The Announcement of the Assumption

Choirs of angels rejoice,
All the saints exult:
Welcome Mary the Queen with great acclaim,
with rejoicing of all creation.

The pilgrim Church is joyful
and praises God the all-loving Father
he has done great things in his humble servant,
and raised her to the royal throne of the Son.

This is the Easter of the Virgin Mother,
who is raised in her body to the glory of heaven,
radiant image of the Church in the future,
brought to perfection in the kingdom.

This is the day in which the new Adam,
who overcame sin and death,
raised the new Eve to be beside him,
as his obedient and generous companion.

From Celebrations for the Millennium, 1999.

66th Recognized Miraculous Healing at Lourdes

Miracles as “Signs of Christ”

On February 10, 1999, Msgr. Claude Dagens, bishop of Angoulême, France, announced that the cure which Mr. Jean-Pierre Bély, a member of the diocese, had experienced at Lourdes 12 years earlier, was truly “a sign of Christ.” The bishop said, “In the name of the Church, I recognize and publicly acknowledge the authenticity of the cure which Mr. Jean-Pierre Bély experienced at Lourdes on Friday, October 9, 1987. This sudden and complete cure is a personal gift of God for this man and an effective sign of Christ the Savior, which was accomplished through the intercession of Our Lady of Lourdes.”

In 1984, Mr. Bély was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis, and, by 1987, he was completely paralyzed. Bed-ridden and on a stretcher, he went to Lourdes in 1987 as part of the October Rosary Pilgrimage. On the final morning of the pilgrimage, as Mr. Bély was anointed in the Sacrament of the Sick, he felt, as he later described, a “sensation of coldness” then “a gentle warmth” that seemed to fill his entire body. "Later, I took my first steps, just like a baby who is learning to walk." He said he chose not to make known the cure immediately, "for the sake of all the other sick people who were there." He stayed in his wheelchair and waited until he was reunited with his wife and two children before revealing what had happened. He felt obliged to submit his case to the Lourdes Medical Office.

"I couldn't keep this sign all to myself," he said, adding that the physical healing was accompanied by a “feeling of total pardon and of love,” received in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

The International Medical Committee voted favorably on the miraculous nature of Mr. Bély’s healing, but only by a small majority. The findings were submitted to Bishop Dagens who conducted a canonical investigation. As he recognized the cure as a miraculous sign, the bishop explained that “the International Medical Committee, even while abstaining from furnishing the absolute medical proof of the cure,
explicitly wished that the Church formulate its own judgment. The Church has the liberty, as recognized by the International Medical Committee itself, to express its own pastoral discernment based on Mr. Bély's testimony and on the opinion of the canonical commission."

The bishop's statement, which avoids the term "miracle," is historically significant because it may allow other bishops to recognize cures and healings as divine "signs," even though doctors hesitate to qualify them as totally inexplicable. "We are witness to a new meaning for miracle," commented the Msgr. Jacques Perrie, Bishop of Tarbes and Lourdes.

### The Special Mission of Lourdes

Since the apparitions at Lourdes in 1858, a procedure has gradually developed for verifying cures and healings which occur there. Today, Lourdes is recognized as the Church's foremost center for investigating healings. There, medical personnel from all the world are permitted to investigate the evidence for reported healings. The personnel includes those who allow and those who exclude the possibility of miraculous healings. The procedure is also one which respects the dignity of the person who has been cured. John Paul II reminded the medical personnel of Lourdes that the verification of miraculous cures is Lourdes' "special responsibility and mission" (L'Osservatore Romano, [Eng. ed.] 19-26 December 1988).

It is impossible to estimate the number of cures which have occurred at Lourdes. There are healings of a spiritual nature, such as faith, conversion, acceptance, joy. There are also the psychological cures—freedom from anxiety, release from addiction and compulsion. There are cures of a physical nature, the only type investigated at Lourdes (and also the only type accepted in the beatification or canonization process), because evidence of the past and present condition can be presented.

The verification process at Lourdes now involves three stages. The first occurs when the cured person is examined at the Lourdes Medical Bureau. Established in 1883, the Medical Bureau receives the testimony of the cured person, of the doctor who treated the patient, of those who accompanied the person to Lourdes. After the preliminary examination, the cured person is usually asked to return to Lourdes a year later for another examination. Many cases remain at this first level because of the difficulty of gathering the previous medical reports, a frequent occurrence with individuals coming from areas where medical records are not kept.

