

Reflection on the Message of December 25, 1999

"Dear Children! This is the time of grace. Little children, today in a special way with little Jesus, whom I hold in my embrace, I am giving you the possibility to decide for peace. Through your 'yes' for peace and your decision for God, a new possibility for peace is opened. Only in this way, little children, this century will be for you a time of peace and well-being. Therefore, put little newborn Jesus in the first place in your life and He will lead you on the way of salvation. Thank you for having responded to my call."

December 25, 1999

I greet all those who are trying to follow Mary's messages. We already have 18 years and 6 months of Mary's presence here behind us, and we are right when we call Medjugorje Mary's school where, let us not forget, peace is the primary subject. So, I again wish all of you a joyful Christmas and a fulfilling Jubilee Year. This Jubilee Year is another impulse for all of us to renew our decision to follow Mary, the new Eve and the teacher for all of us. I want to remind you quickly of the message with which Mary wished to prepare us all for Christmas, and so the message that we all tried to reflect on during Advent. Mary once again called us to prayer and also said a sentence that especially we in our school of prayer may simply not forget: PRAY UNTIL PRAYER BECOMES A JOY FOR YOU. This means that we should pray and especially to pray when we are not feeling the joy in doing so and when we do not like prayer. We will understand this better when we think of the Italian proverb: From eating one develops an appetite. When this is used when it concerns prayer it just means that in our praying we will then develop an appetite and also gain a joy for praying more. When we ask ourselves whether prayer can become a joy for us, then the answer is positive, 'yes'. Prayer is an encounter with God, and God is God who loves us and always when we are with someone who loves us, then we always have peace, love and joy. Why do so few people

experience joy in prayer? The answer to this is also simple. One only needs to take some time for prayer for it to become a real encounter. Many also make the mistake of waiting for joy in order to be able to pray, and this is certainly not the good methodology. One must pray so that one may receive joy in so doing. That is why so many people here in Medjugorje have such a good chance. Mary is praying for us so that we may have the experience of the love of God in prayer, and so then the problem of prayer will be solved. Many pilgrims should be grateful for the spirit of prayer simply because that is a grace. Mary also reminded us in that message that the cross is the sign on the way to love and unity and that it here concerned both the vertical as well as the horizontal dimensions -- our relationship with God and our relationship to the world and the others around us -- and these must be balanced with one another. And conversion, in the light of that message, means that we ought to seek this balance between those two dimensions -- spiritual values and, let us say, the values of this world. I hope that all of us prayed a lot so that, as Mary told us, JESUS MAY BE BORN IN YOUR HEARTS AS THE CREATOR OF PEACE. We may not forget this intention, and especially not in this upcoming year. Jesus wishes to be born in our hearts and when He is born as the Creator of peace, then we will also become carriers of peace in this world without peace.

The visionaries are living their normal lives, and at the moment Marija is here with her family and she is also planning to stay here for the New Year. Vicka is also at home. Ivan was here in Medjugorje for a short time during Advent and then returned to the USA to be with his family. Ivanka and Mirjana are also living their normal family lives. Jacov is also here with his family and, as you all know, since December 12, 1998, he no longer has his daily apparitions, but as she did with the other visionaries Mary promised to come to him once a year and with him Mary chose Christmas. And so he had the apparition on Christmas Day and this was the message:

"Dear Children, Today on my Son's birthday, when my heart is filled with immeasurable joy and love, I invite you to complete openness and complete abandonment to God. Throw all darkness out of your heart and allow God's light and God's love to enter into your heart and to dwell there forever. Be

carriers of God's light and love to all mankind, so that all in you and through you may feel and experience true light and love which only God can give you. I bless you with my motherly blessing."

