

RINGLEADER OF THE MEDJUGORJE HOAX - RENE LAURENTIN

Dr. Gagliardi: "We could not ascertain the sincerity of the seers, but on the synchronicity of the ecstasies they were lying. They said they had the same vision at the same time. We deliberately staggered some clocks so that they displayed a five minute difference between them and observed two of the seers in different rooms. Well, Marija came into ecstasy five minutes before Ivan and finished five minutes before. Strange, isn't it?"

Despite the official statements from the Catholic hierarchy that has studied the alleged apparitions of Our Lady in Medjugorje in the former Yugoslavia that nothing supernatural is happening at the site, many mavericks have tried to provide evidence to the contrary. The ringleader is the dangerous manipulator Fr Rene Laurentin known as the world's foremost mariologist, that is theologian of Mary.

I recommend the book, Medjugorje After Fifteen Years by Michael Davies.

The vision has been popularised extremely well by the efforts of Fr Rene Laurentin. Even many Catholic sources have a bad opinion of him. He lied about Fr Zovko being appointed pastor of Medjugorje just a few days before the first vision and that Zovko did not know the visionaries (page 73, The Medjugorje Deception). Laurentin even went as far as to correct religious errors made by the apparition (page 78 *ibid*) for such errors would betray the human origin of the visions. In a talk dated June 30, 1981, Ivanka told Fr Zovko the following when a woman asked to touch the Virgin Mary.

Ivanka: The Gospa said that there would always be incredulous Judases who would come to her.

Zovko: Judas wasn't incredulous.

Ivanka: Incredulous. That means a traitor.

Zovko: A traitor is only an unbeliever if he hasn't received the gift of faith. Thomas was incredulous. How did you come to say Judas?...

Ivanka: She said it. I didn't... I heard it, we all heard it.

Michael Jones found out that when Laurentin produced his definitive edition of what Mary was saying in her messages he simply changed Judas to Thomas. He even went as far as to omit the dreadful message where Mary says a story that Jesus was going to destroy the world unless somebody gave Mary a bloody hanky was true. Laurentin was lying in omitting this for he was using Vicka's diary and that diary includes the hideous tale.

Here is the relevant entry in the diary, "Today, we waited for the Virgin at Marija's; with me were Marija, Ivanka, and Jakov. We began praying at 6:20 p.m. The Virgin appeared right away. We asked her about the Franciscan Friars and sister of our parish... We asked her about the man who saw Jesus in the street as he was driving people in his car. He met a man covered in blood—this man was Jesus—he gave him a blood-stained handkerchief telling him to throw it in the river. Going on his way, he met a lady—it was the Blessed Virgin Mary; she asked the driver for the bloodstained handkerchief. The man offered her a handkerchief belonging to him, but the Virgin asked for the bloodstained one: 'If he had not given it to me it would have been the last judgment for all!' The Virgin said this was true."

Accordingly The Medjugorje Deception also states that the removed a blasphemous story about God going to destroy the world if a bloody handkerchief was refused to Mary from one of his books, for he wanted to cover up that the Virgin told Vicka that the tale was true (page 94, *ibid*).

He got a Professor Joyeux to test the visionaries and they wrote a book about how inexplicable it all was. There is proof that there were many lies told in this research. The visionaries had a lot to lose if they failed the tests and that could have enabled them to avoid reacting to bright light and sound and to the prick test.

In Fr Raymond Brown's book, Biblical Exegesis and Church Doctrine, we read about Laurentin and his dishonest methods. Laurentin frightens secular humanists who believe that religion is harmful with his promotion of apparitions and miracles. He once spoke up for a miracle that allegedly caused food to be multiplied in recent years! Laurentin is a good example of how religious people think and waste good time and good money for people silly enough to buy or value their tripe.

Laurentin wrote a book on the infancy stories about Jesus in the gospels which tends to solve the problems in them by looking at them from a pious and blind faith point of view to the detriment of the methods of historical analysis (20).

Laurentin once argued that Luke saw Mary as the Ark of the Covenant (74). That was pure dishonesty.

He wrote a foreword to a book that was filled with slander and bitter self-righteousness that attacked modern biblical critics

(75).

He wrote at times in an emotional bigoted tone (76). He accused many Catholic scripture scholars of rationalism and positivism without any evidence (77).

