

The Medjugorje Star

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Second Interview with Cardinal Schönborn

Max Domej from Gebetsktion Wien spoke to Cardinal Christoph Schönborn, Archbishop of Vienna, during his visit to Medjugorje in January 2010. The following is from © Informativni Centar "Mir" Medjugorje www.medjugorje.hr.

Interviewer: Your Eminence, Cardinal Christoph Schönborn, it is a pure delight to meet you here. Can you please tell us what has made you come here to Medjugorje?

I cannot exactly explain how this happened. I have known about Medjugorje for many years, not personally because I have not been here before, but in our diocese and even farther I experienced the fruits of Medjugorje. I always used to say what Jesus has said in the Gospel: "You will recognize the tree by its fruits." When I see the fruits of Medjugorje back at home, I can only say that the tree is surely good.

Message of Our Lady of Medjugorje

February 25, 2010

Dear children! In this time of grace, when nature also prepares to give the most beautiful colors of the year, I call you, little children, to open your hearts to God the Creator for Him to transform and mold you in His image, so that all the good which has fallen asleep in your hearts may awaken to a new life and a longing towards eternity. Thank you for having responded to my call.



I will just repeat what I once said in one interview: If there was something wrong about Medjugorje, we would have to dismiss half of our seminarians, since so many of our priestly vocations are both directly and indirectly related to Medjugorje. How did it happen that I decided to come to Medjugorje? I always used to hesitate, and being a cardinal I am a very exposed person in Catholic Church. Since there are many controversies, I did not want to start additional discussions, and my opinion on Medjugorje was already known. But this summer I visited Community Cenacolo in Saluzzo, Italy. I have known Sister Elvira for the last couple of years. I love her and respect her as an extraordinary witness of the risen Lord, and I am aware of the deep relationship that Community Cenacolo has with Medjugorje. In Saluzzo, I was able to experience a very strong feeling of inner security: my time to go to Medjugorje has come! I would say that was a kind of inner encouragement. I expressed the desire that my visit remains confidential, I simply wanted to spend time in silence and prayer. I did not want to hide my intention to come, but also I did not want that to be the main subject of discussions. I just wanted to come to the place where Our Lady gives so many abundant graces.

Besides that, Ivan Dragicevic was in Vienna last year and I spoke with him and Marija Pavlovic Lunetti this year. They were both in the Cathedral of St. Stephen, and I gave my permission for those events. Both of those two encounters have impressed me so much, primarily because of the modesty, simplicity, clarity and heart-

Reflection on the Message of Our Lady

by Fr. Charles Sellars, omi

Open Your Hearts to God

Jesus repeatedly sought the presence of His Father by retreating into the desert, sailing out on the Sea of Galilee, or venturing up the mountain. There He could more readily enter the inner room of union with the God whose name is love.

We can do likewise by setting aside Lenten retreat times at the lake or by the sea, in the park or on the trail, in the garden or at a monastery. God will not be sought in vain. St. Augustine reminds us that people wonder at the beauty of mountains, the vastness of the sea, the movement of the stars.

In this holy season of Lent, we unite ourselves with our Lord in suffering and in joy. We make prayer our armor against forces of darkness. And we seek Him in the beauty of creation, remembering that we are shining and beautiful in body and soul. "Beauty ever ancient, ever new."

St. Augustine



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warmness of those two visionaries. That only strengthened my decision to quietly and simply come to Medjugorje.

Interviewer: You are a Dominican priest, and Dominicans are famous in the history of spreading the prayer of the Rosary. What is your opinion about the Rosary?

As a Dominican, I am supposed to pray the rosary every day, and I am a little embarrassed to admit that I am not a good Dominican in that sense since I do not manage to pray the rosary every day. There is one thing that I can say: the rosary for me was always the prayer of the poor ones. When it comes to me personally, there are always periods of major anxieties, and in those circumstances the rosary is like a rescue cord. As much as we need cords when we climb the mountain, we also need the rosary. The priest through whom I was introduced to the order of Dominicans was a great teacher of scholastics, a true Thomist of the old style, a new scholastic that has always fascinated me as intellectual, as theologian, but at the same time as an eager promoter of the rosary. That is what has brought me closer to the order of Dominicans. That is what moved me as a fourteen-year-old boy. On one side, the intelligence of somebody who is interested in philosophy and theology; and on the other side, simple devotion. For me, that is the main characteristics of the Dominican order of St. Dominic: St. Thomas, his Summa, and the rosary.

Interviewer: In the parish office where the Franciscans received you yesterday, really cordially and joyfully, you said you wanted to get to know the pastoral work of our Blessed Mother. Can you explain that a little, please?

