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Note from the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith, “The Queen of Peace” about the spiritual experience connected with Medjugorje,

DICASTERY FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH

“The Queen of Peace”

Note About the Spiritual Experience Connected with Medjugorje

Foreword

1. The time has come to conclude a long and complex history that has surrounded the spiritual phenomena of Medjugorje. It is a history in which bishops, theologians, commissions, and analysts have expressed a series of divergent opinions.

The conclusions expressed in this *Note* are presented in the context of what was established in the new *Norms for Proceeding in the Discernment of Alleged Supernatural Phenomena* (Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith, 17 May 2024; henceforth, “*Norms*”). Consequently, the perspective of this analysis is quite different from that which was used in earlier studies.

It is important to clarify from the outset that the conclusions of this *Note* do not imply a judgment about the moral life of the alleged visionaries. Additionally, when recognizing an action of the Spirit for the good of the People of God “in the midst of” a spiritual experience, present from its beginnings until now, we should remember that the charismatic gifts (*gratiae gratis datae*) that may be connected to that experience do not necessarily require those involved to have moral perfection.

2. Although we find many positive elements that help to heed the call of the Gospel when we consider the overall set of messages tied to this spiritual experience, some people believe that certain messages contain contradictions or are connected with the desires or interests of the alleged visionaries or others. It cannot be

ruled out that this may have happened in the case of a few messages. This reminds us that the *Norms* of this Dicastery state that such phenomena “at times appear connected to confused human experiences, theologically inaccurate expressions, or interests that are not entirely legitimate” (*Norms*, par. 14). This does not exclude the possibility of “some error of a natural order [...] not due to bad intentions, but to the subjective perception of the phenomenon” (*ibid.*, art. 15, 2°). As an example of this imprecise and ultimately theologically incorrect mystical language, among the messages connected to Medjugorje (cf. *Raccolta completa dei messaggi della Regina della Pace. «Vi supplico: convertitevi!»* [Camerata Picena, Italy, 2024]; in some cases, the translation was improved by comparing it with the original texts), we can mention the isolated expression, “my Son, one and triune, loves you” (2 November 2017). It is not unusual for mystical texts that intend to express the presence of the whole Trinity in the mystery of the Incarnate Word to use an unsuitable expression such as this. In this case, the text should be understood to say that in the Son made man, the love of the Triune God is manifested (cf. Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith, “‘Trinity Mercy’: Letter to the Bishop of Como on the Spiritual Experience Connected with the Sanctuary of Maccio (Villa Guardia)”, 15 July 2024). In addition, the reader should be aware that whenever this *Note* refers to “messages” from Our Lady, it always intends this to mean “alleged messages.”

To discern events related to Medjugorje, we are fundamentally considering the existence of clearly verified fruits, together with an analysis of the alleged Marian messages.

The Fruits

3. An immediate effect surrounding the phenomena associated with Medjugorje has been the large and growing number of devotees worldwide, together with the many people who make a pilgrimage there from the most varied places.

The positive fruits are most evident in the promotion of a healthy practice of a life of faith, in accordance with the tradition of the Church. In the context of Medjugorje, this applies both to those who had been previously distant from the faith as well as to those who had practiced the faith only superficially. The uniqueness of the place lies in the large number of such fruits: abundant conversions, a frequent return to the sacraments (particularly, the Eucharist and Reconciliation), many vocations to priestly, religious, and married life, a deepening of the life of faith, a more intense practice of prayer, many reconciliations between spouses, and the renewal of marriage and family life. It should be noted that such experiences occur above all in the context of pilgrimages to the places associated with the original events rather than in meetings with the “visionaries” to be present for the alleged apparitions.

4. The intense daily pastoral work in the parish of Medjugorje has increased due to the “Medjugorje phenomenon”. In that parish, we can observe the daily recitation of various parts of the Rosary, the celebration of the Holy Mass (with many liturgies, also on weekdays), adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, and numerous confessions. Outside the parish church there are two Stations of the Cross, a large hall for catechesis, and a small chapel for adoration. In addition to the regular sacramental and spiritual life, Medjugorje also hosts various ordinary pastoral activities, such as annual seminars of different kinds, a Youth Festival, and spiritual retreats held for priests, married couples, pilgrimage organizers, peace center directors, and prayer group leaders.

Moreover, for decades, the parish of Medjugorje has continued to be a major pilgrimage destination. Unlike other sites linked to apparitions, people seem to visit Medjugorje mainly to renew their faith rather than to seek help with specific requests. Notably, groups of Orthodox Christians and Muslims also visit the shrine.

5. Many people have discovered their vocation to the priesthood or consecrated life in the context of the “Medjugorje phenomenon.” The stories of these people are quite different, yet they converge in the same spiritual experience of feeling called to follow Jesus in this way. Some individuals went to Medjugorje to discover God’s will in their lives, others went just out of curiosity, and still others went with no faith at all. Several people reported receiving the grace of a vocation, with a strong desire to give themselves entirely to God while they were on the mountain where the alleged apparitions occurred; others experienced this call while they were in adoration before the Blessed Sacrament.

For many people, life changed after they accepted the spirituality of Medjugorje (messages, prayer, fasting, adoration, Holy Mass, confession, etc.) in their daily lives, leading them to pursue a call to the priesthood or religious life. Some feel they received in Medjugorje the decisive confirmation of a vocation that had been maturing already for a long time. There are also many cases where individuals discovered a particular vocation that, while occurring outside Medjugorje itself, nevertheless took place within groups inspired by its spirituality or by reading books related to this experience.

Moreover, there is no shortage of genuine conversions of people who had been far from God and the Church and who moved from a life marked by sin to adopt radical existential changes oriented toward the Gospel. Numerous healings have also been reported in connection with Medjugorje.

