



BE STRONG!  
*Do Not Relax!*

*By A Friend of Medjugorje*

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**Do Not Relax!**

by

**A Friend of Medjugorje**

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

The author of this book is also the author of the books Words From Heaven<sup>®</sup>, How to Change Your Husband<sup>™</sup>, I See Far<sup>™</sup>, Look What Happened While You Were Sleeping<sup>™</sup>, and other publications such as the *Words of the Harvesters* and the *Caritas of Birmingham Newsletter*. He has written more on Medjugorje than anyone in the world, producing life-changing writings and spiritual direction to countless numbers across the world, of all nationalities. He wishes to be known only as “A Friend of Medjugorje.” The author is not one looking in from the outside regarding Medjugorje, but one who is close to the events - many times, right in the middle of the events about which he has written; a first-hand witness.

Originally writing to only a few individuals in 1987, readership has grown to over 250,000 in the United States, with additional readers in over one hundred thirty foreign countries, who follow the spiritual insights and direction given through these writings.

The author, when asked why he signs only as “A Friend of Medjugorje,” stated:

*“I have never had an ambition or desire to write. I do so only because God has shown me, through prayer, that He desires this of me. So from the beginning, when I was writing to only a few people, I prayed to God and promised I would not sign anything; that the writings would have to carry themselves and not be built on a personality. I prayed*

*that if it was God's desire for these writings to be inspired and known, then He could do it by His Will and grace and that my will be abandoned to it.*

*“The Father has made these writings known and continues to spread them to the ends of the earth. These were Our Lord's last words before ascending: **“Be a witness to the ends of the earth.”** These writings give testimony to that desire of Our Lord to be a witness with one's life. It is not important to be known. It is important to do God's Will.”*

For those who require “ownership” of these writings by the author in seeing his name printed on this work in order to give it more credibility, we state that we cannot reconcile the fact that these writings are producing hundreds of thousands of conversions, if not millions through grace, and are requested worldwide from every corner of the earth. The author, therefore, will not take credit for a work that, by proof of the impact these writings have to lead hearts to conversion, have been Spirit-inspired with numbers increasing yearly, sweeping as a wave across the ocean. Indeed in this case, crossing every ocean of the earth. Our Lady gave this author a direct message for him through the visionary, Marija, of Medjugorje, in which Our Lady said to him to witness not with words but through humility. It is for this reason that he wishes to remain simply “A Friend of Medjugorje.”

— Caritas of Birmingham

# *Medjugorje*

## **The Story in Brief**

THE VILLAGE SEES THE LIGHT is the title of a story which “Reader’s Digest” published in February 1986. It was the first major news on a mass public scale that told of the Virgin Mary visiting the tiny village of Medjugorje, Bosnia-Herzegovina. At that time this village was populated by 400 families.

It was June 24, 1981, the Feast of John the Baptist, the proclaimer of the coming Messiah. In the evening, around 5:00 p.m., the Virgin Mary appeared to two young people, Mirjana Dragicevic\* and Ivanka Ivankovic\*. A little later, around 6:40 p.m. the same day, four more young people, Milka Pavlovic\*, the little sister of Marija, Ivan Ivankovic, Vicka Ivankovic\*, and Ivan Dragicevic saw the Virgin Mary. June 25, 1981, was the first day the six visionaries, Ivanka Ivankovic\*, Mirjana Dragicevic\*, Vicka Ivankovic\*, Marija Pavlovic\*, Ivan Dragicevic and Jakov Colo saw Our Lady, or the “Gospa,” on the hill. These six have become known as and remain “the visionaries.” These visionaries are not related to one another. Three of the six visionaries no longer see Our Lady on a daily basis. As of July 2009, the Virgin is still appearing everyday to the remaining three visionaries; that’s well over 12,820 apparitions. The supernatural event has survived all efforts of the Communists to put a stop to it,

\* Names at the time of the apparitions, they are now married with last names changed.

many scientific studies, and even the condemnation by the local bishop; yet, the apparitions have survived, giving strong evidence that this is from God because nothing and no one has been able to stop it. For over twenty-eight years, the apparitions have proved themselves over and over and now credibility is so favorable around the world that the burden of proof that this is authentic has shifted from those who believe to the burden of proof that it is not happening by those opposed to it. Those against the apparitions are being crushed by the fruits of Medjugorje — millions and millions of conversions which are so powerful that they are changing and will continue to change the whole face of the earth.

