

**MURGIA, DAVID. MEDJUGORJE REPORT:  
THE SECRET DOCUMENT OF THE PONTIFICAL COMMISSION  
(The Sign of Jonah in Vol. 1)  
Final Relatio**

*INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION OF INQUIRY ON MEDJUGORJE*

**Introductory Considerations**

**1. Constitution and working method of the Commission**

On 26 March, 2010, at 10 a.m., the work of the International Commission of Inquiry on Medjugorje began on the premises of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF). The Commission, according to the dispositions of the Cardinal Prefect of the CDF, His Eminence, William Levada, contained in the letter of 18 December, 2009 Prot. 154/81-30933, within which Cardinal Ruini is appointed President of the Commission itself, “will have to collect and examine all the material relative to the Medjugorje phenomenon and then present a detailed Report with the relative *votum* on the supernaturality or otherwise of the phenomenon, suggesting also the most opportune pastoral solutions to apply in this regard. The outcome of this work will be submitted to the Consulta and to the Ordinary Session of this Dicastery.”

Now, after nearly four years of intense work, the Commission consigned this Report to the competent Authorities of the CDF.

The International Commission is composed of 13 Members:

- President of the Commission: **H.E. Cardinal Camillo Ruini**, former Vicar General of His Holiness for the Diocese of Rome.
- **[redacted]** [Josef Cardinal Tomko]
- **[redacted]** [Vinko Cardinal Puljić]
- **[redacted]** [Josip Cardinal Bozanić]
- **[redacted]** [Julián Cardinal Herranz]
- **[redacted]** [Archbishop Angelo Amato]
- **[redacted]** [Msgr. Tony Anatrella]
- **[redacted]** [Msgr. Pierangelo Sequeri]
- **[redacted]** [Fr. A. Maria David Jaeger, OFM]
- **[redacted]** [Fr. Zdzislaw Josef Kijas, OFMConv.]
- **[redacted]** [Fr. Salvatore Perrella, OSM]
- **[redacted]** [Rev. Achim Schutz, secretary]
- **[redacted]** [Msgr. Krzysztof Nykiel, associate secretary]

To these are added 4 Experts:

- **[redacted]** [Reverend Franjo Topić]
- **[redacted]** [Father Mijo Nikić]
- **[redacted]** [Father Mihály Szentmártioni, S.I.]
- **[redacted]** [Sister Veronica Nela Gašpar]

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Msgr. Nykiel, having been nominated recently to the Apostolic Penitentiary, is replaced as assistant secretary by Msgr. Peter Smutelović, official of the CDF, who participates in the works of the Commission since the meeting on 5 October, 2012.

At meetings of the Commission regularly participates His Excellency Luis Francesco Ladaria, Secretary of the CDF.

As is clear from the list of the 17 members, the International Commission is composed of high authorities of the Church, representatives of the lands in which the Medjugorje phenomenon is born, specialists of various disciplines relevant to the question of the supernaturality, and some members of the preceding commissions of investigation on Medjugorje.

They have held 17 plenary meetings, each for one day of collegial work. All these meetings are documented—in all their moments—by the texts of verbalization that bring in their attachments also the results obtained by research and analysis of individual Members and Experts.

To gather documentation in a more opportune and comprehensive manner, the International Commission has studied the material that already exists on the Medjugorje phenomenon: that of the work of the previous commissions; the part that has been considered *ad rem* of the material existing at the CDF and also what is kept in the Archives of the Parish of Medjugorje, of the Secret Service in Sarajevo and of the Police in Mostar. Then, at some plenary meetings, the protagonists of the Medjugorje phenomenon (the present local Bishop, the Father Provincial of the Franciscans, the 6 alleged visionaries, the parish priest present in Medjugorje since the beginning of the history of the phenomenon and two members of the first commission of inquiry on Medjugorje) were heard and questioned. Finally, from 22 to 26 April, 2012, a group of 7 representatives of the Commission made an accurate inspection in Medjugorje to know not only the current situation *in the place* but also direct possible traces of the history of the alleged Mariophanic phenomenon, collecting much information that was not known previously to the Commission itself.

## 2. Criteria Followed

The fundamental criteria followed by the International Commission are the *Norms of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith on the way of proceeding in judging alleged apparitions and revelations* from 25 February, 1978 (*Normae CDF*).

In addition to these overriding doctrinal criteria, it has had to take into account two historical factors. On the one hand, the so-called “Herzegovina Question” is considered, that is the delicate question concerning the Franciscan Fathers of those lands and their relationship with the ecclesiastical hierarchy, a problem that—historically—precedes the events of Medjugorje. On the other hand, the recently acquired documentation has been carefully considered concerning the manipulations of the authorities and of the communist secret services to misrepresent and to confuse the facts and persons involved in the events of Medjugorje, in order to curb a religious and social-political phenomenon contrary to their interests.

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It was also held in mind that, beginning in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, on occasion of the great French apparitions/Mariophanies of La Salette (1846) and Lourdes (1858), the episcopal pronouncements that have deemed them credible, have emphasized four supporting elements:

- *The physiognomy of the event*, that is its precise identification, capable of making it an *object-event* recognizable in its singularity (as an event that starts a *novum*);
- *The inexplicability of the event in its physiognomy* in reference to possible purely natural causes (also taking into account the personality of the witnesses/visionaries and the religious context);
- *The inherent credibility of the event*, that is its verifiable *consonance* with the *works and the gifts of God* (attested in *Revelation and in the tradition of the faith of the Church*);
- *The consequences of the fact in the life of the local* (and eventually universal) Church (both on the level of the *cult* and of the *devotion*, and of the *witness and evangelic proclamation*).

The same itinerary has been followed by the apparitions/Mariophanies of the 20<sup>th</sup> century: Fátima (1917) in the first place and, ultimately, Kibeho (1981-1989) in Africa.

The works of the International Commission are methodically inspired by all this rich theological and canonical tradition.

## PART 1

### THE QUESTION OF THE SUPERNATURALITY OF THE PHENOMENON

#### **1. BEGINNING AND ARTICULATION OF THE PHENOMENON**

##### **1.1 The initial profile of the phenomenon**

The attention of the International Commission focused primarily on the *study* of the *origins* of the alleged Mariophanic phenomenon of Medjugorje and in particular of those aspects that present themselves as peculiar traits of its beginnings: the elements that the witnesses-narrators claim to constitute the *beginning* of their experience and the *conditions* thanks to which the phenomenon is developed.

The *beginning* of the Medjugorje phenomenon presents a certain complexity of identification and delimitation. The declarations of witnesses tend to accredit a framework of facts *without solution of continuity* between the beginning and end of the phenomenon. On the other hand, the same protagonists of the event of Medjugorje recognize that what is happening today is different from what happened yesterday. They recognize, in fact, the extension of time and the change of the spatial location of the events that they recount. Nonetheless, they do not perceive these differences as the signal of a passage from one phase to another, like *the end of a beginning and the beginning of another reality*.

Given this situation, the International Commission was committed in a tentative interpretation of the *beginning* of the phenomenon of Medjugorje, on the basis of the following data of the event:

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- (a) Beginning from 24 June, 1981, some boys and girls have been placed in comparison with the extraordinary events. They claim to have seen the Madonna (*Gospa* in Croatian) who would appear on Mt. Podbrdo in the vicinity of Medjugorje. None of them has revealed—at least from what we can reconstruct—signs of a humanly profile outside the town. They all seem to have been healthy and normal.

Apparently, what has happened occurred in the most spontaneous and natural manner. The parish priest, Fr. Zovko, was outside the place (in Zagreb from 22 to 28 June, 1981) and did not even have the possibility of calling into Medjugorje. There was not any contact with another priest or religious in the area. As a result, one can exclude an influence of the Franciscans on the origin of the phenomenon.

The signed witness exists from Dr. **Darinka Šumanović-Glamuzina**, collected during the site visit to Medjugorje from the International Commission, which recounts the happening in an extrinsic and neutral perspective. She was present *at the place* during the very first days of the history of the phenomenon and remained convinced—although she was very skeptical in the beginning—of the authenticity of the alleged apparitions.

