual Seminar for guides of pilgrimages to Medjugorje held in Neum (Croatia) from 28 February to 5 March.

Defend Medjugorje in a pilgrimage means above all to make sure that one's personal response to the Virgin's messages is faithful. It means to stress the essential, the place and the messages with a spirit of humility, docility and surrender to Mary. It also means to defend the rights Our Lady has over each pilgrim's heart. In this sense, the participants of the Seminar made proposals so that a pilgrimage programme will conform to Our Lady's desires.

From the Italian group the following was suggested:

1. the parish organize testimonies by visionaries and monks for pilgrims;
2. the parish ensure a permanent presence of a priest for confession and liturgical celebrations for each language group;
3. the parish take more care that all pilgrims be involved in the evening programme, at present mostly in Croatian;
4. more attention be given to the moment of the apparition by the person leading the Rosary;
5. the Chapel of Adoration be opened in the mornings for those unable to attend other activities;
6. two footpaths be made leading from the church to the two hills.

Amongst other things a study was made of the Vatican document, "Pilgrimages in the Jubilee of the Year 2000." A theological and pastoral guide for pilgrimages, it contains precious indications on how to make pilgrimages true occasions for spiritual growth. (Alberto Bonifacio)

**Easter in Medjugorje** - During the Holy Week and Easter, the flow of pilgrims was slightly less than previous years. There were, however, new groups. For the thousands present on Holy Thursday, Good Friday and Holy Saturday, celebrations were organized in ten different languages. Amongst foreign pilgrims, the most numerous were those from Germany, Austria and France. Exceptionally numerous were those from all over Croatia and neighbouring parishes. During the evenings about 20 priests were available for confession.

During Lent 230 pilgrims took part in 5 different prayer and fasting seminars. Organized in language groups, they were led by Fr. Slavko and held at the Domus Pacis prayer house.

**Fr. Slavko's missionary voyage** - On 19 March Fr. Slavko visited Croatian prisoners in Den Haag. The meeting lasted 4 hours, during which the prisoners made their Easter confession and attended Mass. They are always grateful for visitors, especially from Medjugorje.

On the 20th, Fr. Slavko held a prayer meeting in the national shrine of Belgium, Banneux where Our Lady appeared as Mother of the Poor in 1932-33 and called for prayer for the conversion of sinners. The programme began at 10 am and ended at 6 pm with adoration and healing prayer. Many prayer groups attended. In all there were 3,000 people.

The day after a prayer meeting was held in Eindhoven (Holland) organized by the Crucified and Wounded Love Community. A young and active community, its mother house is in Maastricht. It spreads the Medjugorje message.

**NOTICE** - With daylight saving, the evening prayer programme in Medjugorje now begins at 6 pm with the Rosary, followed by Holy Mass at 7 pm. Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament is held on Thursdays after Holy Mass, and on Wednesdays and Fridays from 10-11 pm. The Rosary on the hill of apparitions begins at 3 pm on Sundays; and the Way of the Cross at 3 pm on Fridays on Krizevac.

(From the Press Bulletin)

## Mother accepts life and is healed

Among the healings notified, the story of Marilyn, 37 years old, particularly struck me. After the birth of her first son she began to lose her hearing. Her doctors in Paris advised her not to have any more children. Four years later, Marilyn fell pregnant and the doctors advised her to abort. Marilyn refused, and when little John was born, in the Spring of '97, she lost her hearing completely. She never felt sorry for having sacrificed her hearing so that her baby could be born. At the end of March she came to Medjugorje to offer her baby to the Blessed Virgin. During Mass Marilyn began to hear the organ playing; since then her hearing is normal. Our Lady desired to compensate her for her courage in choosing life! With great joy Marilyn is now able to hear the first words of her baby.

"Lack of trust inflicts wounds onto God's heart!" - Father Xavier P., a young priest recently in Medjugorje left us the following testimony: "The other day the Lord made me understand the true meaning of the sacrament of reconciliation. On meeting my spiritual father I told him that since I had confessed the other day, I had nothing new to say.

However, he said to me that confession is not "having something to say," but is putting oneself at the foot of Jesus' Cross to gather the mercy which flows out from His Heart. So I knelt down and said: "Lord, here I am at the foot of your cross to ask forgiveness for my every sin and to draw from your mercy." Then, enveloped by God's love, I said something that I had never thought of before: "I ask forgiveness for my lack of trust in You." And I understood how lack of trust is a terrible wound in God's heart."