See **mej.com** for more information.

## **Be Strong! Do Not Relax!**

August 22, 2005 was the feast day of the Queenship Of Mary. This day brought to completion the circle of a celebration event of Our Lady's life that the Community of Caritas had lived in a very intimate way with Our Lady Herself during the month of August. The Birth to Assumption pilgrimage, starting here at Caritas with the celebration of Our Lady's birthday and ending in Medjugorje, with the celebration of Our Lady's Assumption, had been filled with graces and blessings beyond what we ever imagined. The work involved in putting this together, however, had taken its toll on the whole community. We had hosted two retreats with visionary Marija within a 15 month period, had launched a charter flight to Medjugorje that had taken more time and effort than any of us expected or were prepared for, had cleared a 40 acre piece of property for hay production and to use for extra space for parking, had replaced the roof on The Tabernacle of Our Lady's Messages, as well as made many repairs within the building and around the grounds themselves related to damage from Hurricane Ivan, at the same time carrying the daily needs of the mission, our school and our family life on our shoulders.

Coming back from Medjugorje, we all were looking forward to a time of peace and rest as we headed towards fall and winter. Our founder (A Friend of Medjugorje) called for a day

of retreat for the community on August 22<sup>nd</sup> to spend a little time in reflection on what we had just lived through, what we had accomplished, with God's grace, over these last intense 36 months, stretching back to the last seven years, and what would be our direction for the future. Our founder desired to share a Scripture passage that he had felt led to read, upon returning from Medjugorje, that paralleled the community's experience and where we found ourselves spiritually at this time. Within this booklet, we share portions of that retreat, because though on that day we believed we would be given time for rest—in just a few days, Hurricane Katrina hit, and suddenly we found ourselves working through the nights again, our men heading to the Gulf Coast for weeks on end, while a skeleton crew was left at Caritas to carry on the large task of the mission as best we could. We know that many of you feel tired spiritually. The recent events around the world caused by so many different natural disasters has helped to bring about a spiritual inertia in many. For that reason, we wish to share with you the words Our Lady gave to us through Holy Scripture, when She knew what was heading our way, while we looked forward to a time of rest.

June 25, 1991

**“...little children, pray and read the Sacred Scriptures so that through my coming you discover the message in Sacred Scripture for you...”**

The story that our founder presented to us for reflection that day was from 2 Chronicles 14–16. We recommend that you say a prayer to the Holy Spirit and then read these chapters before continuing to read this booklet to receive the message in its fullness. The words that follow are directly from A Friend of Medjugorje to the community during the retreat.

\* \* \* \* \*

After coming home from Medjugorje, I had a real strong dream during the night that led me to pick something (at random) out of the Bible to read. I opened to the Book of Chronicles. After I started reading the story of King Asa, I felt compelled to continue. The biggest thing that comes from reading this story from Chronicles is the reliance on God. You can try to fix a problem or God can do it. If you do it—you have wars, you have battles that tear each other apart. You let God do it, He gives you peace on all sides. During King Asa’s reign, Ethiopians invaded his country with an enemy that greatly outnumbered his own army. Asa went out to meet the Ethiopians in battle array. He called upon God before the battle:

***“O Lord, there is none like you to help the powerless against the strong. Help us, O Lord, our God, for we rely on you, and in your name we have come against this multitude. You are the Lord, our God; let no man prevail against***

*you.’ And so the Lord defeated the Ethiopians before Asa and Judah, and they fled.”*

vs. 14:10–11

Peace doesn’t come from your armaments. It’s not going to come from having a lot of land and moving people out that’s against you. It’s not that way. God gives peace. It’s got to come through Him not you. Reliance on God brings peace. King Asa said:

*“We have sought the Lord our God; we sought Him, and He has given us rest on every side.”*

vs. 14:6

As I was reflecting on this story in Chronicles, by holy coincidence I found the message we read out in the vineyards in Medjugorje this past August.