So many others have discovered the beauty of being Christians through Medjugorje. For many, it became a place chosen by God to renew their faith; thus, some experience it as a new starting point for their spiritual journey. In many cases, people were able to overcome a spiritual crisis thanks to Medjugorje. Others report a desire awakened in the context of Medjugorje to give themselves deeply to the service of God in obedience to the Church, or to give themselves with greater commitment to the life of faith in their home parish. Meanwhile, in many nations worldwide, a great number of Marian devotional and prayer groups have emerged that are inspired by the spiritual experience of Medjugorje. Works of charity have also arisen in connection with various communities and associations, particularly those that care for orphans, drug addicts, alcoholics, children facing various difficulties, and people with disabilities.

Particularly notable is the presence of many young people, young couples, and adults who rediscover the Christian faith in Medjugorje through Our Lady, with an experience that directs them to Christ in the Church. A witness to the strong presence of young people in Medjugorje is the annual Youth Festival.

Beyond these particular fruits, Medjugorje is perceived as a space of great peace, recollection, and a piety that is sincere, deep, and easily shared.

In conclusion, the positive fruits linked to this spiritual experience are evident and, over time, they have become distinct from the experience of the alleged visionaries, who are no longer seen as the central mediators of the “Medjugorje phenomenon.” In the midst of this phenomenon, the Holy Spirit is carrying out many beautiful and positive things.

Central Aspects of the Messages

The Queen of Peace

6. While the *Gospa* [i.e., *Lady*] most frequently ascribes to herself the name “Mother”, according to various expressions (Mother of the Church, of God, of the righteous, of the saints, etc.), the most original title in the messages is that of “Queen of Peace” (cf. Message of 16 June 1983). This title offers a vision that is theocentric and very rich in the true meaning of peace. According to this understanding, peace signifies not only the absence of war; it also has a spiritual, family, and social meaning. Indeed, this peace is achieved primarily through prayer, but it is also spread through missionary efforts. One of the prevailing characteristics of the spirituality that emerges from the messages is that of trust in God through a total trust in Mary, in order to become instruments of peace in the world. The messages about this theme are quite numerous, some of which we will quote here:

“Dear children, I came to you and introduced myself as the Queen of Peace because my Son sent me. I desire, dear children, to help you: to help you so that peace may come” (10 August 2012).

“Peace. Peace. Peace! Be reconciled! Be reconciled with God and among yourselves” (26 June 1981).

“Dear children, without prayer, there is no peace. Therefore, I urge you, dear children, to pray at the foot of the

Cross for peace" (6 September 1984).

"I call upon you all to pray responsibly for peace. Pray, dear children, for peace to reign in the world, for peace to reign in the hearts of men and in the hearts of my children. Therefore, be my bearers of peace in this restless world. Be my living sign: a sign of peace" (5 August 2013).

"Dear children, I call upon all of you who have heard my message of peace to implement it in your lives with seriousness and with love. There are many who think they are doing a lot by talking about the messages, but they do not live them. Dear children, I call you to life and to change all that is negative in you, so that everything may become positive and life-giving" (25 May 1991).

"You err when you look to the future, thinking only of wars, punishments, and evil. If you always think of evil, you are already putting yourself on the road to meet it. For the Christian, there is only one attitude toward the future: the hope of salvation. Your task is to accept God's peace, to live it, and to spread it" (10 June 1982).

"Today's world lives amid high tensions and walks on the brink of a catastrophe. It can only be saved if it finds peace. But it can only have peace by returning to God" (15 February 1983).

"I have presented myself here as the Queen of Peace to tell everyone that peace is necessary for the salvation of the world. Only in God can you find true joy, which is the source of true peace. Therefore, I ask for conversion" (16 June 1983).

"Carry peace in your hearts. Nurture it like a flower that needs water, tenderness, and light" (25 February 2003).

The Peace That Flows from Love

7. This peace is not an end in itself, nor does it express the highest Christian value. Rather, it is the fruit of love that is lived, which is the greatest and most beautiful virtue. It is the love that surrenders itself to God's love and expresses itself in the fraternal love that avoids quarrels, does not judge, and forgives:

"Love one another. Be brothers and sisters to one another and avoid all quarrels" (25 December 1981). "Dear children, also today I want to call upon you to forgive. Forgive, my children! Forgive others, forgive yourselves" (13 March 2010). "Dear children, this is the time of thanksgiving. Today, from you, I seek love. Do not look for mistakes and errors in others, and do not judge them" (4 May 2020).

This love, which enables us to bring peace to the world, also implies a love for those who are not Catholic. Indeed, this is not to propose syncretism or to say that "all religions are equal before God." Yet still, all people are loved. This is a point best understood in the ecumenical and interreligious context of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which has been marked by a terrible war with strong religious components:

"On earth, you are divided, but you are all my children. Muslims, Orthodox, Catholics, all of you are equal before my Son and me. You are all my children. This does not mean that all religions are equal before God, but people are. It is not enough, however, to belong to the Catholic Church to be saved: one must respect God's will [...]. To whom little has been given, little will be asked" (20 May 1982). "You are not true Christians if you do not respect your brothers and sisters who belong to other religions" (21 February 1983). However, there is also a reminder of the need to "preserve the Catholic faith at all costs, for you and for your children" (19 February 1984).

The King of Peace

8. The title "Queen of Peace" corresponds to the title "King of Peace", which is attributed to Jesus:

"I call on you, dear children, so that your life may be united with him. Jesus is the King of Peace, and only he can

give you the peace that you seek. I am with you, and I present you to Jesus" (25 December 1995). "In my hands, I have little Jesus, the King of Peace" (25 December 2002). "With great joy, I bring you the King of Peace, that he may bless you with his blessing" (25 December 2007).

