

MICHAEL DAVIES REFUTES THE "VISIONS" OF MEDJUGORJE

Marian Apparitions at Medjugorje: True or False?

Source: Davies

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For over two decades - since 1981 - it has been claimed that Our Blessed Mother (called the "Gospa" by devotees) has been appearing to 'visionaries' in Medjugorje, Bosnia (Yugoslavia), leaving messages for the faithful almost daily. Millions of devotees may make pilgrimages there annually and many have attested to various "good fruits" from the alleged apparitions (e.g. conversions, "miracles", etc.). However, these alleged apparitions are not without controversy. As the late Michael Davies has pointed out, there are various troubling aspects. For example:

- Examinations have found nothing of a supernatural origin
- There have been various promised healings which never materialized
- The 'visionaries' predicted a "great sign" which never came, even though it was supposed to come "very soon, quickly"
- The 'seers' have been able to produce 'apparitions' upon request
- Most of the 'seers' own hotels there, who profit greatly from the travel business
- One 'seer' is said to have "spoke and wrote much, and in doing so she fell into many contradictions"
- One 'seer' lied under oath (and only corrected her statement after she was reminded that she was under oath)
- One 'seer' allegedly had a vision while under anesthetic
- One 'seer' has been charged with being an "habitual liar"
- One 'seer', a former seminarian is "now extremely wealthy and drives a custom built BMW"
- There have been "fabricated miracles" (e.g. a miracle of the sun - "Many pilgrims damaged their eyes from staring into the sun")
- There have been charges of "great blindness, superstition, misinformation, and fanaticism" with regard to Medjugorje
- The priest that was "virtually the spiritual director of the Medjugorje seers" is said to have impregnated a nun asked her to lie about it
- Our Lady has supposedly given messages that go against even the high-ranking Cardinal Ratzinger (the future Pope Benedict XVI)
- There has been well-known and scandalous disobedience on the part of religious in that area
- At least one 'visionary' has denied statements made earlier (even though the earlier statement had been taped)
- The "Gospa" in the alleged apparitions has given messages against traditional Church teachings (e.g. telling some people not to pray for themselves, permitting a Protestant woman to receive Holy Communion, etc.)
- Some of the messages seem ridiculous just on their face! For example: "Another of her stories is of a taxi driver who had been given a bloody handkerchief which he was about to throw in a river. A mysterious woman in black, who, of course, turned out to be Our Lady, prevented him just in time, because, had he done so the world would have been destroyed." (Davies)
- The "Gospa's" behavior in the alleged apparitions seems uncharacteristic of the Mother of God, based on previous, approved apparitions (e.g. she is said to sometimes laugh during the apparitions)
- The 'seers' have supposedly received "tens of thousands of messages most of which are notable only for their banality". As Davies points out, "One must also recall that apparitions are always something 'extraordinary', rare, and this is an important element for their discernment."
- At first the alleged apparitions were supposed to end soon, but later some 'seers' say Mary promised them "apparitions for life". Later, a so-called 'second generation seer' (e.g. a 'seer' to take over after the original 'seers' die) may be expected
- The alleged apparitions have been rejected by the local clergy. According to Davies, "Only one Croatian bishop..., a charismatic, expressed belief in the apparitions, and not one of the 100 diocesan clergy in Herzegovina accepts them as authentic."
- Some have died in consequence the alleged apparitions. As Davies points out, a small 'war' broke out in Medjugorje over the "monopoly" one family had in the "pilgrimage industry in Medjugorje." As a result, well over 100 people were killed. Also, at least one other person is said to have died waiting for a promised cure that never materialized (after refusing traditional treatment due to the anticipated "cure")
- Medjugorje 'apparitions' are not limited to Yugoslavia. Michael Davies speaks of the Medjugorje "road show" in which the 'seers' have apparitions wherever they go, almost upon request. "The Madonna seems to be following [them] around the world"

Some of the words attributed to Our Lady are hard to reconcile with what we know about the Mother of Our Lord. For example, Our Lady is supposed to have said things such as: "Have you had enough of me already?" and she is supposed to have thanked the 'seers' for visiting with her. She also was supposed to have instructed a priest to be disobedient to his bishop. The priest in question was one that broke his vows, impregnated a nun, and left the religious life.

