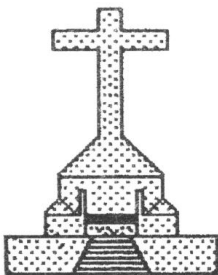


NUMBER 236 : JANUARY 2012 : FREE

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

MEDJUGORJE CENTRE NORTH EAST



www.medjugorjene.co.uk

OUR MINISTRY

To spread the messages of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of Jesus,
given through the visionaries in Medjugorje.

PEACE CONVERSION
FAITH PRAYER FASTING

OUR LADY QUEEN OF PEACE
PRAY FOR US

A HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL



MEDJUGORJE CENTRE NORTH EAST ANNUAL PILGRIMAGE 2012

Flying from Newcastle airport

*Travelling in conjunction with
a Registered ABTA ATOL Pilgrimage Co.*

8th SEPTEMBER - 15th SEPTEMBER 2012

**Cost £499 - Insurance £20
Single Room Supplement - £100**

*Spiritual Director to be confirmed
Further details to follow.*

**There are a limited number of places
but a waiting list will be available**

**Please ring to confirm a place asap.
Ring Kath Ash 01670 733358 or Marjorie Anderson 01670 818937**

Don't delay to avoid disappointment.

**DATE FOR YOUR DIARY
Medjugorje Retreat Minsteracres 2012
Fri 19th - 21st October
Cost £101 per person (sharing)**

OUR LADY'S MESSAGE

Given 25th December 2011

Dear Children,

Also today, in my arms I am carrying my Son Jesus to you, for Him to give you His peace. Pray, little children, and witness so that in every heart, not human but God's peace may prevail, which no one can destroy. It is that peace in the heart which God gives to those whom He loves.

By your baptism you are all, in a special way called and loved, therefore witness and pray that you may be my extended hands to this world which yearns for God and peace.

Thank you for having responded to my call.

God chose Mary, to be the Mother of His Son, a Son given to us. Is: 9:6 For nine month's Mary carried Jesus in her blessed womb. After she gave birth to her first born Son, we are told she wrapped Him in swaddling clothes and laid Him in a manger. This Christmas season once again we welcome both Mother and child to receive in faith the blessing of His peace. Wide is his dominion in a peace that has no end.

MARY INVITES US TO PRAY AND WITNESS THAT GOD'S PEACE WILL PREVAIL IN EVERY HEART Mary comes with her Son, "for Him to give

you His peace." His peace is bestowed upon those who love Him sincerely, who do not break faith, but keep faith with Him, who keep his commandments and follow Him, in a renunciation of violence, and all forms of hostility, aggression and destructive habits.

Even during our Christmas Celebrations, sadly, we have seen the rods of oppressors and bloodstained cloaks in places like Nigeria, Syria and other parts of the world. This child of Peace, Mary's Son, calls us all to **peace** and to be **peacemakers**. As we unite in prayer and witness to God's great love and good will towards us, in sending His Son, for our salvation and encourage-

ment, may Jesus Prince of Peace cause the footgear of battle to be burnt and consumed by the fire of His Divine love.

BY YOUR BAPTISM YOU ARE ALL IN A SPECIAL WAY CALLED AND LOVED. This month's message reminds us also of our baptismal calling. Each one of us is called by name and loved into the new life of grace through our baptism.

Today many who feel unloved need to be loved. They need to know that God loves them, that God first loved them and still loves them. We all need a sense of being accepted unconditionally. God accepts us as we are, but, that does not mean He approves of all that we do, especially if our words and actions or omissions hurt and wound other members of the Body of Christ, the Church. One important aspect of our baptismal calling is to witness to Christ in the world, to bring the message and Spirit of Christ to those who have not yet heard such Good news. We who have found the Christ of God must tell and show others how to seek and find the light of salvation, how to find the Saviour today.

