

OUR LADY OF MEDJUGORJE'S MESSAGE OF APRIL 25, 2008

“Dear children! Also today, I call all of you to grow in God’s love as a flower which feels the warm rays of spring. In this way, also you, little children, grow in God’s love and carry it to all those who are far from God. Seek God’s will and do good to those whom God has put on your way, and be light and joy. Thank you for having responded to my call.”

Grow in God’s Love

A. The Symbol of the Flower

1. **Its Meaning**. Our Blessed Mother refers to each one of her children as a flower. “I wish that you would become like a flower in Spring,” (1984) and to the prayer group, “I wish you to be a beautiful bouquet of flowers that I want to present to God.” (10-25-94) She refers to flowers 25 times in her messages. Elsewhere, she calls her children roses of love, lilies of sinlessness, cyclamens of simplicity. (Gobbi) Many times Mary is described as “very sad, because her flowers are dying of thirst...it breaks her heart to see them withering...She is in the garden...standing near a rosebush...pitying the parched plant.” (Valtorta) She is always tending the flowers.
2. **Its Characteristics**.
 - a. **Fleeting**. “Do not forget that your life is fleeting like the Spring flower that today is wondrously beautiful but tomorrow has vanished, so pray and surrender to God.” (3-25-88) And again: “Decide for holiness, be real with yourselves, bind yourselves to God and do not forget that your life is as passing as a flower.” (8-25-01) Here today, gone tomorrow. She wants us to use our time wisely “and not waste one second of it.”
 - b. **Dependent**. Flowers naturally open up when the sun comes out. “Open your hearts to God like the Spring flowers that crave the sun.” (1-31-85) “I invite you to open the door of your heart to Jesus as the flower opens itself to the sun; Jesus desires to fill your hearts with peace and joy.” (1-25-95) “I would like each of you to be like a flower that is going to open for Jesus.” (12-21-84) Just as flowers grow and develop in the warmth and light of the sun’s rays, so also Our Lady wants us to realize that we are totally dependent on God’s grace.
 - c. **Fragile**. Flowers are very delicate plants that can easily wilt when injured. She calls us to be strong in our faith and dedication. “Each person is like a flower. If someone tries to crush you, try to grow even more. If someone pulls a petal, continue to grow as if you were complete.” (6-21-84) “I desire that you be a flower that blossoms, a flower that does not cease to bloom” (1983)
3. **Its Needs**. Our Lady says that “a flower is in need of water, light, and tenderness.” (2-25-03)
 - a. **Water**. “Every second of prayer is like a drop of dew in the morning that fully refreshes each flower. In the same way, prayer refreshes man, especially personal prayer. Man can thus become a really fresh flower for God. See how drops of dew stay long on flowers until the first rays of sun come.” (1-27-86) Mary calls us to constant prayer.
 - b. **Light**. “I call you to grow in love. A flower is not able to grow normally without water and light. So also you are not able to grow without God’s blessing. Seek His blessing daily.” (4-10-86) Our Lady is reminding us of just how much we need God.
 - c. **Tenderness**. “Open yourself to God’s plans and purposes...your life does not belong to you. May the tenderness of little Jesus always accompany you.” (12-25-93) “We open our souls to you, Father, so that we may be touched by your holy Mercy.” (6-22-85)

B. Growing in God's Love .

1. **Our Poverty** . Like any good parent, Our Blessed Mother wants us to grow and particularly to grow in our love of God, because we are destined to live in union with Him in love forever – a process that begins on this earth. Our Lady gives us the image or symbol of a flower to place us on the right path for this growth:

“I am guarding you like a little flower that does not want to die. So I call you to surrender to me so that I can keep on presenting you to God fresh and without sin.” (8-1-85)

 - a. **Humility** . Our Lady wants us to think often about the flower. It has the promising potential of great beauty, but it is fragile, vulnerable and radically needy of light, warmth, water and tender loving care. It cannot do much by itself and seems to be completely dependent on help from the outside. Sometimes it takes people a lifetime to learn this lesson, because we all like to run our own show. That is why the saints recommend that we grow in our sense of our need of God by making an explicit act of humility before we start praying.
 - b. **Surrender** . The next step after admitting our inadequacy is to surrender all to God. God really needs this before He can properly help us. Our Lady advises us: “I am calling you to a complete surrender to God. Let everything you possess be in the hands of God. Only in that way shall you have joy in your heart.” When this is done, we are placing God in the first place in our lives.
 - c. **Love** . And Our Lady insists that we must do this out of love. “Understand that without love, you cannot comprehend that God needs to be in the first place in your life. So I call you to love, but not with a human love, but with God's love. In this way, your life will be more beautiful and without self-interest. You will then comprehend that God gives Himself to you in the simplest way out of love. To understand all this, you must pray, pray, pray.” (9-25-97)
2. **Prayer** . The ordinary way in which friendships blossom is that people commingle in social gatherings and get to know one another. Slight bonds of interest start between two people and they continue to meet on their own and they begin to feel very comfortable with one another. Their mutual confidence increases and they like each other more and more, and a friendship is born.
 - a. This bears out St. Thomas Aquinas' prescription for cultivating a friendship: 1) growing in knowledge, 2) insight and understanding, 3) union and communion.
 - b. St. Grignon de Montfort attests that knowledge must grow into a spark of desire for the other person, before a real relationship is born, which makes sense, because St. Augustine avers that desire and love are really the same thing.
 - c. But many marriage counselors hold that communication is the key to mutuality if it is done properly.
 - d. To grow in knowledge and love of God, Our Blessed Mother keeps insisting that we must keep praying more and more from the heart and things will happen. She asks: “Why do we pray?” and she answers her own question: 1) “To be with God;” 2) “To sense and feel God present;” 3) “To experience God.” She says: “Accept my call to pray until prayer becomes a joy for you. And then you will discover that God is Almighty in your everyday life. I am with you in this and I wait for you.” (5-25-97)
3. **A Gift** . Prayer is a gift and we must ask for this gift every day and God seeing our good will, will respond in a tangible way.