

**THE SPIRIT OF MEDJUGORJE**  
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**www.spiritofmedjugorje.org**

**SUBSCRIPTION RATE - FREE WILL OFFERING - PLEASE SEE PAGE 8**

*If this is the first time you have received this newsletter, and you would like a "Beginner's Guide," please contact us for one.*



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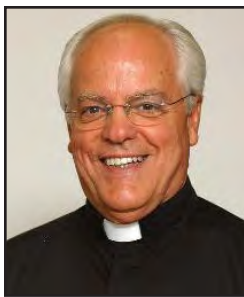
## **CURRENT MONTHLY MESSAGE OF JULY 25, 2018**

**ON THE 25TH DAY OF EACH MONTH, THE BLESSED VIRGIN GIVES A MESSAGE TO THE VISIONARY, MARIJA, THAT IS TO BE GIVEN TO THE WORLD.**



*Legend has it that the icon on the plaque pictured above was painted by St. Luke. The icon, which is said to be miraculous, hangs in the oldest Marian shrine in Croatia, the Shrine of Our Lady of Trsat. You can read more about this on page 3.*

“Dear children! God called me to lead you to Him because He is your strength. That is why I am calling you to pray to Him and to trust in Him, because He is your refuge from every evil that lurks and carries souls far from the grace and joy to which you are all called. Little children, live Heaven here on earth so that it will be good for you; and may the commandments of God be a light on your way. I am with you and I love you all with my motherly love. Thank you for having responded to my call.”



Fr. Bill Kiel

# Many Blessings

By Fr. Bill Kiel

Many pilgrims. Many blessings! Each pilgrim to Medjugorje has personal experiences and blessings. Throughout many pilgrimages to Medjugorje, I have witnessed blessings that include returning to the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Holy

Eucharist, attaining emotional and spiritual peace, physical healings and the healing of relationships.

When one decides to join a pilgrimage to Medjugorje, the soon-to-be pilgrim often anticipates wondrous experiences, or says, "I am going with an open heart for whatever God has for me." The group of pilgrims that I traveled with to Medjugorje in June received a variety of blessings. We were blessed to celebrate Holy Mass at The Church of the Immaculate Conception in Tihaljina, St. James Church in Medjugorje, and in The Church of Divine Mercy in the village of Surmanci, along with the opportunity to reverence relics of St. Anthony, St. John Paul II, and St. Faustina. Mass participation in the various churches brought pilgrims an openness to receive a greater awareness of God's presence and the role He had in their lives. The words, "I am bringing peace to you, I am your mother, the Queen of Peace. I am blessing you with the blessings of joy so that for you God may be everything in your life" (7/25/1988) seemed alive in the hearts of our pilgrims. Also, "I bless you with blessings of joy" (5/25/1988) was embraced by our joy-filled pilgrims on this trip.

An overwhelming experience for many pilgrims was the Hour of Adoration from 10:00 PM to 11:00 PM at the altar

behind St. James Church. The entire area of benches was filled — estimated at about 5,000 pilgrims present. The combination of music, silence and directed meditations was a beautiful, spiritual and emotional time. Blessings received during this time of Adoration could not be put into words by many pilgrims!

For pilgrims who usually have difficulty walking *any* distance or over rough terrain, many were able to walk up Apparition Hill, pray at the site of the original apparitions and walk down the hill. What a great blessing!

The Sacrament of Reconciliation was a special part of the pilgrimage for those who had been away from the sacrament for an extended period of time. This sacrament brings about spiritual peace and also an emotional peace that helps heal broken human relationships —

another blessing!

There was an openness of these pilgrims — who ranged in age from 22 to 81 years old — all were open to what God had for them and to share some of their personal experiences ("God stories"). After traveling with 43 different groups of pilgrims, I never tire of hearing the wonderful God stories! I am reminded in the words, "From the bottom of my heart, I call you to be mine with all your heart and then you will see that your God is great, because He will give you an abundance of blessings and peace." (5/25/2004) Yes, those who are called to Medjugorje return home with many blessings and a deeper relationship with Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Thank You, Lord, for the many Blessings given to us!

Our Blessed Mother, Queen of Peace is a wonderful intercessor. Mary Queen of Peace, pray for us.