During this time of grace we seek the face of the Lord just as the shepherds

sought and found the child Jesus exactly as they had been told wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger. This child we seek is both God and man, and that is why the angels sing *Glory to God in the highest heavens and peace on earth to men who enjoy his favour.*

In this child of Bethlehem we have someone to love, someone to care for, someone to please, and the best way we can please Him is to accept that we are accepted unconditionally and loved by Him, and, it pleases Him most of all to give Him what he came to save us from, namely our sins, so he can fill us with His love and peace.

We cannot save ourselves from our sins unless we call upon the Name of the Lord to be saved. Our first step towards the light of our salvation is to accept that we have all sinned and fallen short of the Glory of God, but, by sending His Son, Jesus, to save us, God has filled us with 'hope', the hope of being saved and redeemed by His merciful love.

Let us all make haste in faith to seek and find the child Jesus, who alone can save our world from sinful folly and death. Just as Mary carries in her arms the child Jesus and brings Him close to

bless us with His peace, we too, will be her extended hands of life, peace, joy and love when we accept and submit to the word which has been planted in us and can save our souls and the souls of others.

May this Holy child of Bethlehem, Mary's child and Son, increase and strengthen our faith in Him, that in all our trials, temptations and weaknesses, we may turn to Him, who is also Mighty God and Eternal Father, and

know His peace has no end.

I wish you all a very grace filled and Blessed New Year when it comes. Let us pray for one another and that we may witness through the prayers of Mary Queen of Peace a new era were peace will triumph.

May the Lord bless you and keep you and cause His face to shine upon you and give you His peace.

God bless you.

Fr Ciaran



ANNUAL DAY OF PRAYER

Organised by the Medjugorje Centre North East

Led by Fr. Noel Colahan

**SACRED HEART CHURCH
NORTH GOSFORTH**

SATURDAY 24th MARCH 2012

Rosary and Talk 10.15am

Shared Lunch

**followed by Holy Mass
and Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament**

Coffee served from 9.30am

The opportunity of a lifetime!

Rosa Mandato Giaccone Echo of Mary

I have just returned from Medjugorje and I already feel the need to go back to that place of peace.

I went to meet with the *Gospa* for the first time, without even imagining what she had in store for me. I allowed myself to be “taken”, conquered. I allowed her to examine every corner of my heart, so that she might read and come to know my thoughts, my fears, my suffering...

We met, for the first time, on Podbrdo: She was there waiting for me, her arms outstretched, ready to welcome me and there, I felt that I had arrived and had been accepted, for the first time.... And so the tears of freedom and happiness began to flow, due to the feeling of having arrived at the right port, that port that you had always sought out and that in the end, you find on a small mountain in Bosnia-Herzegovina!

But total freedom came, when, during a second trip to Medjugorje, we began to climb up Krizevac, on the slopes of which you experience your own personal Via Crucis; where you

leave a part of the burden that you are carrying in the rucksack on your back at each station. You feel lighter after each station: you’ve left another stone or giant mass in Jesus’ hands, a burden that you had been carrying around, and you become aware of the fact that you are being guided by something greater than you and that you cannot explain, but that gives you a great sense of inner peace...

You arrive at the summit, at the great White Cross, and there you discover that your Christ is waiting for you. With your load lightened, once again new tears of freedom begin to flow, that freedom that you got to know on Podbrdo; you become united in prayer with your travelling companions, while *Gospa* speaks to you and gives you immense graces that you are unable to explain, but that make you almost one and the same with the heavens and you cannot but ask yourself: *why me*

You descend from that mountain with the awareness that you have been reborn and you look at your world with another light in your eyes;

you see things from another angle and you know that there is Someone, above you, who will not let you fall, even when it seems that you have no more strength. That feeling of being upheld, just when you were about to let yourself go, is what gives you the strength to look beyond and overcome all further obstacles.

Medjugorje is all of this and more. It is your personal meeting with God. It is the meeting of a lifetime, the one that will change your journey completely; the one that will forge you for the rest of your days... And every evening, you cannot but say thank you to the *Gospa* for giving you the opportunity of a lifetime!

