

'Proofs' counter views of Yugoslavian bishops

To the editors:

I am writing this letter in response to the article of January 10 to the effect that the Yugoslav bishops find no proofs of the Medjugorje apparitions (*Catholic Courier*: "No proof of apparitions, Yugoslavian bishops find"). As someone who visited Medjugorje twice and especially on behalf of the millions who, like myself, have found many personal proofs for themselves, the news made me distressed. Because my personal "proof" are not entirely subjective and are in part communicable I would like to share with the readers of the *Courier* my experiences.

Most of my proofs are not strictly speaking miraculous. But probably because I am a professor — a so-called intellectual — the Holy Spirit almost always in my life treated me for such, giving me intellectual proofs in the form of intersection of events which are so improbable that one must believe their message. I will restrict myself only to those events which are the most objective and objectively verifiable through witnesses or otherwise. Often I am reminded of St. Paul's speaking of the Kingdom being like a mirror in which, for the moment, we see only dimly and without precision.

EVENT NO. 1: Because my father died 30 years ago on the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, and for many other reasons, I became very devoted to Our Lady of Guadalupe. Having visited her shrine in Mexico City, on our return in Kennedy Airport at the luggage retrieval belt I could not believe my eyes to see a group of our fellow parishioners also waiting for their luggage. I was even more amazed to find that they were returning from Medjugorje. I did not know about their trip, but even if I did, I found the coincidence remarkable. Incidentally those of us who met there have since then formed quite spontaneously a Mass-cum-Rosary group, as asked by Our Lady of Medjugorje, attending daily the 7 a.m. Mass at the Immaculate Conception.

EVENT NO. 2: The facts about the eyes of Our Lady of Guadalupe and the reflections in them are fairly well known. For me as a professor at Cornell University it was remarkable to find that a Peruvian Ph.D. in Cornell Engineering undertook a computer-visual analysis of the reflections and was able to identify them quite closely. One of the images in her eyes represent the reflection of an Indian peasant family with a father and mother with child. The profile of the mother is quite clearly enlarged and reproduced in the book by the Cornell Ph.D.

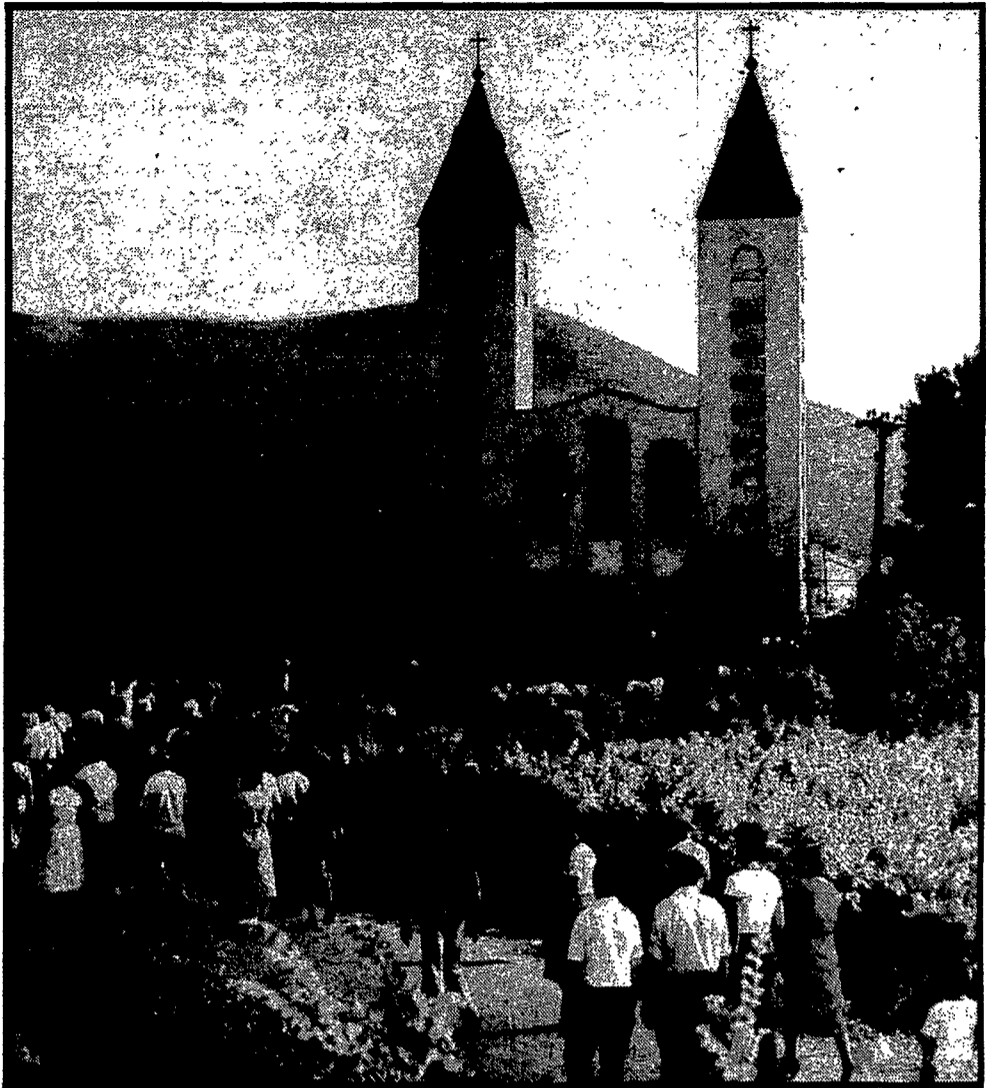
EVENT NO. 3: During my first visit at Medjugorje and a half day of prayer at the hill of apparitions, taking leave of that wonderful place, I felt — like most silly pilgrims — that it would be nice to take with me a souvenir stone; kneeling, I put my left hand blindly down and picked a stone. I decided that it was too big and heavy to carry. So I dug blindly again and picked up another one and I have that stone to this day. It resembles closely the profile

of the mother in the eyes of Our Lady of Guadalupe — something that struck me from the time I was studying the book on the subject.