Sufficiently documented cases are passed on to the International Medical Bureau. Established in 1946, this bureau consists of medical doctors, psychiatrists, and experts in specific diseases. The criteria for recognizing the cure at Lourdes are the same as those proposed in 1743 by the canonist, Prospero Lambertini (the future Benedict XIV), for the miracles required for the beatification and the canonization of saints. The infirmity must have been serious and thought impossible to cure; no medication or treatment must have been given, which could possibly have caused the cure; the cure must be sudden and complete, with no relapse. In a word, the cure must be unexplainable, that is, there is no human or natural factor which could have effected the cure. (The doctors at Lourdes do not speak of "miracles," only of inexplicable cures.) If, in the opinion of the International Medical Committee, there is no natural explanation for the cure, the case is then turned over to the bishop of the diocese in which the individual resides.

The final stage in the process is the investigation by the diocesan canonical committee appointed by the bishop. In the early years of Lourdes, the final judgment appeared to rest with doctors, so much so, that the second President of the Medical Bureau wrote, in 1892, that "the history of Lourdes has been written entirely by doctors." In the twentieth century, the church has assumed a greater role in the discernment process. A miraculous cure is not simply an impersonal intervention of divine power, but a gift to the individual, frequently accompanied by greater faith, charity, peace. For that reason, and since miracles belong "to the order of faith," the canonical examination deals with the individual's disposition at the time of the cure and religious attitudes which are part of the individual's life. The final word belongs to the bishop of the diocese, who, as in the case of Bishop Dagens, recognized the miraculous cure "in the name of the Church."

Mr. Bély's healing is the 66th cure occurring at Lourdes which has been officially recognized by ecclesiastical authorities. In the last one hundred years, over 6,500 individuals have reported cases of cures to the Medical Bureau. Of these, at least 2,500 are considered truly remarkable, but they lack some requirement needed to allow them to the next stage—witnesses, evidence, differing explanations for the cause of the cure. In the last twenty years, there are reports of about twenty cases of extraordinary cures or healings, about one a year.

### Reconsidering the Requirements for a Miracle

In November 1988, the Congregation for the Causes of Saints sponsored a symposium with the Lourdes Medical

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### The Marian Library Newsletter

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Bible and the International Medical Committee on healings and miracles. The symposium was held partly in response to the questions which the medical personnel were posing.

Pope John Paul's address to the symposium indicated several nuances of vocabulary to describe the miraculous. The pope spoke of miracles, not as irrefutable instances of divine power, but as "signs which can be reminders, messages which show that God is Love." There is, he continued, a personal element and message in every healing. "Every medically inexplicable healing, duly verified at Lourdes, and subsequently acknowledged as a miracle by competent authority, embodies a message, a call to a more fervent Christian life, an enlightenment regarding the role of Mary, Immaculate Virgin, Mother of the Church and the Queen of Peace."

He also hinted that the miraculous "signs" need not be limited to cures of a physical nature (a question discussed both at Lourdes and in the Congregation for the Causes of Saints). "There seems to be evidence today that the divine pedagogy is enlightening mankind by more spiritual and more intimate revelations, and that the cases of physical healing are becoming more rare. It remains true that God is still granting unexpected and profound gifts, responding to the supplication made in faith and charity, with confidence in the power of his love which is greater than all" (L'Osservatore Romano [Eng. ed], 19-26 December 1988).

On October 22-24, 1993, Dr. Roger Pilon, the head of the Lourdes Medical Bureau, organized an International Congress at Lourdes to deal further with questions posed by medical personnel concerning the criteria (formulated more than two centuries ago) for the recognition of a miraculous event. More questions were asked than were dealt with at the symposium (occasional interviews with the doctors are found in Lourdes Magazine).

The medical personnel wondered whether a cure which had occurred over a period of a few days, or a progressive improvement for serious illness, could be recognized as inexplicable. Also, almost all the patients now coming to Lourdes, the doctors commented, have undergone some previous medical treatment which may possibly produce results at Lourdes. Finally, medical science and psychiatry can recognize now, more than previously, factors which may have contributed to a cure. Should this recognition exclude the possibility of a miraculous occurrence?

The questioning at Lourdes has led to a deeper consideration of the nature of miracles, their purpose, and the respective roles of the Church and medical science in their recognition. In its early history, Lourdes was influenced by the prevailing antagonism between science and religion. Miracles were valued for their apologetic value; they were the response to skeptical scientists who a priori refused the possibility of divine intervention.

