

Reflection of Our Lady's Message 25th August 2011

“Dear Children! Today I call you to pray and fast for my intentions, because Satan wants to destroy my plan. Here I began with the parish and invited the entire world. Many have responded but there is an enormous number of those who do not want to hear or accept my call. Therefore, you who have said ‘yes’ be strong and resolute. Thank you for having responded to my call.”

This month's message begins with a call to **prayer and fasting** for Mary's intentions. It has a sense of urgency about it so that, Satan's plans may be thwarted and Mary's plan unfold and be realised not just for the parish of Medjugorje, but for the entire world.

In the rite of exorcism Satan is perceived by the church as the enemy of faith, foe of the human race, begetter of death, robber of life, corrupter of justice, root of evil, foementor of vice, seducer of men, betrayer of the nations, instigator of envy, font of avarice, source of discord, author of pain and sorrow; and in the scriptures Satan is known as the accuser who has been thrown down from heaven, conquered by the blood of the lamb and the witness of God's children to the truth of God's word.

We are living in a time of great spiritual warfare of which many sadly are not aware of. We see from the gospels that many followed Jesus, but also many walked away and did not want to hear or accept his call, his teachings.

Mary is aware that many have said ‘yes,’ have responded to her call in this time of grace and wants to confirm them in their ‘yes’ so she urges us to be strong and resolute who have said ‘yes’ to her call to conversion and peace.

YOU WHO HAVE SAID ‘YES’ BE STRONG AND RESOLUTE

St Paul said something similar to the early Christians when he wrote to the Ephesians. “Grow strong in the Lord, with the strength of his power. Put God's armour on so as to be able to resist the devil's tactics. For it is not against human enemies we have to struggle, but against the Sovereignities and the Powers who originate the darkness in this world, the spiritual army of evil in the heavens. That is why you must rely on God's armour, or you will not be able to put up any resistance when the worst happens, or have enough resources to hold your ground.”

To be strong and resolute we must put on the mind of Christ, put on the armour of God. In doing so we also put off the works of darkness, we make a choice for the light which darkness cannot overpower. We make a choice for the good which in the end will triumph over all evil.

You stand strong and resolute when you stand your ground with truth buckled round your waist, and integrity for a breastplate, wearing for shoes on your feet the eagerness to spread the gospel of peace, and always carrying the shield of faith so that you can use it to put out the burning arrows of the evil one, accepting salvation from

God to be your helmet and receive the word of God from the Spirit to use as a sword.
Eph: 5:10-17

Both Jesus and Mary have given a firm **'yes'** to God's plan of salvation for the whole world. Both were resolute in taking the road for Jerusalem, to the hill of Calvary, the hill where God raises up saints and martyrs in every generation.

Let us pray and fast this month not only for Mary's plan to be realised for the whole church, for the whole world, especially for those who do not want to hear or accept her call so that their eyes and hearts may be open to give their **'yes'** and become strong and resolute in deciding for God, in deciding for faith, in deciding for conversion and so decide for true authentic peace in their hearts, their homes, their lives.

If by chance we have become complacent in our efforts to grow spiritually in the Lord, now is the time to renew our **'yes,'** now is the time to once again be strong and resolute in our **'yes'** for God and his saving plan.

Awaken too, and realise the power of **prayer with fasting**. Gather together as a family in prayer groups with Mary the Mother of Jesus, and take at least one day a week to pray and fast for God to hasten the triumph of good over evil in our world today. Pray and fast if you wish to see strongholds of darkness brought down and God's kingdom and his church built up in the power of the Spirit.

God bless you all. Be strong, be resolute.
Fr Ciaran