

(From the Red Book - Pray with Your Heart)

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"To believe means to commit oneself to God"

Welcome.

It is fifty four months now since the beginning of the apparitions, this is a very long story, a world event.

We have allowed all possible experiments to be carried out so as to make sure, to find out what is happening and one can now say that medicine, psychology, pathology have no more to say. What is now left is theology, pastoral spirituality, mysticism to explore, to carry on researching all that is happening here.

What does Our Lady want in so many months of apparitions ? Peace. Our Lady has entrusted peace in our hands, we are responsible for it. She is thus showing a great trust in us, by asking us to help Her in bringing peace to this world.

Our Lady, as a Mother, is calling on us to help Her to bring peace to this world - how can we do it ? She said, quite simply, "*Pray and fast.*"

To recite the Creed every day means to commit oneself to God - I give you my life today, at every moment, in every difficulty, in my suffering, in my work, in my study; I know who I belong to. This is the Creed. Our Lady wants us to pray every day, so that each day may be an impulse, a path towards the Lord.

Our Lady, as a Mother, wants to be with us and She can only be with us if we devote time to Her, by meditating on Her life and coming closer to Her life with our lives.

Recently I was talking to a Bishop in Ireland. He told me, 'I have heard of Medjugorje, of the messages, but one thing is bothering me somewhat, these daily apparitions, why ?'

I replied, 'Our Lady knows the answer. I can only speak for myself. Our Lady is a Mother and, as a Mother, wants to be in every family every day, not just on Sundays when one goes to Mass. She wants to be there every day and She can, provided we take time for the Rosary.'

All this must be a means for us to change our life and every day deepen our faith, love, peace and reconciliation.

I am sure that each one of you who has started to pray has met some sort of difficulty in prayer - he is distracted and so on. But it does not matter. Do not be afraid when you are faced with these difficulties, just go on. As far as fasting is concerned, Our Lady said, ideally twice a week on bread and water.

Fasting certainly helps prayer. One can pray better when one is fasting and one can fast better when praying.

Fasting also helps faith - one can hear the Word of the Lord better. To fast means to come out of ourselves, from the broken home of our hearts in order to hear the Lord. Fasting purifies us and faith also comes from listening; in this way, we are better prepared to listen to the Word, which inside a heart which is free from materialism and selfishness, can more readily become active, and change our lives.

Fasting also helps love, for, by fasting, one becomes a bit more open, one is more sensitive to the other, to our neighbour, one can more easily see that we have plenty, that we really must think more of others. When you fast, the principle to follow in order to know whether you are fasting well or not, is to feel whether prayer is growing deeper, whether you are praying more easily, whether you are feeling more sorrow when you have done something to offend someone else. This means that we are becoming more sensitive and this is the only way to reach peace.

The Thursday messages help us to deepen the messages of peace, conversion, faith and prayer.

Three weeks ago Our Lady asked us once again, to be thankful, to learn how to be thankful, even for the smallest of things. This is another word for peace. When do I say, thank you ? When should I say, thank you ? Who can say thank you ? The one who sees the other, who recognises the other, who is humble. One can read in the Magnificat how Our Lady was thankful. Not to say thank you, not to be grateful, not to have any gratitude in one's heart - this is the greatest atheism.

Think of the story of Adam and Eve - they received everything from the Lord, but in one moment, they forgot, they became blind to what the Lord had given them; they wanted to sin, they felt they had to sin in the hope of receiving even more. They became blind. This is the deepest form of atheism. Who can give everything to a selfish person ? When will a selfish person ever say thank you ? If he were to be given the whole world, it would not be enough. When can a proud person say thank you ? Even if you do everything for him, it will not be enough. He who is humble sees the others, he sees the smallest of things, he starts thanking. If one does that, then peace comes to families, peace comes to the world. I am telling you this in order to be able to be thankful - the way Our Lady is asking - one must pray, one must confess, one must fast.

Therefore, it is necessary to see in order to thank.

When you receive these Thursday messages, always try and deepen them, try and find a connection with the other messages, because there is always a reason why Our Lady give the messages. You know that recently She said She wants to guide us, She wants us to be full of peace, joy, conversion, like a new dress. This is yet another word for peace, to have a new dress of goodness, of love. When Our Lady says, a new dress of love, of peace, we must think of those clothes which have been torn by sin. It is always a sin which breaks a person, a community, a Church. Sin always breaks, and the new dress is love, peace.

In Her last message, She invited us all to be active in the Church, to bring one's own flowers to the church, to Jesus, and added that everyone should be happy. When Our Lady says we must be active, this means we are capable of being so. Our Lady knows who She is talking to, which means there is no one, even if sick, who can say, 'What can I do ?'

Think of St. Paul's comparison between the body and the Church - the eye cannot say to the head, 'I do not need you', nor can the head say to the leg, 'I do not need you.' We all have many charisms, we have received many graces and can serve the Church and Jesus.

And when I look at myself positively, when I acknowledge the fact that I have received a lot, I also feel responsible for going ahead. Our Lady wants this.

The whole logic of these apparitions can be said in the one word Our Lady told to Marija, I believe two months ago. During one of the apparitions Marija asked, 'Blessed Virgin, do you have something specific for me?' The answer was, "*Yes, I have. I give you my love, so that you may give it to others.*" This is the logic, 'I give you my love, my peace, reconciliation, everything, all the graces, so that you may give them to others.' If in these days, in these times we are without peace, without love, without reconciliation, this means we have not opened our hands.

(Fr. Slavko Barbaric - 2nd November 1985)