- Appearances seem to vary with the travel season (e.g. there may be more 'apparitions' when more people are in Medjugorje)
- Those critical of Medjugorje have "come across an organized boycott"
- Medjugorje has become a "tourist attraction"
- The alleged apparitions are very different from previous, accepted apparitions of the Blessed Virgin
- The 'seers' and others involved have become "very rich" off the alleged apparitions. In fact, the Medjugorje events have become a "lucrative source of income" for various people connected with the events there. So much money is involved, it is called a virtual "Medjugorje Industry". In fact, it is claimed that "If any of the 'seers' were ever to admit that the whole story has been a fraud from the beginning they would almost certainly be lynched by their families, friends, and neighbors who have made a fortune from the 'apparitions'. Monsignor Zanic has no doubt that 'the greatest motivator of all - money - is what inspires the 'seers' and their manipulators" (Davies). Even in the United States, Medjugorje is a "multi-million dollar business operation"
- There has been evident lying. As Davies reports: "[I]t should be noted that [one priest who was born in Medjugorje] reveals that two Franciscans, who were members of the bishop's first investigative commission, had detected 'thirteen apparent cases of deliberate and conscious lying' on the part of the alleged visionaries." A statement by Monsignor Pavao Zanic, Bishop of Mostar-Duvno is quoted as saying "For a short description of the falsehoods about Medjugorje we would need 200 pages"
- Medjugorje may be connected with the 'Protestant-inspired' Charismatic movement ["There has been a close connection between Medjugorje and the charismatic movement from its very inception." "...the charismatic movement, which if examined objectively, renders the magisterium unnecessary, for what need is there of a teaching authority when each individual Christian can communicate directly with the Holy Ghost" (Davies)]. As Davies further points out, "[T]he Catholic Charismatic Renewal was founded in Pittsburgh by two Catholic professors... who had received what they termed 'baptism of the spirit' through the laying on of hands by Protestant Pentecostals."
- Some of the messages they attribute to Our Lady are of "very dubious orthodoxy". For example, despite the Church's constant teaching that "Outside the Church There is No Salvation", Our Lady is supposed to have said things like: "To God all religions are the same". This completely ignores that fact that her Son established only one Church; the Catholic Church
- Disobedience by lay persons is widespread in the area. For example, pilgrimages are arranged without the bishop's permission - in fact, they are against his contrary orders. As Davies points out, "Pilgrimages to Medjugorje have, or course, been forbidden by the bishop, the lawful authority in the diocese, and the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, and so every organized pilgrimage there constitutes an act of disobedience to lawful authority."
- Rather than engender obedience, one group of religious involved in the phenomena has remained in a "state of disobedience". Religious in the area have even participated in invalid sacraments (confessions, weddings, confirmations)
- There is controversy over the circumstances surrounding the beginning of the alleged apparitions ["The alleged apparitions began on 24 June 1981 when (one 'seer') claimed to have seen Our Lady while out walking... They later claimed that they were looking for their sheep when, in reality, they had gone out to smoke, a fact which they hid from their parents" (Davies)]
- Our Lady - the Queen of Peace - has supposedly appeared to the 'seers' each day for decades, yet she did not warn against the war that was to come - "one of the most vicious wars of this [20th] century" in Bosnia. That is some omission!
- There has been misinformation concerning papal approval of the alleged apparitions. Some involved in the Medjugorje events attempt to persuade others that they have received approval from the pope. However, according to the Bishop of Mostar-Duvno - despite claims to the contrary - the 'apparitions' were not approved by the Holy See. Davies points out that the pope has refused to visit Medjugorje and that some "papal blessings" (essentially passed off as an imprimatur) were really nothing more than items purchased from souvenir stores in Rome. "[I]t is very significant that during his visit to Croatia in 1994 and to Sarajevo in 1997, Pope John Paul II did not even mention Medjugorje let alone pay it a visit, much to the dismay of its proponents" (Davies)
- Alleged healings have not occurred. "The majority of the pious public has naively fallen victim to the great propaganda, the talk of the apparitions and of healings. These people themselves have become the greatest propaganda for the events. They do not even stop to think that the truth has been hidden by deliberate falsehoods. They are unaware that not even one miraculous healing has occurred that could have been verified by competent experts and institutions such as the Bureau Medical de Lourdes. No one knows of anyone healed from Herzegovina. Everyone knows that little Daniel, old Jozo Vasilj, Venka Brajic and others cited in the first books about Medjugorje were not healed." (Monsignor Pavao Zanic, Bishop of Mostar-Duvno). Also, promises of miraculous healings may have cost some their lives, since those expecting a "miraculous cure" may have refused customary, potentially life-saving, medical treatment.
- The 'seers' may try to cover up facts when they are caught in lies. For example, during one alleged apparition, one of the 'seers' claimed she moved to prevent the Child Jesus (who she said was in the arms of Mary) from falling to the floor. As Davies says, "It is inconceivable that during an apparition of Our Lady with the Child Jesus, the Child could possibly slip." A more probable explanation was that the 'seer' was trying to cover up the fact that although she was supposed to be in a state of 'ecstasy' (and therefore insensible to all around her), she was startled by a cameraman who was testing her - and