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A VOICE AMID THE STONES

D*ear children, today I invite you...”, “...this is a time of grace, my children...”, “pray, do not tire...I am with you...”, “thank you for answering....”.*

I silently descend the slopes of what they call “Apparition Hill”, Podbrdo. I have just left a group of pilgrims at the summit, enjoying the silent company of Mary. We climbed up together. With a sense of calm and recollection we spontaneously reflected on the Joyful Mysteries. Now we are each on our own.

In Medjugorje the meeting with the Mother is a heart to heart. I descend and enjoy the silence that springs up within the soul, the fruit of intense prayer, shared with others. A prayer moved by the Spirit, that always shines new light on the realities that are con-

templated. With my head bowed, looking only at the next stone where I should place my foot, constantly balancing myself, I almost lose contact with all the rest: I am no longer aware of what is happening around me. I want to keep the intimate dialogue with the Mother within myself for as long as possible. And so, while my gaze is focused on a single point, my hearing is ample, open to listening, receptive...

“...I bring you love, dear children... bring love to others”

“...allow me, my children, to show you the true way, the way that leads to life: to my Son”

“God wants to save you and he is sending you messages through men, through nature...”

Like little rags scattered here and there, the words of the Messages that the Queen has delivered to her children distinctly reach my ears: the guides of the groups introduce the mystery in front of the panels of the Rosary. I hear nothing else, only Mary's words that mark out a rhythm to my descent. Different voices and different messages that almost "bounce" between one stone and another and are reconnected with others, forming a single discourse, a single voice. Her voice. From one side to the other, low down and up high. Like the tolling of a bell, that with an almost disarming simplicity, it is

able to draw hearts to God, to elevate them. Many, many times over the years, Mary has pronounced her words here.

And the hill, a humble land, a humble servant, absorbed them as though it were a sponge. And as soon as it is touched by a foot, it sends them back again, resounding, like a perennial echo of immense wisdom, that comes from eternity and that is almost imprinted among these stones. Amidst this land, made of nothing. Like us, vases of clay, capable of containing Infinity.

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A HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL



MEDJUGORJE AFTERNOON OF PRAYER

led by Fr Ciaran McDonnell

February 5th 2012
March 4th 2012
4.00pm to 5.30pm

Rosary : Holy Mass
Adoration of Blessed Sacrament

ST AUGUSTINE'S CHURCH
WEALCROFT
LEAM LANE, FELLING,
GATESHEAD





**REPORT FROM
SISTER EMMANUEL**

of The Community of The Beatitudes

Her monthly unofficial news report is read by more than 2.5 million people

www.childrenofmedjugorje.com

On December 2, 2011, Mirjana received her monthly apparition at the Blue Cross, surrounded by a reduced crowd, due to the winter season. She gave us the following message:

Dear children,

As a mother I am with you so that with my love, prayer and example I may help you to become a seed of the future, a seed that will grow into a firm tree and spread its branches throughout the world. For you to become a seed of the future, a seed of love, implore the Father to forgive you your omissions up to now. My children, only a pure heart, unburdened by sin, can open itself and only honest eyes can see the way by which I desire to lead you. When you become aware of this, you will become

aware of the love of God - it will be given (as a gift) to you. Then you will give it (as a gift) to others as a seed of love.

Thank you

Again, Our Lady asked us to pray for our priests.

A Franciscan priest from Cava Dei Tirreni (Salerno, Italy), Fr Luigi, went to Israel in Oct. 2010 and found a statue of the infant Jesus, which he immediately bought.

Back in Italy, he put down the package in a room in the monastery and went to bed. The next day a voice woke him up, "*Open up, I am choking!*" He became flustered. Then he went to open the package he had brought back from Israel. And there

he discovered, the statue had shed tears of blood! He called his bishop who was visiting the friars on that day. He too, took notice of the fresh tears down the face of Jesus.

Immediately some authorities and experts were called. After long analyses, the fact turned out to be authentic. There was no fixing. The blood was real human blood; it had the same characteristics as the shroud of Turin! One year later on Oct. 2011, the statue was exposed for veneration of the faithful.

