

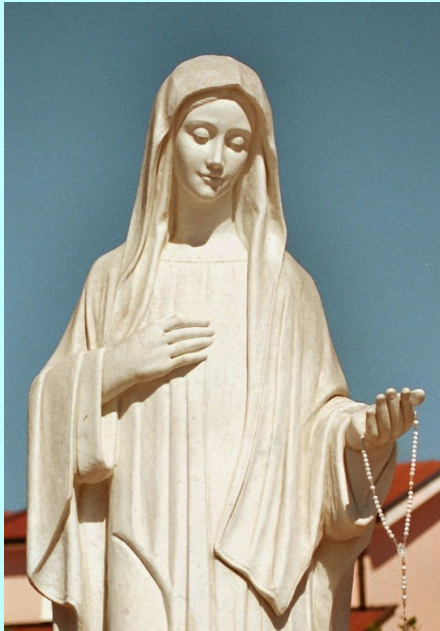
# MEDJUGORJE NOTES

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## Message from Our Lady - 25th January

Dear children! With the time of Lent, you are approaching a time of grace. Your heart is like ploughed soil and it is ready to receive the fruit which will grow into what is good.

You, little children, are free to choose good or evil. Therefore, I call you to pray and fast.

Plant joy and the fruit of joy will grow in your hearts for your good, and others will see it and receive it through your life. Renounce sin and choose eternal life.

I am with you and intercede for you before my Son.

Thank you for having responded to my call

## Notes

1. Between these Notes and the next there is the Feast of **Our Lady of Lourdes** on Feb. 11th. This is the 150th anniversary of the start of the apparitions.

2. This edition marks another anniversary: I started to send out these Notes in February 1989, nineteen years ago. I had no idea then that these apparitions would still be continuing after so many years, or that I would be sending out copies via the internet to so many countries - USA, Canada, New Zealand, Uganda, South Africa, as well as Ireland. There are still about 100 copies sent out each month by post to all over the UK and Ireland. If you need more copies, do let me know and I will add them to your envelope.

I thought you might like to see part of an early edition, so have included it in this edition.

## Pilgrimage to Medjugorje - 2008

There are still places available for anyone who wishes to go to Medjugorje in April (23rd - 30th) from Exeter. If you

want more information, please contact Medjugorje Peace Tours (01372 745550).

## Thoughts on the message

Dear children! With the time of Lent, you are approaching a **time of grace**.

With this message, we are invited to get ready for Lent, a time of renewal, of renunciation, of preparation. So much has been written about this over the years, including the articles etc in these Notes.

Your heart is like ploughed soil and it is ready to receive the fruit which will grow into what is good.

You, little children, are free to choose good or evil. Therefore, I call you to pray and fast.

Plant joy and the fruit of joy will grow in your hearts for your good, and others will see

it and receive it through your life. Renounce sin and choose eternal life.

I have put these parts of the message together, as they tell us that we are at a time when we can do so much, or can let it slip past us. This is why, I am sure, that it is called a 'time of grace', a time of decision as well.

I am with you and intercede for you before my Son.

Finally, Our Mother reminds that she is with us, praying for us, helping us on our journey.

### **Previous messages from Medjugorje - preparing for Lent**

12/2/86 - Dear children ! As a task for Lent you should choose one member of the group with whom you will talk during the entire Lent. Fast and pray and carry your cross with love.

\* 13/2/86 - Dear children ! This Lent is a special incentive for you to change your lives. Start now. Turn off the television and renounce other things that are useless.

Dear children, I am calling you to individual conversion. This time is for you.

\* 20/2/86 - Dear children ! The second message for the days of Lent. You must renew your prayer at the foot of the Cross.

Dear children, I offer you special graces and Jesus gives you the special gifts of the Cross. Receive them and live them. Meditate on the passion of Jesus and unite yourselves, in your lives, to Jesus.

13/3/86 - Dear children ! Today I am calling you to live this Lent with your little sacrifices. Thank you for every sacrifice you have brought me.

Dear children, live in such a way, continuously, and with love help me to bring the offering. For that, God will reward you.

(From the Blue Book - Abandon Yourselves Totally to me)

(P. 65 -)

"Pray with your hearts"

In the message of 28th March, Our Lady said : 'In prayer you will find the deepest joy'. But precisely in that prayer where you find Our Lord.