He likes to distort the views that he does not like (79). He misrepresented Brown's views on the annunciation and the Magnificat (79).

Brown notes a number of pages to exposing how Laurentin twists and distorts to trick people into accepting his views.

Page 80. He lied about Fitzmyer saying the virginal conception was fictitious though he knew his book well.

Brown was falsely accused of saying Mary was a symbol and that the virginal conception did not appear until Matthew and Luke were written.

Page 81. He was accused falsely of saying that he did not know if Joseph was Jesus' dad or not and of saying that Mary received no revelation at the annunciation.

Page 156 makes a distinction between Laurentin's misunderstanding and even misrepresenting the work of those scholars who are too liberal in scripture for him.

Laurentin believes the infancy stories are true for the writers went to the trouble of writing what they wrote instead of simply saying that Jesus came down from Heaven ready made (157). That is a naïve argument and he is not that naïve.

Jesus was called the son of Joseph on five occasions and the son of Mary once for Joseph was dead but Laurentin says that Jesus had no father for nobody called him that in Nazareth (158).

That is pure speculation.

He translated the Bible as saying Mary was full of grace for that was St John Chrysostom's interpretation. But he never checks if John did this because he thought of Mary in a way the author never thought of and because it suited the Mariology of his time.

He argues that since Paul described Jesus as born of woman it refers to the Virgin Birth. But the Old Testament says we are born of woman. The Jews used the expression for everybody (158).

Astonishingly, he argues that since Luke does not mention Mary at the cross she was there!

He lies about Jesus telling his parents that they did not understand that he had to be in God's house as referring to his going back to his father after his death (159). Jesus was in the Temple at the time and it was God's house. Jesus meant the Temple. To extract complicated interpretations from what is straightforward is a disgracefully dishonest approach (159).

He argues for the Virgin Birth on the basis of John 1:13 which has nothing to do with it at all. All the verse in question says is that some people are not born by the will of man but of God which does not mean that these men have not been procreated by men.

Because Son of God is mentioned before son of David in Luke 1:32 Laurentin assumes that it implies pre-existence. But the order could be because the title Son of God is more important than son of David. He just cares about what he wants to prove and options and thinking over all angles does not count.

Laurentin gives no proof that Matthew deliberately left out kings from his genealogy of Jesus but says he did. He gives no proof that it can fit the one in Luke but he says it does fit it. It actually contradicts it.

Laurentin argued that the infancy in Luke is true for it is too coherent to have been invented! Hasn't he heard of novels?

Laurentin believed that the spirit that made Mary conceive in Matthew is female so there is no idea of a God having sex with a woman (160). Brown says this argument is unconvincing. I say the Holy Spirit could be God's power in Mary to conceive without sexual intercourse. To say that Mary conceived by the Holy Spiritess is to say that Mary conceived without sex by her female composition which was a gift from God. In other words, God was believed to have done with her the same as he does with any woman who comes in contact with sperm and gets pregnant.

Laurentin is not to be trusted. When he lies and twists things in his Bible why trust him in apparitions and miracles which

he believes are inferior to the Bible?

A notorious compendium of mysticism and apocalyptic fanaticism called *The Thunder of Justice* was published by Ted and Maureen Flynn whose integrity is disparaged even by conservative Catholics in the know. The book approves of messages from Heaven and visions that have never even been properly investigated. Typical of the book is the way the visions of Mount Mellary in Ireland are approved despite the fact that Ireland has grown more sinful and the Lady said in 1985 that great disasters that would punish sin would come if Ireland did not get holier in ten years (page 30). The visions of the Medjugorje fan Teresa Lopez who has got a good exposure for fraud, lies and religious deception by committed Catholics are cited as grounds for a Christian life. Yet on the back cover of the book Laurentin approves of this irresponsible book and calls Ted Flynn a realist and a prophet! He said the visions make discernment easy meaning discernment regarding the terrible future they forecast.