For us today, Christmas is near and we have already prepared the Manger. The Infant Jesus will be placed and we will bring the family together to venerate Him, adore Him and marvel at His coming among us. Yet, a year ago, the statue of the infant was shedding tears of blood! What does it mean? What message does he want to give us? Why is He choking in his box? He said, "What you do to the littlest of my children, you do it to me." So what did we do? Or what did we miss to do? We have embellished the Christmas story, added some candles and garlands to the stable and hung colourful lights (there was no

light in the stable), we've decorated our Christmas tree with cute angels and figures, and we have made the whole thing very pleasant to look at.

But one can ask oneself, "Infant Jesus, if you spoke to us today, what would You say to me? Why are you crying? What new mortal anguish makes you shed tears of blood? What new Gethsemane is your adorable little heart of love plunged into?"

Each one will think of his own answer. But Jesus' tears should not escape us, they shake us! Yes, what have we missed doing? Now more than ever, we have the opportunity to wipe the face of our Blessed Infant! We can all dry at least one of his tears of blood by a simple prayer from the heart, by giving up a serious sin, by a firm decision to forgive someone, by offering to fast for a mother planning to abort a child, by visiting a neighbour devastated by loneliness, by a discrete donation to a mother of a family that can't cope, etc. Baby Jesus is so humble that he accepts anything, even the smallest sign of affection! Isn't December 25th **HIS** birthday? Doesn't He have the right to be first in our celebrations and to

receive the most awesome gift?

Little Infant Jesus, by your innocence, come heal our hearts stifled by vain worldly worries! We no longer want to let you moan in your closed box by “living it up” far from you. Just the opposite, we want to open wide our doors to you! We want to take you with us at all times and places, to carry you on our wounded hearts like the Child of the family of whom we are proud! Because “you are the most beautiful of the children of men and grace is poured upon your lips” (Ps.45:3). Have no fear, Baby Jesus, we won’t hurt you, stay with us! Without you, we are finished! You are our joy and our glory!

Some news from Medjugorje

Fr. Jozo Zovko and at least 4 of the visionaries have already been to Rome in order to be "examined" by the Commission, and they came back happy. Fr Jozo is now posted in the monastery of Zagreb, with Fr. Ljubo whom many pilgrims know from Medjugorje.

The locutionist Jelena Vasilj is slowly recovering from a thrombosis. Her life is no longer in danger. Let us

pray for her complete recovery!

Vicka has resumed witnessing to the pilgrims but no longer at the blue house, rather at Sr Kornelia's orphanage near her village, and only when her health allows it.

A family on our route. Recently, we rejoiced over Sr. Briege McKenna's presence at our home. She is the nun who, with Fr. Kevin Scallion, travels the world to make Jesus in the Eucharist loved and to use her gift of healing among others. Fr. Kevin, as well, has much to share with us...

One Christmas night, as he was on the road towards his nephew's house, he found himself stranded on the side of the road at 9:00pm. It was impossible to get his car started and he still had an hour's drive ahead of him. There hadn't been a soul in sight since he left Dublin.

By the light of the Christmas moon he saw a cottage on the far side of the road directly across from where he was parked. There was a light burning in the window, so he decided to ask the people in the house for the use

of their phone.

He went through the little white wooden gate, up the path and knocked on the door. After a moment, a youngish man opened the door and greeted him warmly. Looking past him into the house the priest saw a young woman with a baby in her arms. She was holding the baby's little head close to her cheek. She smiled at the priest who asked the man if they had a phone. He replied very gently, "No we don't, but if you walk back to the town there is a man there who has a bicycle shop and he will let you use his phone. You can't miss the house. It's to the right of the supermarket." The priest thanked the couple and wished them a Happy Christmas. "Will the car be alright there?" he asked the man. "Oh yes, I'll see to that," he replied.

So, on that bright dry moonlit Christmas night the priest walked back to the town and found the bicycle shop. On the way he could not stop himself from thinking of his encounter with the couple and their baby, and especially by the strange aroma in the house. It was not an Irish smell. For some reason it reminded

him of his recent visit to the Holy Land. And why was the house lit only by candles?