EVENT NO. 4: Bishop Zanic, the principal opponent of the veracity of the events of Medjugorje and at the same time the bishop of that part of Yugoslavia asked Ivan, one of the seers, to write on a piece of paper the secret entrusted to him by Our Lady regarding the visible sign that she will leave in Medjugorje as proof of her appearing there, and to give it to him in a sealed envelope. Apparently the Bishop opened the letter — I do not know by whose authority — and it revealed that the sign will be in Our Lady's image. Even though I do not dare to presume that my stone is the promised sign, it cannot be denied that its close resemblance does come from Our Lady's image, more specifically her eyes.

EVENT NO. 5: The Children to whom Our Lady is appearing in Medjugorje were made worried and afraid by the bishop's indiscretion. In one of the subsequent apparitions they asked Our Blessed Mother about it. Her response was — as much as I can remember "Not to weep about it." To me, because weeping concerns the eyes, this was a tremendous source of joy and confirmation. If Bishop Zanic has a bad conscience about opening the letter this should also be a tremendous source of gentle consolation — of course, if he starts believing what he does not believe.

Jaroslav Vanek
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Rochester



File photo
Thousands of people make their way each day to St. James Church in Medjugorje, Yugoslavia, where alleged apparitions of the Blessed Virgin occur.

Paper won't lead non-Christian to Christ

To the editors:

A little while ago, I sat down and read through the (*Catholic Courier*). It occurred to me that a non-Christian would find little in it to lead him into an understanding of Jesus Christ. On the contrary, he would no doubt go away confused, perplexed by the contradictions and with the notion that Christians — Catholics for sure — really don't know what they are about.

How do we profess to be Christians and yet refuse to base our thoughts and words

and actions — even our newspaper — on the teachings of Jesus Christ? Why do so many of us try to conform to the ways of our world, saying they are good, when Jesus tells us clearly not to?

Jesus even gives us proof of what is right and wrong: "A good seed bears good fruit and a bad seed bears bad fruit."

Look at our world. Do we like the state that it is in? Do we not know that every evil act brings more destruction and death? Do we not see that good acts result in the spreading of love, hope, joy and new life

— even if it takes time? How is it then that we cannot judge what is right and wrong?

Jesus tells us: "Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the road broad that leads to destruction, and those who enter through it are many. How narrow the gate and constricted the road that leads to life. And those who find it are few."

Jesus leads us to life — no one else does or can. Neither Buddha nor Mohammed, not the humanists or any guru on this earth will reveal the true God to you and I. Jesus calls upon us to preach the gospel so that we may facilitate others coming to know Him. "The work of God is to have faith in the one whom He sent," says our Lord.

If we would call ourselves Christians we must seriously enter into regular prayer, submit our will to the Lord and follow His teachings. These will not be the teachings of the world or other religions. They will not be the rationalizations of our mind or the desires of our human nature alone. These teachings however will bring us into communion with God, ourselves and one another. As God blesses our faithfulness, they will bring us into deeper love, joy, peace, understanding and true life here and now and eternally.

Anne Bartholomew
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Welcomes Courier's difference

To the editors:

I have been receiving your paper for many years. I very much enjoy your balanced approach to news of interest to Catholics. You well merit your current name of *Catholic Courier*. You balance Father Shamon with Cindy Bassett, Father McBrien with Father Cuddy. You balance the latest Vatican fulmination with stories about the living faith of American Catholics. You are not afraid to present balanced viewpoints on controversial topics in the Church today: abortion,

Mary, women's ordination, just war, authority, etc. You are not afraid to print the angry letters of rigid traditionalist Catholics who are fighting to resuscitate the authoritarian model of Church which has been dying since Vatican II.

I have read Catholic newspapers from other dioceses. So many of them merely quote chunks of Vatican documents to warn against some evil or other. So many of them contain boring columns by some local priest exhorting people to do good and avoid evil. So many of them contain numerous pictures of the local bishop showing how busy he is. The *Catholic Courier* is different. Vive la difference!

Rev. Robert L. Collins
East Avenue
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Conversion needed

To the editors:

I believe that there will always be people in our society who are difficult to deal with. These will range from those who are minor irritants in our everyday lives to those who cause trouble on an international scale. If violence and war are our only response, we will never have lasting peace.

What is needed is a dramatic conversion in our attitudes and value systems. If this doesn't start with the churches, where will it start?

Margaret A. Lester
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Is priest 'Baghdad Jim'?

To the editors:

Do we have another Jane Fonda in our midst?

If Father Callan keeps up the course he is taking, he is giving comfort and aid to the enemy, which in time of war is treason.

Our country is at war, and the least we can do is support our troops, who may die for our country.

Hugh P. Welch
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