

THE EDITOR

The majority of the pious public has naively fallen victim of the great propaganda. 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. Msgr. Pavao Žanić, former bishop of Mostar "The numerous absurd messages, lies, falsehoods and disobedience associated from the beginning with the events and apparitions" of Medjugorje, all refute every claim of authenticity. Msgr. Ratko Perić, present bishop of Mostar

EXCERPTS

In our day, Medjugorje is the perverse template, spawning countless imitations; notably the 1988 Scottsdale apparitions in Phoenix, Arizona, where nine children claimed to receive regular instruction from Jesus. One of the most prolific of these, Gianna Talone Sullivan, moved to Emmitsburg, Maryland at Our Lady's request, where she continued to receive weekly lessons from Our Lord. Unsurprisingly, as related in this extract from the testimonial of a recovering Medj addict (available at Emmitsburg.net), it transpired that Gianna had met Vicka:

"Coincidental" similarities between Medjugorje and Emmitsburg jumped out at me the more I read, revealing disturbing copycat mentality among these and other visionaries. Signs that were supposed to appear, but didn't. Secrets and doomsday pronouncements provoking a constant atmosphere of suspense, fear and drama. Creation of divisions among Catholics, the Church and clergy. Private revelations superseding Church doctrine and resulting in subversive activities, disobedience among laity and clergy, and broken marriages. As I continued to read, I grew increasingly disturbed by the predictably similar parallels between the apparition experiences of Vicka, one of the Medjugorje visionaries, and Gianna:

"Paolo Apolito lists the following individuals as being amongst those claiming to have started to receive their own revelations either following a visit to Medjugorje, or through some more general contact with it: ... Fr. Jack Spaulding [Gianna's former pastor in Scottsdale]; Gianna Talone [Sullivan]... And he also makes the very pertinent point, that whereas prior to the modern era, with its explosion of visionary claims, individuals claiming such experiences would almost certainly have been shunned by the average Catholic, now they could expect to be treated as celebrities" [Donal Foley, Understanding Medjugorje - Heavenly Visions or Religious Illusion, 2006, p. 218].

"... In June of 1988, Gianna was the rookie and Vicka was the veteran. ... On the eighth of June, Gianna visited Vicka [in Medjugorje], who was standing on the steps of her porch, surrounded by a host of admirers. But as Gianna approached, the people parted, like mere mortals making way for sainted souls, and she easily approached her counterpart.

"'The Blessed Mother sent me', Gianna said" [Dom Forker, Our Lady of Emmitsburg, 2000, p. 13].

In a decree dated 7 June 2003, after due investigation and consultation with Cardinal Ratzinger at the CDF, Cardinal Keeler of Baltimore informed Gianna's parish priest that her alleged apparitions are clearly and definitively not miraculous ("constat de non supernaturalitate") and, therefore, "there is to be no public activity in the churches, oratories and other properties of the Archdiocese of Baltimore relating to the alleged apparitions and locutions."

In keeping with her modus operandi following earlier denunciations of her apparitions by the archdiocese, however, Gianna feigned to accept the definitive 2003 judgement while continuing her activities with impunity:

In the summer of 2004 Gianna began to hold a monthly meeting at a farm outside of Taneytown, Maryland, and in 2005, moved her meetings to the Lynfield Complex just north of Frederick, Maryland.

Questions began to be raised about the appearance of disobedience to the Archdiocese. Specifically, people wondered how Gianna could advertise her experiences as supernatural at public events, when the cardinal had already judged those same experiences as non-supernatural. In response, Gianna's supporters were always quick to point out that she was in fact being thoroughly obedient: that the only thing she needed to worry about was not to stage her séances on Church property.

On 24 June 2011, meanwhile, Gianna's parish priest in Scottsdale, Fr Jack Spaulding, to whom she and her comrades had first revealed their direct line to "Jesus", was suspended and put on administrative leave. A dossier on EWTN host Fr Spaulding, who also began to receive messages and hear voices, was forwarded to Rome in December, detailing several accusations of sexual abuse against him going back to the 1970s (allegations he strongly denies).