

EXCERPTS FROM MEDJUGORJE PRESS BULLETINS

From Press Bulletin 180

THE IMPRESSION OF A BISHOP FROM FIJI

Msgr. George Pearce, retired Archbishop of the Fiji Islands, came at the end of September and beginning of October 2002 on a private visit to Medjugorje.

These are his impressions:

"I have no doubt about the authenticity of Medjugorje. I have been here three times already and I say to any priest who asks about it: just go and sit in the confessional, and you will see miracle, after miracle, after miracle... through Mary's intercession and the power of God. We were told: "By their fruits you will know them". Certainly, the heart and soul of the Medjugorje message is the Eucharist and the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

I have no doubts whatsoever: this is the work of God. As I said: you cannot but believe when you spend a little time in the confessional. Signs and wonders are merciful gifts of God too - but this is the greatest of all miracles for a priest to

see the people around the Altar of the Lord. I have been in several Shrines, I have spent quite a bit of time in Guadalupe, I have been about eight times at Fatima, and also in Lourdes. It is the same Mary, the same message, but here at Medjugorje this is the "current" word of Our Lady for the world. There is so much anguish and suffering. Our Lady has been with us all the way through, and in a special way in Medjugorje."

In answer to the question, "Do you know that, in the world, there are several thousands of prayer groups inspired by Our Lady's messages from Medjugorje? There are more than a thousand groups in the USA... How much is this a sign that the Church recognizes God's words in the words of Our Lady?", Msgr. Pearce answered:

"We have a little group in the Cathedral in Providence, where I am. They call it "Little St.

James". They meet every evening; they have Exposition and Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, Benediction and Holy Mass. I think that we have not got the message yet. There was a great turn to the Lord right after September 11, but I think, we need more than that before that country really turns to the Lord. So we just pray for that day. We hope we will turn to the Lord before we have to learn too many lessons, but this is also an act of the mercy of God. Everything is an act of the mercy of God. We know very well that God in His merciful love, in His permissive Providence, will take all the means possible so none of the least of His children will be totally lost. That's all that really matters.

I would say: come in the spirit of an open mind, in prayer, and entrust your journey to Our Lady. Just come and the Lord will do the rest."

IMPRESSION OF A CANADIAN BISHOP (Mgr Pearce Lacey, retired bishop of Toronto)

"I came to Medjugorje in 1987. Things were much more primitive then than they are today, but the Spirit is still here and the presence of Our Lady is all around. You can't move anywhere without sensing the marvellous grace of God affecting the lives of people. I have met people who are here because they are on drugs, on alcohol. I have met people with tragic situations in their lives and seen the miraculous way in which God is reflecting, manifesting Himself. One of the priests told me that he was hearing confessions, he eventually stopped and left, and they drew him back! The magnitude of the Confessions is enough if you want to be satisfied that God is present here. For me, that's Medjugorje.

Our Lady's apparitions are no problem for me. Fundamentally, it is a question of belief. We can't inflict faith and devotion on

people. Mostly you can show it by your own example. This is the freedom that God has given to all of us. He wants us to respond out of faith and love.

The basic message of Medjugorje is absolutely solid. We are living in 2002, but men and women are still made of a body and a soul. We all have traces of the original sin. Our needs are the same as in the times of the Apostles and in any generation. Basically, we are the children of God and our cries are as huge as of any generation. Therefore, the message has to be the same! We cannot do without God. This is the marvellous thing about Medjugorje. This is an oasis of God, this is the life of the Church as it should be. Tradition is not a dirty word, although it seems to be to some people! The life of a priest consists in bringing people back to God, people who have wandered away because they thought religion was irrelevant. Thank God that He is God and provides places like this. I have been to other places, but Medjugorje is the shining light today in our society."

From Press Bulletin 181

THE SECOND DEATH ANNIVERSARY OF Fr SLAVKO BARBARIC

On the second death anniversary of Fr. Slavko Barbaric, on the solemnity of Christ the King, November 24th, many Croatian and foreign faithful and pilgrims came to Medjugorje. They prayed the rosary on Apparition Hill and celebrated the evening Holy Mass in the parish church.

Fr. Slavko accompanied Our Lady's apparitions in Medjugorje from their very beginnings and - thanks to the gifts received by God - he very

ANNUAL APPARITION TO JAKOV ON DECEMBER 25TH 2002

At the last daily apparition to Jakov Colo on September 12th, 1998, Our Lady told him that henceforth he would have one apparition a year, every December 25th, on Christmas Day. This is also how it was this year. Our Lady came with the Child Jesus in her arms. The apparition began at 5:20 pm and lasted 7 minutes.