Relics of St. Faustina and St. John Paul II

## Message to Mirjana on July 2, 2018

"Dear children, I am the mother of all of you and, therefore, do not be afraid because I hear your prayers. I know that you seek me and that is why I am praying to my Son for you, my Son, who is united with the Heavenly Father and the Holy Spirit — the Paraclete — my Son who leads souls to the Kingdom from where He came, the Kingdom of peace and light. My children, you are given the freedom to choose, but, as a mother, I implore you to choose the freedom for the good. You, with pure and simple souls comprehend — even if sometimes you do not understand the words — and within yourselves you feel what the truth is. My children, do not lose the truth and true life so as to follow the false one. By life in truth, the Kingdom of Heaven enters into your hearts, and that is the Kingdom of peace, love and harmony. Then, my children, there will not be the selfishness which distances you from my Son. There will be love and understanding for your neighbors. Because, remember, again I repeat to you, to pray also means to love others, your neighbors, and to give yourself to them. Love and give in my Son, and then He will work in you and for you. My children, ceaselessly think of my Son and love Him immeasurably and you will have true life, and that will be for eternity. Thank you, apostles of my love."

Our thanks to Joanne Warren, Sue Taccone, Elaine and John Brady, Diane Niebauer, Cassandra Dragone, Julie Hansen, Chris Falk, Marge Spase, Rose Heintzel, Kathy Wayman, Chris Opron, Joan Peterson, Peggy Smith, Kathy Luschini, Dianne Yochim, Barb Cesare, Cindy Bielanin, Estrella Igras, Louise Lotze, Laura DiBacco, and those who want to remain anonymous for their help with the May mailing. We thank Brian Klins, Susannah Klins, and Louise Lotze for their photos in this issue. We also thank our proofreader, Pat Berrier, our webmaster, Jason Klins, and our prayer group administrator, Patti Millar.

**As of July 25, 2018, the number of Masses reported for Our Lady's intentions was 24,043. Thank you.**

### Prayer Intention of Pope Francis for August

**The Treasure of Families:** That any far-reaching decisions of economists and politicians may protect the family as one of the treasures of humanity.





# Our Lady's Birthday

Our Lady told the visionaries that although the Church celebrates Her birthday on September 8, Her real birthday is on August 5.

In 1984, Our Lady asked the prayer group in Medjugorje to fast for three days before August 5, which that year was the second millennium of Her birthday. According to the archives, during those three days of fasting and continuous prayer the visionaries said the Blessed Virgin was very joyful. "Our Lady repeated: 'I am very happy, continue, continue. Continue to pray and to fast.' Her joy seemed

to have reached a peak Sunday, August 5th. Like a flower when it blooms, and full of joy, Our Lady said: 'Continue, continue, open your hearts, ask God and I will ask for you.'"

By the time you read this, it will be too late to do something special for August 5, but you can still do something for Her "other" birthday on September 8! A day or two or three of fasting? A Mass for Her intentions? An hour of Adoration? You pick! Our Lady will be grateful for whatever you do for Her.

## Our Lady of Trsat

*By June Klins*

A few months ago, one of our subscribers sent us the plaque pictured on the cover, along with the information about it. She had been on a pilgrimage to Medjugorje to the island of KRK to attend a seminar with Fr. Zlatko Sudac (see pages 6 and 7). "What a blessing!" she wrote. She continued, "While on the island of KRK, we visited Mary's Trsat, the oldest Marian Shrine in Croatia and the legend of where Mary's birth home was moved by the angels in order to keep it safe."

This intrigued me, as I had never heard about this before. I did some research and found that the legend says that when the Crusaders took Mary's house from Nazareth in the 13<sup>th</sup> century and brought it to Europe, angels transferred it to Trsat and left it there for six months before taking it to Loreto in Italy. The Frankopans, a noble Croatian family, built a chapel there, and Pope Urban V sent them the icon of Our Lady, which was said to be miraculous. The church and the monastery were built in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. More recently, a statue of St. John Paul II has been added, as a reminder of his visit there in 2003.