In Laurentin's book, *The Apparitions of the Blessed Virgin Mary Today*, 1990 edition, he quotes the locutionist, Fr Gobbi, giving a message from Mary in 1987 where she says that that year some of the great events she predicted at Fatima will happen (page 153). She said she told this to the young people of Medjugorje and said she appears there (page 153). Laurentin admitted that 1987 passed by and the prophecies of Fatima and Medjugorje did not get fulfilled but tries to argue that this was not a false prediction nonetheless for predictions tend to be awkwardly expressed making events far away seem to have been predicted as if they were around the corner! All this despite the lady saying, "Already it shall be this year that my Fatima predictions will be fulfilled". He is twisting the facts. He is not an honest person.

Laurentin accepts that the bishop of a diocese should be the one to decide if devotion to an alleged apparition should be allowed or not (page 41) and yet he argues that supernatural things happened at Garabandal Spain in the sixties (page 146, *The Apparitions of the Blessed Virgin Mary Today*) despite four official statements from successive bishops of that place clearly stating that everything allegedly supernatural had been checked out and explained as natural (*The Apparitions of the Blessed Virgin Mary Today*, page 145). This does not sound like great devotion to the authority of the apostles invested in the bishops. The fact that the Garabandal children were locked out of the Church to stop them having visions there and they went and had them at the Church door shows no respect for the authority of the clergy of the Catholic Church. The real Virgin would not have appeared under such conditions because she would respect the fear of the clergy that letting her appear in or near the Church on consecrated Church grounds might be a sacrilege in case she is not the real Mary.

The Medjugorje apparition manifested in the presence of Father Zovko in the parish Church on 2 July 1981. The next day, the same thing happened. Crowds were in the Church on both occasions. Father Tadija Pavlovic was among them and stated the visionaries declared that they would have no more visions. They changed their minds later and visions have been reported ever since! An apparition appearing in a Church is simply very problematic. Even if the Church accepts the apparition as from God, the Church admits the possibility that some occult or demonic force was at work. That is why even the real Virgin would not appear in a Church. It would be encouraging the people to accept something appearing there that maybe should not be there.

Laurentin believes in the visions of Fatima. Sr Lucia the only surviving visionary said that Mary told her Russia would be converted if Russia was consecrated by the pope and the bishops. Pius XI and John XXIII ignored her request. But Pius XII, Paul VI and John Paul II did the consecration eight times and she kept complaining that as Russia remained godless that they didn't do it right and haggled with new suggestions of what to do. She changed the precisions she wanted for she didn't spell out the same details to the popes when they asked her to tell them what Mary wanted (page 47, *The Apparitions of the Blessed Virgin Mary Today*). It was simple and Lucia couldn't get it right and yet Laurentin makes excuses for her. She was a fantasist and we know from other sources she regularly contradicts herself – the hallmark of a dishonest person. That Laurentin didn't have or want to have the discernment to see that is worrying.

Laurentin said that Mama Rosa the visionary of San Damiano was a very holy woman though he implies that she may have been guilty of fraud when he says Mary asked her to collect money to build her a city of roses that never came to be and that many people suspected her (page 147, *The Apparitions of the Blessed Virgin Mary Today*). She had enough money made to bequeath it to the pope who refused it. Yet Laurentin says that Mama got involved with traditionalist priests who persuaded her that communion in the hand was a sacrilege and surprise surprise she soon had the Virgin saying the same thing in 1969. If so, she was clearly making the messages up. This message made the Church oppose the visions as the sacrilege suggestion implied disobedience to the Church which began to accept communion in the hand again just like it was done in the early Church. Mama Rosa wasn't that angelic after all.

Laurentin's approved of the bishop of Lourdes having argued in the decree of recognition of the apparitions there as authentic, that the big crowds at Lourdes showed Mary really appeared there (page 28, *The Apparitions of the Blessed Virgin Mary Today*). That is frighteningly unscientific and anti-Christian for Jesus said that throngs of people would run after satanic and false miracles. Yet this very argument might have been what made the bishop decide to approve! What value then can we attach to his irrational decree? God didn't guide him so God himself didn't think much of the Lourdes visions!

Laurentin should have realised that when an artist tried to reproduce the colours of the Medjugorje Virgin's dress, which is grey, silver and bluish and the visionaries said he couldn't make anything like it (page 32, *The Apparitions of the Blessed Virgin Mary Today*) that that was a warning sign. Why? Because if you can see it we have the paints and the technology to reproduce whatever is seen. We can make paints shine and make glowing pictures. The visionaries were just copying St Bernadette who said much the same thing.