4th international retreat for priests. The theme is "Priests at the service of life." It will take place in Medjugorje from 30 June to 6 July 1999. Many are the priests who have found the meaning of their vocation at these retreats; so send all those you know!(From Sr. Emmanuel's diary)

## Tragedy in Kosovo and Serbia

Each day we are shown the tragedy of the Kosovar refugees (nearly one million each month) who are brutally sent out of their land, and the systematic destruction of military and non-military plants belonging to the Serbs. The victims are countless. Far from making superficial judgements, we know that this war is the "cruel face" of Satan who "wants war" (25.3.93). "Not only does he want to destroy human lives, but the very planet" (25.1.91). His accomplices are those people who thirst for power and are full of hatred.

Diplomatic efforts, or the destruction of the enemy cannot produce peace; for revenge calls revenge, and the danger is that the conflict will spread. Only God is capable of everything, truly everything. He brings the counsel of the nations to nought (Ps 33). When He wants He makes wars cease ... and says: be still, and know that I am God (Ps 46). God knows when and how to intervene so that on the earth, which is His, peace will reign as it does in heaven, and God will be glorified also in humanity: his glory is living man!

Mary exhorts: take hold of the Rosary.. with prayer and fasting even wars can be stopped (25.4.92). Let her army be mobilized then, and with her weapons Satan's army will be defeated. Mary cannot make the victory hers without the help of us who have responded to her call.

## Pope's Letter to Alexei II

A warm embrace between the Patriarch of Moscow and the Pope's representative took place in Belgrade after years of cold relations between the Orthodox and Catholics. The apostolic Nuncio, amid general astonishment, was the first to receive the Patriarch's greeting. In the letter which the Nuncio handed over to the Patriarch the Pope says: "All who profess the Gospel of peace have the duty of declaring with one voice that every form of violence, ethnic cleansing, deportation of peoples, and their exclusion from society cannot be considered as a way to reach civilized solutions to problems..."

The Pope said he was comforted by the Patriarch's voyage to proclaim the Easter message of peace and express Christian solidarity with all the victims of the persecution and violence. He added that he hopes his visit will be fruitful and will help to bring consolation to the human suffering.

Pope is sure - On 19th November 1997, John Paul II declared: "It will not be darkness to reign in the Year 2000; the new century will be enveloped in God's love. It will be like a time of grace, like the fulfilment of a plan of love for all humanity and for each of us." Then, making St. Augustine's words his, he continued: "Do not fear, it will not be the end of an old world, but the beginning of a new world."

Vicka recommends that we seek peace in our hearts through prayer, because it is the only way for the situation in Kosovo to improve. She told pilgrims: "Our Lady said that too much is said about the war, and people do not pray enough. Agitation and fear do not help, but to the contrary, are used by the enemy." Let us become bearers of peace and put into practice what Our Lady has been teaching us for 18 years.

Fr. Jozo proposes 9 novenas as a prayer for peace, beginning 18 May (the Pope's birthday) till 6 August, with the daily recitation of the 3 Rosaries and fasting on Wednesdays and Fridays. In the gravest of times, Mary has always intervened to answer the unanimous prayer of her people.

The Oasis of Peace Community also proposes a chain of weekly adoration for peace in Kosovo. Fax Italy 0881-963464

**Help Kosovar Refugees** - Also the parish of Medjugorje accepts donations for the Kosovar refugees. Send to bank account: "Medjugorje-Mir", Medjugorje, Privredna Banka Zagreb d.d., Rackoga 6, Zagreb, Croatia; acc. no. 7090-...-9982800-924204. Indicate "Help for Kosovo".

"Due to conflicts in Serbia and Kosovo many pilgrims fear to travel to Medjugorje, yet everything is calm in Herzegovina, and Kosovo and Macedonia are quite a distance away. The Croatian airports have been opened once again and pilgrims have never experienced any trouble."

(Fr. Slavko)

## From the Church of the Poor and Persecuted

"Malnutrition, illiteracy, unemployment, drug and alcohol use, and violence in the homes and on the street. That was what the missionaries from the Community of Villaregia met when they arrived in Campo Limpo, a crowded slum on the outskirts of São Paulo in Brazil where suffering and misery are

daily bread. Homicide, the first cause of mortality, is seen by the young as a necessity and not an act of violence. For them unemployment is an act of violence, because this pushes them to drug and alcohol use in an effort to escape desperation."

