

UNDERSTANDING MEDJUGORJE, AN EXCELLENT REFUTATION OF THE VISIONS OF MARY AT MEDJUGORJE

Understanding Medjugorje, Heavenly Visions Or Religious Illusion? Donal Anthony Foley, Theotokos Books, Nottingham, 2006

Has the Virgin Mary, under the title of Our Lady, Queen of Peace been appearing in Medjugorje in the former Yugoslavia since 1981? Six young people have reported these visions and have been subjected to tests. The authenticity or otherwise of the apparitions is a matter of great debate in the Catholic Church.

This book goes back to the original records about the visions and what the apparition said. It finds many absurdities and much dishonesty among the promoters of Medjugorje.

Ivan Dragicevic has stated on tape that on 24th June 1981 when he saw the Virgin he noticed that her hands were "trembling" (page 45). A perfect being from Heaven would not have shaky hands.

Mirjana asked for a sign that it was Mary she was seeing. Visionary Vicka testified that the hour hand on Mirjana's watch inexplicably turned around. The bishop got the watch and had it examined and it was found that far from being a sign - it was simply broken.

Visionary Mirjana said on the tape, on June 30th 1981, that the Virgin said she would appear for only three more days! The children were heard repeating after the Virgin, "Three more days" (page 71). Three days later Vicka said that the Virgin had appeared for the last time (page 81). Yet the visions are still allegedly happening and haven't stopped since 1981.

One excuse for this is that the three days is symbolic. Jesus said he would be three days in the tomb and he was in less than that. He certainly meant "roughly three days". Our culture does not use symbolism about three days. The Virgin meant three real days.

Another excuse is that Mary only meant she would appear three days more on the hill of the apparitions. Laurentin made that excuse. But it does not hold water. She never even mentioned the hill and it was not mentioned in questions such as, "Madonna how many more days will you appear?"

Father Tadija Pavlovic was in Medjugorje to hear confessions and was a witness to the clear testimony of the witnesses that they had experienced the last apparition just as the Virgin predicted. He was scandalised when yet another vision was reported and refused to hear confessions in Medjugorje again.

Chapter 13 is the most important chapter in the book. It is entitled Medical and Scientific Investigations.

Page 146, says that the first commission of investigation held by the Church was so sure that the ecstasy of the visionaries wasn't genuine that they didn't bother with much of a medical examination of the visionaries. Vicka apparently reacted when a priest stuck a pin in her but it is disputed how much of a reaction she made. Bishop Zanic said in 1985 that he rejected the hallucinations hypothesis given by one of his doctors and concluded that the simulation or fraud was taking place. Father Laurentin responded that the tests he and Dr Henri Joyeux refuted this idea. But in fact in their book Scientific and Medical Studies on the Apparitions of Medjugorje such tests were not mentioned! Joyeux stated that the problems of understanding what the visionaries were saying and the problems in transporting equipment meant he couldn't rule out that the visionaries were lying. None of the tests could prove that the visionaries were not lying and were not going into self-induced trances.

Page 147 finds it disturbing that Jacov claimed he forgot to ask the Virgin could he touch her. And Marija and Ivanka said that the Virgin didn't agree to such a test. Why is it disturbing? Because cameras were poised to photograph the positions of their hands to see if they were really touching anything.

It seems that Laurentin made sure the visionaries would pass the tests. The tests which led to it being boasted in his book that the visionaries were looking at something that even cards put in front of their eyes to obstruct their vision couldn't stop them seeing were dubious. Small cards were used meaning their peripheral vision was unaffected (page 147). I would add this. Look at a point on a wall in front of you. Move the first finger of the left hand about two inches in front of the left eye. Be careful not to focus on the finger. You will not see that you seem to be able to see through your finger.

Page 147 says that Dr Marco Margnelli said in 1985 that the visionaries were in a state of consciousness that is similar to ones deliberately induced but deeper.

Page 148 Laurentin stated that no evidence of signalling was found when the visionaries dropped to their knees nearly at the one time to indicate the vision was present despite admitting that this always happened before they finished the first Our Father. So obviously the prayer could be used as a symbol then!

Page 149, lots of clips have been taken to show that the visionaries do not react as if the Virgin is appearing at the same time.

Page 150 says that the tests were not conducted with scientific rigour. I would add that lack of such rigor has led to psychics fooling scientists but when the standards were raised the psychics failed and were showing to be faking.

Page 150 shows that Laurentin had no right to say that the children's voices went quiet though their lips were moving for they couldn't even get a lip-reader to determine what the children were saying. The silencing would be a miracle if the children are to be believed. But it would be a pointless miracle. Nothing that private is ever said. And if a lip-reader can work out what they are saying, then due to the fact that the children were often filmed then the miracle is doubly pointless. A group of fakes would pretend their voices went quiet to hide the fact that they were talking to nobody at all. Yet we read on page 151 that the Virgin is able to have a different conversation with different visionaries at the same time! If anybody would believe that they are having visions they would believe anything. If Mary is appearing at Medjugorje, why does she lower the standard of visions so much that any group of frauds will be able to fake easily?