The parish priest, having returned, questioned the alleged visionaries and, correctly, informed the Bishop, Mons. Žanić. [Zanic] himself came; he questioned the alleged visionaries, and in a homily, spoke publicly in a favorable way to the authenticity of the apparitions.

Then, even the Communist authority intervened. During the interrogations that followed, the alleged visionaries were exposed to grave threats. They resisted, however, and do not deny at all what they have experienced. There are the testimonies that there was pressure on the Bishop, who, probably for this and certainly for the subsequent affirmations of some alleged visionaries on the pronouncements of the *Gospa* regarding the Herzegovina Question, changed his opinion on the authenticity of the phenomenon.

- (b) The presence in the testimonies of constant elements, unaltered, essentials and modest assumes a value that is much more significant as more is considered to have been made to the present International Commission thirty years distance from the beginning of the events. They are no longer the adolescents from that time who recounted, but they are adult women and men, however tempered and modeled both on a spiritual and human level level—for better or for worse—by what has happened to them in this long period of time. As adults rereading what is deposited in their consciousness, in their memory and in their affectivity (conscious and unconscious). When this reading is in a certain sense *free* from that which has happened in the following, it is able to communicate the freshness and the originality of that which has been experienced, giving the possibility for those who listen to be able, in a certain sense, to be *contemporaneous* to the experience recounted by the visionaries. This also shows the *particular force, characteristic and original* of this experience, *which resists otherwise ordinary and normal alterations in the course of the evolution of the person.*

The principal objections on the veracity and reliability of the alleged visionaries regard the presence—in forms, diverse ways and degrees—of *traces of deformation-manipulation of the content of their statements.* The International Commission has ascertained the *normality or psychological sanity* of the witness-narrators, as we shall see more fully later.

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There are, naturally, other possible forms of *influence* or of *alteration* about which the witnesses do not necessarily have *awareness*: In fact, they do not come as much from precise designs or intentions of other interested actors to bend the events in the direction of their desired end, as they are, rather, inscribed *in the circles of life* (buildings, places, images, symbols, persons) and in the history that they mediate and transmit with their own presence. These forms, in themselves, do not have anything of disease: they offer quite a few of the possible coordinates of meaning, of true and proper *paradigms*, which help to give intelligible and communicable form to the lived experiences. From this type of form, per se, the beneficiaries of the authentic private revelation *are not exempt*: they are part of those *limits* that the blessed John Paul II affirmed always accompany “the human reception of the voice of God”; *limits that are even more evident in the case of private revelation*, where the *divine intervention* that sustains it is different *by essence and by degree* from that which has presided over public Revelation.

## 1.2 The reasons for identifying two phases

The International Commission has considered it necessary to examine the influence that *living environments* may have had on the protagonists and has tried to identify, in their experience, the situation *potentially freer from unconscious influences*, starting from the statements made by the alleged visionaries. Based on this interpretation of the *beginning* of the Medjugorje phenomenon, aimed at allowing *the recognition of the physiognomy of the event* and therefore the *object* of the theological evaluation requested from the Commission, *the events that the witnesses declare to have occurred on Mt. Podbrdo* have been identified as those that respond better *to a situation free from improper elements of influence*. These are the *first five alleged apparitions/Mariophanies*. The following elements are essential to their dynamics of event, experience and communication of she who appears/manifests herself:

- it is the Mother of Christ who awaits the visionaries;
- the “phenomenon” (the *Gospa*, the Figure) stands before the visionaries, always in the same place;
- in the visionaries there is an exact memory of the place and time of the first apparition;
- the message is not addressed to individuals, but to all present (visionaries/perceivers);
- the phenomenon occurs “suddenly” and by surprise;
- the phenomenon causes fear and disturbance in the souls of the visionaries.

Always taking into account the given testimonies, the International Commission has decided to consider, together with the events said to have happened on Mt. Podbrdo, also two other alleged apparitions:

- that of Cerno, a few kilometers from Medjugorje, where the then adolescents had been brought by car by officials of police;
- the one that took place in the parish house of Medjugorje, where the witnesses were in some way “sought refuge” after their previous “taking over,” certainly not benevolent, by state officials.

The International Commission justified this choice, bearing in mind:

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- *the martyrdom dimension* connected with the events of Cerno, not attributable to the choices of the then adolescents and nevertheless accepted by them (the reactions of parents and friends, police interrogations);
- the understandable *desire of the alleged witnesses to avoid unnecessary risks for themselves and their families*—a desire that in itself does not conflict with the demands of authentic martyrdom, where witnesses *do not try to provoke their opponents and their reaction*—connected with the moving from Mt. *Podbrdo* to the parish house of Medjugorje.

Precisely the movement of the alleged apparitions/Mariophanies to the parish house of Medjugorje, however, *also marked the transition to a new phase of the phenomenon, to an objectively less spontaneous and free situation than the previous one*, loading the events (and the alleged visionaries themselves) of a series of expectations and needs absolutely *not present* in the first *seven apparitions*.

Furthermore, the given testimonies show how, starting from this *local and symbolic* shift, the same reported phenomenon has assumed a different physiognomy/communication form compared to the first seven apparitions:

- *the Gospa is “privatized”*: that is, *she addresses the visionaries separately*; Vicka Ivanković, Marija Pavlović, Mirjana Dragičević, Ivan Dragičević and Jakov Čolo say that Our Lady continues to appear to them even today, with different regularity but on set dates, for someone every day. The apparitions are no longer linked to the place, as they were in the past, but to the person of the alleged visionary. In fact, the visionaries themselves no longer form a group and each independently enjoy the alleged apparitions.
- *there is no longer fear or surprise, in relation to an event that is partly exciting and partly enigmatic*;
- *the Gospa is awaited and her arrival is indeed “scheduled”* at a determined time.

The change of the “original place” of the alleged apparitions, connected to the change in the “communicative form” attested by the witnesses of the alleged apparition-Mariophanic events (the passage from a “collegiate-community” communication to a “subjective-individual” communication), allows to identify a reasonable break between a *beginning* and a *continuation* characterized by its own and distinct elements, likely to be evaluated in their own physiognomy. And therefore, as such, differently appreciable.

Having identified *the formal object and specific material capable of offering and outlining the physiognomy of a religious event of specific interest, from the point of view of its possible supernatural origin, this can then be recognized, in a sufficient and reasonable way, in the first seven alleged apparitions, which are attested to have taken place from June 24 to July 3, 1981 to Ivanka Ivanković, Mirjana Dragičević, Vicka Ivanković, Ivan Ivanković, Milka Pavlović and Ivan Dragičević (it is to be said that the visionaries Marija Pavlović and Jakov Čolo, now part of the six visionaries, were added on June 25, 1981, while Milka Pavlović and Ivan Ivanković “left” the group of the visionaries).*”

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The International Commission therefore considered that it could proceed, on the basis of the criteria indicated by the *CDF Norms*, to examine the question of the supernatural or otherwise of the original phenomenon thus defined and the consequent pronouncement by vote.

## **1.3 Reasons to affirm the supernatural origin of the beginning of the phenomenon**

The *CDF Norms* of 1978—made public in 2012 with an Introduction by the Cardinal Prefect that can be considered a sort of “update” of the same—have the objective of being ascertained after a rigorous process, within the limits of reasonableness and moral certainty, the *supernaturality* or otherwise of the events under examination, that is to say that what the episcopal pronouncements of the 19th-20th century describe *as the impossibility of explaining the event in its physiognomy* starting from the so-called “natural causes,” whether they are *physical* (natural-experimental sciences) or *anthropological* (human sciences).

The data and considerations proposed in dealing with the initial profile of the phenomenon (point 1.1) constitute, as has already been mentioned, reasons for affirming the supernatural origin of its beginnings. The following reasons must be added to them.

In the case of the object in question, the testimonies relating to the first seven alleged apparitions *agree in a consistent manner, unaltered, essential, simple and modest* on two elements:

- the *Gospa*, that is “Our Lady,” allegedly started appearing to them as “Queen of Peace”;
- the *Gospa* allegedly made *requests* to them and, also through her *messages*, to believers.