The work of the missionaries is immense, but the power of the evangelical announcement and of the love of the Risen Christ is what opens the way for them to reach the heart of these suffering people. One of the missionaries tells: "I cried as I listened to the young drug addicts, thieves and assassins who thanked the living Christ for having torn them away from death and made them instruments of liberation for other young people.

Our arrival transformed their terror into hope, and their weeping into prayer: 'Everything was dead here and I, too, was dead,' one young girl told me. 'I felt like an animal closed up in a cage, but your arrival gave me a new life. Now I know that I am God's child.' "

## Rebirth of Kampuchean Church

After the sad chapter written by the Khmer Rouge (1975-79) during which churches were destroyed, missionaries were expelled, and priests, bishops and religious were killed, the local Church is gradually beginning to find new life and vigour. Also the number of faithful (22,000 ca. between Kampuchean and Vietnamese) has reached its pre-seventies figure.

The tremendous suffering has had some positive repercussions: Christians have matured the desire to be a Church with its own identity. Hence, with the liturgy and sacred texts in their own language and the use of images and gestures drawn from the local religious tradition. The universal character is guaranteed by the presence of 13 different religious missionary institutes from France, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Thailand and India. These witness the charity and gratuity of the Church through various projects in favour of the poor.

The most moving fruit of this spiritual rebirth is the conversion of former Buddhists who recalled the way they were treated by Christians in labour camps under Pol Pot, when the norm was to steal rice from the others, while Christians, instead, preferred to remain silent rather than accuse, and to give away their rice rather than be egoistic.

Kampuchean Bishop, Mons. Destombes, said in an interview that young people are profoundly moved by the Christian faith: "They see that Buddhism does not respond to their aspirations of greater consideration and life with others. Christianity, instead, urges a person to look beyond oneself and form communities and share one's bread and the Word of God with others." One more step must be taken; reconcile the nation with its past, in all truth; for without truth there is no healing.

**Forty Catholic Missionaries** were killed in 1998 in various parts of the world (of which 9 in Rwanda, 8 in Congo, 10 in Latin America). That's without counting the suffering by millions of Christians deprived of religious freedom in China, Vietnam, Laos, Cuba, Sudan, Pakistan, Egypt, India... Since 1985 approximately 1,000 priests and religious have lost their lives for the sake of Christ.

In **Russia** the perverse effects of the law on religion signed by Yeltsin in September 1997 are being felt. The whole world criticized the law, saying it violated religious freedom guaranteed by the constitution. One-year permits have been reduced to 3 months, making it very difficult for the missionaries to carry out their work. Many missionaries from the Roman Catholic Church have had to return home, especially those from Latin America. On a whole, non-Orthodox Churches are continually persecuted.

**The first 4 Russian priests** will be ordained on 23 May in St. Petersburg. This is the first time after 82 years! These are the first fruits of the seminary which was opened only 6 years ago by Italian priest, Fr.

Bernardo Antonini.

**Pilgrim Virgin in Bethlehem** on 25 December 1999, for the opening of the Great Jubilee. All the world's nations are invited to follow the pilgrim Virgin to Bethlehem for an extraordinary night of peace, love and prayer. God willing, Catholics, Orthodox and Protestants will be able to bring to the feet of the Child Jesus and His Mother the most beautiful gifts and works of art from each country for the glory of Jesus through His Blessed Mother.

**Sr. Emmanuel in India** - The group of lay people St. Emmanuel met in India are spiritually tied to Medjugorje though they have never been there. Through prayer and fasting they understood the need to protect Medjugorje and Mary's plans which Satan wants to destroy. For this purpose they celebrate Mass, do penance and organize nightlong prayer, all with great fervour. "With them I relived the grace of the first years in Medjugorje when everyone in the village was united and followed Mary's messages to the letter. The generous way in which they collaborate for the sake of Mary's plan of peace is a wonderful example for us all who do not know how to use the weapons which Jesus and Mary offer us! The Blessed Virgin, in fact, has already explained that wars can be stopped through fasting and prayer with the heart.

## Surprising faith in poor countries

Fr. **Jozo** recently visited Lebanon, Syria and Korea (5 November - 12 December 1998) on a long missionary voyage after insistent requests by communities, pastors and pilgrims.