Our Lady gave the following message:

soon became one of the most eminent apostles of Our Lady's messages. His whole life was woven into Medjugorje, he is buried here, and he remains forever present here. He knew how to incarnate the spirituality of Our Lady's messages through prayer and works. He was a man of Christ, a priest of Christ, a man of the Church. We thank him for all that he has done, we pray with him and for him, so that God's plans may be realised in Medjugorje and through Medjugorje!

"Dear children! Today, on the day of love and peace, with Jesus in my arms, I call you to prayer for peace. Little children, without God and prayer you cannot have peace. Therefore, little children, open your heart so that the King of Peace may be born in your heart. Only in this way you can witness and carry God's peace to this peace less world. I am with you and bless you with my motherly blessing."

We wish to remind our readers that all articles published in past issues of 'Medjugorje News' can be reprinted separately. Please send a stamped self-addressed envelope (114x225mm) and particulars about the requested article: Issue number, page and title.

She'll never have a more important date

An old gentleman walked into a fashionable florist shop.

"I want a beautiful corsage," he said, "not a big one, but just about the prettiest one you can make." He smiled broadly. "It's for my granddaughter and she's having her first date tomorrow."

The florist was all curious. "How old is the young lady?" he asked, eyeing the flowers speculatively.

"Two weeks," replied the grandfather.

The florist turned in utter amazement. "Did you say a date, a corsage, two weeks old?"

"Precisely," said the old gentleman. "and I want a corsage that's exactly right. She'll never have a more important date than she has tomorrow. My little granddaughter will be baptised."

From Tonic for the Heart from 1000 Bottles by Frank Mihalic

Excerpts from *Children of Medjugorje*

From Sister Emmanuel & Kathy Nolan

1 December 2002

With this Year of the Rosary it is as if the Pope has declared war on the enemy. In fact, his letter *Rosarium Virginis Mariae* seems to have come straight out of Our Lady's school in Medjugorje! He is depending on everyone who has been mobilised by Our Lady, who told us on 24 Feb. 1984, "**Pray! Why do you hesitate?... Be content with prayer. I, your Mother, will take care of the rest**". We shouldn't be alarmed by the explosions from the enemy intended to distract us (for example, reports through the media). Pay absolutely no attention! What is actually happening is the beginning of the breaking apart of the enemy's victories - like the noise made by huge icebergs before they fall apart and crash into the sea. This is the decisive battle. "**Let the Rosary always be in your hands as a sign to Satan that you belong to me,**" (25/2/88). Let's not waste one single day of the ten months left in this *Year of the Rosary!*

The other day in Medjugorje I ran into Kathleen who told me her story. Though she had a job in Switzerland, she had been coming to Medjugorje often. When the Pope declared the Marian Year in 1987, she decided to hold nothing back in response to the Holy Father's plea. She quit her job to spend the year with Our Lady in Medjugorje. She desired to empty herself completely so that she could enter Our Lady's school of love with her whole being. She had seen that Our Lady was forming the young people of the prayer group in a beautiful way and she wanted "to get just the crumbs from their table". She wanted to be part of what Our Lady was doing! She arrived with nothing except her purse which contained her passport. Kathleen dropped the purse in the last pew of the church saying to Jesus, "Well, Jesus, I'm home! And when you come home you drop your purse on the table and don't worry about it. So I'm dropping it here! I have just enough time to climb Mt. Krizevac and make it back for the evening Mass." She continued, "And Jesus, you know, when it comes to sleeping, to be honest I'd like a bed, but it's not necessary. That's your concern." Although it was raining, Kathleen was resigned to sleeping on Mt. Podbrdo. She climbed the mountain, made it back in time for Mass and then started her walk towards Podbrdo.

On her way she heard a voice call to her. It was Marija Pavlovic. She had seen her at Mass and wondered who she was. Draga, Marija's neighbour, was there and translated. Marija invited Kathleen to come into her house. She first introduced her to her mother and father, then to her brother and sister. And entering her bedroom Marija said, "See, here's my bed!" And pointing to the other bed in the room, "And there's yours!" Kathleen argued, "But that's Milka's, your sister's bed." "No," replied Marija. "She's leaving for America tonight." And so Kathleen Martin got a bed - right next to Marija's. She shared that bedroom with Marija for seven years!