who caught the incident on tape.

- Many well-meaning people are misled. As Davies states, "The Medjugorje fraud is making so much money for so many people, particularly in the United States, that the propaganda in its favor must almost inevitably swamp any attempt to make the truth known. Thousands or even tens of thousands more well-meaning Catholics will be deluded into accepting the veracity of Medjugorje by a Hollywood movie called Gospa produced to promote it."

- There is an apparent contradiction between the humble and quiet Mary in Scripture and talkative 'Gospa' of Medjugorje
- There is concern that traditional, orthodox Catholics will become "'hooked' on [this] apparition [and] all their efforts tend to be devoted to defending it and propagating it. They have thus been removed effectively from the battlefield of orthodoxy. There can be no doubt that spurious apparitions are one of Satan's most effective weapons in his war against the [Church]" (Davies). In other words, those 'hooked' on Medjugorje, tend to put the true apparitions of Fatima in the background. Davies says, "I know that it was the view of the late Hamish Fraser that Medjugorje was a means being utilized by Satan to subvert the message of Fatima." Davies also warns, "Satan will obviously seek to introduce error and separate the faithful from the Church under a veneer of piety."

- Some involved in Medjugorje have spread misleading information about those who reject the alleged apparitions. For example, one bishop who was unfavorable to the alleged apparitions was said to have been "removed by his post". However, Davies points out: "The Truth is that...[he] offered his resignation in 1993 after reaching the statutory age of retirement, and was replaced by [a Monsignor] who is just as opposed to the authenticity of the alleged apparitions as was his predecessor."

- Comparisons between known seers of our Blessed Mother (e.g. the obedient, non-worldly, financially poor, saintly seers such as St. Juan Diego of Guadalupe, St. Catherine Laboure, St. Bernadette Soubirous, etc.) and the 'seers' of Medjugorje (e.g. the "disobedient, worldly, financially rich, lying 'seers'") appear irreconcilable

But some might ask "Haven't clergy gone on pilgrimages to Medjugorje - even bishops?" Yes, it is true that some bishops and priests have gone there. This doesn't change any of the above facts or make the 'apparitions' true. Even honest, sincere people may be misled - and this is even more true when a deliberate campaign of misinformation exists.

Still others might ask "But don't some people go there and feel spiritual? Aren't there some good fruits of Medjugorje?" The fact that something might feel good or "spiritual" does not of itself make something truly good or spiritually beneficial. If someone promised that a satanic ritual would make a faithful Catholic feel good or "spiritual", would they attend? Of course not! And further, one's feelings do not always correspond to truth. And as far as good fruits, there may have been some good fruits, but there have also been many negative ones. Frequently mentioned as a "good fruit" of Medjugorje are conversions to the Faith - but are such conversions a "truly good fruit"? Is it truly good to have a convert's faith based on false apparitions? Will their newly found faith crumble when they find the basis of it was false? And this is not even to mention the bad fruits of the alleged apparitions (disobedience, lying, invalid sacraments, damaged health, death, etc.). In any event, God certainly can bring good out of the bad, but that does not make the bad good.

There is no doubt that many (or even most) devotees of Medjugorje are honest, sincere people. They may have been caught up in the campaign of lies and misinformation by the promoters or they may have been caught up in the seeming appearance of good - but none of this changes the fact that these so called apparitions of the "Gospa" just may be a delusion of the devil, a great offense against the Mother of God and "an abuse of [Mary's] name for a commercial purpose" (Davies). Faithful Catholics should consider making reparation for the offenses committed against the Immaculate Heart of Mary in the name of the so-called apparitions at Medjugorje.