

***Fasting and the Prayer for Priests***

Continued from an interview with Vicka on Radio Maria

*This is the final installment of Padre Livio Fanzaga's interviews on Radio Maria Italia from Medjugorje on January 2, 2008. Since it is the "Year of the Priest," it is fitting to end this series with Our Lady's requests for the priests we know. Radio Maria operates stations in the United States. Those stations are listed at the end of this article.*

PADRE LIVIO – One of the messages which you know really well is the one about fasting. Explain to us, well, two things: first of all, some people think that the message about fasting is not so valid anymore, and then what exactly is this fast that the Madonna asks for and why does she ask for it?

VICKA – When the Madonna recommends fasting, she specifies only on Wednesdays and Fridays and fasting only on bread and water. She has also said that people who are not well, they should not fast; it is enough if they will make little sacrifices of their own choosing. For all

other people who are healthy, who say they can't fast because it makes their head spin, the Madonna says that when we do the fast for love of God and her, that there are no problems. What is missing is a strong will-power. And the Madonna doesn't want us to fast only to fast which in the meantime makes us sad or nervous or irritable. It's better not to do it at all. If one does the fast, it must be done out of love; it must be something that gives you joy, that you really want to do. And it is not to be done, announcing this to others; it would lose its value. The fast is to be done with love, with the heart, so that no one knows we are fasting. Fasting signifies purification. And the Madonna wants this fasting on bread and water for the purification of our soul. The Madonna and Jesus want to prepare us on the inside. When we become free of those things which disturb us on the inside, then we can begin to do the fast the way the Madonna wants.

*Vicka continued on page 2.*

**Reflection on the Message of Our Lady**

*by Fr. Charles Sellars, omi*

**There is Joy in God**

There is no "A" list, no group of individuals who are in as opposed to those who are out. Every society has its pillars or its movers and shakers. Unfortunately, people sometimes figure that only those individuals deserve respect, that only those people count. Moving from the margins of society to its center can become a person's main goal in life.

Jesus does not say that people who pray publicly are evil or that making large donations to the temple are bad. He does say, however, that these actions do not give someone an inside track with God. They are good if they reflect interior conversion, they are evil if they are intended to substitute for such conversion.

Everyone counts with God. God does not have one way of acting with one group of people and a different set of rules for dealing with other people. All have been made in God's image and likeness.



**Messages of Our Lady of Medjugorje**

**September 25, 2009**

***D***ear children! With joy, persistently work on your conversion. Offer all your joys and sorrows to my Immaculate Heart that I may lead you all to my most beloved Son, so that you may find joy in His heart. I am with you to instruct you and to lead you towards eternity.

*Thank you for having responded to my call.*

**October 25, 2009**

***D***ear children! Also today I bring you my blessing, I bless you all and I call you to grow on this way, which God has begun through me for your salvation. Pray, fast and joyfully witness your faith, little children, and may your heart always be filled with prayer.

*Thank you for having responded to my call.*



PADRE LIVIO – The Madonna has repeated more than once that fasting on bread and water is fundamental, and she has stated on more than one occasion that fasting cannot be replaced by almsgiving. However, she has suggested other kinds of sacrifices, and I mention this specifically for those people who are at the beginning of this “walk of faith” and who do not yet feel capable of doing a bread and water fast. The Madonna indicated other kinds of sacrifices like giving up TV, alcohol, cigarettes and other things that give us pleasure (from the message of Dec. 8, 1981).

VICKA – Oh, yes, that’s right, to begin like this, a little bit at a time, step after step. The Madonna never said that one must begin right off with a bread and water fast. But begin first with other things, and afterwards, when you pray the Lord for this grace to fast, He will give it to you – because you want to fast, and so He is ready to give you this grace. But you must feel it with all your heart: “Lord, I’m ready to do this fast for you.” For sure the Lord will give you this grace, because you asked with all your heart and He responds with love. And also another thing the Madonna told us, she said: **“You don’t know what great value our fasting has in the eyes of God.”** With our fasting we can even stop wars. That’s how powerful fasting is.

PADRE LIVIO – The Madonna, in teaching us the virtue of renouncing, has as her objective to strengthen our resolve in renouncing sin.