I remember hearing this story for the first time in 1987 and I remember feeling jealous. Even now 15 years later, hearing the story from Kathleen's own mouth, I still feel a tinge of jealousy, thinking immediately, "What was I doing in 1987 that was so important it kept me from responding fully to Our Lady's (and the Holy Father's) call to give everything of myself? Had I been holding on to something that kept me from completely abandoning myself as Kathleen had done?" Then it struck me: I can do it TODAY! *And for me too - today - Our Lady will not be outdone in generosity!*

15 December 2002

A parable from the poet, Rabindranath Tagore will help us catch the point of how economics work in the Kingdom of God: A very poor man was begging along a path in India. In his miserable little pouch he had only a handful of wheat to survive. His hope suddenly ignited when he heard the sound of a chariot galloping in his direction. Riding within was a prestigious king dressed in gold and adorned in jewellery. As the king stopped the chariot in front of him, the poor man thought, "my chance has come!" But to his surprise the King asked the poor man, "what do you have to give me?" The poor man grabbed his pouch and extracted one grain of wheat for the King. The King thanked the man

and off he went! At the end of the day, as the poor man was counting his grains of wheat, he noticed that one grain was gold. Only then did he understand and say to himself, "Oh, how I wish I had given the whole lot!!" In the Kingdom of God, we truly have what we give away and we lose what we keep for ourselves...

For several months I've felt an urge deep in my heart to climb the mountain every day and spend more time with Our Lady in prayer. We all know how prayer can work miracles! So, when the Pope declared the Year of the Rosary, I received a call to make this urge a reality. Also, I'd like to go ahead in writing my book on the Eucharist. I prayed and it became clear to me that only a sacrifice will allow this to happen. Therefore, I've decided to let go of writing the bimonthly report from Medjugorje until the Year of the Rosary is over.

Fortunately, our faithful Denis and Cathy Nolan have agreed to take over, and I'm at peace about their continuing the mission for you. They have a lot to share and will include featured sharing once in a while from those who carry the spirit of Medjugorje and have been close to us over the years. I'm excited about the new dimensions you'll be discovering through this change! Next time, Denis will be carrying the torch... God bless you!

1 January 2003

In her Christmas message Our Lady reminds us of the greatness of the gift of Medjugorje: "**Be conscious of this gift that God has permitted me to be with you.**" The tremendous grace of Our Lady's coming can be seen in the countless conversions that take place in Medjugorje. One such conversion story comes from Bishop Ruben Hector Di Monte from Argentina. When he came to Medjugorje as a pilgrim he stated: "In Medjugorje, I am faced with a deep spirit of conversion, a spirit of prayer and penance." He went on to say that when he had visited his family in Italy, he once again was able to talk with his two cousins: "One was an ardent Communist, the other a Fascist. When I visited them, the conversation would take on an uncomfortable tone. After several years of not visiting them, I found out that both my cousins, the Communist and the Fascist, had become ardent Catholics and lovers of Mary! They told me that they had been to Medjugorje, not because they were interested in what was happening in Medjugorje but simply to accompany their wives. Arriving in Medjugorje, they went to Apparition Hill and there they experienced the sun's 'play' and when they turned to Krizevac, they saw the cross in flames. After praying in the church and saying their confession, they became faithful Christians. I have come to give thanks to Our Lady because she poured her motherly love and God's grace on my cousins!" ("Once Again the Truth About Medjugorje," Fr. Ljudevit Rupcic, 2002, p. 141 - available in the Parish bookstore). Fruits such as these are being offered by Our Lady in Medjugorje and she asks us not to take her coming for granted, "**Be conscious of this gift that God has permitted me to be with you!**"

Even non-Catholics are turning to Our Lady in Medjugorje in order to receive the many graces being poured out upon pilgrims. During my last cab ride from Medjugorje to the airport in Split, Jeff and Jeb (from the USA) related their story to me (after we had first prayed - the cab driver in Croatian - the rosary):

Jeb's law office was in the same building as Jeff's (a CPA). They each discovered that the other would sometimes close his door to pray... One day Jeb handed Jeff a book, which one of his relatives had told him about. It was the first he had ever purchased on Medjugorje. He said, "I think you'll find this interesting." Half way through the book, Jeff, an elder in a Presbyterian church, knew in his heart the apparitions in Medjugorje were true! Before even finishing it he sought out a Catholic Church (he just kept driving around in his neighbourhood that night until he found one). He told the priest he wanted to become a Catholic. Within him was a deep yearning to receive the Eucharist. After being received into the Church months later he and his new friend, Jeb, decided not to put off waiting for a pilgrimage group - but to come immediately to Medjugorje. And this, their first trip, had been filled with so many graces!

After my trip in the cab with Jeb and Jeff, I encountered a woman in line at the airport who also had been on pilgrimage in Medjugorje. She said she was meeting the leader of her pilgrimage group (from New Brunswick, Canada) in Zagreb. "She's a Baptist!" she said. "And because of a desire for the Eucharist, she's coming into the Catholic

Church!" What a wonder that even Baptists are gathering groups and bringing them to Medjugorje! *Let's not miss out on this time of grace while Our Lady is still coming!*

And let us all rejoice with Marija and Paolo - their fourth child, little Giovanni Lunetti - was baptised on Dec. 8th in Italy!