In Lebanon Christianity has been present since its beginnings, and is still present today thanks to the learned and wise religious who have been true spiritual fathers for the Lebanese people. Men of prayer and penance, they know how to give light and direction to souls.

The famous and ageless cedars from Lebanon, quoted in the biblical chants, seem to point up at heaven to indicate the journey that takes to God. It is not surprising then that the apparitions of Medjugorje and Our Lady's messages should ring out in Lebanon like a long-awaited response from heaven to today's problems.

The television transmitted all the prayer meetings, so that a great multitude of people were able to follow everything. At the meetings in churches, basilicas, cathedrals and open-air venues thousands of faithful participated. The prayer meeting in Beirut was attended also by Cardinal Nesellah Boutros Sfeir, the bishops and the Apostolic Nuncio of Lebanon.

Syria, with its capital Damascus was the second stop in this missionary voyage. Also in Syria one is able to sense the spirit of the ancient hermits and spiritual fathers. At the prayer meetings, the call was directed at Catholics, Orthodox and Muslims. In Damascus Fr. Jozo met the Orthodox Patriarch in St. Paul's Church. He also met with the visionary Mirna from Soufanieh.

Unlike the Church in Lebanon and Syria, the Church in Korea is very recent. The first Catholic to have placed foot in Korea was 208 years ago and was from Peking. From then till the end of the XIX century, the Church was persecuted, during which approximately 10,000 people were killed; of these ten were priests. Of the above, 103 were beatified in 1984. South Korea today has about 5 million Catholics. Koreans are very tolerant, with a sharp sense of sacrifice. During the prayer meetings the faithful filled the churches and overflowed into the courtyards, filling these as well. The lack of space did not perturb their participation in the celebrations. It is not easy to find other people who participate in the eucharistic celebration with such inner intensity as the Koreans do. They are also very clever at combining music

and liturgy, making all the celebrations very joyful for the spirit, whilst also being extremely pleasant to listen to.

During the two-week visit Fr. Jozo held meetings in Seoul, Taegu, Choonencheon, Orunjol and Puezan. For the meeting held for the Franciscan community one thousand faithful were expected; three thousand turned up! The meeting truly was grand where one could perceive the soul of Korea and its love of Jesus. (I.V.)

## **Daniel Angel: God's paternal heart wants to save youth**

French priest Daniel Ange, charged by the Pope with pastoral ministry to youth was in Merano nth Italy from 6-7 February 1999. About 1,000 people attended the meeting, the theme of which was, "We thirst for love; not love which leaves one feeling wounded and bitter, but love that only God can give." The young participants were fascinated by Fr. Ange's zeal who spoke of love as an expression of Beauty in harmony with creation, made manifest in the Father's Love.

In our times burdened with events, where love is attacked by many noxious elements, young people are called by Jesus to defend true love. In matrimony the Holy Spirit descends upon the husband and wife, and the marriage is enclosed within the Father's heart. Today, love between a man and a woman has become impossible without the effusion of the Holy Spirit.

The family, for a child, is the first laboratory of future relations with others, and the place where it first experiences forgiveness. Ninety per cent of juvenile delinquents in the US come from divided families. In totalitarian regimes everything is done to remove children from their families to impress ideologies in them because a family of believers represents a breeding ground of opposition.

Youth today are disoriented because couples are not having them for the Lord's sake; and many are unable to call God by the name Father, because their earthly father does not conform to God's heart. Often, in a society where the father figure is lacking, it is the woman who takes on a paternal role. Well the heavenly Father wants to heal young people's wounds.

Homosexuality can often be born in an environment where roles are not properly respected. Instead, when a homosexual moves to a family where members complement one another, or in a society where men and women live chastely, then it often happens that he is healed. To compare the homosexual union to the one desired by God between a man and a woman is a satanic attack on the Holy Trinity. If the law which allows a homosexual couple to adopt children is passed, then these will have two fathers or two mothers. This is a grave injustice against nature and the Creator.

Many families are destroyed because members do not forgive one another. And today many families are saved because the children pray; for these have a special place in God's heart. When St. Francis Xavier was unable to evangelize, he used to send the children.

The hearts of Jesus and the Father are pierced by unfaithfulness and wounds inflicted upon love. Separated couples should become adorers of the Eucharist.