On the content of these *requests*, the testimonies still *agree in a constant manner and unaltered* on these four objects or contents:

- the fervent return to faith;
- true conversion;
- assiduous prayer and fasting;
- the continuous invocation of peace.

The International Commission then examined whether those two elements of concord and constant attestation, permanently connected with the four contents indicated, could be explained starting from the *anthropological and ecclesiological premises* present and acting from 24 June to 3 July 1981, namely:

- the personality and history—conscious and unconscious—of the witnesses/perceivers, as they were at the time of the alleged first seven apparitions of the *Gospa*;
- the patrimony of “normality” at the basis of the cultural, social, religious and ecclesial expressions of the vital environment in which the witnesses were born and thanks to which they built their personal and relational identity until the time of the alleged first seven apparitions of the *Gospa*;
- the knowledge then available to the alleged visionaries, both on the cultural level and on the level of Christian truths;

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- the degree of participation in the ecclesial life of the alleged visionaries, up to the moment of the beginning of the events;
- the information on the events then taking place outside of Yugoslavia, both in Europe and in the world, which could have been available to the alleged visionaries.

The examination conducted by the International Commission led to the following conclusions:

- as regards the personality of the alleged visionaries, as they were at the time of the alleged first seven apparitions of the *Gospa*, it can be affirmed, as has already been observed, that it appears substantially normal, without specific pathological alterations; they had a normal intelligence and were non-manipulatable and not directed by others, able to recognize the *deception* and to take a position in confronting it;
- regarding the history of the alleged visionaries, nothing in it had in any sense *prepared* them for the alleged first seven apparitions of the *Gospa*; [the apparitions] remain something that breaks into their lives and experiences without having been requested, sought, desired, imagined, willed or induced;
- regarding the patrimony of “normality” underlying the structuring of the vital environment of the alleged visionaries, it presented, in the religious field and at the time of the first seven alleged apparitions, the features of the traditional *pietas christiana*, with a significant Marian imprint also owing to the Franciscan charism, but not such as to *await, hypothesize, desire—let alone invent with malice—a supernatural manifestation of the Holy Mother of the Lord*;
- as regards the knowledge then available to the alleged visionaries, both on the cultural level and on the level of Christian truths, they present themselves, at the time of the first seven alleged apparitions, without particular connoting content, inclinations or interests to connote them;
- with regard to the degree of participation of the alleged visionaries in ecclesial life at the time, no particular *protagonism or commitment* is detectable at the time of the first seven apparitions;
- regarding the information on the events then taking place outside of Yugoslavia, both in Europe and in the world, which could have been available to the alleged visionaries, they are not abundant, taking into account the typical structures of a totalitarian state such as that of Marxist inspiration founded after the Second World War by Marshal Tito († 1980).

All these considerations lead to the following conclusions:

- (a) The results achieved show reasonably enough that the object under consideration, that is to say the first seven alleged apparitions, manifest an essential and structural character of *non-deducibility and excess* compared to the history, identity and possibilities of both the alleged visionaries and of their living environment. In parallel, the unpredictable and special religious bond that the event introduces in the experience of its first recipients appears compatible with the *supernatural character* of the sign. In fact,

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- *the way of relating* to the subject of the first seven alleged apparitions, the *Gospa*, is such as to arouse a subjectuality, a responsibility and a protagonism to which the alleged visionaries were neither prepared nor accustomed;
- the *subject* of the first seven alleged apparitions, the *Gospa*, presents herself with fresh characters and familiarity with respect to what the alleged visionaries could know about her;
- the *object of the requests/messages*, that is to say peace in its essentially theological dimension, acquires an urgency, a dimension and a meaning that expands well beyond the horizons already possessed, lived and desired by the alleged visionaries and their vital environment.

(b) The hypothesis of a demonic origin from the beginnings of the phenomenon appears gratuitous and unfounded, being in contrast with what was observed on the initial profile of the phenomenon (see point 1.1), as well as with the positive fruits derived from the phenomenon itself (see point 2 “Subsequent history of the phenomenon”).

(c) In the case of the first seven alleged apparitions, the International Commission found that the testimonies *agree*, also here, in a manner constant, *unaltered, essential, simple and modest* on the following elements:

- the *subject*, the *Gospa*, manifests and maintains an indissoluble bond with the Christ of God and her person and gestures are not understandable outside of this bond;
- the *requests/messages* of the subject, the *Gospa*, have a theological structural dimension, both in their cognitive-intellectual dimension, and in their practical-operative dimension;
- the manifestation of the *Gospa* revives in the alleged visionaries the sense of their belonging to the Church.

(d) On the basis of these data, the International Commission considers that it can affirm with reasonable certainty that the first seven apparitions prove to be intrinsically credible, as they were capable of fostering in those who saw them an awakening of faith, a conversion in their way of life, and a renewed sense of belonging to the Church.

It should be added that the International Commission has taken note of a remarkable number of stories and documents that would attest to the presence in the phenomenon of Medjugorje of signs consisting of physical healings, although, up to now, none of them has received the competent *canonical recognition*.

#### **1.4 Outcome of the vote on the supernaturality of the beginning of the phenomenon**

On this basis, the International Commission proceeded to vote—by secret ballot—on the question of *constat de supernaturalitate* of the beginning of the phenomenon, which gave the following result: out of 15 present and voting (11 Members and 4 Experts),

- **10 Members and 3 Experts:** *constat de supernaturalitate*;

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- 1 expert: *nondum decernendum* [which is not yet decided];
- 1 Member: *constat de non supernaturalitate*.

Therefore, the majority of the International Commission considers the beginnings of the Medjugorje phenomenon not reducible to human dynamics only but having a supernatural origin.

## **2. SUBSEQUENT HISTORY OF THE PHENOMENON**

### **2.1 Aspects not related to the behavior of the alleged visionaries**

In the *CDF Norms*, among the positive criteria for judging the supernatural character of alleged apparitions and revelations, there are healthy devotion and copious and constant spiritual fruits are counted (for example, the spirit of prayer, conversions, testimonies of charity, etc.) deriving from them.

In order to assess the supernaturality or otherwise of the subsequent history of the phenomenon, it is therefore appropriate to distinguish between those aspects or developments that are substantially independent of the behaviors assumed by the alleged visionaries and those which are mainly attributable to such behaviors. As will be clear, in fact, from the immediately following pages, the aspects or developments of one and the other category diverge clearly, in the sense that the former are rich in the fruits indicated by the *CDF Norms*, while the latter present various problematic aspects.

In concrete terms, the subsequent history to the first seven alleged apparitions offers the attestation of multiple Gospel fruits: the abundant conversions, the frequent return to sacramental practice (Eucharist and reconciliation), the flowering of numerous vocations to the priestly, religious and matrimonial life. In the experience of those who lived them, these fruits retain a strong link with *the place* of Medjugorje, rather than with the people of the alleged visionaries: in this sense they can legitimately be connected to the *original events* and constitute a particular form of memory. It should also be noted that this *memory* is expressed in a particular way in the *pilgrimage* to the *place* of the *original events*, which is far superior, in quality, intensity and quantity, to the flow of people who today go to meet the alleged visionaries—to attend the alleged current apparitions—in the various parts of the world in which they are invited by the most varied ecclesial subjects.

It can be affirmed, therefore, that the succeeding thirty-year history since the original events has spread so far and in such depth as to exclude an individual or mass manipulation. We are faced with a dynamic—with every possible caution for this analogy—of the little seed that bears great fruits. Within this evolution/growth, the alleged visionaries are no longer perceived as central mediators of the Medjugorje phenomenon, but rather also as the fruit of the initial event. Their subsequent personal events cannot therefore compromise its supernatural origin. What they attest to take place today must be distinguished from what happened at the beginning and possibly falls into the category of individual spiritual visions and experiences, while the four essential contents of the original events (the convinced return to faith, the true conversion, the assiduous prayer and fasting, the continuous invocation of peace) are now the patrimony of the people of God.