VICKA – Our lives are too comfortable, we have too many things. It is difficult to convince people to renounce something. People are always thinking about eating more, and they think that if they don’t eat for one day, that they will die of hunger. The important thing is to make a start at fasting, liberating our hearts, and to follow what the Madonna wants. The important thing is to begin in order to see that we can liberate ourselves from this fear, that is, trusting our hearts to do the rest. And the Madonna will give us this grace because we want it. It is enough to want it and to apply a strong will-power. With a strong will-power, everything can be done. For sure.

PADRE LIVIO – Of course. The last subject I’d like to talk about is the number of priests who come to Medjugorje, more than in other sanctuaries. It seems that the Madonna calls not only the simple faithful, but also priests. The Madonna has asked many times for prayers for the Pope, for bishops, for our pastors and for priests. She has also asked that the priests be respected, which in Italy is not done much – they are mostly criticized and spoken ill of. In a message from the first year of the apparitions the Madonna said: “Too many people base their faith on how the priest comports himself. If a priest seems to fall short, then people say, ‘God doesn’t exist.’” And then the Madonna said, “One shouldn’t go to church to see how the priest behaves or to examine his private life” (October 11th, 1982).

VICKA – Well, you know, we must understand that the priest is a great gift which God gives to us; that the priest is a great gift – which has a great gift. Padre Livio, you are a father, you have this great gift. Are you prepared to respond to this gift?

PADRE LIVIO – Let’s hope so!

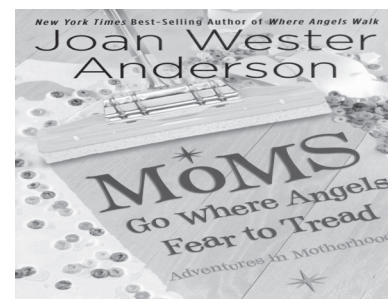
VICKA – But I believe so! Because you want to! It is a terrible thing to judge. Whenever there is something that goes wrong, people who are far from God think immediately that the priest is to blame. When we see our priests in error or in difficulty, we should be ready to give him a hand and to help him because he too needs our prayers as we need his. We should not look at our priests as distant from us, but we should consider them our brothers whom we can help with our prayers and whom we can support with our love. To fight them or fight with them means there is something in us that isn’t good and too ready to judge. Don’t stand in judgment of priests; you can judge only yourself. Don’t make excuses [excusing your being critical of any priest]. Many priests come here to Medjugorje – you know, I see when the people are against the priests, and every year there are more and more priests who come to Medjugorje. You can see that the priests are tired and feel empty, or maybe they have had

troubles, or they are just searching, feeling a need – they come here to Medjugorje, they know the Madonna is here – it is the only place where they can come, where they can receive strength from her and to have her blessing in order to be able to carry their parishes. And so I’m sure that the priests are praying for their parishioners and their parishes. But I say, don’t always be ready to think badly of them; we must stay closer to them and pray for them. If we pray more for our priests, and with our example, they will be more courageous and good and holy.

Radio Maria's stations in the United States:  
580 AM KJMJ - Alexandria LA  
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88.1 FM WHHN - Hollidaysburg PA  
88.7 FM WHJM - Anna OH  
89.7 FM KBIO - Natchitoches LA  
91.1 FM KOJO - Lake Charles LA ✦

*[Editor's note: Stephen Hubert Mule, who died one year ago of a heart attack caused by double pneumonia, was a frequent volunteer at Radio Maria in Alexandria, LA. Thank you for all the masses, prayers and condolences.]*

## New Book



**Joan Wester Anderson** is living proof that a woman can raise five children and maintain some semblance of sanity. In "Moms Go Where Angels Fear to Tread," she regales every mother and grandmother with hilarious stories about how that sanity has been tested—and retested—on a daily basis. Alternately laugh-out-loud funny and touching, the book's bite-size chapters contain amusing stories and observations about everyday mothering adventures that culminate in unexpected insights.

The book is offered on page 5. ✦

# *The Power of the Rosary in Columbia*

**S**ecular newspapers seldom report about the power of the prayer of the rosary, but the Catholic News Agency spread the story about the rosary's relation to two recent events in Columbia, South America.

## **The First Event**

In March 2008, the president of Columbia, Alvaro Uribe, ordered a military raid against a Marxist guerrilla rebel camp in neighboring Ecuador. The number two rebel leader was killed. In response, Ecuador's president cut all diplomatic relationship with Columbia. Venezuela's Hugo Chavez, a political ally of Ecuador's president, sent a massive military surge to the Colombian border.