Today we witness the terrifying massacre of children. Satan, in fact, takes out his revenge on children. The Pope courageously points to the facts: in the last 20 years a billion children have been killed by abortion. To save life also means to defend a population from extinction. Those families which adopt a baby which would otherwise have been aborted, give us all a testimony of love.

The Pope defends life, and that is why he is accepted also by the other confessions.

Another diabolic attack against man's unity is human cloning. Sexuality is one of God's masterpieces; through which life is donated to a unique person who is able to live in eternity. Today there is a satanic



perversion of sexuality, and not even the sexual commerce of children (who die from AIDS) is feared, such is the sexual perversion of adults.

A new generation is born! In the USA these young people talk in schools to proclaim the beauty of chastity. The old slogan, "Safe Sex" is being replaced by a new one: "Save Sex." Hundreds of thousands of young people are making promises of pre-marital chastity. Without the Holy Spirit, chastity in today's society is impossible.

Many young people testify that, though it is not easy, it is possible with the power of Jesus. Anyone who falls, can find refuge in the Sacrament of light, of purification and of forgiveness. Chastity is a protection for love just as the ozone layer protects the earth. These are the young people of the future. Thousands of Maria Goretti's are acting as antibodies which the Holy Spirit is spreading over the world to save the young people.

## **Promise of Chastity for One Year**

The culminating moment was when more than half of the young people freely chose to gather around the altar and make a promise of chastity. Upon each of them the father placed his hands and invoked the help of the Lord. A young speaker said how young people of today seek the truth and not a material world void of inner values. Priests point out that only the faith lived in its fullness can give a meaning to life and can protect the young people from the deceit and dangers of our times.

## **Ongoing Apparitions in Medjugorje are manifestation of Mary's role for our times**

Never before in the history of man have there been apparitions as long as these. They are a sign of God's plan for man in which Mary has a special role. And when God plans something it is surely realized! His work, in reality, often begins in a silent, hidden way, but through the collaboration and readiness of His children, all is brought to fulfilment. That is how it went for Mary, the young girl of Nazareth; that is how it went for many places of apparitions; that is how it is in Medjugorje today.

Mary's apparitions began in a tiny village in Herzegovina, and today it is known worldwide. Through anonymous prayer groups, Mary's messages quickly spread around the world. God sends Mary because her presence is important for a world which has often refused God.

To see the importance of Mary, particularly for our times, we only need to look at John Paul II's symbolic expression: "Totus Tuus" (All yours Mary). The Pope, who has visited many countries, each with its own problems, and who is aware of the problems which besiege all of humanity, is also aware that the man of today is in particular need of the heavenly Mother.

Mary is Mother and as such is concerned for her children's problems. She is also the Woman who best knows how to lead the lost man back to God. Hence she cried in Medjugorje when she pronounced the word "peace" at the beginning of the apparitions: "Peace, peace, only peace. Between God and man there must again be peace; there must be peace amongst men."

When we are ready to entrust ourselves totally to her with the words "Totus Tuus", she who has always walked by God's side will help us love Jesus more and find in Him that true joy that no one can take from us: "These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full" (Jn 15:11).

As Mother, her first desire is to lead us on the way of eternal life. Here on this earth Mary helps us to remain united to Jesus and to discover life in Him: "I came that you may have life, and have it

abundantly" (Jn 10:10).

Padre Pio, who was beatified on 2nd May, honoured Mary in a special way. It is said that he prayed the Rosary continuously. When, on his death bed, he was asked what was really important for these times, he replied: "Love the Mother of God, and make her be loved. Pray the Rosary." This is the witness of a man who was strongly united to his heavenly Mother. In the life of Padre Pio Mary's strength was visible in an extraordinary manner, and he saw in Her the star of hope which rises above the anguish of our times. Mary gathers her children around herself, that they may understand and help one another, so she can lead them on the way to God. To Sr. Lucia of Fatima Mary said: "My daughter, do not worry; my Immaculate Heart will be your refuge and the surest way that leads to God."

Today there are many threats against the faith. In a world which has become frenetic, man's fundamental questions are removed, and often he lives in a superficial way and suffers for the lack of meaning to life. Man rarely asks himself about his sense of being; from where he comes and to where he is going. At the most, the question on God's existence is not made, or is removed.