Only God

9. The messages offer a strongly theocentric view of the spiritual life and frequently call upon us to make a trusting surrender to God, who is love:

"Dear children, today I call upon you to surrender entirely to God. Give everything you do and everything you possess over to God so that he may reign in your life as King of everything. Do not be afraid!" (25 July 1988).

"Dear children, today I call upon you to live the following words this week: '*I love God!*' Dear children, with love, you will achieve everything, even what you consider to be impossible" (28 February 1985).

"Dear children, I call upon you to a total surrender to God. Let everything you possess be in the hands of God. Only in this way will you have joy in your hearts. My children, rejoice in all that you have. Give thanks to God because everything is God's gift to you. Thus, you will be able in life to give thanks for everything and discover God in everything, even in the smallest flower" (25 April 1989).

10. In light of everything above, we can see a nucleus of messages in which Our Lady does not place herself at the center but shows herself to be fully directed toward our union with God:

"Behold, for this I am with you: to teach you and bring you closer to the Love of God" (25 May 1999).

"I call you first to love God, the Creator of your life; then you will recognize and love God in everyone" (25 November 1992).

"I am with you and intercede before God for each of you so that your hearts may be opened to God and God's love" (25 March 2000).

"I call upon you all to grow in God's love, like a flower that feels the warm rays of spring" (25 April 2008).

"Do not waver in your faith and do not ask 'why', thinking that you are alone and abandoned. Instead, open your hearts, pray, and believe firmly. Then your hearts will feel God's closeness and that God never abandons you—that he is always beside you" (25 December 2019).

11. For this reason, Mary invites the listener to encounter God, who is always present in daily life:

"You seek signs and messages and do not see that, with every morning sunrise, God calls upon you to convert and return to the path of truth and salvation" (25 September 1998). "May the wheat fields speak to you of God's mercy toward every creature" (25 August 1999). "God wants to save you, and so he sends you messages through people, through nature, and through many other things that can help you understand that you must change the direction of your life" (25 March 1990).

Christocentrism

12. The intercession and work of Mary are shown to be clearly subordinate to Jesus Christ, the author of grace and salvation for every person:

"In a special way, my children, I would like to bring you closer to the Heart of Jesus. Therefore, my children, today I call you to prayer addressed to my dear Son Jesus, that all your hearts may be his" (25 October 1988).

“Do not let the light of the world seduce you. Open yourselves to the light of Divine Love, to the Love of my Son. Decide for him; he is Love and he is Truth” (2 May 2016). “Today I call upon you, dear children, because you have turned away from Jesus—because you have put him in the background and overlooked him. Therefore, I call upon you to decide for him and to put Jesus first in your life” (24 April 2017). “I wish to renew you and lead you with my heart to the Heart of Jesus, who still suffers for you and calls you to conversion” (25 October 1996). “Only if you draw close to Jesus will you understand the immeasurable love he has for each of you” (25 February 1998). “I call you to allow your hearts to be inflamed ever more ardently with love for the Crucified, and do not forget that he gave his life out of love for you, so that you might be saved” (25 September 2007).

13. Mary intercedes, but it is Christ who gives the strength. Therefore, her whole maternal work consists in motivating us to turn to Christ:

“He will give you strength and joy in this time. I am close to you with my intercession” (25 November 1993). “My hands offer you my Son, who is the source of pure water. He will revive your faith and purify your hearts” (2 October 2014). “Open your hearts and surrender your lives to Jesus, so that *he* may work through your hearts and strengthen you in faith” (23 May 1985).

Mary speaks humbly about her own words in comparison with the Eternal Word, whose words of life are effective in transforming us: “Dear children, I speak to you as Mother, with simple words [...]. My Son, on the other hand, who comes from the Eternal Present, he speaks to you with words of life and sows love in hearts that are open” (2 October 2017).

The Action of the Holy Spirit

14. Many messages call upon us to recognize the importance of asking for the help of the Holy Spirit:

“People are wrong when they turn solely to the saints to ask for something. The important thing is to pray to the Holy Spirit to descend upon you. When you have him, you have everything” (21 October 1983).

“Start by invoking the Holy Spirit every day. The most important thing is to pray to the Holy Spirit. For, everything is transformed and becomes clear when the Holy Spirit descends upon you” (25 November 1983).

“Before the Mass, it is necessary to pray to the Holy Spirit. Prayers to the Holy Spirit should always accompany the Mass” (26 November 1983).

“People pray in the wrong way. They go to churches and shrines to ask for some material benefit. Very few, however, ask for the gift of the Holy Spirit. The most important thing for you to do is just to beg for the Holy Spirit to descend because if you have the gift of the Holy Spirit, you have everything” (29 December 1983).

The Call to Conversion

15. A constant call to abandon a worldly lifestyle and excessive attachment to worldly goods appears in the messages, along with frequent calls for conversion, which makes true peace in the world possible. Conversion seems to be the focus of the *Gospa*’s message: “Dear children! Today I call you to conversion. This is the most important message I have given you here” (25 February 1996).

“My heart is burning with love for you. The only word I want to say to the world is this: conversion, conversion. Make it known to all my children; I only ask for conversion” (25 April 1983).

“Dear children, today I wish to wrap you with my mantle and lead all of you toward the way of conversion. Dear children, please give the Lord all of your past, all of the evil that has accumulated in your hearts” (25 February 1987).

"You cannot say that you are converted because your life must become a daily conversion" (25 February 1993).

"Awaken from your soul's weary slumber and say to God with all your strength, 'Yes.' Decide for conversion and holiness" (25 March 2001).

"Convert, my children, and kneel down in the silence of your heart. Put God at the center of your being" (25 May 2001).

"Dear children, also today, with great joy in my heart, I call you to conversion [...]. God desires to convert the entire world; he desires to call it to salvation and to the way to him, who is the beginning and the end of every being" (25 June 2007).