As tensions between the three presidents increased, President Uribe called on the presidential chaplain to organize a rosary to be prayed for the end of the dissensions. Uribe invited all officials at the Presidential Palace and the ministers of Defense and Interior to pray for the intercession of the patronesses of the three countries: Our Lady of Chiquinquirá (Columbia), Our Lady of Coromoto (Venezuela) and Our Lady of Mercy (Ecuador).

A local Colombian paper, *El Tempo*, wrote that for believers the prayer was very effective since only two days later the three presidents shook hands during the Group of Rio Summit. The crisis was defused when the three presidents vented their differences, but agreed to stand down after Columbia apologized for the raid.

President Uribe is reported to be a man of faith who always carries a wooden cross and a rosary with him. The chaplain, Fr. Solorazano, said he has heard Uribe pray during motorcades and on the presidential airplane and that he tries to incorporate his faith in his work.

## **The Second Event**

The second event was reported by the Catholic News Service in July 2008. Many Columbians believe the recitation of the rosary was the "secret weapon" that resulted in the rescuing of fifteen hostages without a single shot fired. Thousands of Columbians have been praying the rosary for years for the release of numerous hostages being held by rebel groups.

President Uribe stated that the rescue operation "was guided in every way by the light of the Holy Spirit, the protection of Our Lord and the Virgin Mary." The hostages indicated that they had spent much time in captivity praying the rosary, and Ms. Betancourt, formerly a non-practicing Catholic who prayed daily on a wooden rosary which she made while a hostage, attributed the rescue as follows: "I am convinced this is a miracle of the Virgin Mary. To me it is clear she has had a hand in all of this." She was in captivity for six years.

On July 21, 2008, Ms. Betancourt and her family made a pilgrimage to Lourdes to give thanks and to pray for her captors and those who remained hostage. In August 2008, Betancourt and her family were received by Pope Benedict XVI in a brief audience.

Ingrid Betancourt Pulecio (born December 25, 1961) is a Colombian-French politician, former senator, anti-corruption activist and Nobel Peace Prize nominee.

Betancourt was kidnapped by the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) on February 23, 2002, and was rescued by Colombian security forces six and a half years later on July 2, 2008. The rescue operation, named Operation Jaque, (a Spanish term for "check" in chess) rescued Betancourt along with 14 other hostages (three Americans and 11 Colombian policemen and soldiers). In all, she

was held captive for 2,321 days after being taken while campaigning for the Colombian presidency. She had decided to campaign in rebel-controlled areas despite warnings from the government, police and military not to do so. Her kidnapping received worldwide coverage, particularly in France, because of her dual French citizenship.

## **History of Our Lady of Chiquinquirá, Colombia**

Since the beginning of the Christian era, Our Lady has never abandoned any of God's people, but has accepted them as her children. One of the most remarkable features of her motherly love has been her supernatural apparitions which have brought about miraculous conversions and healings, both spiritual and physical. She has appeared in nearly every part of the globe and has adapted herself to each age and to the varied needs of the human race. The following stories of Mary as patroness of South American countries and the results of faith of the believers are a remarkable testimony of her enduring love.

In the mid-16th century, the Spanish painter Alonso de Narvaez created a portrait of the Virgin of the Rosary. He painted in pigments from the soil, herbs and flowers of the region of modern Colombia, and his canvas was a rough 44" by 49" cloth woven by Indians. The image of Mary is about 39 inches high and stands on a half moon. She has a small, sweet smile, both her face and the Child's are light-colored, and she looks like she's about to take a step. She wears a white veil, a rose-colored robe, and a sky-blue cape. A rosary hangs from the little finger of her left hand and she holds a scepter in her right. She holds the Christ Child cradled in her left arm, and looks toward Him. Christ has a little bird tied to His thumb, and a small rosary hangs from His left hand. To the sides of Mary stand Saint Anthony of Padua and Saint Andrew the Apostle, the personal patrons of the colonist and monk who commissioned the work, Don Antonio de Santana and Andrés Jadraque.