The owner of the bicycle shop opened the door, and listened as the priest recounted his predicament. He permitted him to call his nephew, and as he waited, the bicycle-man's wife offered him tea and Christmas cake which he gladly accepted. She talked about the weather, and how Christmas was so quiet this year, etc. Sure enough, the nephew arrived within the hour. They said goodbye to the couple and departed. They stopped at the priest's stricken vehicle to discover that the fan belt was missing. They returned the next day with a local mechanic to fetch the car.

Having done the necessary repairs, the priest turned to pay a visit to the young family and headed for the little white gate. He could not find it. There was only the hedge, and beyond it, a simple green field with no house anywhere to be seen. On the return journey the nephew spoke the whole time. As for Fr. Kevin, he remained silent. *It was the Feast of the Holy Family!*

Sister Emmanuel +

COME AND SEE...

By Fr John McCaffery OFM

Whether you are a priest, lay person or religious, I would like you to read these few words. As you know it was Jesus himself who was the first to apply the title Mother of Christ to the Church when he said: "My brothers and sisters are those who hear the word of God and put it into practice." (Luke 8 : 21)

We are all called to grow into a spiritual maturity resembling Mary and this is brought home to us by St Francis of Assisi when he wrote to his brothers: "We are Mothers of Christ when we carry him in our hearts and our bodies through divine love and a pure sincere conscience: we give birth to him through holy works which should shine as an example before others.

Today, Mary as a Mother is concerned about us, a concern which shines through her messages at Medjugorje. These messages are based on the Gospel and on the official teaching of the Church, and so are sound, orthodox and Catholic in content.

On this basis alone a Catholic is not only free to adopt the messages of Medjugorje, but is in fact called to live them, which are nothing less than the challenge of the Gospel. This inspires us today to greater prayer, penance and, as a result, to peace in public and private life.

Can an obedient Catholic accept the contents of private revelation prior to an official judgment of the Church on the apparitions? The answer is yes - provided the person takes the trouble to examine the orthodoxy of the messages and finds nothing incompatible with the Gospel or Church teaching.

If you have avoided Medjugorje - then, please, I beg you to do so no longer. At least read and reflect on the messages. Mary is simply begging us to take the Gospel to our hearts and to live it with passion and conviction. Yes it is a challenge, but is there anything wrong in that?

May the Lord and his Mother bless you. *Fr John McCaffery OFM*

Flying home, with just one wing..

By Morena Gelsomino - Echo of Mary

I nostalgically recall my catechist, the elderly Sister Santina. She used to say to us little ones how great and merciful God was, but above all that God was the Father and she used to explain to us how immense his love for us children was.

I recall my mother when we were still young children, she used to read the children's bible to us in the evening after dinner, to remind us of the great things that God had done for his people. The days and months became years. We were brought up and educated in faith. I was lucky because I had a lovely family alongside me. There were happy days and, as is the case for everyone, difficult days and, as strange as it may seem, it is in times of difficulty that God shows us his love.

About two years ago I got sick, it wasn't a life threatening illness, but a painful and in certain ways invalidating one. The brain surgery I endured that lasted a few hours wasn't much use, all the therapy and medication I used didn't benefit me much either, I was still limited, weak and had frequent episodes of significant pain. It is not at all

easy to live with all of this, "it is like flying with just one wing" – I thought of this during my journey on the 25th of May last to Medjugorje for a "quick" pilgrimage which I embarked on with my dad, my sister and a dear family friend.

After almost twelve hours, in spite of those who worriedly told me that it would tire me too much I arrived at my destination. I came to understand that tiredness didn't matter. In the house of Kraljice Mira, the Blessed Virgin herself welcomed me into her maternal embrace; the air was dense with peace and joy. I had not come to the hotel to rest, it seemed to me that I had "returned home", after a long time. The more than nine hundred kilometres that separated me from home did not count, it was as though I had found a new home that was familiar to me both in terms of the atmosphere and the people there.

