

The event

Medjugorje, the necessary novena for peace

ECCLESIA

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**Diego
Manetti**



As 25 June, feast of the Queen of Peace, approaches, on which the 43rd anniversary of the beginning of the Medjugorje apparitions will be celebrated, Our Lady is preparing her dear children for this decisive anniversary by asking for a special novena of prayers for peace.

This was expressly requested by the Virgin Mary last 15 June during the evening

apparition to the visionary Marija. On that occasion Our Lady made it known that she wished that the novena in her honour - from 16 to 24 June inclusive - be experienced by climbing Podbrdo, the hill of the first apparitions, near the statue placed on the spot where the Virgin first manifested herself, meeting every evening to pray the Rosary from 10 p.m. in expectation of an extraordinary apparition around 11.30 p.m. The Virgin expressly added that this novena is being prayed for peace in the world. This is the first time in 43 years of apparitions that Our Lady has asked to go up Podbrdo for nine consecutive days to pray for peace, and this makes us think of the seriousness of the situation and the gravity of this extraordinary appeal.

During these nine days the visionary Marija will not have the usual evening apparition, but only the 11:30 pm apparition.

On the first day the visionary reported that she had recommended to Our Lady all the intentions of those present, offering sacrifices and prayers for peace. She then specified that the Virgin prayed in her mother tongue, Aramaic, and then added that she expects her children to be even more numerous the next day, because there is so much need for prayer for peace. She then blessed those present and ascended to Heaven.

On 17th June, the second day of the novena, the visionary Marija said that Our Lady seemed a little happier to her than the day before, she spoke again in her mother tongue and Marija asked her in a special way to intercede before her Son Jesus for peace in the world, She who is Queen of Peace. Our Lady prayed and blessed all those present.

On 18 June, the third day of the novena, Marija reported that Our Lady gave thanks for having taken up her call and prayed for peace in our hearts, in our families and in the whole world, once again using Aramaic. She concluded the apparition by blessing those present and inviting us to come in even greater numbers.

On Wednesday 19 June, the fourth day, Our Lady once again spoke in Aramaic, prayed for all those present, thanked them for all the sacrifices offered for her intentions and said: "See you tomorrow at the same time and place".

The prayer novena for peace recalls the appeal Our Lady made on 25 August 1991, asking for nine days of prayer and fasting to fulfil what was begun with the secrets of Fatima: "Dear Children, also today I call you to prayer, now as never before, when my plan began to be realised. Satan is strong and desires to block the plans of peace and joy and make you think that my Son is not strong in his decisions. Therefore I invite you,

dear children, to pray and fast even more strongly. I call you to renunciation during nine days, so that with your help all that I want to accomplish through the secrets that I began in Fatima may be realised. I invite you, dear children, to understand the importance of my coming and the seriousness of the situation. I desire to save all souls and present them to God. Therefore, let us pray that all that I have begun may be completely fulfilled. Thank you for responding to my call!"

From the above message it is clear that even the current novena of prayer and sacrifice for peace cannot be reductively linked to the albeit understandable expectations regarding the conflicts between Ukraine and Russia or including the Gaza Strip, but concerns a much broader and decisive peace, probably that same peace to which Our Lady referred in the first message given to the visionary Marija, when on 26 June 1981, coming down from Podbrdo after the apparition she had with the other visionaries, she alone saw Our Lady entrusting her with a message full of meaning: "Peace. Peace. Peace. Reconcile yourselves. Be reconciled with God and with men. And to do this you must believe, pray, fast and confess".

Another message we could usefully recall is that of 1 January 2001, when Marija was called by Our Lady to go up Podbrdo for an extraordinary message: "Tonight in a special way I wanted you here. In a special way now when Satan is free of his chains. I invite you to consecrate yourselves to my Heart and to the Heart of my Son. In a special way now, my dear children, I invite you to be close to me. I bless you all with my motherly blessing. Go in peace, my dear children".

Our Lady's words make it clear that we are in the imminence of the time of the ten secrets, which is a prelude to the triumph of the Immaculate Heart of Mary and to that time of peace promised at Fatima and reaffirmed at Medjugorje. It becomes essential, then, to take seriously Our Lady's invitation to pray during these days, knowing that at any moment we could find ourselves at the beginning of those events which concern our faith, and through which - as the visionary Mirjana said - God wants to change the world.

Let us therefore not let this appeal of the Queen of Peace fall on deaf ears and let us also give our contribution to hasten the triumph of her Immaculate Heart, joyfully awaiting 25 June next to celebrate the gift of forty-three years of her presence among us.