In 1562 the portrait was placed in a rustic

*Rosary continued on page 4*

chapel. It was exposed to the air, the roof leaked, and soon the damage caused by the humidity and sun completely obscured the image. In 1577 the damaged painting was moved to Chiquinquirá and stored in an unused room. In 1585 Maria Ramos, a pious woman from Seville, cleaned up the little chapel and hung the faded canvas in it. Though the image was in terrible shape, she loved to sit and contemplate it. On Friday, December 26, 1586, the faded, damaged image was suddenly restored. Its colors were bright, the canvas cleaner, the image clear and seemingly brand-new. The healing of the image continued as small holes and tears in the canvas self-sealed. It still has traces of its former damage, the figures seem brighter and clearer from a distance than up close.

For 300 years the painting hung unprotected. Thousands of objects were touched against the frail cotton cloth by pilgrims. This rough treatment should have destroyed it, but it healed and survives. Pope Pius VII declared Our Lady of Chiquinquirá patroness of Colombia in 1829 and granted a special liturgy. In 1897 a thick glass plate was placed over it to stop the weather and the excesses of the faithful. The image was canonically crowned in 1919, and in 1927 her sanctuary declared a basilica.

### History of Our Lady of Coromoto, Venezuela

When the Spaniards arrived at the region of Guanare around 1591, a group of Indians of the Coromoto tribe decided to abandon their land and flee towards the Tucupido River, since they did not want to have anything to do with the white men or with the religion they brought with them. Fifty years later, still not having converted to the Gospel, the Indians lived in a small village not far from the Spaniards' town. Both groups lived in peace, but remained isolated from each other. Such was the state of affairs when on a morning of the year 1651, the chief of the Coromotos and his wife watched an extraordinary vision: in the ravine of the Tucupido River, upon the waters, a beautiful lady looked at them

with a loving expression on her face; the small Child she carried also smiled warmly.

The mysterious lady summoned the Indian chief and ordered him, "Leave the forest with your people and go to the white men in order to receive the water on the head so as to be able to enter heaven." Impressed by what he had seen and heard, the chief decided to obey the beautiful lady and left with his tribe to be schooled in the Christian religion. But the Indian, used to the freedom of the forests, could not become accustomed to the new way of life, and he returned to his village with his family.

The lady appeared again, this time at the Indian's humble hut. Although the Virgin presented herself surrounded by a luminous aura whose rays filled the hut with fire, she did not succeed in moving the chief, who, annoyed, tried to throw her out and even took his weapons in hand with the intention of threatening the inopportune lady. Smiling all the way, the Virgin approached the chief gently. When he stretched out his hand angrily to catch her, she disappeared before his eyes.

A small holy card, where the image of the Lady was printed, was left in the Coromoto Indian's closed fist. The Virgin of Coromoto is a tiny relic that measures about 1 inch high by  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch wide. The holy card's material could be parchment or tissue paper. The Virgin is painted seated, and on her lap sits the Child Jesus. It seems to have been drawn with a fine pen, sketched as a portrait done in India ink with dots and dashes. The Virgin and Child are looking straight ahead; their heads erect with royal crowns upon them. The back of the throne which supports them has two columns joined together by an arch. The Virgin's shoulders are covered by a crimson cloak with dark purple reflections, and a white veil falls symmetrically over her hair. She wears a straw-colored tunic; and the Child, a white one.

The image is kept inside a richly-adorned monstrance where it is presented for the veneration of the faithful. At the request of the nation's bishops, on October 7, 1944, Pius XII declared her "Patroness of the

Republic of Venezuela," and her canonical coronation was celebrated on the third centenary of her apparition, on September 11, 1952. His Eminence Cardinal Manuel Arteaga Betancourt, Archbishop of Havana, representing Pope Pius XII, crowned the sacred image of Our Lady of Coromoto. The Venezuelans celebrate their patroness each year on three different occasions: on February 2 and September 8 and 11. The National Sanctuary of the Virgin of Coromoto, meeting place of great pilgrimages, was declared a basilica by Pope Pius XII on May 24, 1949. ✦

**Mirjana Dragicjevic-Soldo** received daily apparitions until December 25, 1982. On that day, Our Lady entrusted to her the 10th secret, and told her that for the rest of her life she would have one yearly apparition, on March 18th. In addition, since August 2, 1987, on each second day of the month, she prays with Our Lady for unbelievers defined as "**those who have not come to know the love of God.**" The messages of the 25th are for the whole world, but the messages Mirjana receives are specifically focused on those who are far from God. Therefore, these messages have a different content and tone.