December 25, 2002

**“Dear children, this is a time of great graces but also a time of great trials for all those who desire to follow the way of peace...”**

Our Lady said there would be great trials not for “some” but for “all” who desire to follow the way of peace. There is reason for the trials and Our Lady continued in Her message of what would be the result of living Her messages:

**“...Live my messages and be converted...I desire to give you peace, and that you carry it in your hearts and give it to others until God’s peace begins to rule the world...”**

King Asa, in the book of Chronicles, had come through a period where God had sent adversity or great trials. Trials turn us towards God and towards reform. In Scripture, it describes these trials of King Asa and his people:

***“In that former time there was no place for anyone to go or come, but there were many terrors upon the inhabitants of the lands. Nation crushed nation and city crushed city, for God destroyed them by every kind of adversity.”***

vs. 15: 5–6

We just came through basically seven whole years of trials, escalating into a 36-month period which became very intensified, where we worked, we had to pray hard, we had to struggle all the way through, one thing after another. In the time of Asa, Jerusalem no longer followed God, but they followed their idols. King Asa attacked Jerusalem. He killed a lot of the priests in the Temple. He had repeatedly gone to those who supposedly were practicing Judaism—like those who today are practicing Christianity, and yet their lives are full of idols. And they were tired. Having come through this

period, God spoke to him and said, “You’ve accomplished this. You’ve got everything in order. But do not relax.”

***“But as for you, be strong and do not relax, for your work shall be rewarded.”***

vs. 15:7

And hence, this is why I felt we needed to be called today, because this is a time when we want to slack back a little bit and relax. The message today that we opened to in Words From Heaven before we began our retreat said:

March 25, 1995

**“...There is no peace, little children, where there is no prayer...”**

Do you want your work rewarded? Or do you want it taken away? If we relax, if we let up just a little bit, satan will take our yield, he will take this harvest. And he is going to do that if you relax. So this really struck me when he said, ***“But as for you, be strong and do not relax, for your work shall be rewarded.”*** We cannot slack off in our prayer. And we still have work to do. We need to look at Scripture. The 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Our Lady said this:

June 25, 1991

**“Dear children, today on this great day which you have given to me, I desire to bless all of you and to say: These days while I am with you are days of grace. I desire to teach you and to help you walk on the path of holiness. There are many people who do not desire to understand my messages and to accept with seriousness what I am saying. But you I therefore call and ask that by your lives and your daily living you witness my presence. If you pray, God will help you discover the true reason for my coming. Therefore, little children, pray and read the Sacred Scriptures so that through my coming you discover the message in Sacred Scripture for you. Thank you for responding to my call.”**

Our Lady said, “...witness my presence...” What did Asa the King do?

*“Asa did what was good and pleasing to the Lord, his God, removing the heathen altars and the high places, breaking to pieces the sacred pillars, and cutting down the sacred poles. He commanded Judah to seek the Lord, the God of their fathers, and to observe the law and its commands...He built fortified cities in Judah,*

*for the land had peace and no war was waged against him during these years, because the Lord had given him peace.” vs. 14:1-5*

What Asa did was good and pleasing to God. He served God wholeheartedly, and he served God unreservedly. He served God with an undivided heart. Scripture says because of these things, *God was present*. **“Witness my presence.”**

*“Give me your undivided heart.”* The whole message of Our Lady these past twenty-four years says that. Be undivided. And that is what we have to analyze in our community. Are we divided? Do we do everything here with an undivided heart? Holy and completely for Our Lady? Are we fulfilling our tasks without trying to fulfill a little bit of our own interest? Yes, we have to eat. Yes, we have to put a roof over our head. But there is one goal here, and that is the accomplishment of what Our Lady has given to us. And if I give Our Lady my undivided heart, if you give Our Lady undivided purity of heart—we don’t have to worry about what we are to eat or what we are to wear or what we are to drink or what we are to put over our head. Those things come as the fruit of the reward for our work. It is Our Lady first. It is Her way first. And that’s why we have Her presence.

Before Asa, there was a string of kings that were degraded. God says if you have my presence, I will be with you. If you do not have my presence, and if you do not give me an

undivided heart, I will not be with you, and there will be no rest, and there will be no peace.

***“Hear me, Asa...The Lord is with you when you are with him, and if you seek him he will be present to you; but if you abandon him, he will abandon you.”*** vs. 15:2

It's not a time to relax. It's a time to rely more on God. A time to become more holy. A time to sanctify. A time to bring peace into our family. If there is no prayer in the family, there is no peace. Bridget asked me as she was going to sleep doing her Pieta prayers last night, after everyone was in bed, “Dad, when Joshua falls asleep, you pray his prayers over him. Are you going to continue praying these Pieta prayers when I go to sleep?” I said, “Yes, I will.” But then I said, “But Bridget, you have to remember you have to try and stay awake because prayer takes precedence over tiredness.” I'll say it again, “Prayer takes precedence over tiredness.” It's not an excuse because you are tired and everybody's ready to go to bed that we go to bed. We end our day with God. We begin our day with God. And you'll be able to deal with tiredness or injuries or struggles or sickness much better if you pray than if you don't, because you will have God's presence. It is a guarantee. If it was a guarantee in the Old Testament, it's a double guarantee in the New Testament because we have more than what they had. We have the Virgin Mary, and we

have salvation and redemption through the Cross of Jesus and His Blood.

