

**3** - Priests who canonically administer this parish of Medjugorje or those who come as visitors, are not authorized to express their private views contrary to the official position of the Church on the so-called “apparitions” and “messages”, during celebrations of the sacraments, neither during other common acts of piety, nor in the Catholic media.

**4** - The Catholic faithful are not only free from any obligation to believe in the authenticity of the “apparitions” but they must also know that church pilgrimages are not allowed, whether official or private, individual or group, or from other parishes, if they presuppose the authenticity of the “apparitions” or if by undertaking them attempt to certify these “apparitions”.

**5** - As the local Bishop, I maintain that regarding the events of Medjugorje, on the basis of the investigations and experience gained thus far, throughout these last 25 years, the Church has not confirmed a single “apparition” as authentically being the Madonna. The fact that during these 25 years there has been talk of tens of thousands of “apparitions” does not contribute any authenticity to these events, which according to the words of our current Pope, who I encountered during an audience on 24 February this year, commented that at the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith they always questioned how all these “apparitions” could be considered authentic for the Catholic faithful. They particularly do not seem to be authentic when it is known beforehand that these so-called “apparitions” will occur:

To one of the “seers” on the 18th of March every year, but along with this she will also receive an “apparition” on the 2nd of each month, with “messages” which you can expect, according to the established procedures;

The second will receive an apparition on every day of the year, and if this were not enough, an added special “apparition” on the 25th of each month along with a type of press release, which once again you can foresee and expect;

The third will receive an “apparition” on the 25th of December, on Christmas day, along with a

message similar to the ones already mentioned; The fourth will receive an “apparition” on the 8th of September every year along with a specific message;

The remaining two will receive the same, every day along with “messages” that can be anticipated since they are variations on the same theme. This fact and the flood of so-called apparitions, messages, secrets and signs, do not strengthen the faith, but rather further convince us that in all of this there is nothing neither authentic nor established as truthful.

Therefore I responsibly call upon those who claim themselves to be “seers”, as well as those persons behind the “messages”, to demonstrate ecclesiastical obedience and to cease with these public manifestations and messages in this parish. In this fashion they shall show their necessary adherence to the Church, by neither placing private “apparitions” nor private sayings before the official position of the Church. Our faith is a serious and responsible matter. The Church is also a serious and responsible institution!

Through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the greatest possessor of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, who through the same Holy Spirit conceived in her body and gave birth to the Second person of the Trinity, Jesus Christ, who gives us his Most Holy Body and Blood for eternal life, may He - who is the Way, the Truth and the Life - help us so that the truth of the Blessed Virgin, his Mother and Mother of the Church, Seat of Wisdom and Mirror of Justice, may shine forth in brightness in this parish and diocese, without even a hint of incredibility, yet all in accord with the constant teachings and practice of the Church. Amen.

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Pamphlet 413

## **Official Declarations on Medjugorje**

In 1991, a commission set up by the bishops of what was then Yugoslavia reached the conclusion that there was no clear evidence of extraordinary events at Medjugorje, saying that the study “could not confirm the supernatural character” of the alleged Marian apparitions.

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### **DECLARATION OF THE EX-YUGOSLAVIA BISHOPS' CONFERENCE ON MEDJUGORJE**

At the ordinary session of the Bishops' Conference of Yugoslavia in Zadar from April 9 - 11, 1991 the following was adopted.

#### **DECLARATION**

The bishops, from the very beginning, have been following the events of Medjugorje through the Bishop of the diocese [Mostar], the Bishop's Commission and the Commission of the Bishops Conference of Yugoslavia on Medjugorje.

On the basis of the investigations so far it can not be affirmed that one is dealing with supernatural apparitions and revelations.

However, the numerous gatherings of the faithful from different parts of the world, who come to Medjugorje, prompted both by motives of belief and various other motives, require the attention and pastoral care in the first place of the diocesan bishop and with him of the other bishops also, so that in Medjugorje and in everything connected with it a healthy devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary may be promoted in accordance with the teaching of the Church.

For this purpose the bishops will issue specially suitable liturgical-pastoral directives. Likewise, through their Commission they will continue to keep up with and investigate the entire event in Medjugorje.

In Zadar April 10, 1991  
The Bishops of Yugoslavia  
(Zagreb Glas Koncila May 5, 1991)

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## **ON MEDJUGORJE AT THE 6TH REGULAR SESSION OF THE BOSNIA-HERCEGOVINA BISHOPS' CONFERENCE**

In Sarajevo on July 2-3, 1996 the sixth regular session of the Bishops' Conference of Bosnia-Herzegovina (BCB-H) was held. Present were all of its members: Cardinal Vinko Puljic, President; Bishop of Banja Luka, Franjo Komarica; Bishop of Mostar, Ratko Peric; and Sarajevo auxiliary Bishop, Pero Sudar. From that session we present here only the text that refers to Our Lady's apparitions in the parish of Medjugorje.