#### Sept. 2, 2009 Message to Mirjana




*"Dear Children, today, with a motherly heart, I call you to learn to forgive, completely and unconditionally. You suffer injustice, betrayals and persecutions, but by that you are closer to and dearer to God. My children, pray for the gift of love. Only love forgives all, as my Son forgives—follow Him. I am among you and am praying that when you come before your Father you can say: 'Here I am, Father, I followed your Son, I had love and forgave with the heart, because I believed in Your judgment and trusted in You.' Thank you!"*

#### October 2, 2009 Message to Mirjana

*Dear Children, as I look at you, my heart seizes with pain. Where are you going my children? Have you sunk so deeply into sin that you do not know how to stop yourselves? You justify yourselves with sin and live according to it. Kneel down beneath the Cross and look at my Son. He conquered sin and died so that you, my children, may live. Permit me to help you not to die but to live with my Son forever. Thank you!"* ✦

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**RESPONDING**  
**TO OUR LADY'S CALL TO PRAY FOR PEACE!**  
**MEDJUGORJE IN NEW ORLEANS**  
**IVAN DRAGICEVIC TO SPEAK AT ST. FRANCIS XAVIER CHURCH**

**TUESDAY, DECEMBER 1, 2009**  
**ST. FRANCIS XAVIER CHURCH**  
**444 METAIRIE RD., METAIRIE, LA 70005**  
**ROSARY, HOLY MASS, IVAN'S TALK**  
**EVENING WILL BEGIN AT ABOUT 5:30PM**

We apologize that we don't have the exact time, but Ivan is traveling and out of touch. Exact information will be posted on [WWW.THEMIRGROUP.ORG](http://WWW.THEMIRGROUP.ORG)

**APPARITION: 6:40PM**

**IVAN WILL SPEAK AFTER HIS APPARITION.**



Ivan Dragicevic

We are truly blessed in New Orleans to have this visit from a visionary from Medjugorje. You don't need to travel thousands of miles to be present at an apparition of Our Lady - you need only drive across town. *Please spread the word to all who wish to join us in prayer for this event! It is so important that we come together to pray for our country, for families, holy vocations, and for peace!*

*Prayer,*  
*Fasting,*  
*Reconciliation,*  
*Conversion*  
*+ Peace +*



The MIR Group  
One Galleria Blvd., Ste. 744  
Metairie, LA 70001

Ph 504-849-2570  
Fax 504-849-2574

Message Line - 504-849-2572  
E-mail: [themirgroup@aol.com](mailto:themirgroup@aol.com)  
<http://www.themirgroup.org>



**The Medjugorje Star**  
 2627 David Drive  
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**New Movie on DVD *The 13th Day (Fatima)***

Based on the memoirs of the oldest seer, Lucia Santos, and many thousands of independent eye-witness accounts, the movie dramatized the true story of three young shepherds who experienced six apparitions of Our Lady between May and October 1917.

Available on Dec. 1, 2009, order on page 6.

*2010 will begin our 24th year of printing The Medjugorje Star. If you wish to receive the Star in 2010, please send in your renewal now. While there is no subscription fee, the donations of generous readers have allowed us to keep Our Lady's messages in print. Our readers are the greatest! Thank you!*

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

**THE MEDJUGORJE STAR**  
 2627 David Drive  
 Metairie, LA 70003-4509  
 Phone (504) 889-1713  
 FAX (504) 889-1714  
**Editor:** Kay Mule  
**Secretary:** Ellie Rodrigue  
**Printer:** Roberson Advertising  
 (504) 832-1481

Spiritual Director  
**Fr. Charles Sellars, omi**  
 Oblate Madonna Residence  
 5722 Blanco Road  
 San Antonio, Texas 78216-6680  
 (210) 348-1466

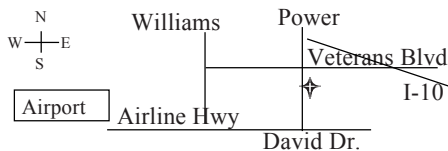
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*§ Visit the Silver Chapel §*

The Medjugorje Star is located near the Louis Armstrong New Orleans International Airport. Join us for prayer in the Silver Chapel –noon–Angelus, 3 pm–Divine Mercy Chapel.



**The Holy Father's**

***Intention for November***

That all the men and women in the world, through testimony of their lives and fraternal dialogue, may clearly demonstrate that the name of God is a bearer of peace.

***Intention for December***

That children may be respected and loved and never be the victims of exploitation in its various forms.