Page 151 remarks the expression on Ivan's face when he was filmed having a vision in Kent. He looked bored. This would be sure sign that he was faking. Nobody could be that disinterested when seeing the mother of God.

Page 153, tells us that Louis Belanger did experiments in Canada and found that under laboratory conditions people could do everything the Medjugorje visionaries did during their visions. There is nothing necessarily out of this world about anything that the visionaries perform or experience.

Page 154, the trances not being hypnotic doesn't mean they cannot be self-induced trances.

Conclusion: Believing in the visions of Medjugorje is really believing the visionaries not God or Mary. The glory and importance they have received could make them fake visions and even believe afterwards that they did experience visions. It is no different from a girl who makes herself believe that a boy who used her actually loved her.

UPDATE - LATEST EDITION OF THE BOOK

"A search of a concordance of Medjugorje messages from 1984 to 2009 reveals that words such as abortion, contraception, pornography and homosexuality are missing. The same is true of adultery, divorce, and fornication. Likewise drugs, murder, lying, lust, and impurity don't get a mention, nor stealing, theft, idolatry, wrath, despair or greed. One exception is "pride" but that refers to the sin of Satan, and not to a human sin."

Vicka said that the apparition confirmed that an outrageously stupid apparition tale was true. The tale claimed that a taxi-driver had to give Mary who was in his taxi, a hanky stained with Jesus' blood and she had said had he refused the world would have ended. Spin-doctor Father Laurentin claimed that the episode was insignificant. But its of huge importance. If a vision endorses rubbish then its not from God period.

15 Feb 1984 Mary says, "Dear children! From day to day I have been appealing to you for renewal and prayer in the parish. But you are not responding. Today I am appealing to you for the last time. This is the season of Lent, and you, as a parish in Lent, should be moved to love by my appeal. If you are not, I do not wish to give you any more messages. Thank you for your response to my call."

31 August 1982, "I do not dispose of all graces." This actually contradicts the apparition of Mary experienced by Catherine Laboure of the Miraculous Medal that shows Mary disposing of graces as if they were rays from her hands.

The Virgin sided with Father Ivika against the bishop who had the rightful authority to give him orders and expel him.

The book points out how the Church officially condemned certain apparitions before the series of apparitions finished. Heroldsbach in Germany, Bayside in New York and Palmar de Troya were condemned. Yet Medjugorje supporters claim that the Church will not decide for or against the apparitions of Medjugorje right now for the apparitions have not stopped. I would add that Lucia of Fatima was recognised as a true visionary even though she reported new visions after the Church

approved her 1917 visions. Melanie of La Salette was recognised as having seen Mary in the 1840's even though she reported later visions that were rejected by the Church. The Medjugorians intention is, "The Church may condemn the apparitions. If we say the condemnation is invalid because the apparitions are still going on, it won't be taken seriously." The same people will accept the Church accepting the apparitions as really from God - even if it refuses to wait until the apparitions finish! Hypocrites!

From journalist Brian Hall's account of his time in Medjugorje. From Vicka we learn that hell is a real fire! And it seems like she was in a lunatic asylum!

'Hell is a big fire. People are going into the fire, and coming out as beasts, as if they had never been human. The farther people go down into the fire, the more they curse God.

'She is sorry, but Vicka has no time to answer questions today.'

The crowd surged forward again. A forest of hands reached up, straining towards the beam of Vicka's smile. She came down the stairs to touch more heads, and stood next to pilgrims for photographs, and signed autographs. She did this every day, and she did it patiently, kindly. I had read that she was planning to enter a convent when the apparitions ended. I had also read that she had at various times spent months bedridden because of a mysterious 'spiritual' illness.

A paper printed in South Carolina that I had picked up in the church called Vicka 'the charmer of the group, although there is nothing "put-on" about her'.

Bishop Žanić's pamphlet said, 'Vicka Ivanković is the main "seer" from the beginning and through her the creator of Medjugorje, Reverend Tomislav Vlačić OFM, has launched the main portion of falsehoods regarding Medjugorje.'

It was Vicka who told Žanić that the Virgin had weighed in concerning a dispute between the bishop and two Franciscan chaplains who had refused to vacate a parish that had been handed over to diocesan clergy. The Virgin had said the Franciscans were right and the bishop was wrong.

The story that Bishop Zanic originally believed in the visions is a fiction,

Some people charged that Žanić had been supportive of the events at Medjugorje until the point when it had become clear that the Franciscans, and not the diocese, would have control over the show. Žanić denied this. But there was no question that the unseemly quarrel gained resonance from a long-standing power struggle between the Franciscans of Hercegovina and the diocesan clergy. (The Franciscans had been sent by the papacy into Bosnia-Hercegovina in 1260, in the hope that their more self-abnegating form of Catholicism would persuade the austere Bogomils to convert, where the sword had not. Whether or not they actually converted many Bogomils is unclear, but they became well entrenched among the Catholic population, and today ministered to over eighty per cent of the faithful in the diocese of Mostar.)