This state of inner peace accompanied me to Podbrdo, in front of the statue of the Blessed Mother and in that blessed place, my prayer was to give thanks for everything that our Mother and our Merciful Father had given to me:

I had woken up after a highly risky operation,

I can walk, laugh, speak, think and pray;

I have a part-time job,

I have a fantastic family, and dear friends;

I have encountered doctors illuminated by God and among these, a special lady doctor, undoubtedly sent by heaven, who later became a treasured friend.

I am unable to do many things, but as my dad said to me: “think about what you **can** do”. Very true! Above all I think, as I was taught as a young girl,

that God is a loving Father and that therefore he wants good for all of us. Let’s entrust ourselves fearlessly to him and he’ll know what to do. Although it is sometimes difficult to say “*thy will be done*”, we will never be alone.

This is my testimony, this is my little miracle, faith makes you “fly”, even with just one wing, my flight brought me to Medjugorje, to that holy land touched by Mary. I flew to the Kraljice Mira community, my other home, where I left a piece of my heart and where I will soon return. Thank you for this umpteenth gift.

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The world on a screen

People, so many people. Different faces and features. Languages and dialects of all kinds. Specific customs and habits, that immediately emerge in their way of walking or gesturing. Children, even infants, with women and men, and then the elderly, and young people, priests and nuns in habits that speak of their Communities, and also many priests at the confessionals, and on the altar.

Sitting on a bench behind the church of Saint James, where a large courtyard welcomes an enormous quantity of people for prayer or Mass, for the ado-

ration or to listen to testimonies, I feel like I am before a large screen, while the world passes by before me with its thousands of faces. I look on enchanted, almost awe struck, at every face because it is the unique expression of God’s creativity and because that man or that woman, came to give thanks to God in Medjugorje...

Why are they here? What urged them to come? What lies behind the curtain of their life? I try to imagine; I hypothesise almost instinctively. I mentally create ideal kinships and I form couples with a gaze. I diagnose ill-

nesses that force some to sit in a wheelchair and from the style of people's clothes, I decide what nation the wearer belongs to.

All suppositions, absolutely unfounded and arbitrary. But guileless and so harmless. In reality I feel a profound respect within my heart for all those who wanted to be with the Queen of Peace during this time of grace; a time that is more and more urgent because "***Satan wants to destroy my plan***", Mary says in one of her messages. And her plan is to re-establish a population with faith in God, a population that knows how to trust Him, a population that might allow itself to be guided gently to become in turn capable of guiding others towards Life, towards fullness: "***I started here with this parish and I invited the whole world. Many answered but an enormous number of people do not want to hear or accept my invitation***". What strong, sorrowful and painful words!

Many are here, I see them walking by, I see them immersed in prayer. This is the population that, over the years, has formed thanks to Medjugorje, to Our Lady... But this is not enough, because, according to Mary, there is an ***enormous*** number of people who are deaf to her maternal call, who oppose the pro-

posal for salvation and so end up inflicting the condemnation of unhappiness upon themselves.

I see the tears of a young mother coming out of confession. I look at a circle of young people sitting on the grass, they chat lively, their faces look peaceful. My curiosity is aroused by a large group of people wearing a red cape with a large print of the face of Christ the king on it, they are waving Polish flags. Perhaps they are members of a confraternity. They are peaceful and composed.

A small little granny from this area, with a black scarf on her head and a strange pair of trousers, sits bent over on a bench and fingers her rosary beads as though she were alone. Children play together, they can communicate with each other even if they speak different languages. Play shortens distances, and it does away with the need for formalities...

There are those who hug each other. Many people smile constantly, almost without reason. Others keep their eyes closed: they are looking *at something else*, with the eyes of their soul. There are also many, sometimes too many people who do not know how to behave, because rather than allowing

themselves to be drawn in by the holiness of this site, they bring the rowdiness of the city with them, with ill-mannered behaviour, high pitched chat and vain and superficial discourse. It's a pity - I think to myself – that they don't know what they are missing by failing to remain in silence and they even end up disturbing others!