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## **2.2 Outcome of the vote regarding the effects of the phenomenon regardless of the behavior of the alleged visionaries**

Called to express itself by voting on the effects of the phenomenon in the history following its beginnings, regardless of the behavior of the alleged visionaries, the International Commission, adopting the five alternatives proposed by the Cardinal President (“positive”, “negative”, “mixed” effects—without further specifying—“predominantly positive mixed” and “predominantly negative mixed”), pronounced as follows, out of 14 present and voting (10 Members and 4 Experts):

- 3 Members and 2 Experts for “positive”;
- 4 Members and 2 Experts for “mixed, mainly positive”;
- 3 members for “mixed”.

With this vote, the collegial reflections on the effects of the Medjugorje phenomenon are closed regardless of the behavior of the alleged visionaries.

## **2.3 Aspects related mainly to the behavior of the alleged visionaries**

The aspects of the subsequent history of the phenomenon that the International Commission has considered problematic concern above all two areas:

- forms and content of the messages, in reference to certain ambiguous expressions, to some transmission methods and to some extemporaneous contents (the “life of Mary”) and occult (the “secrets”);
- present credibility of the alleged visionaries, especially in reference to the subsequent history of their conduct (religiosity and ecclesial practice, family and relationship life, communication initiatives, work and economic conditions).

Some further clarifications now appear necessary to better understand the opinion that has been formed between the Members and Experts of the International Commission.

- (a) Elements which tend to aggravate ambiguity and reservations on the two topics just mentioned have been brought to the attention of the Commission: the collection of documents that confirm the ambiguity of some clergymen, also initially involved in the event, which is an integral part of the *dossier Smuletović*; as well as several finds, mostly taken from the *Internet* that revolves around the phenomenon of Medjugorje. It seems that opposite interests and situations related to the Medjugorje phenomenon, not only ecclesial (the “Herzegovinian case” in a particular way) but also political-institutional (especially at the time of the communist regime), have been created and they influence the reception and evaluation of the original phenomenon, in reference to the weight and meaning that is attributed to the institutional or moral conduct of the various protagonists.

The International Commission, for its part, has *directly* been able to ascertain how the collection itself of original documents and testimonies relating to the Medjugorje phenomenon has encountered numerous and non-trivial obstacles, internal and external to ecclesiastical circles. The examination of first-hand materials, acquired *on the spot* or sent directly to the

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Commission, was made possible following inspections, investigations and interrogations by the Members of the Commission.

- (b) The *CDF Norms*, however, recall, on the basis of spiritual theology, how erroneous elements can also be present in private revelations deemed authentic, as they are “chargeable” to the persons of the witnesses. A private revelation, as a charism, *does not presuppose*, in the chosen witnesses, a *prior holiness* as its condition; *rather* it calls for a *consequent holiness*, often placed in a singular way *sub signo crucis*. It is not said that the witnesses are totally and forever faithful to what they received as a gift or supernatural sign: this call can also be subsequently ignored, without this implying—once it is certified, based on intrinsic elements, the authenticity of the original experience—the denial of the truth of its *being happened* as a gift and as a sign (possibly destined to “third parties”, that is, to the faithful, to sinners, to men of a certain era).
- (c) The main problem of the messages does not concern essentially the original events of the first seven apparitions, but what followed (especially starting from their problematic “transcriptions”, “entrustments”, “applications” to ecclesiastical situations and people). The International Commission has had to consider the repetitive banality of some of the communications which the witnesses declare they received from the *Gospa*, and likewise the lack of elements of incalculability and of transcendence, which is proper to supernatural character – while the content of these communications remains generally in line with the *fides Ecclesiae*. Above all, however, this sector concerns:
- the alleged *Vita di Maria*—of which Vicka Ivanković claims to be the custodian, because it was dictated by *Gospa* herself (!);
  - the “great sign” (not yet realized!);
  - The so-called ten “secrets” (with the question of the “trusted friar”).

The way in which the alleged witnesses speak of these realities, through some analogous aspects, recalls the function taken on by elements both in the course of phenomena authenticated by the Church—foremost of them, Fátima—and in the realm of phenomena not recognized as such by competent ecclesiastical authority but which continue, one way or another, to have credibility among some sectors of the Christian people. The International Commission has considered itself unable to order the alleged visionaries to reveal the content of the ‘secrets’, and thus it does not have the power to include this in its decisions, but must limit herself to presenting a Report to the CDF. Moreover, the alleged visionaries describe them as hidden realities which, by order of the *Gospa*, cannot be revealed until the opportune moment, which will be shown to them exclusively by the Madonna.

- (d) In any case, the form with which these realities are attested seems to *recall and consolidate* a *role* and *physiognomy* of the witnesses of apparitions/Mariophanies that has gradually imposed itself in the Christian religious collective imagination over time and above all starting from the Mariophanic events from Fátima onwards. The International Commission therefore considers it necessary to highlight the following aspects of this process:

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- among the many problematic and ambiguous elements, what undoubtedly assumes a greater weight, in the light of past events, is the typical form of the “secret”;
- not having the alleged visionaries developed particular intellectual qualities and introspection, and having been likewise left without accompaniment and a human and spiritual education worthy of what was happening, the need to refer to behavior patterns that could allow them to integrate the particular experiences that they claimed they were living, may have oriented them to acquire forms and roles already present in ecclesial life (*to be similar to*); none of them, on the other hand, has followed the models offered by the witnesses of authentic prior apparitions/Mariophanies as regards the state of life in the Church and in the world.

## 2.4 Present credibility of the alleged visionaries

As for the present credibility of the alleged visionaries, it is first necessary to consider two arguments, widespread and repeated, which the International Commission, on the basis of its investigations, deemed it necessary to evaluate critically.

The first concerns the immorality of the alleged witnesses, and in particular, their search for profit, openly considered by the *CDF Norms* as an assessment factor contrary to the truth of the certified private revelations. The second concerns the existence in the alleged visionaries of significant and altering psychological pathologies. But nothing of all this appeared from the specific expert reports conducted on them.

- (a) What the International Commission has been able to ascertain, in regard to the accusation of a possible seeking of profit, is that the witnesses of the supernatural sign originally addressed to them now effectively have a relation, ambiguous in certain aspects, with money (and with what in general can be called a preoccupation with their own “wellbeing”). Yet this ambiguity, rather than being located on the side of immorality, is found on the side of the structure of the person, often lacking a solid discernment and a coherent orientation, and also because an available and steady spiritual guide has been lacking to them in the course of these thirty years. If anything, there have been many signs exhibited of spiritual self-promotion and of a lack of pastoral relationships. In other words, it is fitting to recognize that, for long years, neither the bishops of Mostar-Duvno, nor the community of Franciscan friars of Medjugorje established relations with these persons of sufficient regularity and in-depth discernment of the meaning of the events which they claim and even now claim to experience. This circumstance has probably accented the current relative ‘impenetrability’ of the witnesses: innocent at times and calculated in others, through the protecting effect of repetitive formulas and stereotypes defending their Mariophanic “experience.”

This lack of spiritual and human accompaniment is surely one among the causes of certain ambivalences and ambiguities that have been manifested among the protagonists of the phenomenon *underway*. This negative dynamic reaches its apex in the case of Ivan Dragičević, whose continuing meetings and conferences on the Medjugorje phenomenon seem to constitute his only work and support. He has also lied multiple times and is also less credible in the way he speaks of experiences with the *Gospa*.

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- (b) The International Commission notes, in any case, that the *events subsequent to the first seven apparitions* constitute a *real problem*, which makes very difficult an evaluation in conformity to that which can be recognized in the *original sign*.
- (c) From the original documents made available to the International Commission, it appears that the then adolescents had declared that the phenomenon would *end*. But as we know, *this has not happened*. Where does the impulse towards this very long successive continuity really come from? The question is reasonable, all the more if we consider that the places, conditions, times and relative predictability of the alleged appearances *in progress* have substantially changed: they now occur with predictable and often even organized rhythms. In the course of the various hearings, moreover, the International Commission perceived in many ways *the great difference of narrative* that exists between the original events and the current events. The alleged visionaries, in fact, appeared without emotions and took on an almost professional air in mentioning the phenomenon *in progress*; when, on the other hand, in the transcripts of the 1981 interviews, the freshness and ingenuity of the children who try to report the lived experience during the first apparitions emerge—with indisputable evidence.