The Heavy Burden of Evil and Sin

16. At the same time, there is an insistent exhortation not to underestimate the *gravity of evil* and sin, and to take very seriously God's call to fight against evil and the influence of Satan. Another frequent appeal is not to be frightened in the face of trials. Occasionally, it is announced that the present moment is a time of grace and a time of trial. Sometimes the latter element is expressed in very strong terms—as is the case, for example, when it is said that there is despair everywhere, that everything collapses, and so forth, and that these things are connected above all to the fact that many people lack faith and are distant from God. From this arises the call to offer to God all one's suffering and difficulties so that they may bear the fruits of grace and inner consolation:

"I do not weep only because Jesus died, but because Jesus died giving his blood to the last drop for all people, yet many of my children do not want to derive any benefit from this" (1 April 1983).

"Look around you, dear children, and you will see how great is the sin that dominates this earth. So, pray that Jesus triumphs" (13 September 1984).

"Dear children, you know that I promised you an oasis of peace. But know that next to the oasis, there is the desert where Satan is lurking and trying to tempt each of you. Dear children, only through prayer can you overcome every influence of Satan in the place where you live. I am with you, but I cannot deprive you of your freedom" (7 August 1986).

"Wherever I go and where my Son is also with me, there Satan also joins. You have allowed him, without realizing it, to take over in you, to dominate you [...]. Do not give in, my children! Wipe from my face the tears I shed seeing what you do. Look around you! Find time to approach God in the Church. Come into your Father's house. Find time to gather as a family and plead for God's grace. [...] Do not look with scorn on the poor man begging you for a morsel of bread. Do not send him away from your full table. Help him! And God will also help you [...]. You, my children, have forgotten all these things, and Satan has also contributed to this. Do not give in! [...] I do not want to reproach you further; instead, I want to call you once again to prayer, fasting, and penance" (28 January 1987).

"Dear children, in a special way, I now call you all to prayer and renunciation. For, now as never before, Satan desires to seduce as many people as possible to the path of death and sin. Therefore, dear children, help my Immaculate Heart to triumph in a world of sin" (25 September 1991).

"Do not allow Satan to pull you around and do with you what he wants. I call on you to become responsible and determined, and to consecrate every day to God" (25 January 1998).

"Now, as never before, Satan wants to suffocate man and his soul with his contagious wind of hatred and unrest. In so many hearts, there is no joy because there is no God and no prayer. Hatred and war are growing day by day. I am calling you, my children, to begin anew, with enthusiasm, the path of holiness and love because I have come among you for this. Together, let us be love and forgiveness for all those who know and want to love only

with human love and not with that immense love of God" (25 January 2015).

17. Our Lady points out an opportunity to end the war, but it requires the cooperation of Christians in giving the gift of their lives. This implies a strong call to responsibility: "You talk, but do not live. That is why, my children, this war is lasting so long. I call upon you to open yourselves to God and to live with God in your hearts [...]. Dear children, I cannot help you if you do not live God's commandments, if you do not live the Mass, and if you do not reject sin" (25 October 1993). Nonetheless, four months later, gratitude is expressed by emphasizing the value of believers' cooperation: "All of you have helped me so that this war may end as soon as possible" (25 February 1994). The importance of believers' cooperation also appears in other contexts: "You all, with your lives and your example, must cooperate in the work of salvation" (25 May 1996).

Prayer

18. In this journey, prayer is fundamental. The exhortation to pray is both constant and insistent in the messages:

"I call on you once again to decide for prayer because, with prayer, you will be able to experience conversion. Each of you will become, in simplicity, similar to a child who is open to the Father's love" (25 July 1996).

"I call on you to fill your day with short, ardent prayers. When you pray, your heart is open, and God loves you with a special love and gives you special graces. Therefore, make good use of this time of grace and dedicate it to God as never before" (25 July 2005).

19. Along with prayer, the call to *fast* appears frequently, but it is explained as a freely given offering in addition to sacrifices of a physical nature: "If you are in distress or in need, come to me. If you do not have the strength to fast on bread and water, you can give up other things. Besides food, it would be good to give up television because after watching television programs, you are distracted and cannot pray. You could also give up alcohol, cigarettes, and other pleasures. You yourselves know what you must do" (8 December 1981).

The Centrality of the Mass

20. For the faithful, prayer finds its culmination in the celebration of the Eucharist:

"The Mass is the highest form of prayer. You will never be able to understand its greatness" (13 January 1984). "Dear children, also today, in a special way, I wish to call you to the Eucharist. May the Mass be the center of your lives! In particular, dear children, may the Eucharist be in your families. The family must go to Holy Mass and celebrate Jesus. Jesus must be the center of your lives!" (15 June 2018). "May Holy Mass not be a habit for you, but life. By living the Holy Mass every day, you will feel the need for holiness" (25 January 1998). "Do not forget that in the Eucharist, which is the heart of the faith, my Son is always with you. He comes to you and breaks bread with you; because, my children, it was for your sake that he died, rose again, and comes anew" (2 May 2016).

21. The following message underscores the minor value of the apparitions themselves when compared with the immense spiritual treasure that is the Eucharist:

"I am closer to you during the Mass than during an apparition. Many pilgrims would like to be present in the small room of the apparitions, and so they crowd around the rectory. When they swarm in front of the tabernacle, as they now do in front of the rectory, then they will have understood everything; they will have understood the presence of Jesus, because receiving Holy Communion is greater than being a visionary" (12 November 1986).

Fraternal Communion

22. The spirituality of Medjugorje is not individualistic. It is experienced especially in communal events, such as pilgrimages and prayer meetings. At the same time, along with prayer, the messages contain a constant call to fraternal love—a love that accompanies, gives, serves, forgives, and is close to the poor:

“This is the only truth, and it is the truth that my Son left you. You do not need to examine it much. What is asked of you is to love and to give” (2 January 2015).