Mary came at 3:00 p.m. and the apparition lasted for 10 minutes. Jacov's family and a few friends had met and prepared themselves with him for the apparition. Jacov tells us that Mary was very joyful, that she came with baby Jesus, that she spoke to him about the secrets but that he may not tell us anything about that, and that she blessed all of us. Regarding the content of this message, it is very important for us all to live in this way, and I might add especially to do so during this Jubilee Year. It is true that the world and all the other people expect true love and true light from us believers. What does it mean to permit God's light to enter into our hearts? It means that everything that we think and that we do we first prove with God's love and God's light, and then all that which is not good we then improve for the better, and that we base all our relationships with the others and with the world according to His light and His love. This is our primary assignment, because those who are with God simply cannot remain in darkness, cannot remain in hate, cannot remain in sin, and that is why these very decisive words **THROW ALL DARKNESS OUT OF YOUR HEART AND ALLOW GOD'S LIGHT AND GOD'S LOVE TO ENTER**. Let us really take this message seriously and try to live this way from day to day. We can also be assured that we will succeed because Mary says that she is blessing us with her motherly blessing. Motherly blessing means that we are really in Mary's arms the way Jesus is in her arms. When she is with us, prays for us, protects us, and carries us a mother, then we will certainly conquer darkness and sin and live in God's light and love.

During this Advent we always had pilgrims, but the groups had gotten smaller, and now after Christmas and especially for New Years we are expecting many people who along with us wish to enter the New Year in prayer. For Christmas Eve we began with prayer at 10:00 p.m. and exactly at midnight we celebrated Holy Mass. We will also do something similar for New Years in that we will begin around 9:15 in the evening, so that the Consecration will occur at exactly midnight. In so doing we will be showing symbolically that we wish to begin

the New Year or the new time with God. And I recommend to all prayer-groups that they do the same along with us here.

THIS IS THE TIME OF GRACE

We may never forget what this really means. From God's point-of-view every moment from the very beginning to the end of time is a time of grace because He always has loved us completely and unconditionally and He cannot be more merciful today than yesterday or more tomorrow than today. All our prayers and everything that we do does not, so to say, help God to become more merciful or more loving, but it is rather from our side that when we pray, fast, and confess that we help God in giving us more graces and He wishes to do this all the time. So, the time of grace is when people respond and begin to look for God. The entire time since the apparitions began, on June 24, 1981, until this very day has all been a time of grace because so many people have responded and so many have found their way back to God by way of Medjugorje. God therefore opened for Medjugorje a great time of grace. The huge number of people having opened themselves to God is in itself the greatest grace of all. How many people have begun to pray due to Medjugorje? How many have discovered Holy Mass and Confession? And in coming back to God in these ways they changed their lives and their relationships with everyone due to the graces that they have received there and especially so within their families. It is also this that gives us the needed hope for the New Year and for every day of the new century. Let us very consciously ask God that He may free us of everything that hinders us from seeking to accept His graces. This is why we should first ask ourselves what our goal is. Everyone's goal is to live in peace. The second question is, what are we using to achieve this goal? If we take the worlds ways of achieving this, then we will never have peace, and that is why we must decide for God's ways to achieve true peace. Then the next lines of this message tell us what the main conditions are for us to achieve peace.

TODAY IN A SPECIAL WAY WITH LITTLE JESUS, WHOM I HOLD IN MY EMBRACE, I AM GIVING YOU THE POSSIBILITY TO DECIDE FOR PEACE

We all know that she first introduced herself to us as the Queen of Peace and in so many messages she called us to peace, asked us to decide for peace and called us to pray for peace. It is because she is with us and because she is praying for us that we can so easily decide for peace. By calling herself the Queen of Peace she really touched the deepest yearning in our hearts and in the whole world. Medjugorje remains so actual, precisely because here it only concerns peace, but here it must clearly be said that...

THROUGH YOUR 'YES' FOR PEACE AND YOUR DECISION FOR GOD, A NEW POSSIBILITY FOR PEACE IS OPENED

To say 'yes' to peace means to say 'yes' to unconditional love, to unconditional forgiveness, to unconditional reconciliation, and to ask for unconditional forgiveness and to accept unconditional forgiveness. That is our 'yes' to peace. The yearning for peace is a constant and that is because it was given to us, but the decision for peace we must always fight for. The decision for peace again involves the decision for unconditional love, unconditional justice and for being unconditionally good, and therefore it is a decision for a new heart that feels for people the way they are, and then to come to people with God's love and with God's light. A decision for God is the primary condition for us to even be able to decide for peace. Because those who do not decide for God and for what He says and wishes to teach us will run into emptiness, will remain without a purpose and without a foundation, and therefore peace will always remain unattainable. To decide for God therefore means to know His words, to believe in His words, to believe in His love and to always believe that He really does enter our lives, so that He can then become active in our lives. Therefore it is again so important for us to seek what it still is in our lives that hinders us from deciding more for God. We always find the same answer to this and that is our egoism, our pride and our openness for the world and that we in being this way start seeking peace by way of wrong paths and wrong means. The world with all that it offers is seductive. When it offers us peace, it is really only offering us amusement and amusement always goes on the costs of others, therefore it destroys us and then finally also destroys the others. Here it is sufficient only to think about an alcoholic, a drug addict or someone who has taken upon himself some other bad habit, here it always concerns this

