

Reflection on the Message of September 25, 1999

"Dear Children! Today again I call you to become carriers of my peace. In a special way, now when it is being said that God is far away, He has truly never been nearer to you. I call you to renew prayer in your families by reading the Sacred Scripture and to experience joy in meeting God who infinitely loves His creatures. Thank you for having responded to my call."

September 25, 1999

I again greet all those who are following Mary's messages and who are now reflecting with us on this month's message. First I want to remind everyone of last month's message. Mary called us in August to honor God in discovering His beauty and love with which we were all created and then to discover His mercy toward all creatures. Then Mary called us to renew the prayer of gratitude and that our prayer may then gush forth from our hearts like the fresh water does from a spring. This message too did not tell us anything new, because we knew all that already, but in this message we can think of what Mary and Mirjana pray on the 2nd of every month -- for non-believers, for all those who have not yet experienced God's love. This is because when many Christians say "I believe", all it means is "I know". For every Christian certainly knows what he is meant to do, but he does not do it because the love for doing it is lacking. Only love can give us the needed impulse to begin. We should have nothing against knowledge and we should all really try to always know more, but knowledge alone is not yet what is called faith. On the foundation of knowledge these other dimensions must then grow, such as in honoring God, in developing a new relationship toward Him, in adoring Him, in realizing His beauty and love that He shows us throughout all of nature, in discovering also His mercy with which He never rejects us and even when we are sinners and when we repeat sins. He always accepts us and it is then that the gratitude will remain and grow in our hearts. When we see and experience all that God does for us, who He is for us, then all that remains to us is

gratitude and therefore we are called, also in Holy Scripture, to always express thanks. Mary has also expressed this in many messages. Again I wish to emphasize the depth of love with which we are all created. Once we have understood that our lives are a gift of God's love, a wonderful gift of God's creative love, then we will accept our lives with love, love ourselves as God's gift, and protect it from all destruction. When we love ourselves as God's gift, then we will be stronger in our fight against sin, because sin is always destructive toward this gift. Then we will also find it easier to discover the need for going to Confession, for asking forgiveness and for receiving that inner-healing. When we have realized that our life is a gift of God, then we will also accept the others as God's wonderful creations. Only in this way can one hope that all abortions will stop and then become impossible, because who would then destroy this wonderful gift of God?! Then all other forms of destruction such as drugs and alcohol will no longer be possible. All that would be left in our hearts would be gratitude, joy and amazement toward all of God's creative love and might. And it is this that Mary wants -- to teach us a new relationship toward God. Here we also discover Mary's methodology. She does not speak a lot about sin in the messages, and many say that Medjugorje has become the confessional of the world. Mary tries to ignite the light of love in our hearts and it is in this light that we can then recognize sin and then also regret that we have destroyed life. Then the wish for Confession, for asking for forgiveness and for the resulting inner-healing comes into being. Our methodology is somewhat different. We criticize, we judge and we scream easily, and in front of such behavior hearts simply close, and then all spiritual growth ceases. Mary's methodology is the better one -- to try to inflame love in all hearts. And let us try to continue to learn this way of behaving from Mary.

Concerning the three visionaries who are still having their daily apparitions, Ivan is in the USA, Marija is in Italy and Vicka has for the last two months not been speaking to the pilgrims because of a problem with her throat, but we hope that she too will soon again be able to give her testimony. Mirjana, Jacov and Ivanka have their yearly encounters with Mary, and Mirjana has her prayers with Mary on the 2nd of every month.

During these months we have had more and more pilgrims again from the whole world. Right now we have Italians, English, Irish, Americans, French, Romanians, Hungarians, Poles, Slovaks, Czechs, Ukrainians, also Koreans, Canadians and so forth. At the moment we also have between 450 and 500 South Americans who represent all the Peace Centers and many Prayer Groups, and who have already for a few years now been meeting here for a Congress. Their program is that they hear talks by the Franciscans and those visionaries who are here during the day, then also talks by some who have come here with them, and then they do the entire evening program with us in the Church. This Congress is a good school for them all, in that it gives them new impulses for their work. Let us also pray that good fruit will grow in the hearts of all the attendees.

I also wish to mention here that last Monday, on September 20, Archbishop Georg Eder of Salzburg, Austria, was here with us. It was not his first visit here, but I want to mention his visit because he said something very important. When we read Mary's messages they are very simple and often repeat themselves and really say nothing new, and he told us that he too had had some difficulty with the messages before he came here and as a Theologian, always looking for deeper Theology and Philosophy, he could not really get much from them. But since his first visit here with us last January, he now says that he accepts them very simply and was reminded by them of how his own mother who used to speak to him. He was one of five children and remembers still so clearly how often his mother had said, "How often must I tell you something!" Since this memory came to him, he tells us that these messages are so beautiful, so deep and so useful for him that he reads a message every evening and always finds something that reminds him of his own mother.