“I call upon you, my children, to see who needs your spiritual or material help. By your example, my children, you will be the outstretched hands of God, which humanity is seeking” (25 February 1997).

“Then choose one day of the week and dedicate it to the poor and the sick: do not forget them” (23 January 1984).

“Dear children, I urge you to love your neighbor and, above all, to love the one who brings bad things upon you. In that way, with love, you will be able to appreciate the intentions of the heart. Pray and love, dear children! With love, you will be able to do even that which seemed impossible to you” (7 November 1985).

“Dear children, today I am calling you to the love that is pleasing and dear to God. My children, love bears everything—everything that is difficult and bitter—for the sake of Jesus, who is love. Therefore, dear children, pray that God come to your aid [...]. In this way, God can shape your lives and you will grow in love. Glorify God, my children, with the *Hymn to Love* (1 Cor.13) so that God’s love may grow in you from day to day to its fullness” (25 June 1988).

“You ask my Son to be merciful to you, but I call you to mercy. You ask him to be good to you and to forgive you, but how long have I been begging you, my children, to forgive and love all the people you meet!” (2 March 2019).

The communal aspect of Medjugorje also emerges in the constant emphasis on the fundamental importance of the family in Christian life: “Dear children, I beseech you, please begin to change your family life. Let the family be a harmonious flower that I wish to give to Jesus. Dear children, let every family be active in prayer, for I desire that the fruits in the family be seen one day. Only thus will I be able to give them all, like petals, to Jesus for the fulfillment of God’s plan” (1 May 1986).

23. This spirituality certainly also includes an ecclesial dimension: one of communion with the whole Church, with the Pastors, and in particular, with the Holy Father:

“Carry out your duties well and do what the Church asks you to do” (2 February 1983). “I am asking my Son, through love, to grant you unity through him: unity among yourselves and unity between you and your pastors. Through them, my Son always gives himself to you anew and renews your souls. Do not forget this” (2 August 2014). “As my children, I ask you: pray very much for the Church and her ministers, your pastors, that the Church may be as my Son desires: clear as spring water and full of love” (2 March 2018). “Pray for my very beloved Holy Father; pray for his mission” (17 August 2014).

Joy and Gratitude

24. The spirituality of Medjugorje is joyful, celebratory, and includes a call to live the joy of following Christ, giving thanks even for the small, good things in life:

“Dear children, I call upon you to open yourselves to God. See, my children, just as nature opens itself and gives life and fruit, so I also call on you to live with God and surrender completely to him. My children, I am with you, and I want to introduce you continually to the joy of life. I desire that each of you may discover the joy and love that can be found only in God and that only God can give” (25 May 1989).

“Dear children, I call upon you to give thanks to God for all the gifts you have discovered during your life and even for the smallest gift you have perceived. I give thanks together with you. And I desire that all of you may experience the joy of these gifts, and that God may be everything for each of you” (25 September 1989).

“Pray, little children, so that prayer may become life for you. In this way, in your lives, you will discover the peace and joy that God gives to those whose hearts are open toward his love” (25 August 2007).

“My children, those who pray feel the freedom of the children of God and, with a joyful heart, serve the good of their brothers and sisters because God is love and freedom. Therefore, my children, when they want to put chains on you and use you, it is not from God because God is love and gives his peace to every creature” (25 October 2021).

“Find peace in nature and you will discover God the Creator, to whom you can give thanks for all creatures” (25 July 2001).

“I want each of you to be happy here on earth” (25 May 1987).

“Dear children! Pray and renew your hearts so that the good you have sown may bear the fruit of joy” (25 February 2024).

“I need you to be united with my Son because I desire you to be happy” (2 May 2015).

The Witness of the Faithful

25. In the messages, we also find pressing calls to personal witness. Generally, these are calls to give witness to faith and love in one’s life—in fact, we can summarize the missionary message of Medjugorje in that line. In this regard, in the monthly messages to the parish, the *Gospa* often addresses the faithful, calling them “apostles of my love.”

“Dear children, as Mother, I beg you to persevere as my apostles [...]. I am praying that you may witness the love of the Heavenly Father according to my Son. My children, great grace has been given to you to be witnesses of God’s love. Do not take lightly the responsibility that has been given to you. Do not grieve my motherly heart. As Mother, I desire to rely on my children, on my apostles” (2 November 2012).

“Apostles of my love, my children, be like rays of the sun that, with the warmth of my Son’s love, warm everyone around them. My children, the world needs apostles of love” (2 October 2018).

Particularly beautiful is a message that exhorts people to give less importance to spectacular signs and, rather, manifest what they believe with their lives: “You ask me for a sign so that my presence may be believed. The sign will come. But you do not need it: you yourselves must be a sign for others” (8 February 1982).

Eternal Life

26. In so many messages, there is a strong call to awaken the desire for heaven and, therefore, the search for the ultimate meaning of existence in eternal life:

“Dear children, today I want to call all of you to decide for Paradise” (25 October 1987). “God sends me to help you and to lead you to Paradise, your goal” (25 September 1994). “I wish to make of you a very beautiful bouquet prepared for eternity” (25 July 1995). “Without him, there is no future and no joy, but above all, there is no eternal salvation” (25 April 1997). “Decide for holiness, my children, and think of heaven” (25 May 2006). “In your heart, the desire for heaven will be born. Joy will begin to reign in your heart” (25 August 2006). “You are so blind and attached to earthly things and think of earthly life. God sent me to guide you toward eternal life” (25

October 2006). “Do not forget that you are pilgrims on the road to eternity” (25 November 2006). “Do not forget that you are passing, like a flower in a field” (25 January 2007). “Do not forget that you are pilgrims on this earth” (25 December 2007). “Everything passes away, my children; only God remains” (25 March 2008). “I desire, my children, that each of you fall in love with the eternal life that is your future” (25 January 2009).