Today's approach is influenced by the miracle accounts of the Gospels. Vatican II (Dei Verbum) spoke of "works, signs, and miracles" which make known Christ and attest to the revelation of which he is the center. The Catechism of the Catholic Church speaks of "miracles and prodigies" as signs that witness that the Kingdom of God is present in Jesus. They are invitations to believe in Jesus, while intended to strengthen the faith of those who believe. They are not intended "to satisfy the curiosity and satiate the desire for magic" (CCC 547-49). As in the Gospels, miracles are recognized by persons of faith.

Because miracles are a sign of faith, they belong to the order of faith, and it is the prerogative of the Church to recognize that faith. Even scientists who might recognize a secondary cause acknowledge that the final word belongs to another order. "Healings constitute a fact which has its explanation only in the order of faith," said John Paul II, "which the most rigorous scientific examination cannot deny a priori and which it must respect, precisely in its order."

In the Gospel accounts of the miracles, there is both an extraordinary happening and also some personal gift to the individual, a sign of God's love. A theologian who has written extensively about miracles, René Latourell gives the following definition: "A miracle is an extraordinary religious event, manifest in the physical world, a special and free intervention of God's power and love which is addressed to individuals as a sign of God's presence in the world and of his word of salvation."

Many question the criterion stating that a miracle must be totally inexplicable. In our daily experience, the divine is mediated through secondary causes. Why could not an extraordinary event, even if attributable to a secondary cause, be considered miraculous? Limiting miracles to unexplainable interventions of divine power reinforces the notion that God works primarily "in the breach." One theologian at the Lourdes symposium, Xavier Thevenot, thought that a cure from a disease advancing rapidly, even though attributed to the extraordinary appearance of a secondary cause, need not be eliminated from what is considered miraculous. The entire spiritual and psychological disposition of the person should be examined to see if the extent of the change represented a new outlook for the person involved.

Today, Mr. Bely, now 62 years old, has returned to his work and is active in both parish and diocesan activities. The recognition of his cure by the medical and church authorities took almost twelve years. "It was a long time," he said, "but I could not keep this sign only for myself."

His attitude, as described by Dr. Theillier, director of the Lourdes Medical Bureau, is similar to that of Bernadette after the apparitions—one of simplicity and humility. After his cure, he worked with a diocesan organization devoted to the spiritual care of the sick. He is also active in many areas in his parish. He believes that his cure was the result of many prayers of those who accompanied him on the pilgrimage. "Prayer has a great power . . . I am an ordinary person . . . I believe that cure which I received was as if God winked at me."

Bibliography:
The Marianum's Position on the Dogmatic Definition

For the past few years in the religious press, there have been references to a movement promoting a fifth Marian dogma—Mary, Coredemptrix, Mediatrix, and Advocate. Especially in the United States, people are encouraged to send petitions for the definition to the Holy See. The Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith has examined the matter, but, as far as we know, its views or conclusions have not been made public.

The XII International Mariological Congress, held at Czestochowa in August 1996, considered the matter and wrote a declaration which was published in Osservatore Romano with a commentary by the Pontifical Marian Commission.

In an attempt to say something thoughtful and dispassionate on the topic, the Marianum organized, on August 28, 1998, an informal but serious meeting to discuss the matter. Professors of Mariology from a number of Roman theological faculties attended. The discussion was centered on a paper presented by the president of the Marianum, Fr. Ignazio M. Calabuig, "A Reflection on the Request for a Dogmatic Definition of Mary Coredemptrix, Mediatrix, Advocate." While awaiting the publication of this lengthy paper in the Marianum [journal], we give here a few extracts making known the position taken by the Marianum faculty.

"... Catholic doctrine is substantially unanimous in acknowledging Mary's cooperation in the work of salvation, but this unanimity is fractured when theologians want to express the doctrine, in precisely appropriate language without ambivalence or misunderstanding.

The titles Coredemptrix, Mediatrix, and Advocate do not have a univocal meaning. Each of them has been understood in various ways throughout history and in different theological traditions. For example, the term mediatrix has a different meaning in Eastern theology than in Western theology.

Questions arise about the nature of these titles. Are they ontological, that is, do they refer to an action on Mary's part that was determining and necessary for the redemptive event, as was her fiat for the Word's becoming man? Or are they functional titles that make clear the role entrusted to Mary, namely, that through her cooperation, redemption comes to all people?