Enclosed with the plaque of Our Lady of Trsat was a clipping with a write-up about the shrine by Cardinal Josip Bozanić, the Archbishop of Zagreb. It reads: "Mary's Trsat is a special historic, religious, cultural building complex consisting of the Shrine of Our Lady of Trsat and the Franciscan Monastery, the residence of the guardians of the Shrine... This is a family shrine and its origins are connected with the tradition that speaks of the small house in which Mary was born being transferred by angels to Trsat (1291-1294) before it arrived in Loreto, Italy. Therefore, Trsat is

often referred to as the Croatian Nazareth. It has been the most popular shrine for the seamen of Kvarner Bay since long ago. It is also the spiritual center of the whole of western Croatia. Its history predates the arrival of the Franciscans, but this period is filled with legend... Although the Shrine of Our Lady of Trsat, as an important building within the city of Rijeka, does not belong to the ranks of the most beautiful church buildings, of which some were conceived in competition to the Trsat building complex, it does outshine them all with its glory.

"Before describing the Trsat Shrine, it is important to consider the documentary evidence of its origins. There is scarcely a family on our islands where the Shrine of Our Lady of Trsat is not mentioned. Where does the attraction of Trsat come from? The angel asks this when he hails Mary "full of mercy [grace]". This means full of God, close to God, filled with God's power. In other words, we experience God's proximity in Mary's closeness, because she is close both to God and to ourselves. She helps us to be close to God through her, so that her shrines are places where God is close, places where God's closeness is manifested... Therefore, in all of Mary's shrines, and here on Trsat, we experience an awareness that God is with us, that He leads our history, our lives, our people; that He is the support of everything that happens and we feel secure in Him."



*Statue of St. John Paul II*

## Vicka in Loreto

*By Sr. Emmanuel*

Some time ago, Vicka went with a dozen friends to the Marian shrine of Loreto (Italy). When the Basilica was almost empty at around 2 PM, she was able to pray at length in what is considered to be the "House of Mary" transported by angels from Nazareth to Loreto. One of her friends, Gemma, noticed that while she was praying, Vicka would turn her head from left to the right and was moving in a rather unusual way, smiling a lot.

When they left the Basilica, Gemma, intrigued by what she saw, asked her, "Why were you turning your head like that?"

"It's because the Gospa came," she replied, "and as She

was walking here and there in the room, I followed Her with my eyes!" "Oh really," said Gemma, deeply moved, "so She was walking among us?" "Yes, replied Vicka, "it's normal. She was at home; it's Her house!"

We are truly living in a time of grace! How wonderful to know that our Heavenly Mother is so close to us, so tender, so normal, so human and so divine! Though we do not yet have the joy of seeing Her with our own eyes, we can already grasp this beatitude, "Blessed are those who believe without having seen!"

*Children of Medjugorje, [www.childrenofmedjugorje.com](http://www.childrenofmedjugorje.com), April 2018 report*

# A Witness to the World of the Power and Glory of God

By Monique Louise (Tetreault) Phelan

This is a personal account of how I learned of Medjugorje, this "Heaven on earth," and my journey there. It is an attempt to let others know that Jesus is alive and among us, still performing miracles. The purpose of this is to give witness to the events that took place on June 24, 1987, the vigil of the 6th anniversary of Our Lady Queen of Peace. It is my hope that all who read this will be encouraged to confess their sins, forgive those who have hurt them, and convert their lives.

It really began in January, 1987. I came upon a book about the La Salette apparitions my mother had given me as a young girl. Since I was not far from the La Salette Shrine in Attelboro, MA, I decided to take a ride there. I was not a practicing Catholic at this time. I did go to church some Sundays, but if I felt like staying in bed, I did. Due to my high pressure job, I often worked overtime on weekends, specifically on Sundays. I was just doing what everyone else was doing in the 1980s – much of which wasn't good. Little did I realize that my life was soon to change significantly.

At the shrine, I picked up a book called *A Woman Clothed With the Sun*. It contained a number of Our Lady's apparitions. I began to read about Fatima, as I was familiar with it. It spooked me and haunted me because it convicted me. But Lent of 1987 was the best I'd done in my life!