These connotations, by contrast, give great credibility to the accounts of that time; but, at the same time, they show a noticeably changed attitude, not only on an emotional level, and in relation to a certain “addiction” to repetition, but, according to what appears, even in the public and spectacular forms of the present alleged visions or apparitions, among other things for the “ease” of their management.

Considering that such difference in narrative (and credibility) cannot be ascribed to reasons of psychological disorder or even outright immorality—if not perhaps in the case of Ivan Dragičević—the problem of the witnesses’ present credibility remains. The Commission has therefore hypothesized diverse interpretations of this fact, interpreting it as a “degradation” or as a “rarefaction” of the original phenomenon.

## **2.5 Outcome of the vote concerning the supernaturality of the aspects of the subsequent history of the phenomenon related to the behavior of the alleged visionaries**

In any case, given also and above all the fact that the alleged visions or apparitions are still ongoing, it did not seem opportune to proceed now with a decision on their supernatural character. Like any reality still open to further developments and implications, the Medjugorje phenomenon, being *in fieri* [ongoing], requires above all a correct and respectful educational-spiritual accompaniment of the men and the women protagonists involved in it.

Called to express itself by voting “on the developments subsequent to the beginnings that directly concern and involve the alleged visionaries,” the Commission has expressed itself as follows: out of 14 present and voting (10 Members and 4 Experts),

- 8 Members and 4 Experts: *nondum decernendum*;
- 2 Members: *constat de non supernaturalitate*.

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Based on this and previous votes, the Commission believes it can suggest the most opportune pastoral solutions to be applied to the Medjugorje phenomenon.

## PART II

### SUGGESTIONS FOR THE PRACTICAL MANAGEMENT OF THE PHENOMENON

## **1. REASONS REQUIRING SOME MODIFICATIONS OF THE LINE HITHERTO FOLLOWED**

### **1.1 Presentation of the reasons**

The conclusions reached by the International Commission regarding the supernatural origin of the Medjugorje phenomenon require or at least suggest modifications to the line followed so far which, on the basis of the judgment *non constat de supernaturalitate*, also reaffirmed by the Zadar Declaration of the Yugoslav Bishops' Conference, forbids the organization of "official" pilgrimages to Medjugorje, with the participation of priests, and, in general, any gesture or position that implies a recognition of supernaturality.

The supranational diffusion of the veneration of the "Madonna of Medjugorje" and in particular of the pilgrimages to Medjugorje, with the abundant fruits of grace that resulted from it, recommends in turn that a positive pastoral attitude should be assumed, aimed at favoring and promoting the fruits of goodness and at the same time to contrast, and, if necessary, to repress the ambiguous, dangerous or even frankly negative aspects that are also present in the phenomenon, as was noted in the first part of this Report.

The International Commission believes, in fact, that the prohibitions in force up to now to accompany pilgrimages pastorally and spiritually have obtained the unwanted effect of leaving the field free for initiatives that do not comply with the Church's thought and discipline. Moreover, as early as in 1991, the Zadar Declaration had stated that "The numerous gatherings of faithful who come to Medjugorje from various parts driven by religious or other reasons require the attention and pastoral care in the first place of the diocesan bishop, and with him also of the other bishops, so that in Medjugorje, and in connection with it, healthy devotion of the Virgin Mary may be promoted, according to the teaching of the Church." The local Bishop, His Excellency Ratko Perić, based on its *constat de non supernaturalitate* judgment, also reaffirmed in the testimony he gave to the International Commission, has so far made it difficult to fully implement the indications contained in the Zadar Declaration.

In this situation, the International Commission believes and suggests that:

- In Medjugorje and other places interested in the phenomenon, pastoral initiatives should be promoted that are suitable for promoting a healthy Marian spirituality, Christocentrically oriented (*per Mariam ad Christum*) and characterized by the renewal of faith, by a spirit of penance and a sense of belonging, faithfulness and obedience to the Church, in accordance with the meaning of the initial apparitions and the widespread attitude among the pilgrims who go to Medjugorje;

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- the prohibitions of pilgrimages to Medjugorje should be removed with the participation of priests and spiritual guidance to pilgrims should be ensured;
- suitable measures must be taken to ensure, both in Medjugorje and in other places, the vigilance and authority of the Church on arbitrary and potentially harmful actions and behaviors for pilgrims and devotees, as well as for the reliability and moral and ecclesial profile of the phenomenon of Medjugorje.

These suggestions partially modify the line hitherto followed by the Church with respect to the Medjugorje phenomenon but this, on the one hand, is justified by the developments that occurred over 30 years from the beginning of the phenomenon and more than 20 from the Zadar Declaration, while on the other hand it does not constitute any breaking or drastic reversal. In fact, the pastoral care of the phenomenon is encouraged and its deviations are countered. The suppression of the ban on accompanying pilgrimages is, in reality, only a consequence of these two orientations, constant in the Church's attitude towards the alleged Marian apparitions and, in the case of Medjugorje, already spelled out in the Zadar Declaration.

## **1.2 Outcome of the vote on present bans on pilgrimages to Medjugorje**

The International Commission has decided to proceed to a vote on the issue of current bans on pilgrimages to Medjugorje, choosing from the following proposals: “the current bans on pilgrimages to Medjugorje should be removed”; “The current bans on pilgrimages to Medjugorje must be maintained”.

The 14 present and voting (11 Members and 3 Experts) expressed themselves as follows:

- **10 Members and 3 Experts:** “the current bans on pilgrimages to Medjugorje must be removed”;
- **1 Member:** null vote.

At this point, three specific issues need to be addressed which appear particularly important.

## **2. FORMS IN WHICH THE AUTHORITY OF THE CHURCH IN MEDJUGORJE SHOULD BE EXERCISED**

### **2.1 Reasons why this problem arises**

The problem arises for two different reasons. The first is represented by the attitude constantly maintained by the Diocesan Bishop Perić, which in fact makes adequate pastoral care of the phenomenon impossible. The second is consequent to the supranational dimensions assumed by the phenomenon itself, which the Ordinary of a single place can hardly provide, albeit in collaboration (so far lacking) with the Ordinaries of the other involved places.

To deal with this situation, various possible solutions have been formulated and evaluated by the International Commission. With regard to Bishop Perić, it seems difficult to predict whether he, in the face of a possible pronouncement and specific requests from the Higher Authority, will effectively be able to change his position and above all his concrete attitude. Otherwise, his transfer to another position could ensure a more peaceful management of the Medjugorje phenomenon, on

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condition that this is done with his consent and in any case save his honor, allowing him a dignified exit.

Another solution could consist in the establishment of a new ecclesiastical district, which includes the territory of the parish of Medjugorje. A solution of this kind seems to have already been attempted, restoring autonomy to the ancient ecclesiastical district of Trebinje, currently united to Mostar-Duvno, and assigning to it the parish of Medjugorje, which it previously did not include. Bishop Perić was in favor of the autonomy of the district of Trebinje, but opposed to the assignment of Medjugorje to that district. Furthermore, one may ask whether it is opportune to create an ecclesiastical district, facing the difficult problems, including property, connected to such an operation, only to solve a contingent problem linked to a person.

It should be added that none of these solutions takes into consideration the supranational dimension assumed by the Medjugorje phenomenon. Other solutions have therefore been proposed which take this dimension into account. Their common element is the establishment of an on-site ecclesiastical authority depending directly on the Holy See, and not on the diocesan bishop, as regards the management of the Medjugorje phenomenon.