From a biblical viewpoint, these three titles refer properly to Christ. He is "the one Savior of all" (Rom. 5), for outside of him there is no salvation through anyone else, nor is there any other name given to the human race by which we are to be saved" (Acts 4,12). Nothing is lacking to his perfect act of redemption and nothing can be added. He is the one and perfect Mediator: "There is also one mediator between God and the human race, Christ Jesus, himself human, who gave himself as ransom for all" (1 Tim. 2,5-6). To his perfect and immediate mediation nothing can be added, nor can anything be taken from it. He is the just and merciful Advocate; St. John writes: "If anyone does sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous one" (1 John 2,1). He is the high priest "who has taken his seat at the right hand of the throne of majesty in heaven" (Heb. 8,1), and who "lives forever to make intercession" (Heb. 7,25) for those who listen to God.

In the New Testament, none of the three titles—Coredemptrix, Mediatrix, Advocate—is attributed to Mary. On the contrary, the New Testament texts describing Christ as Redeemer, Mediator and Advocate seem—not to support the idea of a creature alongside him acting as Coredemptrix, Mediatrix and Advocate in an ontological sense.

On the other hand, we recognize within the New Testament itself that, by the gift of grace, God calls creatures to take part in the realization of the plan of salvation in Christ. Speaking of his own ministry and that of his companions, St. Paul does not hesitate to affirm "We are God's coworkers" (1 Cor. 3,9). Vatican II recalls that the Church "is driven by the Holy Spirit to do her part for the full realization of the plan of God, who has constituted Christ as the source of salvation for the whole world" (LG 17). Now, Mary is "preeminent" (LG 53) among the members of the Body of Christ. There is no doubt that, in her faith and obedience, she cooperated in a more intense way in the realization of God's saving project and in a unique way in the redemptive incarnation of the Word.

These preliminary and elementary notes make sufficiently clear that the significance of the three titles, considered singly and as a whole, is not a slight one. Among theologians, they raise many questions to which there is not a readily agreeable answer. When we venture beyond the hermeneutical horizon of Lumen gentium in relation to the three titles, we find ourselves in a lively crossfire of theological debate.

The request for a dogma is centered on these very titles: Coredemptrix, Mediatrix, Advocate. Since the issue has gained some publicity, there has arisen among theologians renewed interest in those titles, sometimes to show how founded they are in church teaching, sometimes to point out the ambiguities they involve.

Why the Marianum does not support the request:

The staff of the Marianum [journal] does not support the request for a dogmatic definition for the following reasons:

- The doctrine on Mary's cooperation in the work of salvation has been formally, repeatedly, and authoritatively taught by both the extraordinary (Vatican II) and the ordinary (papal and episcopal) magisterium of the Church.
- The doctrine is not contested or denied in any essential element by Catholic theologians.
- In both the sacred liturgy and popular devotions, Mary's cooperation in the work of salvation, her constant intercession, and her spiritual motherhood are widely confessed.
• The proposal for a definition centered on the three titles of Coredemptrix, Mediatrix, and Advocate is a source of perplexity both with regard to the titles in themselves (toward the first of the three, the magisterium is extremely reserved) and also with regard to aspects of the doctrine underlying each of the three terms.

• The doctrine of Mary's mediation should be dealt with in a much broader theological framework (christological, pneumatological, ecclesiological) and, consequently, rethought in its presentation and terminology. It should also be studied again from a biblical viewpoint.

• The proposed dogmatic definition could inflict a serious wound, difficult to heal, on the ecumenical movement, something that would be counter to a Church commitment aroused and guided by the Spirit.

• Such is our position: it is stated, with respect to all, out of the necessity of making known our position as theologians, while acknowledging that there will be disagreements with our position.


Preparations for the Great Jubilee

Celebrations for the Millennium.


These three volumes are offered by the Central Organizing Committee for the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000. For each of the years, materials for liturgy and prayer services are provided to underline the themes of the preparation period for the millennium, as outlined in On the Coming Third Millennium. The structure of each book is similar: formularies for Masses (many newly composed); texts for the General Intercession; prayer before the Blessed Sacrament; texts for prayer vigils and the celebration of the Word; penitential celebrations; litanies; Marian devotions. Some of the material can be found elsewhere (e.g., the Sacramentary, the Collection of Masses of the Blessed Virgin Mary); but much of the material, especially for the prayer services and devotions, is newly composed or taken from sources not readily available.