TODAY AGAIN I CALL YOU TO BECOME CARRIERS OF MY PEACE

It is not, as we all know, the first time that Mary has called us in this way. Already on the third day of the apparitions -- on June 26, 1981 -- Marija Pavlovic told us that she saw Mary holding a cross and, while crying, expressed her first message concerning peace, "Peace, peace, only peace! Peace between God and man, peace among you. Pray and fast and you can

prevent war and natural catastrophes." Since that message on that day Mary has called us to peace many, many times, and all we need to do is to look at the messages and we will be able to see how many she has repeated this call. Peace is the deepest of yearnings of the human heart. Everything that man does, both the good and the bad, is all done in his search to have peace. There are two paths to peace. The first path to peace is the one that Jesus showed us, and it is when we offer up ourselves for the others out of love, when we love one another, when we forgive one another, when we reconcile with one another, when we help one another, and when we are good and patient with the others, that peace will then come to us. This is the true peace that the Prophets too announced from the very beginning. But then there is also the other path and, I would say, it is what is perceived as being the simpler path to peace where the person wishes for his own peace at the expense of others. In this way the false prophets have always announced the simpler path without pointing out sin and without requiring conversion. Here one can say that the false prophets always had an easier time collecting followers than did the true prophets, because the work on oneself is always difficult and costly. We of course wish to decide for the true path to peace and for the peace to which Our Lady has called us. The Biblical word for peace is SHALOM. This word originally meant to be "whole" or to be "untouched". This word therefore means more than only being without war or having a contract that insures a peaceful life among men, but it means a fullness of being, in the physical, in the mental as well as in the spiritual sense. This type of peace is the result of human cooperation with God -- God being the God of peace. His will is our peace, but all of us must also for ourselves decide for peace and then, with the grace of God, also cooperate with Him. The one who opens himself to God by praying and fasting, who asks for forgiveness in Confession, who fights daily against his own negative impulses, this one will have peace. And only the one who has peace in his own heart can also give this peace to others. So then the peace from inside one's own heart flows out into the family, from the family into the Church, and from the Church into the entire community and the whole world. The path to peace is difficult and were it easier, then the world would have had peace a long time ago. The most beautiful assignment any person can be given is to carry and to offer peace to others, but it is also the

most difficult assignment because parts of one must die such as one's own egotism, selfishness, jealousy and all other negative aspects and feelings of one's personality. Mary is, let us say, optimistic because she is convinced that we are able to become carriers of peace. I am certain that many people will renew their decision for peace and that they already today are again ready to forgive, to love more, to reconcile more easily, because only these then are the conditions for true peace. Then Mary speaks to us about God's proximity to us.

IN A SPECIAL WAY, NOW WHEN IT IS BEING SAID THAT GOD IS FAR AWAY, HE HAS TRULY NEVER BEEN NEARER TO YOU

All of us have had the experience that when we are not doing well and are having problems that we easily come to think that God is not hearing us, that He is not helping, and so that He is distant or even absent from us. Fundamentally we must remain aware that God is near to us, as St. Paul says when he says that we are "in Him and move inside Him". God is always near to us but we are able to close ourselves to Him, and we can distance ourselves from Him with our own hearts. Every sin is in fact a distancing of ourselves from God and a hindrance from His being in our hearts, and when our heart is closed to God, then we will certainly not be doing well. Problems and difficulties can go so far that the person in his bitterness ends up pushing God away, but problems and difficulties can also help the person in understanding that he is unable to live without God and then in fact becomes more likely to open himself to Him. This then is certainly the chance for the single person while it is also the chance for all of humanity. When we, by way of our behavior in living without God, end up in our dead-end roads, then we will also become ready more quickly to turn around and therein to convert. Regarding the presence of God, a quick over-view of the Bible suffices for one to see that God is constantly present. When He revealed Himself to the prophet Moses, He really identified Himself as the God who knows His people, who knows the suffering of His people, and who also wishes to save His people in that He sends them Moses. The presence of God is certainly noticeable by way of different signs, and someone once counted that in the Bible it says in one way or in another "have no fear, I am with you" some 365 times. Jesus' name is "Emmanuel" and this means "God with us" and this of

