

(From the Red Book - Pray with Your Heart) -

(P 207 -)

"Conversion lasts the whole of one's life"

In my opinion, one very important thing for us all is what Our Lady asked Ivan's group a few weeks ago - to have a week's spiritual retreat, to have one wherever one happens to be, without looking for a cloister or a retreat house, but to hold one in our own daily life.

Each of us, especially now before Christmas, ought to spend a week this way, one ought to devote oneself more to prayer, more to silence, one ought to be more in contact with Our Lord; this programme is very beautiful and simple, suitable to us all. No matter where we are or what we do. What we can do is this - pray more at the beginning of the day, pray to the Holy Spirit, read the Bible, pray the Rosary, attend Mass. let us retire and live one week this way.

Mirjana received a further apparition on 30 November - these messages, these words, all these things she heard and saw are an appeal to us. If we think of Jesus' parables where He was saying we must be awake, not asleep, we already have the answer to Mirjana's words.

The situation here with us is as follows : every day we see many people, many conversions, many healings, a new spirit of prayer, we receive a great many testimonies from all parts of the world. Many prayer groups are being created ; many priests who have been heve decided - one day or one evening - to pray this way in their own parishes, together with their own people, as they have seen us do here, three hours of prayer. This is the most important thing. All those who have started to pray, to come together to pray in groups, in families, are doing well.... It is most important for us to pray, to open ourselves to love, peace - all the rest will be given to us.

Conversion, in the messages of Medjugorje, means to change one's way of life, to forsake sin, selfishness, arrogance, pride, and to open ourselves to humility, love and never to give up. Conversion has two elements - one, whereby we are called to forsake sin and another, whereby we are called to open ourselves to love. None of us will be able to say he loves enough, that he cannot love more. This is conversion - to try and love more, to try and get to be fully aware of sin, to pray for the spirit of love and to go forward.

I am saying this for the benefit of all those who have started with enthusiasm after hearing of the apparitions and have realised that change is not easy, it requires some hard work. Do not allow yourselves to tire, conversion lasts the whole of one's life. Our Lord understands this. Our Lady understands this - this is why She has invited all to confess every month. If She is inviting us to confession, one can say She knows we are sinners. She knows we will remain as such, but that does not matter. What matters is to look once again for reconciliation and the strength which is given to us by the Lord. This is hope and strength for us.

(Fr.Slavko Barbaric - 8th December 1985)