

(From the Blue Book - Abandon Yourselves Totally to me)

(P. 120 - )

"Pray to the Holy Spirit for enlightenment"

Those of you who have been here several times, will see that we have transformed the statue of Our Lady which was made according to the description given by the visionaries, to the little chapel.

We did this because our Bishop wished it, he is as you know, still opposed to the events.

The apparitions come now in the parish house, but every evening, after the apparition, the visionaries describe what has happened and tell what they are allowed to tell and they always request a blessing for all those who are in the church.

We begin the Rosary at six and I beg you all not to stand in front of the parish house, as we might get into trouble.

We pray in church. One cannot go into the parish house because the room is very small. I ask you to pray with us. I will tell you when the visionaries begin to pray : we keep silence for a little while and then we sing : "Ave, Ave" or another hymn and we are all together.

Yesterday's message was very beautiful and calls us to work hard and constantly. Our Lady said :*"Dear children, today I want to say this; begin cultivating your heart as you cultivate your fields, cultivate and change your hearts so that the Spirit of God can live in your hearts. Thank you for answering my call."*

Do you know how you should cultivate the fields to have good fruit and flowers ? One must work hard and look after them every day. So it is with our own hearts; we must root out the bad weeds from our hearts and let the new Spirit of God come and live there. This is what Our Lady wants from all of us and this is also the meaning of the apparitions.

You know we cannot expect new truths from the apparitions, but we can expect new stimulus and when people accept this, what God wants is already happening.

Our Lady did not appear so that we should begin quarrelling about whether she had appeared or not. The most important thing is to let ourselves be moved in prayer, in reconciliation, conversion, in fasting, in faith and in peace. This is what Our Lady wishes.

And so I ask you never to forget this, for there are so many rumours, there are so many stories going round in the newspapers, in telephone calls, just do not forget this one thing : do everything Our Lady wishes.

If you have begun to pray here, go on praying and fasting in your own homes, in your families, do what Our Lady wishes.

Our Lady wants everyone's good and only our good. But I must repeat; the general message is always the presence of Our Lady. She shows herself here in a special and marvellous way and day by day, more and more people feel drawn here from all over the world. When we have understood Our Lady's presence through these events, then we shall understand that She is everywhere, always with us, like our Mother and, as Our Lord said, will always be with us.

From this presence, the other words and messages acquire a special and marvellous strength and this is the first and most important criterion for the apparitions if by appearing to the visionaries, Our Lady makes other people believe, and begin their conversion. After Easter, Our Lady gave this message : *"Dear children, I invite you to pray that the Holy Spirit may enlighten you. The Lord will give you new trials, but all will be allowed for the purification of your faith. Thank you for answering my call."*

So speaks Our Lady and so did Jesus speak. This is the hardest thing for us all, the world over, and has always been in all times, not just today. There has always been the Cross, there have always been difficulties.

And many have lost their faith because of their difficulties, and have asked themselves : 'Why does Our Lady ... ?' But Our Lady says : *"The difficulties are for our good, for the purification of our faith."* And I can say; it is true !

Here too at Medjugorje, we have always felt a great grace in all our troubles. Last year, when the Episcopal Conference forbade official pilgrimages, Our Lady said : *"Do not be afraid, allow yourselves to be guided. I guide everything."* And it is always the same, even now. This month, I wrote in my diary; if there are fifteen hundred to two thousand people from all over the world every evening, this is a sign for all.

Our Lady arranges this if we listen, if we heed her voice, and you too are a sign that people, God's people want to see what is happening, to see these events connected with Our Lady.

So after these events, no one will be able to say 'I was important, I was the guide, I was the organiser.' no, because we have seen all along that Our Lady prepared every step through those who were ready to heed Her voice.

This is the most important thing for all of us, and you who have many troubles, who are sick, or desperate, without hope; to search for the Will of God and live it, is the surest way through life, the way most full of joy even if you have to suffer.

In a message on the 28th March, she said: *"Dear children, I invite you to pray, pray and pray. In prayer you will find the greatest joy."*

A question arises for all of us from this message; have we in our hearts a joy that we could call the greatest joy ? If not, it does not mean that we do not want it, but perhaps our prayers are not yet the kind of prayers that will help us reach the greatest joy. Prayer is a meeting with God, with the resurrected Jesus. In the same way as all the Apostles were filled with great joy after meeting Jesus alive after the resurrection, so Our Lady calls us to this same joy, that is to meet Jesus.

After meeting a man, a friend, one needs time to understand what he wants, to tell him about myself. However, if our prayers only consist in an occasional sign of the cross, an occasional 'Hello' to someone standing in a corner of our lives, the odd Hail Mary when we are tired, or when we are in some dire need, that is not the way to the greatest joy.

The trouble is this; we all want joy, but we are not willing to accept the means, to follow the path which leads to the source of joy, to the source of life, of love. This is the trouble, we do not want to use the means. And that is why Our Lady asks us so urgently and every evening to *"Pray, pray"*.

It is obvious that Our Lady is not asking us to waste time in prayers to find the way. When we reach a profound joy, we shall also have peace and shall be able to be reconciled with everyone.

When I tell you to pray, if you want joy, it is quite simple perhaps, but when you go back to your homes, pray reading the Bible, reading the Word, to hear the Lord speaking to your hearts and try to live these things. Then you will see that Our Lady is right when she calls you to profound prayer.

You know that she asks for the Creed, seven Our Father's, Hail Mary's and Glory Be's, the whole Rosary, and to read the Bible, celebrate Mass, go to Communion and make a monthly confession. When you say 'It is a lot !', of course it is, it is a lot for those who have not understood the existence of prayer, but it is little for those who have met Our Lord resurrected.

And so I invite you; begin and continue as you can now, and always try to find the deeper meaning of prayer. Our Lady has also given us a marvellous means for doing this; and that is fasting. Many have confirmed that they are able to pray more deeply and easily when they are fasting. Our Lady does not call us to hunger, but to a process which comes about when we begin to fast; the heart is purified, we open out and can feel Our Lord better and so prayer helps fasting and fasting helps prayer and so we progress along the road to peace. And all of us and the whole world wants peace.

But when you are told to try to use these means, the answer is: 'I cannot, I haven't time, I cannot work when I am hungry !'

If we Christians try to find excuses for not fasting because it is difficult, then perhaps we should think of all those who Our Lady calls her children and who are dying of hunger, and who have not got their daily bread. If we think of these things, perhaps it will be easier to take up these means for our own lives and along this road it will of course be easier to meet other men and easier to meet Our Lord.

(Fr. Slavko Barbaric - 26th April 1985)