Necessary Clarifications

27. The messages overall possess great value and express the constant teachings of the Gospel in different words. However, a few messages stray from these positive and edifying contents and even seem to go so far as to contradict them. As a result, one should be attentive lest these few confused elements overshadow the beauty of the whole.

To prevent this treasure of Medjugorje from being compromised, it is necessary to clarify some points of possible confusion that can lead some small groups to distort the valuable proposition of this spiritual experience, especially if the messages are read partially.

This leads us to recall a decisive principle: when one recognizes an action of the Holy Spirit in the midst of a spiritual experience, it does not mean that everything belonging to that experience is thereby free from all imprecisions, imperfections, and areas of possible confusion. Once again, one should remember that these phenomena may “at times appear connected to confused human experiences, theologically inaccurate expressions, or interests that are not entirely legitimate” (*Norms*, par. 14). This does not exclude the possibility of “some error of a natural order, not due to bad intentions, but to the subjective perception of the phenomenon” (*ibid.*, art. 15, 2°).

For this reason, the faithful must be attentive and cautious in interpreting and disseminating the alleged messages. To provide guidance in this regard, we now point out some messages that should be taken with special care, although many of them can be adequately understood when seen in light of the overall set of messages.

Reprimands and Threats

28. In some cases, Our Lady seems to show some irritation because some of her instructions were not followed. So, she warns about threatening signs and the possibility of no longer appearing (although afterward, the messages continue unabated):

“I have come to call the world to conversion for the last time. Later, I will no longer appear on earth. These are my final appearances” (2 May 1982).

“Make haste to convert. When the promised sign is manifested on the hill, it will already be too late” (2 September 1982).

“Today, I am calling upon you for the last time. Now it is Lent, and you, as a parish, can adhere now to my call out of love. If you do not do that, I do not wish to give you any more messages” (21 February 1985).

These messages should only be received as a call not to postpone or delay conversion, keeping in mind what St. Paul says: “Behold, now the favorable time; behold, now the day of salvation!” (2 Cor. 6:2).

In fact, one of the messages provides the right light to interpret correctly the other messages we have mentioned:

“Those who make catastrophic predictions are false prophets. They say, ‘In such a year, on such a day, there will be a catastrophe.’ I have always said that chastisement will come if the world does not convert. Therefore, I

call everyone to conversion. Everything depends on your conversion" (15 December 1983).

Messages to the Parish

29. There are other expressions that run the risk of being misinterpreted, as is the case with the messages for the parish. In them, Our Lady seems to want to exercise control over the details of the parish's spiritual and pastoral journey (including requests for days of fasting or specific commitments to undertake for the various liturgical seasons), giving the impression that she wants to take the place of the ordinary parish structures meant for participation. Sometimes, as we can see in the messages that follow, the "special care" that Our Lady wants to exercise over the parish extends to the point of recrimination that her pastoral directions are not being obeyed:

"Dear children, I have chosen this parish in a special way, and I desire to lead it. With love, I am protecting it, and I want everyone to be mine. Thank you for coming here this evening. I want more and more of you to be with me and my Son. I will give you a special message every Thursday" (1 March 1984).

"Dear children, tomorrow night [on the Feast of Pentecost], pray for the Spirit of Truth. Especially those of you from the parish, because you need the Spirit of Truth so that you will be able to transmit the messages as they are, neither adding anything nor taking anything away, but [transmitting them] just as I have given them" (9 June 1984).

"Dear children, in these days [of Advent], I am calling you to family prayer. On several occasions, I have given you messages in God's name, but you have not listened to me. This Christmas will be unforgettable for you as long as you accept the messages that I am giving you" (6 December 1984).

"Dear children, I wish to continue giving you my messages, and so, today, I call upon you to live and accept my messages. My children, I love you and have chosen this parish that is loved by me in a special way, where I gladly remained when the Most High sent me. Therefore, I call upon you: accept me, dear children, so that you too may be happy. Listen to my messages! Listen to me!" (21 March 1985).

"Today, I wanted to cease giving you messages because some people did not accept me. However, the parish has made progress, and I wish to give you messages as never before in history since the beginning of the world" (4 April 1985).

Such repeated exhortations addressed to the parishioners are an understandable expression of the alleged visionaries' intense love for their parish community. However, Our Lady's messages cannot replace the ordinary role of the parish priest, the pastoral council, and the synodal work of the community regarding decisions that are the subject of communal discernment, through which the parish matures in prudence, fraternal listening, respect for others, and dialogue.

The Relentless Insistence on Listening to the Messages

30. Beyond the frequent exhortations to the faithful of the parish, in general, Our Lady seems to promote listening to her messages so insistently that sometimes this call stands out more than the content of the messages themselves: "Dear children, you are not aware of the messages that God is sending you through me. He is giving you graces, but you do not understand" (8 November 1984). "You are not aware of all the messages I am giving you" (15 November 1984). This risks creating a dependence and an excessive expectation on the part of the faithful, which could ultimately obscure the central importance of the Revealed Word.

The insistence appears constantly. For example, "Live my messages" (18 June 2010). "Spread my messages" (25 June 2010). "Live the messages I am giving you so that I can give you new messages" (27 May 2011). "Follow my messages [...] renew my messages" (17 June 2011). "Embrace my messages and live my messages" (24 June 2011).

In some messages, as in the one that follows, the insistence becomes pressing: “Dear children, also today [your] Mother calls upon you with joy: be my bearers, the bearers of my messages in this weary world. Live my messages and accept my messages with responsibility. Dear children, pray together with me for my plans, which I desire to fulfill” (30 December 2011).

