

## OUR LADY OF MEDJUGORJE'S MESSAGE OF JANUARY 25, 2008

**“Dear children! With the time of Lent, you are approaching a time of grace. Your heart is like ploughed soil and it is ready to receive the fruit which will grow into what is good. You, little children, are free to choose good or evil. Therefore, I call you to pray and fast. Plant joy and the fruit of joy will grow in your hearts for your good, and others will see it and receive it through your life. Renounce sin and choose eternal life. I am with you and intercede for you before my Son. Thank you for having responded to my call.”**

### This Lent Let Jesus Be The Joy Of Your Life

#### I. What Is Our Blessed Mother Saying To Us?

##### A. Prepare For Lent.

1. Be Alert. “Lent is a time of grace.”
  - a. Lent is a very special time when the entire Church enters into a Retreat. It is a unique opportunity for spiritual growth and should not be missed.
  - b. It is a time when God rains down His grace upon us. He knows each of us and our special needs and has already prepared special gifts for us.
2. Be Open. “Your heart is like ploughed soil.”
  - a. Your heart is ready to receive when it is open. Our Lady is commenting on the primary parable of the Gospels: the Parable of the Sower, which comes four days after her message. The “seed” is 1) Jesus and His presence in our life; 2) His Word spoken to us; and 3) His Rule, the Kingdom of God. In the parable Jesus describes four kinds of hearts: 1) Closed, like certain Scribes and Pharisees; 2) Fickle, like the undecided; 3) Divided, those that have not placed God first in their lives; 4) Open, purified and simple hearts that are eager to hear every whisper of Jesus.
  - b. We show our openness by our eminent good will, our desire to grow, our life of prayer, our confidence that Jesus will speak to us the wisdom we need.
3. Be Ready To Plant. “Ready to receive the fruit of growth in good.”
  - a. The “fruit” is the result of all our efforts to do what is right and the way we step out in faith to cooperate with all God’s graces.
  - b. St. Therese said she was careful never to let an opportunity pass by.
4. Decide. “You are free to choose.”
  - a. We must make a firm choice beforehand to make the best of Lent and to ask God graciously to bless our choice.
  - b. We have to ask the Holy Spirit to be with us every step of the way.

##### B. Respond To The “Call”. “Pray and Fast.”

1. The “Call” is always the heart and primary focus of Our Lady’s Message, the place where we want to concentrate all our efforts, the key to unlock all the graces and treasures hidden in the Message.
2. “To Pray” has as its object to be united with Jesus in mind and in heart and all that that entails.
3. “To Fast” is to purify the heart by disengaging it from material preoccupations and opening it up to heavenly things.

##### C. How To Pray And Fast. “Plant Joy.”

1. We plant joy by loving. The first four fruits of the Holy Spirit are Love, Joy, Peace, Patience. They are in a causal relation with one another. By loving someone, we grow more and more joyful. The more we find our joy in being with someone, the more we are at peace. All this takes time: patience.

2. To plant joy in prayer, Our Lady says that we must be pro-active, i.e. look forward eagerly to our time with Jesus, greet Him with joy and exuberance, tell Him how happy we are to be with Him, gush forth with your sharing excitedly, etc. We do all this because we truly love Him, because each day we make new discoveries of His love for us.
3. To plant joy in Fasting is to fast more and more with greater love. As we grow in our love for Jesus, we are willing to make any sacrifice for Him and we do so more and more out of love. The thought of His Passion and all He suffered to save us helps us to fast in a passionate way.

## **II. What Is Our Lady's Full Program For Lent?**

While prayer and fasting are certainly the basics, the backbone of our Lenten practice, there is more. Our Lady gave a fuller view in her message to Ivan on February 6, 1989. Ivan says:

“Our Lady wants this from us during Lent:

1. Review and live Her Messages.
2. Read the Bible more.
3. Pray more and offer all for the intentions of Our Lady.
4. Make more sacrifices.”

(She added her Special Blessing to all this.)

### **A. Review And Live Her Messages.**

This means spend Lent under the guidance of Our Blessed Mother. That is the meaning of her statement: “I am with you and I intercede for you before my Son.” She is our spiritual Mother who is always very close to us. She sees exactly what our needs are each step of the way and she is interceding with her Son to obtain all the graces we need. We should live in her presence, always holding her in mind and heart, asking her advice continually.

#### **1. Prayer.**

- a. Preparation for Prayer: 1) Giving our sins and failings to Jesus in sorrow; 2) Giving our problems and concerns to Mary with confidence that she will take care of all of them; 3) Uniting ourselves with our Blessed Mother; 4) Descending to the bottom of our heart where our real selves and values are; 5) Asking for the blessing and grace of the Holy Spirit that we might pray well.
- b. Praying with the heart. Meaning what we say and saying what we mean, attentive to each word we express, sharing with love all that is in our heart, telling Jesus we love Him, thanking Him for His advice and for all that He is doing for us.
- c. Letting Our Blessed Mother lead us and guide us in all our prayers, especially at Holy Mass, the Rosary.
- d. Offering little prayers throughout the day, thinking of Jesus often, desiring always to be with Him, etc.

#### **2. Faith.** Sensitive to the presence of Jesus in our hearts and around us, growing more and more in confidence in Him, surrendering totally to Him, remembering Him, looking at things the way He does.

#### **3. Conversion.** As Our Lady says: “The first act of conversion is Confession. If Confession means little to you, your conversion will be little.” Trying to change or improve something daily. Cultivating openness.

#### **4. Fasting.** Deciding what the fast will be and sticking to it. Fasting on Wednesday for the Coming of the Holy Spirit; on Thursday to hunger for the Holy Eucharist; on Friday to honor the Passion of Our Lord.

#### **5. Peace.** Filling our hearts with divine love so as to be carriers of Peace. Viewing everyone as our brother or sister. Being positive always. Seeking reconciliation in gentleness.

### **B. Read The Bible More.**

1. Placing the Bible in a central place and having it open.
2. Reading a passage and reflecting on it throughout the day.
3. Preparing the Readings for the next day's Holy Eucharist.
4. Reading the passages concerning the Passion of Our Lord.

### **C. Pray More And Offer All For The Intentions Of Our Lady.**

1. Deciding specifically for times of prayer.
2. Offering little prayers throughout the day.
3. Representing Our Lady's intentions at Holy Mass and Rosary especially, i.e. for

Peace, God's Mercy, Conversion of Sinners especially those who do not know  
God loves them (atheists), Pope, Bishops and Priests, etc.

- D. Make More Sacrifices.
1. Turn off the television.
  2. Skip desserts.
  3. Spiritual and Corporal Works of Mercy.
  4. Offer everything out of love.

-Rev. Robert Hughes, S.M.