I was always fascinated how the Mother of God has a pretty peculiar pastoral method that differs in a way from pastoral-theological manuals or lectures. Ever since my youth I loved Lourdes, and I still do. This is how I imagine the events in Lourdes: the bishop of Tarbes town probably had his own plans and his own opinions, and then the Mother of God comes, without asking

the local parish priest or bishop. She appears at a completely impossible site, in a hole, on a rock, at the river where people were not even going, and to a girl that is illiterate, that cannot even explain what the Holy Trinity is, because she had not learned that at her religious education class. And Our Lady appears only to her, and just like that, gives her precise instructions about what to do, what to say to the priests, to come in processions, to build a chapel. And then she orders her to grab a piece of soil, and water gushes out...

The rosary is like a rescue cord.

The pastoral plan of the Mother of God was very precise. She knew it all exactly. That was not foreseen in the pastoral plan of the Church but has determined and changed the pastoral plan of France and the whole world. In the Vatican there is a grotto of Lourdes in front of which the Holy Father prays. Throughout the world there are grottos of Lourdes, and people are coming and praying, doing what Our Lady told them to do. And all of that through a little girl, Bernadette, the visionary, and the Church has recognized that.

I thought: I want to see what that looks like in Medjugorje today, how does Mary lead us step by step, how people experienced those beginnings here in 1981? What did the Mother of God have on her mind when she decided to appear on a really rugged hill to a group of wild children and to start giving them practical life guidelines, and for so many years? That is so fascinating to me!

We need to think about pastoral work as well because I can simply state that throughout the whole world Mary has proven to be the best pastoral theologian. In Latin America she organized whole missions through Guadalupe where she appeared to an Indian — an Indian! And she told him what he should say to his bishop. She did not say that to the bishop, but to an Indian. There are similar experiences in every country, and that is something theologians should think about.

Many faithful are discouraged because of the rejection attitude of the local bishop and use that as an excuse, so they are cut off from pastoral of that kind. As all of South America is marked with the apparitions in Guadalupe, I think that similar strength should be coming out of this place. Somehow, the humble faithful should be protected from any kind of mockery...

I think we should fear not in that sense at all. The Mother of God is the best diplomat even here. Already in Cana of Galilee she had organized everything in the best way, she knows how to handle difficulties, and she is beautifully doing it for centuries already. She tells us: "Do as He tells you to do!" It is obvious that she advises us to listen to the Church. Supreme authority in the Church is the Holy See, the Holy Father and his Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, and that is the highest authority in all of the issues of faith and morality. The supreme authority of the Church gave us clear guidelines, not directly from the Holy Father himself, but from the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, that had clearly confirmed what once the bishops from Yugoslavia said, and that doubtlessly is applicable in Medjugorje. I have always repeated that; those texts are very much known. There are three elements that are valid still today, and I can place my visit to Medjugorje within those guidelines. In that sense, my visit is not something that is unusual at all. The Holy See, in accordance with the Statement of Bishops from 1991, says the following:

First: *Non constat de supernaturalitate*. That is the expression that is rarely used, and means that supernaturality of the events has not been confirmed, and that is classical formulation of the church doctrine. It is not said that supernaturality was excluded, but has not, or still is not finally confirmed, and all because of one simple reason that I fully support. I am a member of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, and it is understandable that I support that, if we were to discuss it. Namely, as long as the phenomenon is still ongoing, it is normal that the final decision of the Church is not

Schönborn continued on page 3

going to take place yet, because something like that was never done in the past before. Both in Lourdes and Fatima the events first ceased and then the Church made its decision about that, its final decision. Sooner or later that will take place here as well, but in this case we let the Mother of God with freedom of choice.

Second, no official pilgrimages are to be organized, which means that I cannot organize pilgrimages from my diocese to Medjugorje. That is logically related to what was mentioned in the previous point. So, there is no official recognition yet, but in that formulation it is also said that supernaturality is not excluded. The Church has clearly said it is not excluded. It is not confirmed, but it is not excluded.

The third thing that Church doctrine clearly states is, also in accordance to the statement of Yugoslavian Bishops, that the faithful journeying to Medjugorje requires attention and pastoral care. That means that indeed pastoral care of the pilgrims needs to exist, and that is the matter that many are trying to serve, Gebesaktion

Wien amongst others, who take care of pilgrims, follow them and help them even after pilgrimages. I think that in that way, Medjugorje can continue well on its journey, with full trust that the Church, mother and teacher in this case, is going to continue to monitor its journey. I would advise patience. The Mother of God is so patient with us that for nearly 29 years here, in a very direct way, she is showing her [nearness] and care for the parish of Medjugorje and numerous pilgrims. We can peacefully wait and have patience! Twenty-nine years is a long period of time for us, but not such a long period to our God!