This often-repeated appeal probably comes from the love and generous fervor of the alleged visionaries who, with goodwill, feared that the Blessed Mother’s calls for conversion and peace would be ignored. This insistence becomes even more problematic when the messages refer to requests that are unlikely to be of supernatural origin, such as when Our Lady gives orders about specific dates, places, and practicalities and when she makes decisions about ordinary matters. Although messages of this type are infrequent in Medjugorje, we can find some of them that are explained solely from the personal desires of the alleged visionaries. The following is a clear example of these misleading messages:

“This August 5th will mark the celebration of the second millennium of my birth [...]. I ask you to prepare yourselves intensively over three days [...]. Do not work on these days” (1 August 1984).

It is reasonable for the faithful, using prudence and common sense, not to take these details seriously nor heed them. One must always recall that in this spiritual experience (as in other spiritual experiences and alleged supernatural phenomena), positive and edifying elements are mixed with other elements that are to be ignored. But this fact should not lead one to spurn the richness and the good of the Medjugorje proposal as a whole.

Our Lady Gives the Right Value to Her Messages

31. In fact, it is *Gospa* herself who calls upon us to put her messages in perspective. For, she clearly affirms that we must listen to the Gospel. Often, she asks that her messages be listened to, but she also subordinates them to the incomparable value of the Word revealed in the Holy Scriptures. The following exhortations are very insightful on this point, and they become a central criterion for the attitude we should adopt vis-à-vis the messages:

“Do not go in search of extraordinary things. Instead, take the Gospel, read it, and everything will be clear to you” (12 November 1982).

“Why do you ask so many questions? Every answer is in the Gospel” (19 September 1981).

“Do not believe the lying voices that speak to you about false things, a false light. You, my children, return to Scripture!” (2 February 2018).

32. Our Lady’s call to read the Holy Scriptures is one of the most repeated requests:

“Dear children, today I call upon you to read the Bible every day in your homes: place it in a visible place, so that it will always prompt you to read and pray it” (18 October 1984). “Place the Holy Scripture in a visible place in your families; read it and live it” (25 August 1996). “Put Holy Scripture in a visible place in your families; read it, meditate on it, and learn how God loves his people” (25 January 1999). “I call on you to renew prayer in your families by reading Holy Scripture” (25 September 1999). “Do not forget, my children, to read Holy Scripture. Put it in a visible place and give witness with your lives that you believe and live the Word of God” (25 January 2006). “Read and meditate on Sacred Scripture, and may the words written in it be life for you” (25 February 2012). “Put Holy Scripture in a visible place in your families and read it” (25 January 2014). “My children, read the book of the Gospels. It is always something new; it is what binds you to my Son, who was born to bring words of life to all my children” (2 November 2019).

33. On the other hand, the *Gospa* herself says that, even more than the messages, it is the witness of Christians that is the true light for the world:

"I wish you to be active in living and spreading the messages. *In a special way*, dear children, I want you all to be a reflection of Jesus that will illuminate this unfaithful world that walks in darkness. I wish you all to be the light for everyone, and I desire that you give witness to the light" (5 June 1986).

34. In this way, one should recognize that the messages in which Our Lady repeatedly asks us to listen are ultimately her insistent calls to convert, return to Christ, meditate on his Word, pray, and seek peace. None of these distance us from the Gospel or distract us from it. Therefore, to remain faithful to the true spirit of Medjugorje, we should not focus too much on extraordinary events and alleged messages from the *Gospa* but should use our time and energy to pray with the Word of God, worship Christ, serve our brothers and sisters, and build peace everywhere.

The "Self-Exaltation" of Our Lady

35. Those messages that attribute to Our Lady the expressions "my plan" or "my project" also show a certain problematic aspect: "Each one of you is important in *my* plan of salvation" (25 May 1993). "My children, do not forget that you are important *in my plan of salvation* for humanity" (25 June 2022). "I call on you to pray [...] for *my plans*" (1 October 2004). "Also, tonight I call on you to pray for *my plans* [...] *my projects*" (2 September 2005).

These expressions might create some confusion. In reality, everything Mary accomplishes is always at the service of the Lord's plan and his divine plan of salvation. Mary does not have her own plan for the world and the Church. As a result, these messages can only be interpreted in this sense: that Our Lady fully assumes God's plans to the point of expressing them as her own.

36. Along these lines, special attention is required concerning the possible misuse of the word "mediatrix" in reference to Mary. Although it is true that, in the messages overall, everything is attributed to Jesus Christ, while Mary cooperates with her maternal intercession, certain expressions appear that do not seem consistent with the whole: "I am the mediatrix between you and God" (17 July 1986). "I desire to be the link between you and the Heavenly Father, your mediatrix" (18 March 2012).

Used in this way, the expression "mediatrix" could erroneously lead one to attribute to Mary a place that belongs uniquely and exclusively to the Son of God made man. It would, in fact, contradict what Sacred Scripture affirms when it says that there is only one "Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all" (1 Tim. 2:5-6). These alleged messages also fail to express adequately the fact that, as St. John Paul II explained, Mary's mediatory cooperation is "subordinate" to the mediation of Christ (cf. *Redemptoris Mater*, par. 39). In this way, her cooperation "neither takes away from nor adds anything to the dignity and efficaciousness of Christ the one Mediator" (Second Vatican Council, *Lumen Gentium*, par. 62).

In the same message of 18 March 2012, however, it is clear that Mary's mediation does not obscure Christ's unique mediation since hers concerns only a "maternal intercession" for us: "Dear children! I come among you because I desire to be your mother, your advocate."

With Us, Toward Christ

37. One must bear in mind that the messages as a whole have a strong theocentric and Christological emphasis. Some of the messages offer help in this regard because they underscore Mary's maternal intercession as the key to her specific and always subordinate role. The following messages, in which Mary emphasizes that she cannot and will not replace Jesus Christ, are especially clear on this topic:

"I do not directly dispose of divine graces, but I receive from God what I ask for through my prayer" (31 August 1982).