On April 25, I was flipping through the *Providence Journal Bulletin*. There was an article entitled "The Yugoslav apparitions: Miracle or Hoax?" I read it, totally astonished. The article stated the Blessed Mother was appearing daily to six children in Medjugorje, Yugoslavia. I believed in the Medjugorje apparitions right away...due to all the reading I had recently done on past apparitions. There was a great similarity between these apparitions and other Marian apparitions. They all took place in a remote area, in a predominately Catholic country, and the visions took place to young people. The message is always the same: return to God through the sacraments, pray the Rosary, make peace with one another.

From the newspaper article, I found out that Wayne Weible, a Protestant journalist, who wrote six columns about the Medjugorje events, would be speaking in Providence on April 28. My husband, John, and I decided to go, despite a freak snow and ice storm that developed later that afternoon. Wayne did not speak about Medjugorje, but had left copies of his columns on the back table. When I read the newspaper articles, I believed immediately in the events happening.

John and I went to Hawaii in May that year. I went to church every morning while I was there. After Mass, two women and I would pray the Rosary together and we talked about Medjugorje. On the way home from Hawaii, I asked John if he minded if I went to Medjugorje.

When I arrived home, I made arrangements with Peace

Center Tours in Illinois. I got the last seat available for the 6th anniversary, which would take place June 24, 1987. My next hurdle was to ask my boss for the time off. To my amazement, none of my co-workers were scheduled for time off that week. The last crucial item needed was my visa. It arrived days before I needed to leave. My visa was approved by the Yugoslavia embassy in NY, no small feat. When I told my family and friends where I was going, they were shocked. I simply replied this trip was a calling from Our Lady and I had to go.

I arrived at Logan Airport in Boston on June 22, almost missing my plane to New York. However, when I got seated in the plane, it was delayed. The weather was rainy, windy, and I began to get nervous, as I don't like to fly. I kept hearing a loud voice in my head that said, "Go home. You can turn back now before it's too late. You don't know what will happen to you if you go." All kinds of negative thoughts poured through my mind, such as the plane crashing and the Communists coming after me. But a small, sweet, reassuring voice kept saying, "Go to Medjugorje. You will be taken care of." I listened to the small, sweet, reassuring voice and continued my journey.

At 7 PM on June 23, we reached our destination: the little hamlet of Medjugorje. As we sat on the bus, we prayed, hoping to see something, anything! It had been a 24-hour trip and we were tired, but excited. No sooner had we arrived, when the setting sun turned white, like a host, and started to spin and turn beautiful colors: yellow, rose, orange. The clouds that passed by also turned colors. The sun danced, spun and pulsed in the sky. It was breath-taking and

lasted about 30 minutes. The sun never set during this time. It stayed in the same place the whole time. Eventually, the sun turned golden-orange. Several passengers, myself included, saw the sun's rays in the form of a cross through the venetian blinds on the bus.

The next day, Wednesday, June 24, was the feast of St. John the Baptist. We awoke to the sound of roosters crowing. After breakfast, we left our host family for the 10 AM English Mass. We heard Our Lady was to appear to

the visionaries on Mt. Krizevac at 11:30 PM that evening. Our first stop after Mass was at the visionary Vicka's house. Always smiling, patient, and kind, she prayed over the sick. She affirmed the 11:30 apparition time that evening.

After Vicka's, we decided to go to Apparition Hill, which is where Our Lady first appeared to the visionaries. Crosses and petitions were placed all over the area. As we went up to Apparition Hill, some Croatians offered us handfuls of cherries. The people are so humble, kind, generous and prayerful. Once at the spot where Our Lady first appeared, we prayed the Rosary and silent prayers of the heart.

When we came down Apparition Hill, we went to see the



*Apparition Hill before the statue of Our Lady was placed where the first apparitions occurred*



visionary Mirjana. She is very sweet and shy. She carries a very heavy burden. She has been entrusted with 10 secrets, which will be read by Fr. Petar Ljubac (whom she chose). He will pray and fast seven days and then announce them to the world three days before they happen. The third secret will be a sign to the world that Medjugorje is real. It will be a sign for all to see, indestructible and untouchable. Mirjana's mission is to pray for unbelievers: those who do not know God's love (which is all of us from time to time, as we all fail at some point to trust and love God).

