

## **MEDJUGORJE—THE ACTUAL SITUATION (March 2010)**

Both inside (and even outside) the Church, Medjugorje remains a “hot” item, with the divisions between believers and non-believers becoming ever larger. Believers tend to only see the “fruits of the tree” (Matt 7, 15-20): conversions, prayer groups, healings, vocations etc.

But let us read further in Matt, 7, 21-23 : 21 *"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. 22 Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?' 23 Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'"*

Non- believers tend to see especially the disobedience of the seers and of the Franciscans of Medjugorje, the rebellion against the bishops and the Pope, the fanaticism, the manipulations, lies, contradictions, the profiteering, the luxurious homes of the “seers”, the sex scandals of the Franciscans, the suspended Franciscan rebels involved in Medjugorje and their illegal sacraments.

Among the non- believers are people who have either been personally disillusioned with Medjugorje, with consequent suicides, divorces, psychiatric problems etc, or those who have read the many critical books and publications.

Among the believers two groups can be distinguished, the commercial and the not for profit. The commercial believers earn a great deal of money from their ‘goldmine’, e.g. the Franciscans of Medjugorje, the “seers”, the organisers of the pilgrimages, the sellers of videos, DVDs, books etc. Among the not for profit believers are those who naively accept everything and who only read books, periodicals and websites which are pro Medjugorje and who thus can be considered to be misled by their ignorance.

With both groups there are many believers who display a marked degree of fanaticism and obsessiveness. Medjugorje has become their all encompassing dogma which overrides everything else. This fanaticism overrode all common sense, critical evaluation, intellectual honesty, prudence and friendship. This attitude can only be explained by the influence of the “diabolo”, the evil spirit, the malign entity which everywhere sows enmity and disunity.

In June 1981, when Fr Jozo Zovko had thoroughly interviewed all the “seers”, he told them “You have not seen Mary: there is no sign, there is no message. You can only have seen Satan.” Yet he refused to perform an exorcism when a Franciscan colleague proposed that. Later on, first he and then Tomislav Vlasic began to manipulate and direct the “messages”. In fact, Jozo proposed to the “seers” that they should let him formulate the answers of the “Gospa” to the questions of the villagers.

All this has been recorded and can be read in "Ces 10 jours qui ont fait Med." by J.Bouflet and " Understanding Medugorje." by D.Foley. I possess about 100 pages of transcripts from these recordings.

Those who have the courage and honesty to present the truth are insulted by fanatical believers (I have a list of 100 insults addressed to me) and are often demonised and even threatened.

What is the position of the official Church?

All the local bishops, (Zanic and Peric) of Mostar and all the official commissions of investigation were uniformly negative: "non constat de supernaturalitate" (supernaturality is not demonstrated)

When bishop Zanic tried to convince Pope John Paul II to condemn Medjugorje, the Pope was influenced by the Marialogue René Laurentin, by US president Reagan (who supported the Polish Solidarnosc and who was in contact with Marija Pavlovic), by Sister Emmanuel, bishop Hnilica and promoters of the Charismatic movement. However, as a phenomenologue the Pope was mainly interested in the positive outcomes of Medjugorje and no papal intervention was achieved.

On 27 June 1991, when the bishops conference of Yugoslavia was about to issue a strong condemnation of Medjugorje, the civil war in Yugoslavia had just broken out the day before. Indeed, on 10 April 1991 the declaration of Zadar announced clear pastoral guidelines which had been prepared by a special liturgical-pastoral committee on 17 June 1991. I possess the English translation:

1. The "seers" were ordered not to make any public declarations and to hand over their "messages " only to the local bishop and the competent committee.
2. The parish priest of Medjugorje was ordered to ensure that no mention was made of "apparitions" or "messages" on public occasions or publications.
3. The faithful were directed to accept the guidance of their bishop.

This committee consisted of four bishops and four theologians. The bishops were Komarica from Banja Luka as president, Stanbuk from Hvar, Puljic from Sarajevo and Zanic from Mostar. The theologians were two Franciscans and two diocesan priests. The meeting took place in the basement of the presbytery in Medjugorje. It was anticipated that these directives would be approved and presented ten days later in the general session of the Yugoslav bishops conference of 27 June 1991.

However, on 25 June 1991 Slovenia and Croatia declared themselves independent of the federal Socialist Republic of Yugoslavia and on 26 June 1991 the Serbian army first entered Slovenia and began the terrible civil war in Yugoslavia. At the same time, the State of Yugoslavia ceased to exist, and with it the Yugoslav bishops conference!

The general session of the bishops' conference on 27 June 1991 therefore did not take place and the anticipated directives were therefore never published. It is in any case difficult to prohibit pilgrimages and prayers in a time of war. The "seers" of Medjugorje and the Franciscans continued to propagate their "messages" throughout the whole world. The war had saved Medjugorje!