course also means His presence. Jesus eternalized His presence in that He took the bread into His hands and spoke the words, "This is my body that will be offered for you." And several times He told his Apostles, "I am with you all the days until the end of the world." A special way the presence of God is promised us by way of the Holy Spirit who will lead us and introduce us to the truth that is otherwise lacking. So God is with us. But the main way, so to say, of God's presence was given us in the Holy Eucharist. Once we have understood that God is with us in the form of the bread, then our life will certainly change completely. The first fruit of the understanding that God is with us will be that we will be freed of all fear, because all fears that so often already come in childhood are always attached to the absence of a loved person. So when a loved person -- the mother or the father -- was absent, then this wound will be carried on through all of life and that person will always live in fear. The fear will go away when the loved person is back again, when one feels, sees and hears this so needed love. The main experience of many people today is that they are really fearful and live in an existential fear. This fear is understandable because the person really has been distanced from God and the inner-healing will only happen when our hearts again open themselves to God's presence among us. When one investigates the Medjugorje phenomenon, it is also very important to realize that Mary is constantly calling us to attend Holy Mass and Adoration. It is also very good to hear that many prayer-groups have also reinstated Adoration. There are already prayer-groups that have managed to arrange for permanent Adoration, because there are enough members among them that are ready to be in Jesus' presence for an hour or more every week. To delve into Jesus' presence is the salvation of man, and this is Mary's wish for us. This is why she said, "When you adore my Son, then I am with you" and at another time "fall in love with Jesus in the Holy Eucharist". Here it always concerns the experience of having Jesus near to us and from the experience of being near to God we will get peace and from peace then all other positive traits will also be able to grow. A special experience of God's proximity to us should also happen in Confession. The person who opens himself before the Priest and to God and who expresses his sins and shows his wounds will experience the omnipresent God who forgives, who heals the wounds and who frees the heart to

once again be in the presence of God, and so we will certainly do all that we can to accept the omni-present God and to also remain with Him at all times. Then Mary says...

I CALL YOU TO RENEW PRAYER IN YOUR FAMILIES BY READING THE SACRED SCRIPTURE

How often Mary has called us to doing this we would simply have to count throughout all her messages. Praying in the family is very important. When the parents pray with the children in the evening and when they also hear the words of God, then it will give the children the needed strength for the rest of their lives to love one another, to forgive one another and to thereby live in peace with all people. Such an education will then continue down the generations and bring about good at all levels. That the children and today's youth have so many problems and difficulties is a sign that they have not been introduced to the presence of God. There are so many things and situations that distract the young and that can bring them far away from God! That is why it is always the primary assignment of their parents not only to work for their children's material well-being but also really to work for their children's being given the chance to experience God's love and proximity to them, so that they will later always choose God's path for them. It is not easy, but it is most definitely important that we think and work for this to become the case, and with this Mary also promises us her own help. Then Mary says...

AND TO EXPERIENCE JOY IN MEETING GOD WHO INFINITELY LOVES HIS CREATURES

She also spoke about God's love in the message before the last one, and here I again wish to emphasize that in our prayers our first intention must always be for us to experience God's love. That God loves us infinitely is simply the primary truth when it concerns God in relationship to us. And true joy can only be experienced when we encounter the love of the loving person. To be able to experience this loving person and the joy that comes from it, one must decide to give the necessary time because without this it will be impossible. And the great grace that so many pilgrims who come to Medjugorje have received is that they have decided to take the time for being with God and for listening to His word and for discussing it with others. And now, when we look

at the entire message, we can also say that it is preparing us for the month of October which is also consecrated to Mary in a special way. This is why she is again calling for prayer within the family and this can be arranged so easily by, for instance, praying the Rosary while also reading texts that concern the mysteries. In so doing one has created good family prayer while, at the same time, creating the experience of being near to God and its accompanying joy. I hope and I will also pray that God may give all of us His true peace, that we may all become carriers of peace, that He may make His proximity to us known to us, and that our families may all open themselves to this call of Mary's. Then God will give us all the grace to know that He is the God of love and of peace. Let us now pray...

God, our loving Father, in the name of Your Son, Jesus, who is our king of Peace, along with Mary, Queen of Peace, we now wish to ask You that You reveal Your presence to us, that we may in all that we experience Your proximity to us. Give us the grace, by way of Your presence, of receiving Your peace, so that a good relationship may become possible toward ourselves, toward the others, toward You and toward all of Your creation. We beg You, heal our wounds, forgive us our sins, free us all bad habits, and from all that closes us from Your presence and that hinders us from having You take the first place in our lives. We ask You, O Father, bless all parents, all fathers and mothers, that they may really pray with their children, and reflect with them on Your words so that they may understand it and then from Your word acquire wisdom, love and strength for their lives. We ask You on behalf of all who have distanced themselves from You and who complain about You being a distant God, all those who have been left alone in their suffering, and who are therefore carrying bitterness and accusations toward You in their hearts, give them the grace to open themselves to Your love. Bless all who, due to a lack of human love, do not believe in Your love and who, due to the lack of love of those around them, can no longer feel Your love for them. Father, touch the hearts of Your children who are living in darkness and distance from You so that they may find the way to You in the light of Your love for them. Especially, we ask You on behalf of all youth who are seeking peace along false paths and who therefore destroying themselves, grant them peace. Call back all those who are now in dead-end roads and who no longer know where to

turn. Send to these some people who are able to witness Your true peace to them. Father, give us all the joy in encountering You, our loving Father, in prayer. We also ask for all those who are ill, for all who are suffering due to war or natural catastrophes. Send also to all these people someone who is able to bring them an inner peace in Your name. Bless us and fulfill us with Your peace, through Christ, the King of Peace. Amen.

Fr. Slavko, Medjugorje

Sept 28, 1999



medjugorje