"The Bishop of Mostar reported to the Conference on the official letters of the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith addressed to two French bishops in regard to pilgrimages to Medjugorje. In the letters, among other things, is stated that 'official pilgrimages to Medjugorje, understood as a place of authentic Marian apparitions, are not permitted to be organized either on the parish or on the diocesan level, because that would be in contradiction to what the Bishops of former Yugoslavia affirmed in their Declaration of April 10, 1991. (see *Glas Koncila*, 30, VI, 1996). The bishops moved to announce and circulate this church position in the territory of their dioceses."

*Vrhbosna*, VII (CX), 3, Sarajevo 1996, p. 171

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## **THE LATEST VATICAN STATEMENT ABOUT MEDJUGORJE**

From the beginning of June 1996 many of the public means of communication reported that the Vatican had prohibited pilgrimages to Medjugorje. Spokesman for the Holy See, Joaquin Navarro-Valls immediately refuted this. However, in case there would remain any doubt regarding the stance of the Vatican towards Medjugorje, the spokesman for the Holy See clarified their position once again. Here we treat of the subject in full:

**"INDIVIDUALS PERMITTED TO VISIT MEDJUGORJE, OFFICIAL SAYS", By Catholic News Service**

While the Vatican has never said that Catholics may not go to Medjugorje, it has told bishops that their parishes and dioceses may not organize official pilgrimages to the site of the alleged Marian apparitions, the Vatican spokesman said.

"You cannot say people cannot go there until it has been proven false. This has not been said, so anyone can go if they want," the spokesman, Joaquin Navarro-Valls, told Catholic News Service Aug. 21.

In addition, he said, when Catholic faithful go anywhere, they are entitled to spiritual care, so the church does not forbid priests to accompany lay-organized trips to Medjugorje in Bosnia-Herzegovina, just as it would not forbid them accompanying a group of Catholics visiting South Africa.

Navarro-Valls insisted "nothing has changed" regarding the Vatican's position on Medjugorje.

In early June, a French newspaper published excerpts from a letter about Medjugorje pilgrimages written by the secretary of the Vatican Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in response to a question from a French bishop.

The letter from Archbishop Tarcisio Bertone of the doctrinal congregation quoted from a 1991 statement by the bishops of former Yugoslavia, which said that after much study, "it cannot be confirmed that supernatural apparitions or revelations are occurring here."

However, the bishops said- and Archbishop Bertone repeated- the number of the faithful traveling to Medjugorje requires for the church to arrange for their pastoral care.

After quoting the 1991 statement, Archbishop Bertone wrote, "From what was said, it follows that official pilgrimages to Medjugorje, understood as a place of authentic Marian apparitions, should not be organized either on a parish or diocesan level because it would be in contradiction with what the bishops of ex-Yugoslavia said in their declaration cited above."

Navarro-Valls said, "When one reads what Archbishop Bertone wrote, one could get the impression that from now on everything is forbidden, no possibility" for Catholics to travel to Medjugorje.

But, in fact, "nothing has changed, nothing new has been said", the spokesman told CNS. "The

problem is if you systematically organize pilgrimages, organize them with the bishop and the church, you are giving a canonical sanction to the facts of Medjugorje," which the church is still in the process of studying.

"This is different from people going in a group who bring a priest with them in order to go to confession," the spokesman said.

Navarro-Valls said he commented because "I was worried that what Archbishop Bertone said could be interpreted in too restricted a way. Has the church or the Vatican said no (to Catholics visiting Medjugorje)? No."

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## **HOMILY OF BISHOP RATKO PERIĆ ON THE SOLEMNITY OF THE MOST HOLY BODY AND BLOOD OF CHRIST**

Medjugorje, June 15, 2006

I am truly grateful to the Holy Father the Pope, to John Paul II of blessed memory and to the reigning Benedict XVI, who have always respected the judgments of the bishops of Mostar-Duvno, of the previous as well as the current bishop, regarding the so-called "apparitions" and "messages" of Medjugorje, all the while recognizing the Holy Father's right to give a final decision on these events. The judgments of the bishops, after all the canonical investigations made thus far, can be summarized in these following points:

**1** - Medjugorje is a catholic parish in which liturgical and pastoral activities are carried out, just as in all the other parishes of this diocese of Mostar-Duvno. No-one except the official Church authorities is then authorized to attribute the formal title of "shrine" to this place.

**2** - On the basis of Church investigations of the events of Medjugorje, it cannot be determined that these events involve supernatural apparitions or revelations. This means that till now the Church has not accepted, neither as supernatural nor as Marian, any of the apparitions.