In the meantime, the non recognised Medjugorje became world famous and was on the way to compete with such recognised apparition sites as Lourdes and Fatima.

What action did Pope John Paul II take? Officially nothing. According to some, he did speak privately about the positive fruits of Medjugorje. Perhaps he hoped in his heart that Medjugorje was real, but realised in his mind that it could not be genuine. In a private letter of 22 July 1998 Cardinal Ratzinger wrote that all the positive aspects of Medjugorje which had been attributed to him and the Pope by René Laurentin, bishop Hnilica, Sr. Emmanuel, etc. were "frei erfunden" (fantasies). De facto the Pope, a deeply pious and patient man, as well as a typical polish fervent believer in the veneration of Mary, allowed in good faith some dubious practices to continue.

After the death of this Pope, it fell to Cardinal Ratzinger, the former prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, now as Pope Benedict, to make some resolute but painful decisions. He severely punished Fr Gino Burrelli (a false stigmatist from San Vittorino Romano) and also Marcial Maciel, the founder of the Legionnaires of Christ. Fr Tomislav Vlasic of Medjugorje was suspended, laicised and dismissed from the Franciscan order. The rebellious Franciscans from Assisi were forced to obey their bishop. The prayer of the Lady of all Peoples of Amsterdam (which had imprimaturs from 70 bishops) was partially condemned ("who once was Mary"). Jozo Zovko was banned from Medjugorje. The Neo Catechumenate was reined in. The editor of the influential USA-magazine "America" was forced to resign etc etc. The list is far from complete.

This raises the question of why the present decisive Pope Benedict XVI has not yet condemned Medjugorje??? Perhaps because it might cause a schism? The Pope is trying to achieve closer ties with the Pius X fraternity of the late Archbishop Lefebvre, with the Orthodox Churches. with the Muslims, with the Jews etc.

Quite a number of Cardinals (think of the eccentric Schönborn of Vienna) and bishops have let themselves be persuaded by the manipulative siren song of Medjugorje, and this has caused a considerable amount of controversy in the Vatican. The problem of Medjugorje could and should have been solved long ago, but initially it was the influential Marialogue René Laurentin and later the civil war in Yugoslavia which saved Medjugorje from a boycott.

Medjugorje is Satan's masterpiece in these confusing end times. He incites pious believers against the bishop of Mostar because he refuses to recognise

their "sanctuary". The danger is that if the Pope will not recognise Medjugorje, many such fanatical believers may turn against the Pope. In that way, the small herd of still pious believers may separate from Rome and become a de facto sect.

The late Fr Slavko Barbaric said it in this way: "We Franciscans want to remain here." The resistance of the rebellious Franciscans is in fact a resistance against the papal decree "Romanis Pontificibus" of Pope Paul VI of 6-6-1975. This decree ordered that the Franciscans should leave 50% of the parishes to the diocesan priests of the diocese Mostar. The consequence of the decree was an open rebellion from a great many hot-headed Franciscans. These rebels against Rome were supported by the messages of the "Gospa". In this way, Medjugorje became a "deus ex machina" against Rome.

What has happened with the main manipulators of Medjugorje?

1°Fr Slavko Barbaric died on 24-11-2000 in disobedience on the Krizevac. Bishop Peric had forbidden him to live in Medjugorje. The next day he was "canonised" in a "message" from the Franciscan "Gospa"...

2°Fr Tomislav Vlasic is no longer a priest or a Franciscan

3°Fr Jozo Zovko has already been suspended three times and is now exiled from Medjugorje.

What has happened with the "seers"?

Milka Pavlovic and Ivan Ivankovic did not return to the apparition mountain of Podbrdo after only one apparition. The others all live in luxurious homes and lost their "vocation" and married. Some run their own hotel and work with American travel agencies.

What will the new Vatican investigation committee achieve? Let us hope it is able to combine genuine pastoral care for the millions of duped pilgrims with a true regard for the truth.

#### PRESS RELEASE

Vatican City, Mar 17, 2010 / 09:56 am (CNA/EWTN News).- A statement was released by the Holy See on Wednesday confirming the formation of a commission to investigate the "phenomenon" of Medjugorje.

The Vatican communiqué reads: "Under the auspices of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, under the presidency of Cardinal Camillo Ruini, an international commission of investigation on Medjugorje has been constituted. Said Commission, composed of cardinals, bishops and experts will work in a reserved manner, subjecting the results of their studies to the authority of the Dicastery."

Waterinckx Mark Bruges Belgium E-mail : [markwaterinckx@skynet.be](mailto:markwaterinckx@skynet.be)

