

OUR LADY OF MEDJUGORJE'S MESSAGE OF DECEMBER 25, 2004

“Dear Children!

With great joy, also today I carry my Son Jesus in my arms to you; He blesses you and calls you to peace.

Pray, little children, and be courageous witnesses of good news in every situation. Only in this way will God bless you and give you everything you ask of Him in faith.

I am with you as long as the Almighty permits me. I intercede for each of you with great love.

Thank you for having responded to my call.”

(Annual Apparition to Jakov Colo on December 25, 2004:

“Dear Children!

Today, on a day of grace, with little Jesus in my arms, in a special way I call you to open your hearts and to start to pray.

Little children, ask Jesus to be born in each of your hearts and begin to rule in your lives.

Pray to Him for the grace to be able to recognize Him always and in every person.

Little children, ask Jesus for love, because only with God's love can you love God and all people.

I carry you all in my heart and I give you my Motherly blessing.”)

Be Courageous Witnesses

Christmas is preeminently a Feast of Light, because Christ, the Light of the world, is born anew. The Feast of Epiphany celebrates the manifestation of this Light. Without the presence of Jesus and His Good News, this world sits in darkness. When the world resists this presence and seeks its own purposes, it falls deeper into the darkness. Therefore, Our Lady says to “pray and be courageous witnesses of good news in every situation” because “you are children of light.” Then she states an important warning: Being true witnesses is the **ONLY WAY** to receive the Father's blessing. She follows this with a significant promise: As true witnesses, the Father will grant you anything you ask for in Faith.

A. Witness to the Light of Faith: The Struggle of Light vs. Darkness (Good vs. Evil)

1. Cardinal Ratzinger said recently that in the last centuries there has been a movement of secularism. Certain forces in the world sought to cut the link to the Creator by the separation of Church and State. Today, he says, there is something new – “an aggressive secularism” that seeks to remove religion entirely from public life and force it back into the private life of the individual.
2. Our Lady, Mother of the Church, does not want this to happen. She asks us to be courageous and full of fortitude: stand up and defend the Faith, be witnesses of good news, do not let darkness prevail or evil to overcome the good, let the Light of Christ fill this dark world with His saving presence. The primary witness she has always asked for is good example – to live according to the Gospel. This is part of the “new evangelization” that the present Pope has promoted so much.

3. Our Lady also said once that many people come into our life who are in darkness, so give them light because you are children of light. What she is saying is that besides good example there are some times when we have to speak up. St. Augustine, St. Gregory and St. John Chrysostom say that we should not be like dogs that do not know how to bark. The first Luminous Mystery is the Baptism of Jesus which recalls our own Baptism where Jesus is enthroned as Light in the center of our being, a Light that should always be shining.

B. Witness to the Light of Love: The Struggle of Love vs. Hatred

1. Pope John Paul II was consecrated Pope in 1978 and when he took office he remarked that there were at that time 45 countries engaged in war and civil strife. He immediately embarked on a mission of peace and strongly encouraged dialogue as the first step towards peace. Dialogue he says is based on respect and consideration of the rights of others, and such dialogue promotes understanding and reconciliation which in turn fosters love. He is the first to speak out against violence, retaliation, conflict and war.
2. Jesus was born in the poverty of a stable and comes to us in the gentleness and humility of an infant to win over our hearts and transform them. His aim is to teach us to love the way God loves – devoid of selfishness, always taking the initiative to give and to give the very best one has – one’s very self – to those who are not deserving of such love, not counting the cost. This is the wine of the New Covenant proclaimed at the marriage feast of Cana – the second Luminous Mystery, supremely achieved with His death on the Cross. We feed on this love in the Holy Eucharist so that we love the way Jesus loves – always seeking reconciliation, always wanting to be a source of blessing to others, especially one’s enemies.
3. Our Blessed Mother seconds this program of love. Love is a gift, she says, that we should ask for every day. We cannot love until we experience the love of Jesus, so she tells us to ask Jesus to reveal His love to us day in and day out: that way, touched by Jesus’ love, we will become more loving. She especially asks us to pray for all those who do not know God loves them, that is, the atheists. She wants us to be carriers of love and peace to all those we meet.

C. Witness to the Light of Hope: The Struggle of Hope vs. Despair

1. Pope John Paul II says Christmas is a Feast of Hope, because it is the Dawn of a New Day of Salvation. No longer is there the darkness of death but the promise of eternal life where all our troubles cease and every tear is wiped away. This eternal life we possess now through faith in Jesus Christ and this should fill us with great joy – a joy we are meant to bring to others. Mother Teresa said she was always amazed at the powerful effect on others of a simple smile, so she always tried to smile no matter what.
2. Our Lady gave Ivanka the most important advice she said she had ever received: Be positive – think only positive things, say only positive things, and do only positive things. Negative things are part of the realm of darkness and satan is the prince of darkness. Our Lady says that there is nothing that is totally dark; in every situation there is a ray of light somewhere, and she advises us to walk

around (reflect) the situation until we find that ray of light and then walk into it and you will find the solution.

3. The angels brought “glad tidings” of great joy to the shepherds. Our Lady calls the visionaries “my little angels” because they (and we) have the same mission. Ivan intimated once that because Our Blessed Mother comes as Our Lady, Queen of Peace, that means we should be very happy because great things are in store for us. This “good news” we should bring to others “in every situation.”

D. Practice. We can live this message:

1. By always wearing a smile;
2. By saying uplifting things to those who are sad;
3. By receiving Jesus at Holy Communion from the hands of Mary with joy (“I carry my Son Jesus in my arms to you”);
4. By saying grace before dinner when we eat out;
5. By writing a letter to the editor in defense of life;
6. By starting a conversation with someone you seldom speak to as a sign of reconciliation;
7. By starting the day with a resolve only to think, say, and do positive things.

Rev. Robert E. Hughes, S.M.