

(From Pray with Your heart - Red Book)

(P50 -)

Continue to grow in peace, in reconciliation, in love.

The apparitions now last sometimes three, four or five minutes as Our Lady wishes. Vicka, Marija, Ivan, Jacov have daily apparitions and always pray for peace and for all pilgrims, with Our Lady ; they ask the blessing for the sick and also for sacred objects. What does Our Lady want from us ? The first message is the presence of Our Lady. When I asked Ivanka , “What shall I tell the pilgrims ?” ”Shall I talk about fear or hope ?

“Of hope, since Our Lady has come not to condemn us, but to save us.” So you see, Our Lady is present and from Her presence one can explain all that has been happening here for the last fifty months. It is a very exceptional thing, but as far as we are concerned, a very common and daily happening. Our Lady asks for peace, conversion, faith, prayer, fasting, as guidelines for our life and, more specifically, She asks for the daily Creed, for seven Our Father’s, the whole Rosary, complete with the three parts - joyful, sorrowful and glorious - for the reading of the Bible, to fast twice a week and confession once a month.

These are the concrete things Our Lady is asking of us. She obviously asks us to pray with all our hearts, to make time for prayer, to become active in prayer and to ensure that our Mass becomes a live experience of God. However, in all this, Our Lady asks us to open ourselves to prayer, to Our Lord’s invitation, to this invitation of peace, reconciliation - She wants to save us. And all the other Thursday are stimuli for us to stick to the path with Our Lady.

During these days I want to mention one thing - Peace. Every day, for the last fifty months, Our Lady has been praying with the visionaries for peace and we are all invited to peace.

The visionaries say, ‘peace, reconciliation’ and only repeat the words our Mother asks them to pass on to us. And I can honestly say, according to my own experience here in Medjugorje of the last forty months, that many hearts, if not all, who having got here and started to pray and fast, have actually felt this call, this invitation to peace. Only Heaven and no one else in this world can pronounce the word peace, can invite us to peace, to the degree where we can believe that peace is actually possible.

Judging by what is happening here with us, I think I can quite honestly say that on the spiritual front, the one of faith, the messages have been accepted as being messages of the Gospel and has also accepted their practice.

After this appeal who will be able to say, ‘I have been waiting’. What for ? You see, it is fifty months now, and I think I am in a position to say that the longer it lasts, the firmer I am in my conviction that it must be a strong appeal for us all. As far as we can gather from here, this message is spreading to the whole world and Our Lady has already found many a soul even within other churches, that is the Anglican, Protestant and Baptist churches.

An Anglican vicar spent three weeks here and said, ‘I have understood one thing - Our Lady is not asking my conversion to the Catholic Church, but that I improve myself, as I too have the Gospel.’ Last year he came back and said, ‘ As I got back home, I started talking to my friends about it and - one wondered - how is it that so many people would listen with wide-open eyes. We formed nearly thirty prayer groups, all made up of Anglicans, Baptists, Protestants, Pentecostals with some members of these prayer groups being even Buddhists and atheists. They stated that if a Madonna is called Queen of Peace and invites us to pray, they too would join in and pray.’

And this is a great miracle for the Anglican who told me, ' Father, you know there is not a great deal of room for Our Lady in our churches, as She has almost been chased out ; She is now inviting us, and this message is spreading.'

Look at the Thursday messages, one can say that Our Lady is inviting us to prayer in order to obtain the deepest joy, to solve difficulties, to overcome tiredness.

On this point we can really afford to become selfish ; if you pray you will obtain your joy, you will overcome your tiredness, you will solve your problems. We are, therefore, allowed to become selfish. However, if we carry on growing in peace, reconciliation, spiritual strength, love, people will receive a lot from us, even the whole world.

One cannot expect this call to peace to come from others though, one must start from oneself and this is, somehow, the hardest way of going about it, as it is easier to invite others to patience rather than being patient oneself, it is easier to invite others to forgiveness than to forgive. We must start from ourselves. If we Christians start living the Gospel message Our Lady repeats here, the world will be closer to peace. And this is very important - that we should feel a little responsible for what is happening around, even though we are not heads of state, it does not matter ; peace depends on all of us - from your prayer, from your behaviour.

And now some of yesterday's news :

... Ivanka was not present at the apparition, Jacov is in Sarajevo. To Vicka, Marija and Ivan Our Lady has appeared three times ; once as She usually does, before Mass. They then went up to the hillside, as Our Lady appears there every Monday night, for their group only. Today Marija told me that She appeared at half past eleven and again at midnight. On all three occasions She repeated that we must really be full of joy. They told me that She has blessed everyone in a special way.

She was joyful because so many people had come. Lately Our Lady has been asking the visionaries for some other prayers. She asked them to pray more "until my birthday".

You can therefore feel a very close, very motherly and friendly presence. It does not seem strange to me any more if the visionaries come up to me and say, "The Queen of Peace says so and so" It is as if one who is amongst us were to say, " Do this, do that " All those who come here and start to pray feel Her presence, hear Her voice.

(Fr. Slavko Barbaric - 6th August 1985)