15 January 2003

Cardinal Christof Schönborn taught in his cathedral in Vienna last month that Mary today is doing missionary work all over the world: in Argentina, Mexico, Lourdes, Sri Lanka, Medjugorje... Her power to attract people, especially the poor and those in need, is not the work of clerics or some kind of unhealthy cult, as some might have it, he said. Rather, if Mary is there, people come! Even though she never really travelled during her lifetime or preached to anyone, Mary has been a powerful missionary drawing millions to her Son. **"On Medjugorje I don't want to express myself from the standpoint of an ecclesiastical judgment. But I only can ascertain one thing again and again, that this is a place where there is obviously an intense mission-station of heaven where thousands upon thousands of human beings find prayer, confession, conversion, reconciliation, healing and deeper faith."**

Several months after Cardinal Schönborn gave the Holy Father and his Papal Household their 1998 Lenten Retreat, the author of the "Catechism of the Catholic Church" said in an address at Lourdes: **"It is and will be so important that bishops also publicly take under their protection the pastoral pronouncement of Medjugorje so that the obvious fruits that are in that place might be protected,"** (18/7/98).

On 13 January at 11:00 am in the Mostar hospital, Vicka gave birth to a little girl, Marija Sofija (by caesarean section). The mother and baby are doing well! With Mario and Vicka, give thanks to God and let's confide this new little life to His protection!

Beginning in the year 2000, Our Lady invited everyone to Apparition Hill for New Year's Eve, where she would give a message through the visionary Marija. But this year Marija was not in Medjugorje. So on January 2nd, when Our Lady appeared to Mirjana for her monthly prayer for unbelievers, she gave Mirjana a message for all who were gathered at the green tent. (Usually there are no messages on the 2nd of the month.) **"Dear Children, as a mother invites her children, I invited you and you responded to me. Allow me to fill your heart with love, so that it becomes a heart of love that you will be giving to others without reserve. In that way, you will best help me in my mission of converting those of my children who have not yet experienced the love of God and the love of my Son. Thank you!"** (2/01/03) Incidentally, Mirjana was recently invited by a friend of mine from the East to come to her country to have her monthly apparition there. Mirjana told her that Our Lady has asked her to always be in Medjugorje for this apparition on the 2nd of the month. (The Gospa once told Mirjana, **"My eyes and my heart will be here [in Medjugorje], even when I will no longer appear,"** 18/03/96).

Sr Emmanuel

Please note: the articles are copyright by "Children of Medjugorje" (<http://www.childrenofmedjugorje.com>)

The following can be obtained from Medjugorje News by sending a stamped self addressed envelope (225x114mm):

- The ten page Apostolic letter **"Rosarium Virginis Mariae"** from the Pope.
- The **four triptych pages**, one for each series of mysteries, with a comment for each Hail Mary (*I have found these to be useful aids to meditation when praying the Rosary*).
- John Paul II **"Letter to the Elderly"**.

O'CONNOR TRAVEL WORLD

O'Connor Travel World is a pilgrimage Apostolate consecrated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus through the Immaculate Heart of Mary.



24 APR - DIVINE MERCY PILGRIMAGE TO THE NORTHERN SHRINES OF ITALY.

18 days touring Italy. **SPEND DIVINE MERCY SUNDAY AT THE VATICAN.** Tour Rome, Assisi, Siena, Padua, Venice, Florence – **COST: A\$ 5400 PP all inclusive except lunch.** Spiritual Director: Fr Edmund Little PP – Nelson, New Zealand & Leader: Michelle Ellis

19 MAY - OUR LADY HELP OF CHRISTIANS PILGRIMAGE TO MEDJUGORJE & ROME

5 nights Rome & 9 nights Medjugorje – **COST A\$ 4333 PP Share twin.** Leader Dennis Patzel, Spiritual Director: TBA – All inclusive cost except dinner in Rome and lunch in Medjugorje. Visit Vatican, Catacombs and many Holy sights in Rome

16 OCT – We are presently organising a pilgrimage to Rome for the BEATIFICATION OF MOTHER

TERESA ON 19 OCTOBER. The pilgrimage will also visit ASSISI (St Francis), SIENA (St Catherine), LORETO (Holy House), LANCIANO (Miracle of the Eucharist), SAN GIOVANNI ROTONDO (Padre Pio). An extension to Medjugorje is available. – (**PRICE & DETAILS ON APPLICATION**). Margaret Rieger of Palmerston North will be leading a group from New Zealand.

All quoted prices are in Australian dollars

We utilise the services of Singapore Airlines. You are able to join the pilgrimage in either Sydney or Melbourne or if you do wish to depart from Auckland, the airfare will be slightly higher, but we can arrange this for you.

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