Prayer is a meeting with God speaking to us, leading us, giving us light, saving us. Our Lord who introduced himself as a Father and Jesus Christ as our brother, as our friend.

In our meeting with Him we must have a deeper joy and none of us has anything against this deep joy. We must wonder how to pray, how to meet this Father, this brother, this friend ?

God revealed Himself in Jesus Christ.

Before this, Our Lady also said another thing : "Pray with your hearts," that is not only to repeat something in words. An example : in a kitchen you can find every kind of food, but you can still starve if you do not eat well if you do not eat at all.

Many people pray but do not feel this joy, this deep peace. Why? We must say : they do not pray as they should, they do not meet Our Lord as they ought in order to receive this joy. What may be their predicament to pray and not feel anything ?

If you want to meet one of your friends, you must look for him, you must find time to speak to him, to listen to him ... If you want to have a satisfactory meeting you make preparations so that you will not be disturbed. If you do not have the time, if you do not try to arrange the meeting, if you do not try to say anything to the other person, you cannot have a meeting even on a human level.

And the same thing can be said, I think, also of prayer if you are determined to pray. At the beginning of Her apparitions, Our Lady used to recommend: "Recite the Creed". If you have made up your minds to carry out whatever Our Lady has asked of you, you must get ready; that is, find the time and take time when you can be for God alone, when the telephone cannot interrupt you, nor your wife ..... a little corner in your house, and say: this half hour is only for prayer.

Find the time, the place and begin as you can. I am telling you to begin as you can. In the beginning Our Lady requested: the Creed, seven Our Father's and fasting (one day of the week). They are concrete and simple things to begin with. And anyone who has begun like this, finding every day a little time for prayer, has been able to learn how to pray.

We must begin as when we started to pronounce the first words with our mothers. We must begin as we can and go on continuously in this way.

Look for a time, a place; try to speak to and listen to God. In this concrete manner it is possible to go deeply into and you will, from day to day, feel a mood for prayer.

Do not just say : "I want to pray" without following this method. The same thing is true if you say : "I want to be a doctor" but you do not want to study. This is not taking things seriously ... How can you hope to reach the goal if you do not wish to use the means to attain it ? How can you want joy and deep peace and not the means to reach them ? How can you want to pray if you do not pray ? How can you want to meet the Lord if you do not try to fulfil these conditions ?

One more thing - create a habit. You say, the appetite grows by eating, and I say: also prayer grows by praying, and fasting grows by fasting. Being unable to pray like St. Francis used to, does not mean I need not begin.

This is the journey Our Lady asks of us. If you are absent-minded, you go to prayer with this absent-mindedness. The first concrete start was very simply, to say seven Our Father's.

In August last (1984) Our Lady asked for the whole Rosary. The Rosary is a repetitive prayer, but also a rhythmic, meditative and biblical one. You can recite it in your families, even with the children. You may change something: a little silence, some singing, some words of praise, some spontaneous prayers and the repeating of Hail Mary, Hail Mary .....

And I can say that if it should happen to you, as it did to St. Francis, to begin the Our Father and then continue all night long repeating only "Our Father", experiencing its sweetness in your mouth and in your heart, you will have all the same followed the Blessed Virgin, even though you may not have recited one Hail Mary. it is not a matter of just saying : I have recited one hundred and fifty Hail Mary's.

You must begin to pray with your heart and you will learn this little by little, every day, step by step. If you have had a frustrating and weary day, of course, your prayer cannot be the same as on a day when you are not weary; your prayer must be according to your capabilities, according to where you have reached. Your prayer is the expression of your soul, where joy, love, reconciliation grow .....

But every day you must go on as best you can and in so doing you will reach joy and be able to pray with your heart, with an ever deeper joy.

Fasting is connected a great deal to prayer but it has another function - to set us free from matter, from distressing anxieties. And fasting opens us, our body too,

to the Word. The Word can better be incarnate, become flesh more easily in our bodies if we fast. We all know what we must do (we do not need apparitions) - love. Jesus said : "especially your neighbour, like yourself." Everybody wants peace : but it is not enough to know this.

If we begin fasting Our Lord can purify us step by step. And this purification give the possibility to the Word to become incarnate in our souls, in our sentiments. We are not yet open. By fasting, we get ready, step by step to say our "Yes", as Our Lady did so that the word of love and of peace may become incarnate and take shape. By fasting and praying we get nearer and nearer to Our Lord and so we get nearer to peace and to love : to what Our Lady has asked of us.