At 6 PM, we went to the rectory where the visionaries would gather to pray the Rosary and see Our Lady. People from all over the world gathered to pray the Rosary. We then went to the 7 PM Croatian Mass. So many people were there that we had to sit outside on the grass. It was estimated that 70,000 people were in the village from all over the world to attend the anniversary.

My friends and I left early to begin the climb up Mt. Krizevac. The sun, once again, turned to a white host and began to turn a beautiful rose color. As we climbed the mountain, we prayed the Stations of the Cross all the way up to the top. Once on top of the mountain, it was a beautiful scene with the valley below. The cement cross there was built in 1933 in response to the terrible storms that had plagued the area. Hail had killed their crops on numerous occasions. The cement was carried on their backs. Since the building of the cross, their crops have not been destroyed. Our Lady stated to the visionaries that She is present there every day praying for the world.

About 50,000 people gathered on the mountain that night, praying and singing in their native tongues. At 10:00 PM, two helicopters flew above us. The Communist military knew it was the anniversary, and they had come by to scare us away. They did not want crowds gathering, especially religious crowds. Not to be dismayed or frightened, the people began to sing and pray louder. The visionaries came up the mountain about an hour prior to the apparition time. Everything became peaceful except the helicopters which hovered above us. The visionaries began the Rosary, followed by seven Our Fathers, Hail Marys, and Glory Be's. Then we were asked to kneel. Our Lady appeared.

After Marija announced the message from Our Lady, she asked everyone to continue to kneel. I held hands with my friends and a little old Croatian woman, not knowing what to expect next. We were kneeling directly in front of the 30-foot cross, when suddenly it lit up like it was electric with a strobe-light effect. There was no electricity on the mountain at the time. The light came from within the cross. The cross lit up with Christ hanging on the cross in a black and white image (there is no body on the cement cross). The cross then disappeared completely and then re-appeared. A crown of thorns appeared on the cross, then the entire cross was filled with a pattern of thorns. The entire cross disappeared and came back. Then the horizontal part of the cross disappeared and only the vertical bar of the cross was

present. Then the vertical part of the cross disappeared and the horizontal bar was hanging in the air. This happened numerous times. Some people saw the image of Our Lady with a crown of stars, which I did not see. Others saw flecks of gold. Everyone gasped, cried and whispered, "Praised be Jesus". Words of praise and worship could be heard all over the mountain in many different languages.

This went on for 20-25 minutes. During this time, the helicopter was gone until the last five minutes or so of the miraculous apparition. It was spectacular! No words can truly explain the great privilege we were granted. As I stood close to my friends, we held each other and cried with tears of joy, wonder and awe. Everyone on the mountain prayed and sang after the miracle took place. Looking into the night sky, there were a million stars with no clouds in the sky and no moon. We sat on Mt. Krizevac until 1:30 AM

What I realized is that many people thought they would see Our Lady, but She brought us to Medjugorje to see Her Son and how much He suffered for love of us. I understood what it meant to be in "fear of the Lord". This fear is not the emotion of being afraid, but rather of awe,

wonder and the power of God being beyond anything we can humanly understand. It also encompasses the emotion of love. I was drawn to Medjugorje out of love. Our Lady leads us to Her Son, not to Herself. I had believed in God, but I didn't make that belief a part of my everyday life – I didn't even pray.

A talk was given at St. James Church that afternoon – how the spirit of Medjugorje should change our lives. Do not wait. Do not be afraid; be courageous. Our Lady wants us to be holy and not sin anymore. Sacrifice, penance, and our problems are the greatest gifts in life. We need to thank God for the trials and not be sad and complain. Prayer should lead us to silence and letting God speak. Fasting is a physical silence. The purpose of a pilgrimage is to find peace. Let this be a first step for a permanent way to find peace for a lifetime. Don't just spread peace – *be* peace, even when they accuse you, provoke you. Prayer, fasting, listening in silence – this is where peace will be found. How to convert your life: love God and love your neighbor. Let Our Mother hold your hands and lead you. I went to Medjugorje because I heard the call and chose to answer it. It was a very humbling experience. It was simply pure grace from God. God has a mission for me, a purpose for my life and also for yours. We are all called to be great saints, and as Mother Angelica says, "Don't miss the opportunity!"