same seeking for peace. And it is this then that also seduces. Whoever does not decide for the difficult way to peace will never attain it, and therefore has never decided for God. By way of prayer, fasting, regular Confession and attendance of Holy Mass and especially also for the time we take for Adoration, then our hearts will become firm in God and firm in peace, and then we will be able to resist the temptations of this world. Then Mary says...

ONLY IN THIS WAY, LITTLE CHILDREN, THIS CENTURY WILL BE FOR YOU A TIME OF PEACE AND WELL-BEING

We may not become tired of the realization that it really depends upon us what will happen in these new times. All of us want peace and therefore we also expect better times. This last century was one in which there were an extreme number of wars, an extreme amount of injustice in which millions upon millions fell due to these wars. There were millions upon millions of refugees and uncountable persecutions only due to other peoples' consciences in the totalitarian systems, and all these wounds have remained and these then are a real danger for the individual as well as for whole nations and for the whole world. The material prosperity in the West has also brought about a great distance between many people and God, and this has for instance allowed for millions upon millions of abortions that also leave their wounds in society. And it is only a very firm decision for God that will make this new time a time of peace and of well-being. We may simply not fall victim to the many temptations of this world and then wait for someone else to bring about true peace for us, something that we ourselves are really waiting for. We must, in order to attain true peace, listen to Mary, the Queen of Peace, and then also do what she is requesting of us. We may not allow ourselves to expect something from the others, but rather that we ourselves start doing everything that we can to attain this peace that Mary has promised us if we listen to her. If we expect peace by way of the others, then we will always remain disappointed, but if we decide and act for our own peace and love in our own hearts, then we will always have more and more work to do on behalf of true peace because all of humanity needs peace. At the end of the message, Mary says...

THEREFORE, PUT LITTLE NEWBORN JESUS IN THE FIRST PLACE IN YOUR LIFE AND HE WILL LEAD YOU ON THE WAY OF SALVATION

Often Mary has called us to place God in the first place in our lives or to allow Him to take the first place in our lives. When she tells us to place the little Jesus in the first place in our life, then Mary is telling us something that we should really understand. Jesus came to us as a child and it is, more than anything else, the child that we should be able to give the first place in our life. When we think of a child and its mother, then we know that the mother is always attending to that child day and night and that she never leaves that child alone. The child without the help of its mother could never survive, and our spiritual lives are very much the same way. Our hearts, in which Jesus lives as a child, are always in need of our care and our activity. We must nourish our hearts with good food and here it means spiritual food that we receive in prayer, in fasting, in Confession, at Holy Mass and at Adoration. We must at all times cleanse our hearts, so that the child Jesus is able to live inside us. The child Jesus will not be able to live and survive in those who do not decide for the daily spiritual work. This is why we should also think about some advice of Mary's when she told us to work in our hearts as we do in our fields. Everyone who has ever tended to a garden knows that the work there or in the fields must be a radical type of work. The useless and bad roots that are able to suffocate the good plants must be hindered and removed, the ground must be cleaned so that the good plants can grow and then have their flowers or their fruits. It is this way also with the child Jesus in our hearts. If we want Him to live in us and to grow in us, then we must, as St. Paul tells us, "fight to the blood against sin" and untiringly fight for the good, and this is certainly difficult work, but it is the only work that brings good fruit. Therefore, this new time, in which we can have peace and well-being, demands this from us, and so we very consciously must want to take little Jesus in our hearts and to attend to Him as a mother does her child. Only if we do this will we be on the path of salvation. Salvation, in the biblical sense, does not only mean to some day attain eternal peace, but it also signifies a well-being here on earth if we follow Jesus. If all people were to follow Jesus, then all of us would be doing well spiritually, mentally as well as materially. So the biblical meaning of

