

(From 'I beseech You, listen to my messages and live them - Yellow Book)

Dear children, you forget that you are all important (P76 - )

I will read to you last Thursday's message and try to explain it in the context of all the other messages, *"Dear children, you forget that you are all important. The elderly are especially important in the family. Urge them to pray. Let young people be an example to others by their lives, let them give witness to Jesus. Dear children, I beseech you, begin to change through prayer and you will know then what you need to do. Thank you for having responded to my call."*

The apparitions show us in a practical way how to go towards peace and how to achieve peace. I think all of us can find the answer to 'why am I here' ? from this fact. Perhaps because I believe that this place, over the last five years, has become a place of prayer, of fasting, of re-awakening of faith, where peace is found, where it is possible to live reconciliation with God and other people.

In her first five messages, Our Lady said *"Prayer"*. Since last March, 1984, She has been giving us a message every Thursday. When we read these messages it can be seen that no message is without this strong invitation to *"Pray"*.

Naturally we must ask ourselves why there is this invitation to pray. If you read the messages you will understand the reason. Our Lady repeats many times, *"Pray and you will have all you desire"*, *"Pray and you will have peace, a deeper joy, you will overcome your tiredness, you will have love, strength for reconciliation"*, and much else.

Many people have discovered something very important here : that they can pray and that they have time for prayer.

Many of us caught up in the hectic routine of our modern world lose the time to pray and many people excuse themselves, "I haven't enough time". It would be more honest to say, "I don't see the need for prayer." We can't see the value of prayer any more. Thinking of all of us who wish for peace, wish to love and be loved, it is true what Our Lady is telling us, *"Pray and you will have all of this."* And what do we do ? We leave prayer, we haven't got time for it, we believe that we can resolve everything with our money, by our devices, and I don't know what else. This is a great mistake, also in the lives of us Christians.

But when we discover the value of prayer, then we find the time for prayer and we start again to organise our life with God.

This is our conversion. This is the significance of the words in the messages where Our Lady says, *"Abandon yourselves, let yourselves be guided by me."*

In her last but one message, She said, *"You are too preoccupied with material goods, and in these goods you lose everything that God wishes to give you."*

In other words, in the first place in your lives there is not God, love of God, or peace ; material goods take the first place.

Naturally, if we do not meet each other through our hearts, but with our money, our muscle, our heads, then conflicts and wars must follow. I would like to explain to you that Our Lady has never spoken against our belongings, against our money or against our work, never. But She has spoken many times about changing our relationship with all our possessions and finding a

new order of values in our lives. This is what the apparitions are for, to produce this new order of values in our life. God is not inviting us, through Our Lady, to lose something, but to change our values in the light of our faith. This is why Our Lady is always telling us, "*Pray*". Without prayer, this change is not possible. But not all prayer helps us to change our lives and to bring harmony to them. You know that Jesus told us not to pray as the pagans do, only with our lips, but to pray from the heart; seeking first of all the will of God and the Kingdom of Heaven and then all else will be given to us.

Here Our Lady is inviting us to heartfelt prayer and asks that it be active prayer, that the words be active. She said, "*I invite you once again to pray.*"

What does heartfelt prayer mean ? It means feeling the words of God in our heart and allowing ourselves to be moved by these words. Do God's words move me or not ? What does it mean to me when God says, "I give you my love", "I give you My Body", "Here is My Word for you", and from the Cross, "Here is your Mother. Here is your son", "Be reconciled to your neighbour", "Love your neighbour, love your God above all else, love yourself, do not destroy yourself". If these words leave us indifferent and if we continue to find excuses it means that our prayer is not active, it cannot move us and we are closed. Or, in other words, what does the Cross mean for you in your family ? When you look at it does it invite you to love and to reconciliation ? Does it help you not to blaspheme and not to use swear words ? Does it help you to love your neighbour ? Does it help you to accept Our Lady ? To pray or not ?

If we continue to behave selfishly in front of the Cross, if we affirm that we cannot forgive when someone has offended us, then it means that the Cross is silent and is no longer speaking to us. Our Lady, by inviting us to pray, want us to be touched by God's Word once again, and not to be afraid in the face of these things. Like a Mother, Our Lady invites us, "*Do this and you will receive all that you need.*" In one of her messages, She said, "*I know that you want to live all that I tell you, but you are not able to do so because you haven't yet started praying.*"

In this message too, we have an example of whether the word moves us or not: Our Lady said, "*Dear children, you forget that all of you are important.*" These words said by Our Lady are serious. She is telling each one of us personally, "*You are important.*"

Sometimes we talk about inferiority complexes in psychology; how many people, especially amongst the young, have lost the meaning of life, of sacrifice, of love and many other aspects and do not want to live life and so the way is opened for drugs, alcohol, crime and all that is negative. Our Lady says to each one of us, "*You are important*". I believe that these words must heal our soul and our heart of every fear and worry. We are important for Our Lady and important for each other.

If we accept this and begin to live it, who will dare to hate someone any more, or with hate destroy someone ? What parent will dare to fight or get divorced if they become important to each other, and if their children become important to them ? Look how important what Our Lady is telling us is. In the Kingdom of Heaven no one can be idle because no human being refuses love.