*Editor's note: This was a condensed version of Monique's testimony, which she originally wrote for her family. If you would like the complete text of Monique's story, you can email her at [mphelan8559@gmail.com](mailto:mphelan8559@gmail.com). Monique shared with me that her birthday is August 5, the same day as Our Lady's "real" birthday, according to the visionaries. Also, she noted that her Godparents consecrated her to Our Lady on 8/16/59. She wrote, "That is key to me, as Our Lady accepted that consecration in spite of my waywardness, and protected me!"*



*The Cross on Mt. Krizevac  
(Cross Mountain)*

*Editor's note: In 2002, I wrote a 3-part series about a seminar I attended with Fr. Zlatko Sudac. At the time, many people told me they made copies and handed them out. Recently, Our Lady and Her Son made it very clear to me that the series needed to be reprinted. Part 1 was in our July 2018 issue and Part 3 will conclude in the September 2018 issue.*

## Seminar with Father Zlatko Sudac

### Part 2

By June Klins

"Amazing Grace" in Croatian, English, Italian, Spanish... It brought tears to my eyes as I was transported back to Medjugorje where the world converges and praises God as one. "We all have something different to offer and God is realized through this," began Father Zlatko Sudac at this seminar in Chicago in November (2001). As he quieted the crowd, he advised that the applause given to him should really be given to Jesus, and that he is hurt when people mention his name too much. A holy priest, whose spiritual director is the same as the Holy Father's (Pope John Paul II at the time), Father Sudac spoke of a dream where he saw himself as the sandals that God puts on so that through them He may come to the people whom He intends to reach. "A person never preaches; the Holy Spirit speaks through his heart. A person never heals; the Holy Spirit heals through him. A person never evangelizes; the Holy Spirit evangelizes through a person who is open to God."

"Each of us has our own charism and we fulfill the meaning of our life if we do it with Jesus," Father continued. "We are the extended hands of Christ." A priest who has been gifted with many charisms, including the stigmata, Father Sudac said that we should never be ashamed to acknowledge the gifts God has given us. As he humorously mimicked a person saying, "It's nothing," he explained that this is covering up God's gifts and is false humility. "Don't think of anything as your own," Father continued. "Everything you have is God's." Similarly, Our Lady of Medjugorje said, "If you have received a gift from God you must be appreciative, but do not say that it is yours. Say, rather, that it is God's." (9/10/85) Using his favorite Biblical analogy of the vine and the branches, Father posed, "Why should the branches be ashamed if it bears sweet fruit?"

Just as we should not diminish our own God-given gifts, Father Sudac cautioned that we should not compare our gifts, nor should we judge others. "There are thousands of paths to God," Father stated. "There are thousands of ways people can experience God in their own hearts." He seemed to echo Our Lady when She said, "Each of you has a special gift which is personal. You alone can understand it interiorly." (7/85) Father said that we are all limited by what we can see and hear, but if we wish to live like Jesus in all of His fullness, then we must be open to all the opportunities He gives to us. "God fills in the holes," Father said. "Grace-filled moments do what words cannot do." We must seek our own experience of God, but the danger exists that people generalize their own experiences. "That is wrong," Father stressed. "Everyone's experience with God is different. God reveals Himself to each one in his own specific way, taking

into consideration his nature, his joys, his faults – the entire person." "Do not be ashamed to witness to the Spirit," Father directed. He acknowledged that in his own path to God, he totally surrendered himself to the Holy Spirit. Father said that we should likewise let our hearts burn with the Holy Spirit because it is through the Holy Spirit that our faith bears fruit.

"God surpasses all experiences," Father continued. He explained that when we speak of the Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit, it does not mean the number of gifts is limited to just seven. He clarified that the number "seven" in the biblical sense means "fullness," or in this case, "countless." "God gives thousands of gifts," he said. Some people are born with a deep spirituality, but some people are born with spiritual blindness, and it is not their fault. He suggested that when we talk about God to others, especially those who "have no ears to hear," we should use analogies, just as Jesus did in His parables.