Asa, after he was told to be strong and not relax, decided to enter into a covenant with God.

***“They entered into a covenant to seek the Lord, the God of their fathers with all their heart and all their soul; and everyone who would not seek the Lord, the God of Israel, was to be put to death, whether small or great, whether man or woman. They swore to the Lord with a loud voice, with shouting and with trumpets and horns. All Judah rejoiced over the oath, for they had sworn with their whole heart and sought Him with complete desire, so that He was present to them. And the Lord gave them rest on every side.”***

vs. 15:12–15

I can't help but think this is so related to Our Lady and what She's asking of us to have peace. To institute peace in our families and homes, everything, every word, everything we do has to be toward peace — if it's not, we will not have the fruit of peace on all sides and no rest. ***“And the Lord gave them rest on every side.”*** So, Asa's difficulty shows in the next verse:

***“Maacah, the mother of King Asa, he deposed as queen mother because she had made an outrageous object for Asherah (as an idol); Asa cut this down, smashed it, and burnt it in the Kidron Valley...” vs. 15:16***

This is read as a little verse in the Bible, and it comes up as a little point. His mother didn't do something she was supposed to do. She built an idol. He crushed it and then it goes away. But how many times did he go to his mother? How many opportunities did he give her? How much did he tell her that she must do this? “You're not going to do this. You need to crush this,” and she wouldn't do it. She was compromising. How long did that struggle last? Weeks? Months? I'm sure he didn't just come and depose his mother and that was it. She had been warned over and over again.

What King Asa did, in regards to his mother, was a very difficult thing to do. Actually, it is the most difficult thing to do. But if you don't, you will lose that which Our Lady has formed in you through the influence of those who do not want to change. You have to be willing to slay Isaac. Is it painful? Yes, it's painful. Do you think Asa had an easy time with this? Was he suppose to look the other way when his family wanted to do something different than what God had shown him to do? Had he looked the other way, he would never have been

rewarded for his work and he would never have been given peace on all sides.

Despite his peaceful reign, Asa will be remembered as a king who failed to finish well. He was called “Asa the Reformer” because after learning that “when you are with the Lord, the Lord will be with you,” he found the strength and courage to make great reforms throughout the land that God rewarded him through the blessing of peace. Yet Asa eventually committed an infidelity against God. He quit relying on God. He relied on men and on his wealth. When that happened, God looked at that as adultery and infidelity, and war was waged against him. A prophet was sent to tell Asa what would come of his infidelity:

***“Because you relied on the king of Aram and did not rely on the Lord, your God, the army of the king of Aram has escaped your hand. Were not the Ethiopians a vast army? And yet, because you relied on the Lord, he delivered them into your power. The eyes of the Lord roam over the whole earth, to encourage those who are devoted to him wholeheartedly. You have acted foolishly in this matter, for from now on you will have wars.”*** vs. 16:7–9

Is your reliance on your money, your physicians, your equipment, your skill or is it on God? How did Asa lose his under-

standing of what will bring peace? When the wars stopped, did he begin to relax, did he lose site of God in the blessings that came to him because of his fidelity? Without an enemy threatening his security, did he no longer see a need to pray? Our Lady told us to pray and read the Sacred Scriptures so that we may discover the message in Sacred Scripture for us. This is Her word to us:

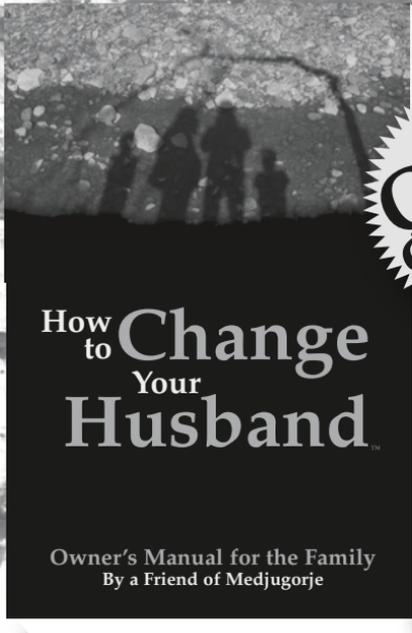
***“But as for you, be strong and do not relax, for your work shall be rewarded.”*** vs.15:7

I saw in a farming magazine the other day a guy who is 53 years old. He said it’s time for him to slow down. He’s built his farm, he wants to pass it on to his kids, and he wants to relax a little bit. A woman interviewed me on the plane coming home from Medjugorje. She asked, “What’s your resolution when you get home?” I said, “Continue.” She said, “That’s your answer?” I said that’s my answer, “Continue. I’m going to continue.”

