



where Sister Elvira helps out young drug addicts; two young men each giving us a talk on their lives before and during their stay there.

g) Going to the Oasis of Peace, a community of people from all over the world, married, celibate, priests, religious... Sister Claire Marie (*who came to NZ a couple of months later – see report on the Auckland Eucharistic Convention in this issue, Ed.*) gave us a very interesting talk about the Community.

h) Enriching talks from various Franciscan priests and from Marijana, one of the two locutionists.

i) Visiting Vicka – one of the visionaries – who gave us her usual talk (she gives it daily, when necessary to all pilgrims) at her house and individually blessing us, a very moving experience.

and each of us receiving a blessing from him, a Rosary and a picture of Our Lady (he gives these to every pilgrim).

f) Visiting the Cenacolo Community



j) Visiting Fr Slavko's tomb in the cemetery behind St James Church, a huge monument to a most well-known and beloved priest.

I can't possibly put into words the wonderful grace-filled time I spent in this little village, "a little piece of Heaven on earth". My most precious time was our visit to the Blue Cross as a group. We each took a flower which we laid at Our Lady's feet by the Cross and then those who wanted to were invested in the brown Scapular. That was awesome for me.



We experienced weather of all sorts whilst on our pilgrimage: sunny for the first few days, then rain for a few and finally **snow** (*photo above*) for the last day which was a new experience for many of us!

Beside visiting Medjugorje we spent time in Zagreb, Dubrovnik and Split where we had organised tours of each city and spent a night in each. We went to Holy Mass in the Basilica of St Blaise in Dubrovnik and in Tihaljina (a small village between Medjugorje and Split) we also had Holy Mass in the beautiful local church.

Since returning home the main thing I miss is the faith companionship of the other pilgrims and Fr Joe but letters to and fro over the Tasman have kept me in touch with quite a few of them and hopefully this will continue.

Sheila Bates - Glenfield

## MARIJA TELLS ABOUT MONTHLY MESSAGES

By Pam Taig (*Medjugorje Sentinel*)

Marija, the visionary of Medjugorje who receives the message of Our Lady to pass onto the world every 25th day of the month, speaks about how this is accomplished.

"Through me the Madonna gives these messages which she used to give every Thursday, and now every 25th of the month. She has said she gives these messages for all those who want to grow following the path of holiness. She has said that each of us is called to follow this path. However, the Madonna wanted, by means of these very simple messages, to call us to a very concrete life, to a very real path with God and the Church. In reality, the Madonna wanted to awaken us, to tell us how important we are for Her."

Marija is convinced that she has not made a mistake in passing on the messages, because she prays about it.

"Before passing on the message and writing it down I say every time: "Let us pray". This is my assurance. If I don't pray, I lack confidence. When I pray I feel confident that I'm passing on the exact words. It can happen that at the end of the message, when I've already written it down, often it doesn't seem right. Once I began to cry and I said to

Father Slavko, who is my spiritual guide, "I shall tell the Madonna not to give me the messages any more." But he said, "What's the matter? Isn't the message right?" Yes, the message is right, but once I've written it down I can see that it isn't how the Madonna said it. At first the message seems so rich, so strong, so full, then once it is written down it seems poor, empty. I can't explain. They seem just words, and so I got upset and burst out, "That's enough, I can't pass on the messages any more." But then I understood: it is how you receive the message. Perhaps if the Madonna were to say it to each one of us it would seem different according to our availability. There is such an intensity of love and affection in the Madonna's words, that you can't transcribe them.

"Many times I have tried to describe what the Madonna is like and I look for the right words, but I have never found them. Even though the behaviour of the Madonna is very human, at times you can see she is a queen. But she is also a mother who understands, who loves, who suffers with us and gives us hope. In the world of today, the presence of the Madonna for such a long time is the most important message. As long as the Madonna is with us, there is hope."

## JAKOV COLO BIDS FR. SLAVKO FAREWELL

*in the name of all the visionaries at the cemetery*

Our dear brother, Fr. Slavko. How could we not remember all these years which we spent together: each of our conversations, each of our prayers together and everything we have gone through together? How could we not remember each of your sacrifices and each of your battles for us? How could we not remember your goodness and your love for us? You often said to us, "Do you know that I love you?"

We felt that love so often and in so many different ways. We remember so many of your words. Often after the apparition, you would ask us, "How is Our Lady?" You, dear brother, are now with her - you who consecrated your life to her - you who did everything for everyone to come to know her love and her goodness. That love and goodness were actually in you and this could be experienced by every person who came to know you.

We thank you, dear brother, for your support which we so often needed and which you gave us at every moment. We thank you for

every advice you have given us when we needed it the most. Thank you for leading us through our spiritual life and for helping us with prayer in our personal lives.

Thank you for each of your visits to our homes which brought so much blessing and joy into our families.

Thank you for each game you played with our children who knew how to recognise a real and true friend on their own.

Today, dear brother, we are crying but, at the same time, we are rejoicing because you are with her whom you loved immeasurably, the one you gave your life to - Our Lady. Your work, goodness and love will forever live in us and you, dear brother, always pray for us and always watch over us.

It is now, dear brother, that we say to you what you always said to us, 'do you know, brother, how much we love you?'

*Your Jakov, Ivan, Mirjana, Ivanka, Vicka and Marija*