

(From the Red Book - Pray with Your Heart)

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"Everything has its time"

Belgrade Television has shown a documentary film on Medjugorje. When one already knows the situation from the beginning, this event appears even greater than it did at first sight. It is the first time someone has spoken in this manner - it is a documentary of about an hour, a really good one, followed by discussion. But how can sociologists, psychologists, neuropsychiatrists debate on these things if they do not believe in God? They had a debate; there was also a representative of the Orthodox Church and he was the best of them all, as he gave some very good explanations regarding faith, mystery, the visions, the apparitions and did not fall short on other issues either.

He told a psychologist, "Can a person who is colour-blind give the judgement on colours?" That is, in other words, how can an unbeliever talk about the apparitions? Surely, he must always explain them on a pathological, psychological or sociological level, but never on a spiritual one.

There was also a representative of the Catholic Church, an actual member of the Commission and with regard to him I will say in a nutshell - when he had to speak, he did not, and when he did, he spoke badly.

However, on the whole it was something very positive.

Marija Pavlovic spoke in such an inspired way that I said that, had they all spoken against the apparitions, Marija would have amazed everyone, for she was so genuine and said some really good things. It is quite clear, therefore, that this time is not the hour of triumph for us, but just a new appeal, a new call to be accepted, in order to believe in and live the messages.

In the last message Our Lady asks us to take care of our hearts, to clean up every corner of our hearts. She said, *"Now that your work on the land is over you have more time available. You clean every corner of your homes, but neglect your hearts."*

And so she invited us to clean our hearts.

It is very important to feel that everything has its own time, that we are invited to find a daily balance - the balance of our time spent, that is, finding time for prayer, for spiritual life, the same way one finds time for work, study, rest.

Our Lady proposed we should pray - when one prays well, I believe that an hour and a half is sufficient. If one were also to manage to go to Mass sometimes, perhaps that too, would give some balance to our day.

You see, even when one goes to work or to study one does not go out without having washed oneself; it takes some time to wash one's face, to shave; women especially need more time in the morning. And that is all right, it would not be right to go out anyhow; it is not normal.

We must ask ourselves, however, how long we devote to prayer in the morning. If we say, "I have no time", is it that we seem to have time for breakfast, for other things, but not for prayer? We go out with a starving soul, with a soul which has had nothing to eat all morning. How can we face the day? How can we meet others? How can we give peace? How can we

forgive ? Be reconciled ? An empty soul, an empty heart cannot forgive, an empty soul is amidst conflicts ; there is a saying here, "If one does not eat bread, one must eat bones."

So, you see, if Our Lady says, "*Everything has its time*", one ought to find time in the morning for prayer, for one's soul. One ought to find time for prayer in the evening also. And in a message Our Lady has asked us to become active in prayer.

Our Lady says, "*Everything has its time*": this message is very important for parents. You must know that everything has its time, but if you do not know it, how can the young know it ? How can the children ? If you start immediately, if you start from scratch, it will not be difficult even for the young, even for the children to learn about this time.

... Why does Our Lady ask for prayer ? Prayer is a means of obtaining peace, joy, of being able to be reconciled. We all want peace, we all want reconciliation, to be loved and to love, but it is quite something else if we all desire the means to receive this grace.

I will give you an example - surely, at school every student wants to succeed at the end of the school year ; this is certain, but it does not follow that all students want to study. The same goes for all of us - we all want peace, reconciliation, love, but we do not all wish to take up the means to receive it, which is prayer.

Two Dutch girls left their testimony with me : 'We have discovered that prayer is the path to peace and to happiness and to joy. And this means a lot, because after having discovered this we were able to stop smoking hashish, drinking and other things'. This is the way to peace. We cannot give up nothing. I am certain that only when we have discovered the finer things, when we have discovered a greater value, can we then forsake the other things.

And so, if any of you is still saying, "I cannot resist swear words", I think he is saying so because he has not yet discovered prayer, the joy of prayer. If someone says he cannot give up alcohol or other things he knows are not good, I believe that it is only because he has not yet discovered what these girls say - the joy, the happiness in prayer.

I want to repeat what Our Lady said, "*I am saved, but I want you too, to be saved*". And one cannot be saved in this world unless one starts with prayer, with fasting, with this kind of faith. In a message Our Lady is inviting us to be consecrated to the Cross - that means being with the Cross, feeling the Cross, talking to the Cross, letting it speak. What is the Cross talking about ? "Here is your son, here is your Mother". The Cross talks about forgiveness, sacrifice, love and eternal life. If we, in our homes, carry on swearing, doing evil before the Cross, if we behave selfishly before the Cross, we can effectively say the Cross does not speak anymore, it is dumb.

But the Cross wants to talk to us, Our Lady wants the Cross to talk to us. Be consecrated, open your hearts and you will see that it will tell you - perhaps as with St. Francis - it will say, 'Go and renew your life, your family, your love, your parish, your church, your community'.

Do not say, 'I cannot', for the Lord knows what He is saying and when He invites us to something, He also gives us the graces, He also gives us the strength.

We can do nothing with our own strength, but as we open ourselves in prayer, in fasting, we are given the same experience as St. Paul had, when he said, "I am a weak man, but in my very weakness I have lived. I have experienced the glory of the Cross, the strength of Grace".

(Fr. Slavko Barbaric - 18th October 1985)