

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

(P. 167 - 170)

"I would like the Cross to also be a joy for you"

In yesterday's message Our Lady said, "*Dear children, during these days of the celebration of the Cross I would like it to also be a joy for you. Above all, dear children, pray in order to be able to accept illness and suffering with love, as Jesus did. It is only in this way that I am able with joy to give you graces and healing which Jesus is allowing me to.*" We can well say that this message contains all that Our Lady said about the Cross. Our Lady wants my cross, your cross and suffering to become joy for us both. Let us ask ourselves, does Our Lady know, humanly speaking, what She is saying or is She perhaps an idealist who has forgotten what we are like ? Each of us has some cross and suffering and Our Lady would like our crosses to become a joy for us - and if She so wishes - I believe we can say that this is possible.

This is a very difficult message for us all, so we must ask ourselves whether from experience it is possible for the crosses which I have to bear to become, in fact, a joy for me. Our Lady wishes this to be so and her wish is not an empty one as ours so often are when we say, 'I wish you well', and perhaps we may have other feelings in our hearts. Our Lady wishes it. But let us read on in order to understand fully: "*Above all, dear children, pray in order to be able to accept illness and suffering.*" Our Lady knows what we are like and it is for this reason that She tell us to accept with joy or with love, like Jesus, but She says, "*pray in order to be able to understand and to accept.*"

Our Lady is not inviting us here to be a masochist or to rejoice in suffering. She does not invite us to look for the most difficult crosses but She invites us to pray and accept our crosses and suffering. I do not want to offend anybody who may in a special way be in great suffering, but Our Lady invites us to pray to pray and accept the cross with love. And now let us ask ourselves why ? Not because we continue to suffer, but in order to get well again and save ourselves.

So here Our Lady teaches us how to save ourselves from suffering, by praying in order to be able to accept it with love; "*it is only in this way that I am able with joy to give you graces and healing which Jesus is allowing me to.*" In this way both your suffering and mine can be accepted by you and me. Our Lady makes it a condition to pray in order to be able to accept the Cross, so we must pray in order that Our Lady may be able to give us these graces which are at her disposal through Jesus Christ.

Our Lady speaks from experience, She knows the meaning of suffering and of the Cross and She behaves here like a mother who speaks to her son who must go into hospital for an operation. The child is afraid and does not want to go but his mother says to him, 'You must go to hospital.' What does the child see ? He only sees the particular situation and is therefore afraid of the operation. The mother on the other hand sees the situation in its full context; she is pleased if she can find a bed in a good hospital for the operation because she hopes that after the operation the child will get well again. In the same way, Our Lady is not pleased when we suffer but invites us to accept our suffering in order that She may heal us. And here we must be careful. Jesus did not immediately accept the chalice, but said, "Father, if thou art willing, remove this cup from me, nevertheless not my will, but thine be done."

According to this message we may and should pray for healing, but after having accepted our suffering, always say 'Thy will be done'. Our Lady knows that all our crosses and suffering can be changed into the Resurrection and She wants this. She once said, "*Many people have begun to pray for healing here in Medjugorje but once returned home they cease praying, they*

*forget and in this way lose many graces.*” We must see here something very important; we set limitations to Our Lord; ‘ You must comply with my wish’ and if it does not happen on a certain day, we give up praying and do not live reconciled any more with Our Lord. We must have great patience. If you ask me what significance do these messages on conversion have, I would say that they invite us to be patient with ourselves and God; to have patience with our ways and let ourselves be guided. This message speaks in depth about reconciliation. We have all experienced suffering and have certainly asked God, why should it be me ? Why my family ? Suffering and the Cross has always been a great obstacle. You know the words of St. Paul when he says, the Cross is folly for many, but for all those who are called it is salvation and the wisdom of God. Let us ask ourselves how often we have borne a grudge against God because He has sent us a cross. To have a grudge against God means not to be reconciled with Him, with his plan for us and with ourselves, and thus so many times He cannot grant us all his graces.

I ask you, when last was it that you have not accepted something from someone else with whom you are not at peace or with whom you were not reconciled ? You refused to accept even the nicest thing from him because you tried to avoid it, to avoid meeting him or even greeting him. So if in the depth of your soul we are not ready to say in all circumstances, ‘Lord, your will be done’, as Jesus did, then Our Lord is unable to help us.

Therefore, to be reconciled means to accept our life as it is, our limitations, family, parents, although we have not chosen them and many other things, not stoically, with indifference or disinterest but with love, in order to be healed and accept all that Our Lord offers us.

With reference to the messages I would say that fundamentally this is the only way to peace; if we are not in peace with God we can never be reconciled to the world and people.

This is a very important point but very difficult, as so often we have to say, with reason, that someone has offended us or not loved us, was not willing to forgive us, cheated us, and we then bear a grudge against that person. But if we wish to be in peace and serve the cause of peace we must be prepared to be reconciled in depth. This does not mean that it is a good thing that you made me suffer or offended me, no. It only means that it is not up to me to judge, but to forgive and I must not harbour any bitterness in my heart. I must be ready to accept you if you say, ‘please forgive me’.

If we learn this reconciliation in depth through the messages, prayer and fasting, we are then on the right path to bring peace to the world. In the message before last Our Lady said, “*I will be able to do everything with you, but without your help I cannot*”. If tomorrow you or I should receive a personal call, ‘ Go and bring peace to that family or in your family’, ‘Forgive unconditionally’, but we are not ready to bring that peace, Our Lady cannot count on us. What can She do with me if I cannot forgive, if I am ready to start fighting with others ?

I now tell you that there is no valid excuse if you say, ‘I cannot, he has offended me’, ‘he is very nasty’; there are no valid excuses. The only thing worth doing is to start to pray in order to be able to accept suffering and to live reconciled with it.

And if someone should ask, what does Our Lady want of us, here is the reply: She wants you to accept your suffering with love, that you bear it with love in order to be healed. If you are a son or daughter who feels that your parents at home are a cross for you, or if you as a parent, mother or father, and because of their behaviour your children are a cross for you, here is what Our Lady says and wants from you; not that you go elsewhere to bring peace, but that you start in your family. Our Lady has invited us several times to start where we are. It is of no account how long the apparitions have already lasted or will last, the only thing that matters is what you will do about them. If we open our hearts to God we have understood everything

and if not, then we have understood nothing, and Our Lady is very anxious for us to be able to understand.

Well, thank you for your kind attention and I hope that during these days when visiting the hills of the Cross and of the apparitions, or just praying together with the other pilgrims, you will be able to experience that it is true that suffering can become a joy and that if we accept it with love it can be taken away from us in prayer.

(Fr. Slavko Barbaric - 12th September 1986)