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It is really incredible that the visionaries will continue to have one apparition per year until the end of their lives. I believe that Our Lady is supreme and absolute. She is coming directly from the heart of our God. Her intentions and desires are

surely in accordance with the Holy Trinity. If she would like to express her [nearness] in this way, even for the lifetime, she must have good reasons for that. Already now we can say that in these 29 years Medjugorje did not lose its strength, it did not pause. We could even say, just as the Franciscans mentioned yesterday, even if there wouldn't be more apparitions, even if supernatural phenomena of this kind would stop, people would still be coming because here they feel the presence of Christ and the Mother of God in a strong way.

Just as in Lourdes where apparitions stopped 150 years ago, the presence of the Mother of God did not stop. How many people in Lourdes experience the nearness of the Mother of God that brings them such consolation! Recently I experienced the same again: when a man goes to a grotto during the night and prays at the place where Bernadette had apparitions, he can simply say: She is there! And that will continue to be the case! It is true consolation to see what is that that reflects and radiates from this place through her blessing hands and heart. ✦

Remembering Murdered Franciscans

On the day when we remember beatified Cardinal Alojzije Stepinac, February 10, we prayed in Medjugorje parish for all murdered Franciscans who were born in the parish of Medjugorje: Fr. Kri•an Gali, Fr. Jozo Bencun, Fr. Marko Dragicevic, Fr. Mariofil Sivri, Fr. Grgo Vasilj, and Fr. Jenko Vasilj, who were amongst those 66 priests from the Herzegovinian Franciscan Province brutally murdered by Partisans during World War II and at the very end of the same war. Fr. Karlo Lovri celebrated Holy Mass at 6 p.m. in the parish church of St. James, and there were also ten other priests that concelebrated with him.

The parish priest, Fr. Petar Vlaši, spoke before Holy Mass and said that there isn't

a single family in the parish of Medjugorje that did not have at least one person killed during that period. Fr. Karlo, in his homily, said amongst other things, the following: "We should be praying for them, but at the same time, we should be praying to them. They were not frightened, they did not deny our Church, and, on the contrary, they gave their lives for Jesus and for their country. We thank them for that!"

Let us remind ourselves how Fr. Kri•an Gali was killed by the bomb that Partisans threw through the window of the parish house on October 30, 1944, and he was buried at the cemetery Kovacica at the back of the parish church. On February 14, 1945, Partisans came to the Mostar monastery and took Fr. Jozo Bencun and Fr. Grgo Vasilj along with six of their priest

brothers, and they were killed and thrown in River Neretva in Mostar. Fr. Marko Dragicevi along with two other priests was taken from the church during the time of Holy Mass that he celebrated and killed at the unknown place in Izbicno village on February 11, 1945. Fr. Mariofil Sivri was arrested by Partisans on February 8, 1945 in Siroki Brijeg, and he was not killed immediately with his other eight brothers, but he was killed at the unknown place on February 12, 1945. Fr. Jenko Vasilj was killed in May 1945 as he was on "the way of the cross" with many other priests and Croats and Catholics at that time. He was killed in the northeast region of Croatia, close to the border with Austria. The number of over 700 parishioners should be added to the sacrifice of these priests, who were killed during World War I and II and the recent homeland war, all from the parish of Medjugorje. ✦

*Interview with Cardinal Schönborn
in the Vercernji List Newspaper 01/04/2010
continued from last issue*

Interviewer: “The Church has divided the matter of Medjugorje from the pastoral work. But still a large number of pilgrims come over here. What position should we take about this matter?”

Cardinal: “The concrete ways of pilgrimages have been over here, and that is a practical challenge for the church. That’s why the bishops from ex- Yugoslavia said in 1991 that the official pilgrimages shouldn’t exist. I do not want and I cannot organize official pilgrimages to Medjugorje in my diocese as we did to Rome or the Holy Land. But the Bishops’ Conference or Rome have never forbidden pilgrims to come to Medjugorje, which is the main part of the third statement. For us bishops, for me this is very important. The believers must get the pastoral care. As the archbishop, I see my homework in that. If I, as a bishop, see that in my diocese hundreds, thousands of believers convert, pray, and are healed, then I as a bishop must take care that all of them get that pastoral care. That’s why I supported all these things, as for example, the community of the “Oasis of Peace,” which was started because of Medjugorje. I think that all of this has influence on us bishops, especially those dioceses which pilgrims do come to Medjugorje and they need to get good pastoral care. So in all of those conversations I had with other bishops about Medjugorje, I encouraged them to support their pilgrims.”