So, if I make up my mind to love I will always have much to do. Do not complain that you do not have any work to do. You have work. Many people are waiting for your help, a word from you, and your presence.

In this message we have an example, "*The elderly are especially important in the family.*" Guided by this message, I often ask myself and I ask you too, when did we last tell some elderly person in the corner of our home, or in the family: you are very important ? Perhaps

because we have never said this they have lost every desire in life, and all joy in it. Many of them have lived in the belief that someone is of value if they work, and after retiring they lose the meaning of living, they lose joy, and they feel of no importance.

Look at how Our Lady is educating us, how she wants to open our eyes to each other's needs. From my words, perhaps from the words of a young person, depend the parents' joy ; and from the words of a parent depend the children's lives. So you see how important we are to each other, the life of another person can really depend on me, on you. If we discover these values life will change and perhaps we will have a new chance to discover and realise the nonsense of our fights, our hate, our envy, of our being closed and looking just for something for ourselves.

Our Lady said for the elderly people, "*Urge them to pray.*" These words must be understood in connection with the last words of this message, "*Begin to change through prayer and you will know then what you need to do.*" Through this message, prayer is once again a way to discover that I am important, that you are, that each on if us is. Through prayer, we can discover what we must do.

In her last but one message, She said, "*Dear children, I want to guide you completely.*" Why say, I don't know what to do ? I am frightened. If Our Lady tells us seriously, "*I want to guide you completely*", we must give Her our hand. I am sure that by coming here this is what you want to do.

And now a few words for the young people. Our Lady is asking a lot from you. She said, "*Let young people be an example to others by their lives, and let them give witness to Jesus.*"

If you ask me how to give witness, I say "Try". How can you be an example for Jesus ? By testifying. Jesus has invited us to live a life full of joy, of love for everyone, and life full of peace and a heart ready to bring peace. Jesus has invited us all to forgive when we are offended and not to be revenged; He has invited us to develop the gifts we have been given by God, and this is particularly valid for young people. You have many possibilities of developing them. In the life of a young person, all laziness, all letting one's self go is really a sin against the Holy Spirit. Our Lady has suggested two days' fasting and prayer; why ? Not in order to annihilate us. If a trainer wants to get the young people in his team ready, he doesn't to reduce them to nothing, but to prepare them in order to have a good team for the new season. In the same way, Our Lady is asking certain things in order to prepare you young people to be able to face up to life, not to make you tired. We elderly can also be young on one condition, to be young in our spirit and soul. Someone who wants to renew his life doesn't lose hope, and even if difficulties come remains youthful

What does Our Lady want of us ? She wants to help us to open our hearts to peace, be ready to live the fullness of life; then it doesn't matter how old we are.

We must be ready to open ourselves in prayer; as I open myself when I am with a friend, so I open myself to God. If I don't spend time with someone, I will never open myself up; and it is the same with prayer.

Now I beseech you all to begin to change yourselves by prayer. I have already told you that Our Lady is asking for active prayer ; this means that She is inviting us to be changed. If we accept the Word of God with our heart then it will speak to us. The condition required to accept it with a new heart is prayer. If you read the messages you will realise that this is repeated in other words in every message.

But there is another important means available to us and that is fasting. It is a speciality of Our Lady. All our cookery recipes have become very complicated, but Our Lady has remained just a two thousand years ago; She has not changed the recipes of her kitchen which She is suggesting to us in our modern world where we have everything available. She says : the ideal is bread and water. But the stress is on bread.

When we come to Italy we find your specialities and, when you come to Medjugorje, you find this speciality. Why ? Our Lady is not asking us for fasting because She is happy if we are hungry. This is not so. This is the chance to live on bread and it is an aspect, perhaps the first which we should discover, the eucharistic aspect of this fasting. By living on bread for two days a week we will discover how important bread is and by discovering our daily bread we will more easily be brought to realise our eucharistic bread. This will come to us step by step, slowly.

Fasting has its own value; it serves as a means, it serves us for our faith, for our prayer, for love and for reconciliation.

In the Beatitudes Jesus said that those who are poor of heart before God are blessed. He did not say blessed are those who do not have anything, but those who are poor of heart. We can interpret this as meaning blessed are all those who feel a need for God. This is what being poor means, that is, open.

Today, the editors of Spot (a local magazine) asked Vicka how Our Lady guides her, how she could describe Our Lady: friend, mother, unapproachable being from above; Vicka described her in the loveliest way, "Mary is Mother".

Afterwards they asked her, "What do you like most about this Mother?" She said, " Her exceptional goodness and tenderness. She is a Mother who loves everyone and wants us all to be saved, the whole of humanity."

I tell you this because we must understand that everything Our Lady offers us, She offers to us as a mother who has understood and taken seriously the words of Jesus, "Here is your son." She has kept these words in her heart. They are words which have moved Our Lady. If someone says, "She is asking a lot, it is not possible", we must accept. Our Lady loves us and this is why She is inviting us and I am sure that by coming here you will have understood and accepted her voice and will wish to continue.

I am inviting you. Our conversion will never be finished. So, be patient with yourselves. Conversion means growing in love, in peace, and in the spirit of prayer and penance.

Who of us is able to say that they have already grown enough, cannot love any more and cannot grow any further in faith ?

(Fr. Slavko Barbaric - 26th April 1986)