One feature is several new litanies, which make possible a slow rhythmic interaction of expressions of praise and petition, and can be used as part of a service or a processional chant. The invocations of the litanies provide many suggestions for prayer, catechesis, and illustration. In the 1997 volume, there are three new litanies referring to Christ. The 1999 volume contains three litanies for the Blessed Virgin Mary. In addition to the Litany of Loreto, there is the “Litany of Mary, Queen,” (which appeared in the “Order of Crowning an Image of Blessed Virgin Mary” [English translation, 1987]). The third, “Litany of Our Lady of Hope,” provides variety in structure, with contemporary titles, illustrating Mary as disciple and model of the Church; it speaks of Mary's identification with the oppressed and marginalized, and describes her presence as “prayerful, welcoming, shining, active.”

The 1999 volume provides examples of Reconciliation Services based on different themes: Lord, Our Father; the Father of Mercies; the Fountain of Love. Suggestions for “examination of conscience” are given, one based on the Parable of the Prodigal Son, and the other on the Beatitudes.

The Marian section, a small part of the total work, provides material not previously accessible to most catechists and liturgy planners. Texts (four major sections) for the revered hymn of the Eastern Church, the Akathist, are provided, together with an opening invocation, Scripture readings, intercessions, and “workable” suggestions for their use. The texts could be used during Advent or as a prayer service on the solemnities of Mary, Mother of God and of the Annunciation.

The 1998 volume has an innovative Rosary service based on the mysteries based on “the mysteries of the Holy Spirit” i.e., the Holy Spirit’s presence at the Annunciation, Visitation, the Cross, Pentecost, and in the Hearts of the Christians. The format consists of announcement of the mystery, Our Father, ten Hail Marys (the first part only, but with the possibility of including a phrase referring to the mystery under consideration, with the second part only at the end of the decade). Twenty-six years ago, the American bishops’ Bebold Your Mother urged adaptation and experimentation with the rosary-type of prayer. However, since no examples from any authoritative source were provided, experimentation with the rosary was frequently misunderstood and resisted.

The use of the resources are not “time-dated,” that is, limited to the years for which they were originally intended; they will enrich liturgies and prayer services well into the next millennium. The postconciliar period has given great attention to the liturgical texts, but provided very little guidance for the development of prayer services. These books provide many texts but also patterns, which can be adapted, for vigils, reconciliation services, Marian programs. These books should be in every sacristy and in the offices of religious educators and liturgical planners.
The Virgin Mary “Present in Every Sunday of the Church”

On May 31, 1998, Pope John Paul II addressed an apostolic letter on the importance of Sunday. “The celebration of Sunday,” explained the pope, “remains, on the threshold of the third millennium, an indispensable element of our Christian identity.” It is the Lord’s Day, the first and the eighth day, the weekly commemoration of the Resurrection of the Lord. In the history of Christianity, the celebration of the Eucharist has always been the central event of the day, though the remaining activities of the day have been observed in different ways. In Catholic countries, the day has been one of freedom from work, rest, joy, and solidarity.

A section of the letter (#86) speaks of the Virgin Mary’s relation to Sunday. Mary is present in the Church’s celebration of Sunday. “Without in any way detracting from the centrality of Christ and his spirit, Mary is always present in the Church’s Sunday.” Mary’s presence is founded in her inseparable relation to the saving work of Christ celebrated in the Eucharist. The Eucharist celebrates “the mystery of Christ” and his whole saving activity, which embraces Mary and the Communion of Saints. Because of her relation to the mystery of Christ and the Church, Mary is present in a “unique” way. “How could she who is mater Domini and mater ecclesiae fail to be uniquely present on the day which is both dies Domini and dies ecclesiae?”

To the Church celebrating the Eucharist, Mary is the exemplar of those attitudes necessary for divine worship. First, as Mary received and pondered the word, so the Church listens to the Word in liturgy—Maria audiens, ecclesia audiens. “As they listen to the word proclaimed in the Sunday assembly, the faithful look to the Virgin Mary, learning from her to keep it and ponder it in their hearts (Lk. 2:19).” In Eucharist, the members of the Church stand with Mary in the offering of Christ and of their own lives—Maria offerens, ecclesia offerens. “With Mary, they learn to stand at the foot of the cross, offering to the Father the sacrifice of Christ and joining to it the offering of their own lives.”

At liturgy and in their daily lives, the faithful join with Mary in her prophetic hymn of praise: “With Mary, they experience the joy of the resurrection, making their own the words of the Magnificat, extolling the inexhaustible gift of divine mercy in the inexorable flow of time.”