But Mary's heart is patient and generous, because it continues to call even those who need to be scolded. It is up to us to have the humility to allow ourselves to be corrected and the will to improve. If all of these people are here, they are here to learn, although they sometimes don't realise it fully.

This is Mary's school. A school of simplicity, of littleness, in everything. If we really want them to, God's laws will become clear to our spirit, because the grace in Medjugorje is clear and direct, it reaches the soul and explains how to enter into harmony, how to find primitive beauty, that will undoubtedly emerge, even outside and our behaviour will naturally take on God's elegance.

This is not a joke. We do not come to Medjugorje to trick time and return home like we would from any other journey. We need to be *strong and decisive*, if truly, like Mary, *we have said our YES*. □

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I called you friends

by *Francesco Cavagna Echo of Mary*

What is the Church? Or better **who is the Church?** Coming to Medjugorje you can see and understand this: people of every "language, population and nation" united around a single altar. Jesus is the centre. And Mary is she who wanted and prepared all of this, who personally invited each of us.

It is by now commonplace to think of the clergy and the high-ranking hier-

archy when we speak about the Church. But it is above all made up of people who share hope in the Risen one and experience a profound communion of love in breaking the bread, the bread of the Eucharist.

So much talk is wasted and so many times I have heard people say to me "God yes, but not the Church!" ... Now I understand that I too am the Church. The Church includes all

those who walk towards God. To us God entrusts the mission of continuing to make Him present on earth! The Most Blessed Trinity trusts us to such an extent that we have been given this important duty: to be His symbol, His instrument, His people, His limbs, and in this trust there is the utmost expression of his love.

This is the great miracle that is repeated silently here in Medjugorje. Given the extent of what Medjugorje is, nobody can say that they have fully understood this continuous novelty. Coming to this place, everyone takes home a precious and personal memory, everyone is struck by something different. We shouldn't be surprised that impressions are sometimes different.

For years I lived in this blessed land, touching so much hidden beauty and so many contradictions, that when I return to Medjugorje after a lengthy period of absence, I am struck by the details that I failed to notice before. And more than ever before I am struck by the peaceful and relaxed faces of the people, their active and committed participation in the Mass, and the light in the eyes of

those who go to receive the Eucharist. I am struck by the simple communion that is formed between people from different countries, sometimes from the most far flung places on Earth.

Medjugorje is alive, it is not a museum, it is not a place, it is not a mountain, it is not the story of six adolescents who are growing with Our Lady. Medjugorje is a life that is lived, it is the miracle of so many people who have renewed their hearts and changed their lives and who continue to do so.

Medjugorje is Mary's children, her pilgrims, Medjugorje is this living Church that is the most beautiful and most authentic testimony of the Risen Christ. This Church that continues to draw new members close to it, because love is a language that is universally understood. Because every soul needs the profound peace that is handed out abundantly here. Because the peaceful faces of people who are happy to live as they love, is a wonderful testimony that has an irresistible force of attraction.

Francesco Cavagna

**MIDDLESBROUGH CENTRE FOR PEACE
MEDJUGORJE EVENING**

**JANUARY 13th 2012
FEBRUARY 10th 2012
7.30pm to 9.30pm**

Rosary : Holy Mass : Talk : Witness

**JOHN PAUL CENTRE
55 GRANGE ROAD, MIDDLESBROUGH**

For further details please contact:
Mrs Marie Bedingfield

Tel: 01642 530739

THE MEDJUGORJE APOSTOLATE ANNUAL RETREAT

(Led by a priest from Medjugorje)

From 6.30pm on Friday 27 January 2012 to 4pm on Sunday 29 January 2012
at Emmaus Retreat Centre, West Wickham, near London. BR4 9HH.

Residents with full board: Shared room £118 per person, single room £128.

Day attendance: Saturday with lunch/without evening meal: £36.50

Saturday with lunch and evening meal: £46.50

Sunday: with lunch £36.50

To book or for further information contact: Paul Spencer

Tel 0116 2128175

pilgrimsmary@hotmail.com