Hence, it is ever more necessary to listen to Mary's voice; she invites us to make space for God and for prayer, and to turn to the essential, for man does not live on bread alone. Today's materialistic man errs when he thinks that to "have" more is to "be" more. In the avidity of wealth, one is ready to tread on his neighbour especially when the latter is weak, instead of considering and accepting him for his dignity as Child of God.

The tendencies which produce a culture of death should not be underestimated; they have become a real threat to man and indeed to the best part of humanity. Our heavenly Mother sees the dangers which loom over mankind, and that is why she calls man to conversion. She invites man to return to God, for only God can give man peace and prepare for him the way of salvation.

Helmut

*"The temptations and storms which surround us are a sure sign of divine predilection. The fear you have of offending God is the surest proof that you do not offend Him."*

*Padre Pio*

Travelling to Medj. - By ROAD: bus from Trieste (adjacent to train station) leaves regularly every evening 6pm, arrives in Medj. 8am. Reservations ring Italy 040-425001. By SEA: Ancona Italy to Split. Departures Ancona: Mon., Wed., Fri. 9pm, Sat. 10pm. Departures Split: Sun., Tues., Thur., Sat.. Reservations fax Italy, Agenzia Mauro: 071-202618; Agenzia Morandi: 071-202296.

\* Main language editions of Echo of Mary available in Medjugorje at the Miriam and Shalom shops to right of St. James church (looking at church) and at the Ain Karim shop, in arcade under International Hotel.

## The Mail

A missionary from Santafè in Bogota, Colombia wrote to thank us for the copies of Echo and added: "I've been a missionary for 48 years - I'm now nearly 80. I've had moments of joy and moments of sorrow, but I've never regretted leaving my homeland and my family. My joy has been to live for and carry the Name of God to these poor souls which thirst for Him.

Each week I hold a lesson for the Legions of Mary and I teach them how they must love and bear witness to the fact that they belong to the Immaculate Heart. I always exhort the faithful to turn to Our Lady, as she is the most effective way of getting to Jesus." (Fr. V. Menegon)

**Sr. Maureen from Dublin writes:** "You will never know, on this earth, how the "Echo" has been such a grace for so many people in this day and age.

**KNOCK, Ireland- Pentecost 1999.** All night vigil: Sat. 22 May (10pm) to Sun. 23 May (5am). Speakers: Brendan Walsh, Jelena Vasilj, Fr. Benny McHale, Bishop Thomas Finnegan.

**Apostolate of St. Joseph of the Eternal Family, London** - St. Joseph is described by John Paul II as "the Guardian of the Church for these times," augmenting the role of St. Joseph as Patron of All Families. Today, families worldwide are under continuous and mounting attack causing the disintegration of marriage and of family life. This results in the loss of true values, graces and much needed blessings for the family which this Apostolate seeks to restore.

Meetings are currently held on the last Saturday of each month at 12.30 pm in the Church of St. Patrick, Dundee St., Wapping, London. A time of prayer is led by a music ministry, a talk on Church teachings, then Holy Mass, and Eucharistic Adoration. During Adoration there is time for Confession and healing prayers. All are welcome.

## The Icon of Merciful Jesus

Jesus appeared to Sr. Faustina on 22 Feb. 1931 and asked her to have an image painted according to what she could see, and write beneath it: Jesus, in Thee I trust! Two bands of rays, one red and one white, issued forth from Jesus' heart and became wider till they covered the entire globe.

Jesus explained: "The pale ray stands for the Water which makes souls righteous; the red ray stands for the Blood which is the life of souls. The Water represents the sacraments of Baptism and Penance; the Blood represents the Eucharist.

These two rays issued forth from the depths of my most tender Mercy at that time when my agonizing Heart was opened by a lance on the Cross...

Fortunate is the one who will dwell in their shelter, for the just hand of God shall not lay hold of him." "Since God is infinite, also His mercy is infinite; so that His readiness to welcome back prodigal sons who return to His House is also infinite." (Dives in misericordia)

My sincere thanks to all my brothers and sisters for their prayers, their concern and their greetings; they are a great comfort to me in this time of trial. My ability to work is now limited, but the assistance I am given and God's Providence is continuous and very moving.

May the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary fill each of you with every grace in these two months dedicated to them. I bless each one of you.

Don Angelo

ECHO

Villanova (Mantova)

28 April '99

The Lord has allowed me to intercede for more graces for you.