Throughout the week, Mary precedes and accompanies the Church in its pilgrimage to the triune God. “From Sunday to Sunday, the pilgrim people follow in the footsteps of Mary.” Lastly, the members of the Church are confident that Mary’s prayer is joined to theirs in praise of the Trinity. “Her maternal intercession gives special power and fervor to the prayer which rises from the Church to the most holy Trinity.”

References to Mary in the liturgy need not be limited to Marian feasts. Unfortunately, many Catholics hear a reference to Mary only on the Marian solemnities—Immaculate Conception, Mother of God, the Assumption. On the Sundays, there is the great silence about the Virgin Mary. Yet, Mary is related to the mystery of Christ celebrated in every Eucharist. An occasional and discreet reference to Mary—in word, song, and art—can provide to the Church gathered on Sunday a model of the attitudes requisite for worship. The Mother of the Lord and Mother of the Church is present in a unique way on Sunday, the Day of the Lord and the Day of the Church.

Update . . .

From the Marian Library/IMRI

Upcoming Events . . .
✓ The International Pontifical Marian Academy (PAMI) announces that the Fifteenth International Mariological Congress will be held in Rome, September 15-24, 2000. The theme of the meeting is “The Word Made Flesh and the Blessed Virgin Mary.”
✓ The Mariological Society of America will hold its annual meeting in Belleville, Illinois, at the Shrine of Our Lady of the Snows, May 24-26, 2000. The theme of the meeting will be related to Mary and pilgrimage. The Society issues a “call for papers” on topics related to the meeting’s theme: Mary’s pilgrimage of faith, the role of Marian shrines, the Marian “geography of faith.” Those wishing to present a paper at the meeting (for publication in Marian Studies), should submit a précis by January 15, 2000, to the MSA Secretariat (at the Marian Library).

Persons . . .
✓ The last issue of the Marian Library Newsletter reported that, at the annual meeting of the pontifical academies and theological faculties in Rome on November 7, 1998, Deyanira Flores Gonzalez received the first award for the outstanding academic dissertation; it was presented at the Marianum, on Rupert of Deutz. It was reported that on this occasion she received $35,000. We were later informed that Professor Flores donated the entire amount to the International Pontifical Marian Academy (PAMI) for “the promotion of scientific Mariological research and for Mariological societies and their publications in Latin America.”
✓ On March 20, 1999, it was announced that Pope John Paul II had appointed Dr. Ignacio M. Calabuig Adam, O.S.M., rector of the Marianum (Rome) to be a consultant to the Congregation for Divine Worship and Disciple of the Sacraments.
✓ On November 20, 1998, Fr. Frederick Jelly, O.P., professor of theology at Mt. St. Mary’s, Emmitsburg and at IMRI, was awarded the degree of Magister of Sacred Theology from the Dominican Prior General. The award was conferred by the Prior Provincial of the Dominican Friars of the Province of St. Joseph at a Vespers Service in St. Vincent Ferrer Church, New York City.
✓ In reply to a letter of the French bishop, Msgr. Gilbert Aubry of Saint-Denis-de-la Reunion, concerning the status of the apparitions in Medjugorje, Msgr. Tarcisio Bertone of the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith replied, “It is not the custom of the Holy See to pass the first judgment on alleged supernatural phenomena. This dicastery follows the decision established by the bishops of (what was formerly) Yugoslavia in the Declaration of Zadar, April 10, 1991.” . . . On the basis of the investigations conducted, it is not possible to affirm whether there is evidence of a supernatural occurrence.” After the division of Yugoslavia into independent countries, it is the prerogative of the members of the episcopal conference of Bosnia-Herzegovina to study the situation and to issue any new judgments on the matter.

In a letter to Famille Chrétienne, the bishop of Mostar-Duvno, Msgr. Ratko Peric stated, “My conviction and position is that the apparitions or revelations of Medjugorje not only non constat de supernaturali­tate but that also constat de non supernaturali­tate (From La Docu­men­tation Catholique, 2-16 August 1998, no. 2187).”
✓ For the last eighteen years, Fr. René Laurentin has published an update on the events at Medjugorje. This year’s volume, he has announced, will, at the request made during a visit of the Bishop Peric of Mostar, be the last. The final volume includes advice to pilgrims and to church authorities responsible for Medjugorje. His last words on the subject, “Where hostility abounds, grace is even stronger” (From Eco di Bonaria, no. 12).
1998
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