

If we have not understood the Cross, we will never understand anything of Christian life.

Another message at the beginning of this time of Advent, tells us that Our Lady has come to teach us love: *"You do not yet know how to love, you do not yet know how to listen with love. I am your Mother and I want to teach you something very important."* At the beginning of the liturgical year, Our Lady gives us the task of: "Love." At this point, we must ask ourselves a deep and intimate question: if Our Lady had said once more "there will be a catastrophe" how would we behave ? If Our Lady says: *"You do not yet know how to love"* has this moved us or not ? If these words do not move us it is a sign to us that we see our physical life as more important than our spiritual one. We can pray or not do so, be converted or not, but one day we all must die and this will be our catastrophe. When Our Lady tells us: *"I have come to teach you to love"* this means that she has come to preserve us from the most dangerous death, the death of our soul. These words must move us.

Another very important fact is that Our Lady wants to bring us to the Cross. In two messages she has said: *"Pray a great deal for peace in front of the Cross."* Our Lady knows what significance the Cross has. She is educating a prayer group with Ivan and sometimes tells the group to pray the joyful mysteries together, the sorrowful mysteries two by two in the group, but for the glorious mysteries she says: *"Go to your homes and pray in front of the Cross."* The Cross is the most important Word Our Lord could tell us. What does the cross of illness or suffering mean ? If we have not understood the Cross, we will never understand anything of Christian life or of the life of Jesus. We have to pray a great deal in front of the Cross and meditate on It. Our Lady was poor in front of Our Lord, she said to the Angel: Behold the handmaid of the Lord. This is the summary of the whole of the Bible. By these words Our Lady showed that she understood that a Servant of the Lord would come Who by His Life and Love would save the world. Others were waiting for a political saviour. As a poor handmaid, Our Lady waited for the Servant of the Lord. To become the Mother of Our Lord, she had to understand the Cross and she wants us to understand It, too. You can see how much the visionaries suffer; they are with Our Lady every day but still suffer. It is suffering for Jacov to live without his parents and so is it also for Ivanka. Vicka has been ill for so long and now also Marija ! I can see that suffering exists in their lives, but in a different way because they bear their crosses with joy. Our Lady wants us to learn this, too. We will not be spared our crosses and our suffering, but Our Lord will give us strength. Our Lady has come, as Jesus did, not take away all the suffering of the world, but to show us how to live with it. As the Apostle says: 'to those who love Our Lord all suffering will be worthwhile.'

Our Lady wants to bring us to the Bible. She has said: *"Read the Bible, put it in a prominent place in your families so that it will be a stimulus to you."* We see the Cross and the Bible so often and can have a hundred Bibles in our homes, but if we do not look at them with our hearts they will not give us an impulse for reading and prayer; if we want them to do so, we must begin with our conversion. Conversion means letting ourselves be moved by the Cross and the Bible which is the Word given to us. Many times in our family life in front of the Cross we behave badly. If the Cross and the Bible do not mean anything to us anymore it means that our spiritual life is dead.

When Our lady asks us to fast she wants to lead us to the life of the poor. She is not asking for hunger from us, but for a deeper life, purified from every sin and evil. A poor person is able to believe and to abandon himself to God, because he will never put his hopes in the material world or earthly goods; he will never tell someone he does not need them. A poor person is

open to God and to his fellow men and this is what matters. Our Lady knows this and this is why she asks us to fast twice a week.

A French journalist told me today that he had not heard any more about Our Lady giving messages containing threats or similar warnings. I explained that all the secrets remain. Our Lady has not said that they will not come about, but has told us something important: *"By your prayers and fasting you have helped the fulfilment of my plans."* What can the plans of a mother be for her children ? Only plans of good and peace, but Our Lady added: *"Continue to pray and fast so that all my plans may be fulfilled."* Our Lady wants to save not only us, but the whole world when she gives us the means of prayer and fasting into our hands. We are all responsible and I understand this responsibility now more than ever in my life. We are all responsible for each other and for everything which happens in the world ! Yesterday I told you to appreciate every act of forgiveness; even if it is only forgiving a swear word, if you have shaken hands to make peace, it is a great step... peace is like a house, it is built with small stones, stone by stone it becomes a house, and forgiveness by forgiveness will make a new world. You have heard this today in the readings: Isiah, this voice from the desert, tells us to lower these hills. These hills and valleys are my hand and your hand, your heart that no longer knows how to forgive. If they are full of grace and love then Our Lord can come. The prophet Isiah and John the Baptist did not mean that we must lower our Monte Krizevac, the Italian Alps or the Apennines, but we are thinking of our hearts which can be higher than these hills and wider than all the valleys in the world. In this sense, too, we must understand Our Lady's last message: *"You can say that my joy at Christmas lies in your hands."* Like a Mother she wants to have everyone seated at the table in peace and love together.

The road of love is a great and long school that lasts all our life.

(Fr. Slavko Barbaric 9th December 1984)