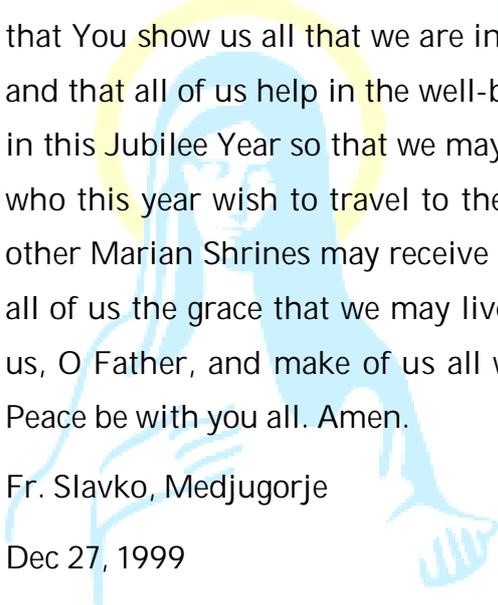
salvation includes all spiritual, mental as well as material goods. Only in this way can humanity attain salvation. God is a God who is offering each of us salvation, and Who also wishes to participate in this salvation for us. He does not only offer His help to us, but He offers Himself to us as this help, and when people refuse this help then they are isolating themselves from all those around them and from the rest of the world. This message is a really an important message because it is such a hopeful message, but it also is telling us very clearly what it is that we should do, that God is very much with us, that He wishes to remain with us, and that He wishes to work through us. And that all may happen, we now wish to pray...

God, our Father, we wish to thank You that You sent us the child Jesus, and that He decided to remain with us. With Mary, His mother and Your humble servant, we ask You for ourselves, at the beginning of this new time, to send us the Holy Spirit so that He may free us of everything that hinders the child Jesus from remaining in our hearts. Cleanse us of all our selfishness, our pride, our egoism, our jealousy and our envy. Free us from our laziness and our fear of working with Your Son every day. Cleanse our hearts, O Father, so that they may become good homes for Your Son. Father, give us the grace that we may say 'yes' to peace and that we may therefore decide only for You. In Your Name, at the beginning of this new time, we reject all sin, all that is evil and all temptations that come from the world and from Satan. Protect us, O Father, and give us the grace that we may allow ourselves to be protected, and Father, along with Mary, we also ask You for protection of all families, all parents, for every mother, for every father, and for all children, that they may during this new time all decide for peace and therefore only for You, O Father, and that the newborn Jesus may remain in all of them. Help our families to overcome all that is evil. Keep our families unified and in peace through Your Son Jesus, and heal all families that have been divided, all families into which the worms of conflict, pride, selfishness, alcoholism or disloyalty have entered. We bring before You all the wounded relationships between men and women, between parents and children, cleanse them, heal them, so that all our families may really become families for this new time, families of peace, families in which only life is served. We ask You for all women who have conceived a child or who will conceive a child during this time, for all Doctors and all those

who through their service attend to unborn life, that every conceived child may also be accepted and that this new time be especially known as a time in which true peace and all life can be served. We ask You, O Father, for all the sick and for old people, that they too may experience help by way of the young and healthy, and that You wish to give to everyone. Let us become conscious of the fact that peace depends entirely on the behavior of each individual. We also ask You on behalf of all those who are responsible in the Church and in the world, that their hearts may all become open to Your offer of true peace, that everyone who carries a responsibility may also decide for You, O Father, and that all of us may during this time cooperate only with You. We ask You on behalf of all Catholics, all other Christians and all those of other religions, that You show us all that we are in fact able to live in peace with one another, and that all of us help in the well-being of all the others. O Father, bless us all in this Jubilee Year so that we may constantly stay active and that all pilgrims who this year wish to travel to the Holy Land, to Rome, to Medjugorje or to other Marian Shrines may receive a new impulse for their lives with You. Give all of us the grace that we may live this new time in You and with You. Bless us, O Father, and make of us all witnesses of Your peace, and so may it be. Peace be with you all. Amen.

Fr. Slavko, Medjugorje

Dec 27, 1999



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