These solutions differ from each other mainly with regard to the problem of whether the parish church of St. James in Medjugorje, which can be considered a *de facto* sanctuary, with abundant fruits of grace, should be officially erected as a sanctuary by the Holy See, becoming, by virtue of this erection, an “international sanctuary,” “pontifical” as it would be exempt from the jurisdiction of the local Ordinary.” If the ban on “official” pilgrimages is lifted, the characteristics of the parish church of Medjugorje seem to correspond fully to the definition of shrine contained in the Code of Canon Law: “The term shrine means a church or other sacred place which, with the approval of the local Ordinary, is by reason of special devotion frequented by the faithful as pilgrims” (can. 1230). It should also be noted that the erection of a sanctuary does not in itself imply any recognition or even reference to apparitions of supernatural origin. The sanctuaries must have their own statutes, approved by the Holy See in the case of international sanctuaries, which constitute the normative instrument for adapting the juridical figure of the sanctuary to the concrete needs of the individual situations. In particular, it is possible to determine in the statutes the entrustment of the sanctuary to a religious institute, the procedure for appointing the rector and the extent of his faculties, relations with other ecclesiastical authorities. Usually, in pontifical sanctuaries, direct dependence on the Holy See is ensured through the appointment of a pontifical Delegate, different from the rector of the sanctuary.

However, it has been observed that the erection of a sanctuary in Medjugorje, and even more so its qualification as an international and pontifical sanctuary, erected by the Holy See, may appear to be too abrupt and radical a passage, compared to the current prohibitions of official pilgrimages. The predictable simplifications and media interpretations could also induce believers to think that the Church approves the Medjugorje phenomenon in its entirety. Such an erection therefore requires great prudence and could, if anything, take place at a later time, while for now it could be suitable to establish in Medjugorje only an ecclesiastical authority depending directly on the Holy See.

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**2.2 Results of the votes regarding the forms in which ecclesiastical authority is to be exercised in Medjugorje**

On this basis, the International Commission proceeded to vote, by secret ballot, on the question of the forms in which to exercise the authority of the Church in Medjugorje, choosing from three options: “diocesan bishop”, “authority directly dependent on the Holy See” (leaving open the question whether this authority should be exercised through the erection of a pontifical sanctuary), “new ecclesiastical district.”

The 16 present and voting (12 Members and 4 Experts) expressed themselves as follows:

- 7 Members and 3 Experts: “authority dependent on the Holy See”
- 4 Members: “diocesan bishop”
- 1 Member and 1 Expert: “new ecclesiastical circumscription.”

The International Commission, subsequently, decided to proceed to a further vote, regarding the erection of a pontifical sanctuary in Medjugorje, choosing from the following proposals: “a pontifical sanctuary is erected in Medjugorje”; “A pontifical sanctuary is not erected for now, but only later, in Medjugorje”; “A pontifical sanctuary is not erected in Medjugorje at all.”

The 14 present and voting (11 Members and 3 Experts) expressed themselves as follows:

- 6 Members and 3 Experts: “a pontifical shrine is erected in Medjugorje”
- 4 Members: “a pontifical sanctuary is not erected for now, but only later, in Medjugorje”
- 1 Member: “a pontifical sanctuary is not erected in Medjugorje at all”.

The other two particularly important specific questions remain to be examined.

**3. ATTITUDES TO BE TAKEN TOWARDS THE ALLEGED VISIONARIES**

**3.1 Objectives to be achieved**

As is clear from the first part of this Report, the alleged visionaries have appeared substantially credible in their witness of the first seven apparitions, and also through the succeeding alleged apparitions, it does not seem possible to deny their subjective good faith, independent of judgment on the reality of the event. This positive evaluation, however, does not extend to Ivan Dragičević, on whose credibility serious and demonstrated reservations have emerged. Also, as regards moral conduct and in particular the question of the *quaestus lucri*, the position of Ivan Dragičević is more compromised than that of the other alleged visionaries.

On the other hand, the alleged visionaries for a long time no longer form a single group but each of them acts on their own, also with regard to the alleged apparitions and other activities connected with the Medjugorje phenomenon.

In the judgment of the International Commission, the attention and pastoral care must, above all, be addressed to them, toward the development and deepening of their spiritual life and their sense of belonging to the Church. They do not in fact appear mature either in their faith or in their

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ecclesiality, and at certain times not even in their psychological consistency. The fact that none of them have been really followed by a spiritual director in their personal journey can at least explain these lacks in part.

It should be recognized that the alleged visionaries, in their public statements, do not intend to take the place of the Church, and they do keep her doctrine in mind, in a sufficiently balanced way. However, there are strong tendencies to draw attention to themselves and their current alleged visions, rather than on the Christocentric and ecclesial substance of Marian spirituality. If, as is desired by this International Commission, the Church will take a more positive attitude towards the Medjugorje phenomenon, committing herself to promoting the fruits of grace, it appears necessary that the centrality of the place of grace of Medjugorje emerge more clearly than the personal events and present experiences of the alleged visionaries, for which the Church cannot and must not be held responsible.

The alleged visionaries themselves must be helped to realize this changed situation and to accept it, even in their characteristic behavior.

## **3.2 Concrete suggestions in order to achieve these objectives**

First of all, it seems necessary that those who exercise the authority of the Church in Medjugorje become the main reference of the alleged visionaries and, for their part, are welcoming and well disposed towards them: on these bases they can also exercise due firmness towards them.

The alleged visionaries must have a spiritual guide to accompany their formation and maturation. Each of them can be asked to choose a priest for this task and to communicate his name, to be approved by the competent authority. They could also be asked to do a spiritual retreat at least once a year. Their doctrinal formation should also be deepened, based on the Catechism of the Catholic Church.

It seems opportune to ask the alleged visionaries to live the alleged apparitions in a manner not as public as presently happens, and not to contradict in their statements the indications that will eventually be given by the CDF. Furthermore, not to accept invitations to conferences or other events without the prior consent of the local Ordinary. These indications apply in a special way to Ivan Dragičević.

According to the International Commission, the “secrets” of which the alleged visionaries speak, the “life of Mary” and any similar texts cannot enjoy any ecclesiastical approval.

The linguistic formulation of the alleged messages of the Madonna should take place in the presence of the priest in charge of the spiritual accompaniment of the alleged seer.

Church authority must keep watch over the economic activities of the alleged visionaries connected with the Medjugorje phenomenon, especially in the case of Ivan Dragičević.

The willingness of the alleged visionaries to accept these or similar requests will constitute a concrete verification of their personal acceptance of the Marian message of penance, communion and ecclesial obedience of which they consider themselves to be hearers.

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**4. CARE OF PILGRIMS AND DEVOTEES OF THE MADONNA OF MEDJUGORJE**

The phenomenon of Medjugorje has long assumed a supranational character. It is therefore necessary to distinguish between its dynamics in Medjugorje and those present in other parts of the world.

**4.1 In Medjugorje**

The territory of Medjugorje has become a place of pilgrimages, of prayer and of discovery or rediscovery of the Christian faith, with its own spirituality which manifests itself through Mary who invites to humbly turn to Christ and to live the gift of God with radical coherence, promoting, as a consequence, inner peace and also social peace. Medjugorje takes on a special meaning for people who live in environments filled with secularism and laicism in which Christians, even if they are not subject to open persecutions, undergo cultural oppression against their faith and need to be encouraged and supported in spiritual combat.

From an ecclesial point of view, the situation in Medjugorje presents itself in a certain “bipolar” sense: the parish church of St. James constitutes, in fact, the main pole of attraction, but the proprietorship of alleged visionaries, where the alleged apparitions usually take place, in their turn, represent centers of attraction. This state of affairs could perhaps be overcome through a more positive approach of the Church to the Medjugorje phenomenon and the maturation of the ecclesial sense of the alleged visionaries.

The Franciscans ensure good pastoral care in Medjugorje, which however needs to be integrated and strengthened (if necessary with a greater contribution also from non-Franciscans), both for the number of employees and for their skills, in particular linguistic skills: it would be so better adapted to the supranational character of the influx of pilgrims and their spiritual needs.

Special importance is given to sacramental confessions, which occur in huge numbers in Medjugorje. Therefore, the confessionals must be increased, guaranteeing the external conditions for the respect of the secret, and a precise discipline of the confessors must be ensured, checking their identity and suitability.