"Pray, and through prayer encounter my Son, so that *he* may grant you the strength, that *he* may grant you the

grace” (23 June 2017).

“Decide for Jesus; decide and go together with him into the future. [...] I desire to lead all of you to my Son [...]. Decide for him and put him first in your lives” (22 June 2012).

“By living my messages, I desire to lead you to my Son. In all these years that I am with you, *my finger is pointing to my Son*, to Jesus, because I desire to lead you all to him” (28 December 2012)

The following can be considered as a summary of the Gospel message as seen through Medjugorje:

“I desire to draw you ever closer to Jesus and his wounded heart so that you might understand the immeasurable love that gave itself for each of you. Therefore, dear children, pray that a fountain of love might flow from your hearts to every person, as well as to those who hate and despise you. In this way, with the love of Jesus, you will be able to overcome all the misery in this world of sorrows, which is without hope for those who do not know Jesus” (25 November 1991).

Therefore, it is essential to be attentive to what the overall events surrounding Medjugorje remind us about the teachings of the Gospel, focusing not on the details but on the great exhortations that appear in the *Gospa*’s messages. In their light, some less important or unclear texts should be read with prudence.

Conclusions

38. Through the *Nihil obstat* about a spiritual event, the faithful “are authorized to give it their adherence in a prudent manner” (*Norms*, art. 22, §1; cf. Benedict XVI, *Verbum Domini*, par. 14). While this does not imply a declaration of the supernatural character of the phenomenon in question (cf. *Norms*, art. 22, §2)—and recalling that the faithful are not obliged to believe in it—the *Nihil obstat* indicates that the faithful can receive a positive encouragement for their Christian life through this spiritual proposal, and it authorizes public acts of devotion. Such a determination is possible insofar as many positive fruits have been noted in the midst of a spiritual experience, while negative and dangerous effects have not spread among the People of God.

Evaluating the abundant and widespread fruits, which are so beautiful and positive, does not imply that the alleged supernatural events are declared authentic. Instead, it only highlights that the Holy Spirit is acting fruitfully for the good of the faithful “in the midst” of this spiritual phenomenon of Medjugorje. For this reason, all are invited to appreciate and share the pastoral value of this spiritual proposal (cf. *Norms*, par. 17).

Moreover, the positive assessment that most of the messages of Medjugorje are edifying does not imply a declaration that they have a direct supernatural origin. Consequently, when referring to “messages” from Our Lady, one should always bear in mind that they are “alleged messages.”

39. The elements gathered in this *Note* make it possible to recognize that the conditions are present to proceed with the determination of a *Nihil obstat*. The Bishop of Mostar-Duvno will issue the corresponding decree. The special Apostolic Visitor for the Parish of Medjugorje, who will continue to carry out the functions entrusted to him, should verify that this *Note* is included as an Introduction in any publication that collects the messages. In light of the clarifications offered above, he will then discern any future messages—or past messages that have not yet been published—and should authorize them before any publication. Likewise, he will take such measures as he deems necessary and will guide pastoral discernment in response to new situations that may arise, keeping this Dicastery informed.

40. Although there may be different opinions about the authenticity of some facts or certain aspects of this spiritual experience, the ecclesiastical authorities of the places where it is present are invited to “appreciate the pastoral value of this spiritual proposal, and even to promote its spread” (*Norms*, par. 17). However, the power of each Diocesan Bishop to assess prudently what is happening in his own territory and to make his own decision on the matter remains firmly in place (cf. *Norms*, art. 7, §3). While the positive fruits of this spiritual phenomenon

are widely spread throughout the world, this does not deny that there may be groups or persons who, by misusing this spiritual phenomenon, act in a mistaken way. Each Diocesan Bishop, in his own Diocese, has the freedom and authority to make the prudential decisions he deems necessary for the good of the People of God.

41. In any case, may the people who go to Medjugorje be strongly advised that pilgrimages are not made to meet with alleged visionaries but to have an encounter with Mary, the Queen of Peace, and—faithful to her love for her Son—to encounter Christ and listen to him through meditation on the Word, by participation in the Eucharist, and in Eucharistic Adoration, as happens in so many shrines spread all over the world in which the Virgin Mary is venerated with the most varied titles.

42. Let us read one last message, which summarizes the valuable Christocentric sense of the message of Medjugorje and manifests its most authentic spirit:

“Dear children, my words are simple [...]. I am calling you to my Son. Only he can transform despair and suffering into peace and serenity. Only he can give hope in the deepest sorrows. My Son is the life of the world. The more you come to know him, the closer you come to him, and all the more will you love him because my Son is Love. Love changes everything; even that which seems insignificant to you apart from love is made most beautiful by love.” (2 September 2018).

Queen of Peace, pray that those who freely accept the spiritual proposal of Medjugorje may live ever more united with Jesus Christ and find true peace of heart in him.

To you, we also entrust this world of ours, which is succumbing to a “third world war fought piecemeal.” Queen of Peace, hear the plea that rises from the hearts of children, young people, the poor, and every person of goodwill.

“Thank you, our Mother! Looking to you, who are without sin, may we continue to believe and hope that love might conquer hatred, that truth might conquer lies, that pardon might conquer offenses, that peace might conquer war. So may it be!” (Francis, Prayer to Mary Immaculate, 8 December 2022).

The Supreme Pontiff Francis, at the Audience granted to the undersigned Prefect, together with the Secretary for the Doctrinal Section of the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith, on 28 August 2024, approved this Note and ordered its publication.

Given in Rome, at the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith, 19 September 2024.

Víctor Manuel Card. Fernández
Prefect

Msgr. Armando Matteo
Secretary for the Doctrinal Section

Ex Audientia Die 28.08.2024

Franciscus