Interviewer: “You had a meeting with a visionary, you climbed Apparition Hill. What were you talking about?”

Cardinal: “I would say, ironically, that Our Lady did not choose the simple hills. I am fascinated with the coherence of Medjugorje with other Marian shrines, apparition sites. I always say that there is a grammar of Mary’s apparitions. That style has something special with Our Lady.”

Interviewer: “In what way is this connected?”

Cardinal: “There are three elements which are connected with this phenomenon. Almost always Our Lady appears to children. Those were not especially intelligent children or holy children, but normal. Bernadette did not know how to write. She was 14 almost, as the children over here. Secondly, Mary gives the messages through the children. It is insulting for one bishop. Why does Our Lady not come to the bishop’s house? Why does she come to the hill filled with stones or by the river? This is not practical. In Fatima she appeared in the bushes. She gives the messages through children because children are not complicated. The third element: it looks like Our Lady has her own program. In Fatima she had appeared before the Russian Revolution and she gave a message. When rationalism was on its highest level, she appeared in Lourdes. She appeared in Yugoslavia in the moment when we did not have an idea that Yugoslavia would fall apart in the time when the Catholics, Muslims and Orthodox were living together. She appears with the name Queen of Peace. Ten years after that, the first of four wars on the Balkan Peninsula breaks out. And her first message was peace through conversion, prayer; and this first message has its weight, strength, credibility. Maybe we could go further to Guadalupe, Mexico. When Europe started the invasion of America, Our Lady appeared to one Indian who had to go to his bishop to tell him what to do. I think that theologians have to study the syntax of Mary’s apparitions and in that context to study the phenomena of Medjugorje.”

Interviewer: “It is prayed for peace in Medjugorje all the time, but the political peace is not correct, the state has problems, and the Croat Catholics are in the

worst position. What would you suggest to the International Community which is run now in this country by your co-citizen Valentin Inzko?”

Cardinal: “The problem over here is that too many countries are involved in such a small country which that way cannot overcome these problems. Long-lasting peace can be formed only if everything is just for everybody. This is a challenge for European policy. I am happy that Valentin Inzko is now in charge of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and I expect that he gets a bigger support from the European community. [Note: Mr. Inzko, the high representative for Bosnia-Herzegovina, is a Roman Catholic born in Austria of a Slovenian family.]

I am sure that what is going on in Medjugorje supports that peace. And people from all over the world do come to this small village in Herzegovina which had never been known in the world, if I want to speak ironically. Look how many Koreans come to Medjugorje! This is a hope that these people will be apostles of peace in their countries, peace which comes from Medjugorje. If it is prayed for peace in the world in one place, then that is a special blessing for one country. And Our Lady respects all three religions. Orthodox believers honor Our Lady. Islam doesn’t respect any other person that much but Mary. For Croat Catholics who are a minority in this country, the apparitions among them are a great comfort.” ✦

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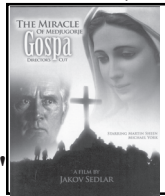
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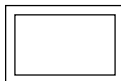
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By Mimi Kelly, Director of The MIR Group



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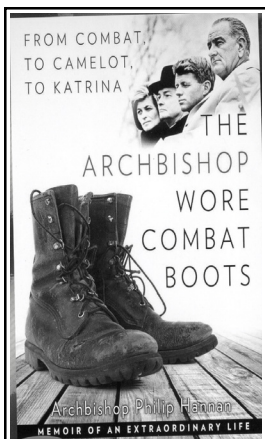
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The Archbishop Wore Combat Boots

From Combat to Camelot to Katrina

By Archbishop Philip Hannan

Release date is now May 15.

Archbishop Philip Hannan will be

97 years old on

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Our purpose is to spread information about the apparitions of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Medjugorje, Bosnia-Herzegovina. Any article in this newsletter can be copied in whole with credit given to The Medjugorje Star. There is no subscription fee. This newsletter survives solely on your donations and purchases of books and religious items. Your prayers are requested for this ministry of spreading Our Lady's messages worldwide.

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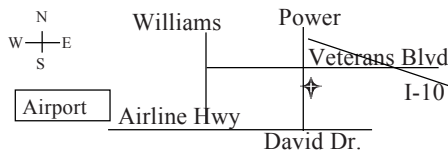
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Store Hours
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The Holy Father's Intention for April

That every tendency to fundamentalism and extremism may be countered by constant respect, by tolerance and by dialogue among all believers.

Intention for May

That the shameful and monstrous commerce of human beings, which sadly involves millions of women and children, may be ended.