Father became very passionate as he spoke about Jesus' mission here on earth. He said that Jesus did not come to earth just to establish a religion. "He came to fulfill the law of all religions with the law of love, peace and freedom." "However," Father continued, "we cannot live without the holy institution. Don't ever doubt that it is holy." Father said that when we think of Peter being "the rock" upon whom the Church would be built, we usually think of the institution, but we must also remember that Peter had charisms. "We cannot have one without the other," Father declared.

The power to make changes in our Church comes from the Spirit. "Reforms without the Spirit are like a head without the body; likewise, the very beginning of the Church, going back to St. Paul." Father recommended Our Lady's formula for change: "We need to fast and pray so that the power of the Spirit can change the way we look at things."

In speaking of the Church, Father focused on the very special gift of the priesthood. "Love priests." He repeated passionately, "Love priests. No one, not even Mary, has the power that a priest has. No angel in Heaven has the power that a priest has. Mary has never presided at a Mass." His words were reminiscent of Our Lady's words, "I ask you to pray in a special way for Pope John Paul II and for priests." (7/10/92) After a slight pause, he continued, "Sometimes when I reflect on this, I have a tremendous fear of the Lord." He spoke of the tremendous responsibility of priests. "We are there for you. We need you to pray for us. You and we are one body. Jesus Christ is the Vine and we are the branches. The future of the Church is in this parable." "If the church needs anything today," Father zealously proclaimed, "it needs priests, bishops, and deacons who are willing to die



Fr. Sudac in Medjugorje in 2017



for God, who live the Gospel, who die to themselves and who feel proud they can suffer in the name of Jesus Christ." He told us not to be afraid to tell our priests when things need to be changed. He advised us to express it from our hearts, and assured that if we do it with love, the Holy Spirit would be with us. He said that since Jesus does not change, we must be the agents of change.

Father then spoke about the gifts which we have all been given "free of charge" – life, freedom, love, happiness, joy of the heart, peace, and spirituality. "Everything else you have to pay for," he mused. These are all valuable gifts needed for our existence though. And we all get these, Father said, because in the face of God we are all the same. On Judgment Day, God will not ask our nationality, or even our religion, Father declared, but He will ask us how much we loved. "Love is a gift from God. Therefore, pray that God may give you the gift to love," Our Lady said on 5/28/84. "You have to cooperate with the grace of God," Father emphasized. "The more you cooperate with God, the more God will give you." The way we cooperate with grace is to celebrate the sacraments, which Father described as acts of faith to change our lives, a direct touch between us and God.

Then Father posed the question of why, with all the gifts we have been given, there are so few miracles today. He answered the question by suggesting that it is because

we are too rational. "God surpasses reason, though," Father said. He also suggested that there are so few miracles because none of us has truly suffered in the name of Jesus. He said that when we begin to get persecuted, our faith gets stronger. He gave the example of his homeland, Croatia. "When the Church is lukewarm, God allows persecution to strengthen faith," he seemed to forewarn. "When faith is not allowed, it gets stronger. Forbidden fruit is the sweetest fruit."

"We need to love and communicate and pray together more," Father Sudac continued to echo Our Lady of Medjugorje. "The future of humanity lies with the family. The family is the basic spark of humanity and we have wandered off from that." He asked, "When have you children seen your joy and happiness?" He pointed out that when the children ask, we can say that it is Jesus who makes us happy. "We have a tremendous responsibility before humanity and before God."

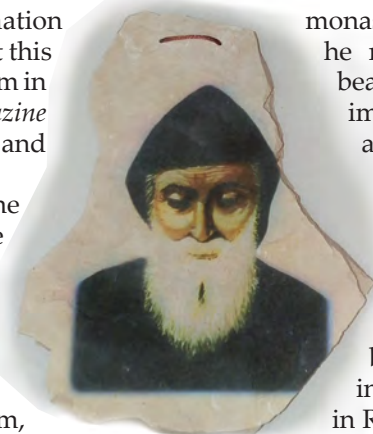
Father Sudac summed up his first few talks with what he described as "the best" imagery – the vine and branches. He noted that the vine and the branches grow on one and the same plant. "Grapes grow on branches, not the vine," Father said. If we are well-rooted in the vine of Jesus Christ, then all the juices can flow through to touch our lives. "You are the branches on the vine of Christ."