Yet Ivan said on the documentary *Apparitions of the Virgin Mary* stated that he sees Mary like an ordinary three-dimensional person and stated that he talks to her just like he talks to his interviewer (Galaxie Productions, Amaya Films, 2000).

He says that the ears and eyes of the visionaries of Medjugorje respond to sounds and lights when they are having their vision but they pay no attention to them (page 49, *The Apparitions of the Blessed Virgin Mary Today*) but just focus on the apparition. Sounds like good yogic concentration rather than a miracle to me! So he says also (same page) that the EEG shows that the children give no reaction during the EEG and their attention is focused only on the vision. Significantly, it bears no trace that an invisible person is speaking to the children. You would expect sounds that didn't exist in the room but which were made by the vision to show up in the EEG. They don't. The tests don't prove that they are communing with an invisible person at all. Quite the opposite.

He states that visions are false if they add to the gospel of Christ (page 18, *The Apparitions of the Blessed Virgin Mary Today*) even though Medjugorje has given 10 secrets and many other revelations that are not in the gospel. For the Virgin to stand up for priests like Vego is as much an addition to the gospel as would adding a line saying Judas was homosexual to the gospels would be. There is no difference in practice where it counts.

Laurentin says he approves of the Church having done away with the Canon Law forbidding the promotion of unauthenticated apparitions. But it is obvious that the Church cannot endanger its authority and let people publish without permission for apparitions can easily lead people into separation from the Church and heresy. But according to Laurentin such publication is fine!!

People who can be proven to be religious liars are responsible for the popularity of Vassula Ryden. She claims that entities from Heaven write through her hand and appear to her in visions. Laurentin promoted her though she was known to have had messages fixed and then presented to the gullible as real messages from Jesus and who was given the honour of a condemnation by the Vatican (page 196, *The Medjugorje Deception*). He covered up for how Vassula whose first marriage broke up and who had remarried against Bible teaching by saying her first marriage was found to be invalid. It was not investigated even so how could it be null? (*Medjugorje the Untold Story II*, page 25).

Medjugorje supporters such as Father Michael O Carroll and Archbishop Franic were as bad though her heresy and absurd messages not to mention her use of the mediumistic technique of automatic writing to get messages from Jesus whose handwriting was very odd were shameless.

Laurentin became aware that if too many of the claimed visionaries were related it might cause problems or suspicion about their honesty or objectivity. So according to Laurentin in 1984 they were not related at all. Writer Mary Craig claimed that too in 1988. (Craig 1988: 18; Laurentin and Rupčić 1984: 25. But they are liars and Laurentin knew they were in fact related. The Ivankovic visionaries are in fact first cousins! Dragicevics are as well. Marija Pavlovic and Jakov Colo are cousins too. Claverie (2003: 371-3.).

Laurentin outrageously claimed that the visionaries would not have kept up a lie for years. Why not? All they have to do is rarely meet as a group and just have visions separately? Since Christmas 1982 they agreed to allow for having visions not as a group but as individuals. Anybody could lie for decades if all it takes is looking at a wall and saying you spoke to somebody.

The book *Our Lady of the Nations* could be thinking of Laurentin when it says, "Medjugorje presents a problem for research, as no thorough academic and objective treatment has been published in English." It says the problem with Zimdars-Swartz' work on the subject is that she depended too much on devotional books. Naturally this would refer to Laurentin who appears in her bibliography.

Laurentin tampered with the transcripts of the tape recordings recounting the early appearances. Fr Ivo Sivric noticed that he left items out and took licence with the text to make the apparitions sound more convincing and plausible than they were. A lot of books on the subject of Medjugorje were shifted on the back of his lies.

Without Laurentin, the bogus apparitions would not have gained the influence and prestige they have done in the world. People would not have been fooled or have wasted money to be with an Our Lady who was not there.

He may have seen the light a bit later on. More than two decades after the visions he stated, "I have never expressed a positive judgment on the authenticity of the Medjugorje apparitions." Caution at last when it was too late!

OFFICIAL CHURCH DOCUMENTATION REFUTING THE APPARITIONS:

http://members.tripod.com/~chonak/documents/medj_index.html

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Videos

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