The celebration of the Holy Mass is lived in an absorbed collected and devoted way. The large number of pilgrims who participate in it makes it highly desirable to enlarge the size of the parish church. Also, Eucharistic adoration and the recitation of the rosary are very well conducted and participated. However, they could be enriched through the *reading* of Sacred Scripture.

The catechesis of the Franciscans is very well conducted, especially from the pedagogical point of view. However, it should be further improved both as regards the meaning of pilgrimages to the sanctuaries of the Madonna and popular Marian piety, and to be better suited to the conditions of those who “start over” their Christian experience and need to be offered the fundamental aspects and contents of faith.

It therefore seems opportune to organize talks in Medjugorje, not so much on visions and the visionaries, but rather on the central questions of Christian life and of a Marian spirituality in the

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contemporary world. At least initially, these talks could also be attended by priests, to prepare them to fruitfully conduct pilgrimages. For the same purpose, a small book, published by the competent ecclesiastical authority in Medjugorje, can be useful, giving exact information and favors the formation of pilgrim guides.

The tendency to focus the attention of pilgrims on the alleged visionaries and their visions is strengthened by the autonomous presence in Medjugorje of several new religious communities. This requires that this presence be disciplined, proceeding to identify the nature and degree of canonical approval of the communities present; moreover, to screen their activities, even from an economic and financial point of view. This will protect the pilgrims from the various risks of sectarian drifts, the formation of “parallel churches,” economic abuse.

The offerings that flow to the parish church and to the Franciscans are managed with due transparency and wisely distributed. However, it seems appropriate, given the size assumed by the influx of pilgrims, to organize more carefully the collection of the various offerings and in particular the Mass intentions, on the model of what happens in the most important Marian shrines.

## **4.2 In the world**

In many nations and ecclesiastical districts, there are numerous groups of Marian prayer and devotion which are inspired by the Medjugorje phenomenon and its spirituality. However, they are often not sufficiently followed and accompanied spiritually. Autonomous initiatives organized outside of any pastoral control and sometimes giving rise to dangerous deviations, find ample space.

In any ecclesiastical district in which these groups are present, the local Ordinary should therefore entrust a priest with their pastoral care. His specific task will also be—if the current prohibitions are lifted—to accompany pilgrimages to Medjugorje, personally or through other priests or in any case safe and well-prepared people. Pilgrimages, in fact, offer great pastoral opportunities, given that pilgrims are mostly in an open-minded disposition, which makes them ready to re-read their personal history, giving it a new Christian orientation: especially in our time, they need and desire to be listened to, to be helped to reconcile with God, with themselves and with their neighbor, thus finding a positive outlet for one's life.

In this context, it seems highly appropriate that the ecclesiastical authority in charge of Medjugorje, in agreement with the local Ordinaries, establish relations with the priests appointed by the Ordinaries themselves and with the groups inspired by the Medjugorje phenomenon. A possible new provision of the Holy See would provide all the local Ordinaries of the places with criteria for discerning and directing the initiatives that take place in their ecclesiastical districts.

## **SUMMARY**

At the end of this final report we briefly re-propose the main conclusions reached by the International Commission.

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To fulfill the mandate received to “collect and examine all the material relating to the Medjugorje phenomenon and then present a detailed report with the related *votum* on the supernaturality of the phenomenon, also suggesting the most opportune pastoral solutions to be applied in this regard,” the Commission, in addition to examining the already existing material on the Medjugorje phenomenon, listened to the testimonies of the main protagonists in plenary meetings and made, through some of its components, an accurate inspection in Medjugorje, collecting many news that were not previously known to it.

## **On the supernaturality of the phenomenon**

From all this study a very clear differentiation emerged, although not perceived by the protagonists of the alleged apparitions, between the beginning of the phenomenon and its subsequent history. The beginnings (specifically the first seven apparitions, which took place from 24 June to 3 July 1981) involved, in fact, some psychically healthy and normal boys and girls who, outside of any expectation or preparation, and with no possibility for the Franciscans or other people to influence them, have always and in agreement testified that the Madonna appeared to them, suddenly and repeatedly in a specific place and at specific times, initially causing in them surprise and fear, describing herself as “Queen of Peace” and entrusting them with a message of conversion and penance. This testimony was maintained by them even when the police arrested them and threatened them with death.

Subsequently, however, interference soon occurred with the “Herzegovina case”—centuries-old contrast between the bishops of Mostar-Duvno and the Franciscans—while the Madonna allegedly addresses the individual visionaries. The apparitions are awaited and pre-announced, and seem to become normal and much less involving.

For these reasons, the Commission has separately assessed the supernaturality of the beginning of the phenomenon and its subsequent history. As for the beginning, the vote gave the following result:

- **10** Members and **3** Experts *constat de supernaturalitate*;
- **1** Member *constat de non supernaturalitate*;
- **1** expert *nondum decernendum*.

With regard to the subsequent history, the effects of the Medjugorje phenomenon were evaluated first, regardless of the behavior of the alleged visionaries; specifically, especially the numerous conversions and vocations to the priesthood and consecrated life. The vote gave the following results:

- **3** Members and **2** Experts *positive effects*;
- **4** Members and **2** Experts *mixed effects, mainly positive*;
- **3** Members *mixed effects*.

The aspects of the phenomenon related mainly to the behavior of the alleged visionaries and their present credibility were then assessed. The vote on the supernaturality of the aspects of the subsequent story related to the behavior of the alleged visionaries gave this result:

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- **8** Members and **4** Experts *nondum decernendum*;
- **2** members *constat de non supernaturalitate*.

**On the appropriate pastoral solutions**

The investigation into the supernatural nature of the phenomenon thus ended, the Commission proceeded to evaluate the most appropriate pastoral solutions. Both the supernatural origin of the beginnings of the phenomenon, and the abundance of the fruits of grace, as well as the unwanted effect of the current prohibitions, which ended up facilitating initiatives not conforming to the thought and discipline of the Church, suggests to modify the line hitherto carried out by the ecclesiastical authority and to assume a more positive pastoral attitude, aimed at favoring and promoting the fruits of grace, while at the same time contrasting ambiguous, dangerous or negative aspects. In particular, the Commission believes that the prohibitions of pilgrimages to Medjugorje should be removed with the participation of priests and a spiritual guide to pilgrims should instead be ensured. The vote on the matter gave the following result:

- **10** Members and **3** Experts: “the present bans on pilgrimages to Medjugorje must be removed”;
- **1** Member: null vote.

A particularly delicate and relevant problem is that of the form in which the authority of the Church is to be exercised in Medjugorje. In fact, the Diocesan Bishop Perić is resolutely against the phenomenon and it seems difficult to induce him to change his position; in addition, the supranational dimensions assumed by the phenomenon seem to require that the authority in charge is different from that of the local ordinary. The Commission has considered several hypotheses, which have been summarized in 3 formulas submitted to vote. The outcome was the following:

- **7** Members and **3** Experts *authorities dependent on the Holy See*;
- **4** members of the *diocesan bishop*;
- **1** Member and **1** Expert for a *new ecclesiastical district*.

The possibility of erecting the parish church of St. James in Medjugorje as a papal international sanctuary was also carefully evaluated. The vote on the matter gave the following result:

- **6** Members and **3** Experts: “a pontifical sanctuary is erected in Medjugorje;”
- **4** Members: “a pontifical sanctuary is not erected for now, but only afterwards;”
- **1** Member: “a pontifical sanctuary is not erected in Medjugorje at all.”

The Commission also addressed the problem of the behavior to be followed with the alleged visionaries, suggesting first of all to take a closer look at their spiritual life and their sense of belonging and obedience to the Church. It is also necessary to bring out more clearly the centrality of the place of Medjugorje with respect to the current events and experiences of the alleged visionaries. In order to achieve these objectives, various concrete indications are suggested to be proposed, compulsorily if necessary, to the alleged visionaries.