*"I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever remains in me and I in him will bear much fruit, because without me you can do nothing" (John 15:5).*

## The Picture of St. Charbel

Several subscribers have sent us information about St. Charbel since he is our patron saint this year. The more I read about him, the more I am in awe. The July/August issue of *Crusade Magazine* recently featured St. Charbel on their cover and published the story about his picture.

What is interesting is that from the time St. Charbel entered the monastery, no one except his fellow monks saw his face, nor did anyone take his photo. On May 8, 1950, four Maronite Catholic priests from Scranton, PA, were on a pilgrimage to St. Maroun's Monastery in Annaya, Mount Lebanon, to visit St. Charbel's tomb. One of them, Fr. George Webby, took a photo of the other priests and the guard on duty outside the



*Picture of St. Charbel in a shop in Medjugorje*

monastery. When Fr. Webby developed the photo, he noticed an additional person with a white beard standing in the middle of the photo. He immediately went to the monastery to inquire about the mystery person in the photo. All the older monks who had known St. Charbel when he was alive attested that it was St. Charbel. Experts ruled out trick photography. Coincidentally, the photo was taken on St. Charbel's birthday! All subsequent pictures of St. Charbel have been based on the photo taken by Fr. Webby, including those displayed at St. Peter's Basilica in Rome during his beatification and canonization and those in Medjugorje shops.

## Break the Fast Prayer

*By Darcie Nielsen (written at Adoration)*

Jesus, I conclude this fast day in Your heart. I ask that You take my efforts and multiply them for the glory of Your kingdom.

Fill me with a spirit of gratitude and charity. I rejoice to draw closer to You in this fast and I recognize how much I need You. Lord, I am so weak, but You make me strong.

Give me the grace to continue fasting from what is evil.

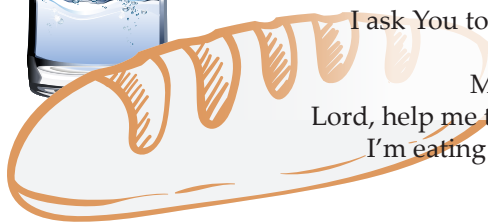
I ask You to be with me now as I break the fast. Protect me from the spirit of gluttony and enlighten me to choose a food that will be healthy for my body.

May I always remember that my body is a temple for the Holy Spirit.

Lord, help me to eat slowly and intentionally. May I love You and honor You just as much when I'm eating as when I'm fasting. Thank You for this food and nourishment for my body.

May my heart joyfully await for the next time I receive You.

[www.livethefast.com](http://www.livethefast.com)



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## MARY IS CALLING YOU

On June 24, 1981 in Medjugorje, Our Lady appeared to six children. She identified Herself as the Blessed Virgin, Queen of Peace, and has continued to appear daily. Her message is PEACE, peace with God and man. Her words to the visionaries, "I have come to tell the world that God exists. He is the fullness of life, and to enjoy this fullness and obtain peace, you must return to God."

Today, all but three of the visionaries have daily apparitions of the Blessed Mother. During the apparitions, the visionaries do not react to light, don't hear any sound or react to being touched. They feel that they are outside of time and space. All the visionaries declare to see the Blessed Virgin as they see other people - in three dimension. They pray and speak with Her.

The Blessed Mother is confiding ten secrets to each visionary (some are chastisements for the world) and promises to leave a visible sign at the place of the apparitions in Medjugorje for all humanity. This time, this period of grace, is for CONVERSION

and a DEEPENING OF FAITH. After the visible sign, those still living will have little time for conversion.

Father Jozo Zovko, who was the pastor of St. James when the apparitions began, has spoken about what he calls "the weapons" or the "the five stones" of Our Lady. They are: prayer with the heart, especially the Rosary; Eucharist; Holy Bible; monthly Confession; and fasting.

The publisher recognizes and accepts that the final authority regarding the apparitions at Medjugorje rest with the Holy See in Rome.

To borrow an original prayer cloth from Medjugorje for a week, send a self-addressed stamped envelope to the address below. You must include your phone number. If you want a prayer cloth we made to keep, send a self-addressed stamped business size (4 1/8" x 9 1/2") envelope with \$.71 postage on it.



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