Our Lady has a lot of patience with us, so we must have patience with ourselves and with others. Some people have told me : now we find time more easily for the whole Rosary then we did at the beginning for the Creed and the seven Our Father's.

Our Lady leads us step by step and She also does not want us to force ourselves or others. See what you can do today and go on. But always go on every day. Praying and fasting are the means to get ready, to accept the grace of peace, faith and love. The aim of fasting and of prayer is not in fasting and prayer in itself. We do not pray to waste time, we do not fast to be hungry. These are only means for us, to meet Someone, to feel Him and to be able to receive the Word for ourselves.

(Fr. Slavko Barbaric - 30th March 1985)

### **From the Archives - Feb 1990**

By the time you receive these notes and messages it will be Lent, and for this reason most of the messages are about how we should approach this time in the Church's calendar. Looking at these, perhaps the one word which sums up how we should use Lent is preparation.

I am sure that Jesus did not go into the desert and fast for forty days only to be tempted by Satan. He was preparing for His passion, death on the cross and Resurrection. If we wish to really greet the risen Christ, after having followed Him to Calvary, we too should use this time as a time of preparation. Look at the new message for February this year and it is still being asked of us.

How should we use this period of Lent, now (in 1990) ? I am sure that you have been advised by many as to how we should do this, but I hope you don't mind me adding a few other thoughts.

It seems to me that giving Our Lord our time is probably the greatest act of self-denial we can all give, in extra prayer, Mass, seeing and helping others, etc. Time is one part of our lives which is finite, limited, and how we use it shows how we value things in life. One way of realising how little many of us value our relationship with God is to count up how many hours a week we talk to God, listen to God, are aware of His love and presence in our lives; it is a sobering experience to do this - try it.

Praying to God at this time is one way of coming to realise the great love that Jesus has for us, in spite of the pain He endured for us. Listening to God, reading the Passion in the Gospels - all these lead us to this King of Love.

3/3/87 - Dear children, Lent begins soon and I invite you to pray. Renounce things during Lent which you particularly like. Sacrifice things. This is the time during which Jesus suffered and gave His life for you."

Perhaps it should be a time for looking again at the term 'fasting' and what it really means. It is easy to describe what fasting is not. It is not some form of divine dieting, or a way to offer a new form of suffering by not eating. We are told in the Gospel about how we should approach fasting :-

"And when you fast, do not look dismal, like hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by men. Truly, I say to you, they have their reward. But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, that your fasting may not be seen by men but by your Father who is in secret ; and your father who sees in secret will reward you ." (Matthew 6: v.16 - 18)

Why do we fast ? It is interesting to note that whenever something important was going to happen in the time of Christ and before, it was often preceded by a period of prayer and fasting. Pentecost, the most important example, shows how the followers of Jesus prepared for the Holy Spirit by prayer and fasting. The two are always together; prayer without fasting is limited in its effect on those who are praying, while fasting without prayer is without direction. It seems that fasting brings us closer to God by the decision we take to distance ourselves a little bit further from our world.

What form of fasting is best ? Mary herself answers this at Medjugorje.

8/12/81 - The best form of fasting is on bread and water.

- If you are not able to fast on bread and water, you can give up various things. It would be very good to give up television, since after watching the programmes you are distracted and unable to pray. You can renounce alcohol, cigarettes and other pleasures. **You know yourselves what you must do.**

21/7/82 - The world has forgotten the value of fasting and prayer; with fasting and prayer wars would be stopped and natural laws suspended. Nobody is exempt from fasting. Fasting cannot be substituted by giving alms, only the sick can substitute it by almsgiving and the sacraments. But you all have to pray, fast and give alms. Fasting is avoiding sin. But one must also fast with the body. The fasting you do by eating fish instead of meat is not fasting. Real fasting is eating only bread and water.

These messages show how our Mother understands our weakness; not many of us are able or willing to fast on just bread and water each Friday, but she gives a number of other ideas, as well as saying "You KNOW YOURSELVES what you must do."

Perhaps Lent is also a good time to try to fast in some way, in order to come closer to the real significance of Easter, so that we can really rejoice with the Risen Christ.

I remember when I was a child having the erroneous impression that I should fast from sweets during Lent in order to get a bigger egg at Easter ! Of course this was not the idea of fasting, but if we use the time of Lent in a more spiritual way ? -

"Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal."

Perhaps in this way the idea was not totally wrong after all.