With regard to the care of pilgrims and devotees of the Madonna of Medjugorje, the Commission first considered how this care should take place in Medjugorje itself, cultivating the genuine

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characteristics of the spirituality of that place, focused on the rediscovery, through Mary, of faith in Christ and the commitment to live the gift of God with radical coherence. The Commission also gave specific suggestions regarding the service of the Franciscans, the celebration of the Eucharist, the administration of the sacrament of penance, catechesis, the presence in Medjugorje of “new communities,” the management of economic and financial aspects.

Finally, as regards the care of pilgrims and devotees in their places of origin, the Commission recommends that in every ecclesiastical district concerned there should be a priest appointed by the local Ordinary to follow both the Marian prayer and devotion groups that are inspired by Medjugorje and pilgrimages to Medjugorje itself. It also hopes for a contact between these priests and the ecclesiastical authority in charge of Medjugorje, in agreement with the local Ordinaries.

This final report was approved by the International Commission of Inquiry on Medjugorje on January 17, 2014.

**Darinka Šumanović-Glamuzina Testimony**

On the morning of 26 April 2012, thanks to [redacted], we met Dr. Darinka Šumanović-Glamuzina. The more detailed report of this meeting will be presented by [redacted]. She is a woman who, at the age of 24, during her medical studies, met the visionaries for the first time, just before an alleged apparition. She went to their house before the alleged apparition.

As a Catholic, but not practicing at the time, she joined the group and began to pray, then went up the hill with them and today reports that she too had then, an experience of the Madonna that changed her. After the event, in fact, she felt full of energy. She says that once, a few years later, a priest asked her to talk about this event, after which no one asked her about it anymore.

It struck us that as this person, after so many years, in recounting that event, was very excited, turning red in the face, with tears in the eyes.

This, compared to the “normality” with which [redacted] had experienced the apparition of the Gospa, etc., the day before, made us think.

The doctor, who is now 56 years old, then made a participatory analysis of the event, getting involved at the moment of the apparition quite affectively, with the aim of understanding as best as possible what she had to evaluate as a doctor.

We noticed a strong emotion in her but we also saw a great rational clarity, also as a person in general, with which she spoke about the individual moments of her experience. Here are her words:

“I went as a doctor to the hill of the apparitions to make a verification during the apparition. It was the fifth or sixth day of the apparitions. I had the charge of observing the visionaries’ behavior in their homes before they went up the hill. By then, these events were considered a scandal. My task was to calm their behavior with the ultimate end to make them not to go anymore to

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the hill. At that time, there were several visionaries in Vicka's house and all were praying the rosary. They had given to me a rosary as well. I accepted this rosary with the desire to be close to them and to be welcomed by them. But I wasn't part of them. I wanted to check from a psychological point of view what was going on there, because I thought it was a manipulation. They accepted me as if I were one of them. There was a friendly atmosphere. At a certain moment they all said together: "Now let's go up the hill."

I couldn't do anything at the time. I had such an energy. They ran up the hill. I ran after them. In an instant we were on a plateau where the children stopped. I thought I would face a situation where the children would agree where to go and where to stop. This has not happened. All together they said at the same time: "Yes. This is the place." They didn't talk to each other. Everyone said at the same time, "This is the place."

They all lined up and I stood beside them with the rosary in my hand to observe them. I watched them very attentively. At that moment, I thought it was a phenomenon of collective hypnosis. But everything happening was outside of what I, as a doctor, knew as hypnosis or manipulation.

At a certain moment, I even thought it was an object of the universe, something that belongs to another reality. At that moment, they all began to pray the rosary together. They prayed, prayed, prayed. The atmosphere of their prayers in that moment changed in an incredible way. It was something I had never experienced before. I was a believer, but at that precise moment I was an agnostic. After a moment of prayer, which seemed very long to me, they all said "Here She is." All together at the same time. This was a new shock for me. I looked at them and they looked at something that was in front of them and they said: "Here is the Madonna." Everyone knelt down and started talking with the Madonna. There were a few thousand people in that place. By then, people asked many things to pray for this intention, for another, to pray for health. But I wanted to investigate and do more detailed research on this phenomenon. I believed that being close to this phenomenon I could expose the deception from a medical and scientific point of view.

I asked Vicka who was next to me: "Can I ask some questions to Our Lady?" At that moment, I doubted. I was impressed, but I didn't think it was the Madonna. Vicka asked Our Lady: "Madonna, can this woman ask You questions?" This was a new shock to me because she had contacted something and asked permission so that I could have contact. This immediately put me in a position to think that someone is actually there. Someone is there.

Vicka was looking at this unknown being and said to me: "Yes. The Madonna said that you can ask the questions."

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I ask: "Vicka ask: Who are you?" Vicka asks and listens to the answer. Vicka replies: "The Madonna says that she is the Queen of Peace."

I hope you understand this situation: a continuous contact between Vicka, Our Lady and me is taking place.

In that moment, I thought: "But what Queen of Peace ... We have Peace."

Then I asked another question: "Why did Our Lady come here? Why to this mount? Why to these rocks?" I come from another part of the former Yugoslavia and for me this village was primitive. It seemed to me the last place in the world. "Why right here?" The Madonna replies to Vicka and she says to me: "Because faith is strong here. Faith is solid." I thought inside me: "It really is. Truly, faith is strong."

This was not enough for me. I go ahead and ask Vicka to ask the Madonna if I can touch the vision. I was convinced that if there had been something from the universe, I would have had a different feeling. I was convinced of it.

The Madonna says to Vicka: "Yes, come closer". Vicka tells me where I had to stay and where to touch Her. Vicka says, "Here, here." At that moment, I am still doubting. I want to unmask everything and reveal their hoax. But the moment I knelt down and put my hand in the place where Vicka told me that there Our Lady was I become aware that I am entering into something very dangerous that I can't see the end of. I enter into something for which I feel immature. The visionaries were around me and looking at me. I felt their desire that I touch this thing.

It seemed to me to be on an edge, on a very subtle border between the desire of the children that I touch this "someone" and my unbelief. At that moment, I felt destroyed.

In an instant, I felt collapsed. In the following seconds, I try, like a robot, to touch something and an incredible thing happens: something that words cannot describe, something inexplicable. I feel that this "something" or "someone" is gone. I don't see anything, but I feel it's gone. I feel that it is no longer here. Behind me I hear Vicka's words: "The Madonna has gone away." After a second, I then heard these words from Vicka.

I back off with so much shame. I was so ashamed inside. I felt a great humility inside of me in front of the miracle that was in front of me. I approach Vicka and ask her: "Vicka, what is this?" Vicka is so scared. She says: "The Madonna said: There are always unbelieving Judases." Judas and not Thomas. In that moment I was aware that I was that. This is me.

Inside me, I felt a kind of energy, not like the one that made Saint Paul fall from the horse, but something similar. I am a doctor and I have a very clear perception. All my cells were different. I was aware of having experienced a physical

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metamorphosis. The external appearance has remained the same, but the internal aspect had completely changed. They continued to pray [to] the Madonna. After that, everything was over. I started going down with them. With me there were Ivanka, Mirjana and, I think, Jakov, I know there were three of them.

Going down I wanted to finish my research and I asked a few more questions. I asked Mirjana a question and for me it was another confirmation that they saw something, because giving such an answer is not possible for those who do not see something.

I asked Mirjana: “What did Our Lady tell me?” Because I was very impressed by what Our Lady had said to me.

I think she moderated a little the response of the Madonna because she felt compassion. Mirjana replied that Our Lady said: “There are always believers, unbelievers and Judas.”

I thought inside of myself: “All this is me,” but it didn't comfort me much. So, I asked Mirjana if I could see the Madonna. She replied with so much childish joy: “Yes, yes. If you want you too can see the Madonna.” You must know that whoever is inventing something does not want others to see that thing. Instead, she wanted me to participate. “You too will see it if you want.” I went up the hill being a certain type of person and went down like another person. It was a bitter pill for me, but now I have to say it. In my life, after this event, incredible, fantastic, beautiful things, inexplicable according to any human logic, began. You must know that I am a logical and very rational doctor. Later, in my life, I had very significant dreams that opened very clear horizons to me which then occurred exactly. Without these words of the Madonna I would never have known them.”

**Thank you for reading this translation.**

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