A Friend of Medjugorje

Taken from a Retreat on August 22, 2005

May you continue, do not give up, stay on your knees, pray, pray, pray always. Every difficulty passes. Peace comes to those who persist. Remember our founder’s words to his children, *“Prayer takes precedence over tiredness.”*

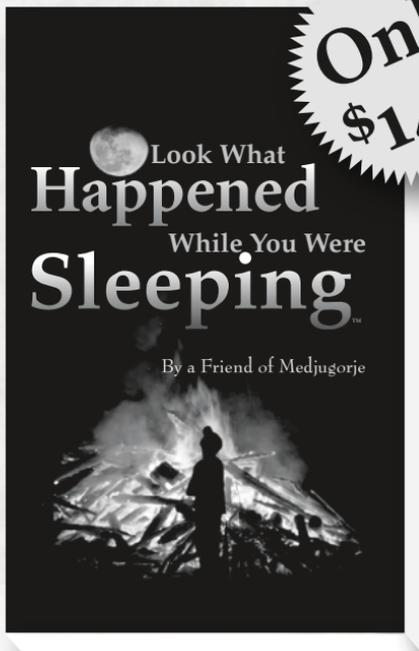


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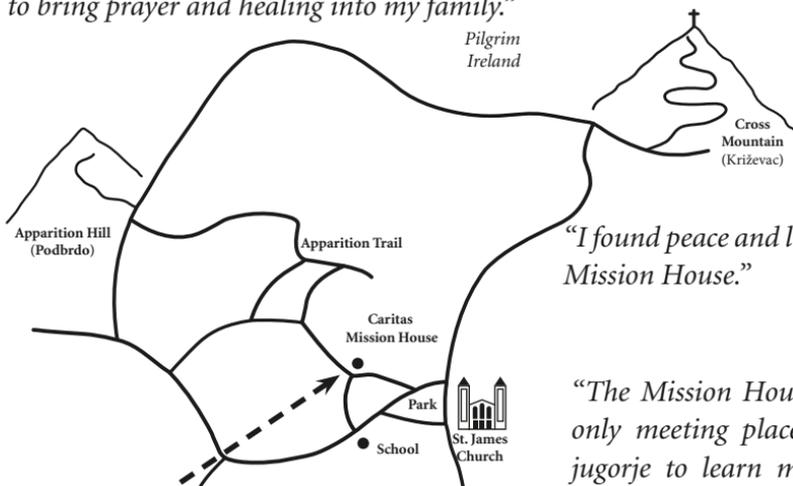
# Don't Miss a Visit to the Caritas Mission House

Apparition Hill, Cross Mountain, the Visionaries, St. James Church, and Caritas Mission House, these are the five “**must do’s**” to have a complete Medjugorje pilgrimage. Throughout the years, pilgrims from every nation have made the Caritas of Birmingham Mission House in Medjugorje a part of their pilgrimage. Countless numbers have relayed to us it is there, in the Mission House, where they came to understand more fully Our Lady’s messages and plans for the world. It is why people, who have returned home from their pilgrimages, have told others going to Medjugorje to go to the Caritas Mission House, stating that the Caritas Mission House was a high point of their pilgrimage and a “**must do**” to make a pilgrimage to Medjugorje a complete and more profound experience.

*“After coming in the Caritas Mission House, I decided not to leave my husband and seek to bring prayer and healing into my family.”*

*Pilgrim  
Ireland*

# Medjugorje



*“I found peace and love in the Mission House.”*

*Pilgrim  
South Africa*

*“The Mission House was the only meeting place in Medjugorje to learn more about and discuss the Messages.”*

*Pilgrim  
England*



*“Following Caritas’ mission for several years and observing their work in spreading Our Lady of Medjugorje’s messages, it’s no wonder to me as to how they became the largest Medjugorje Center in the world.”*

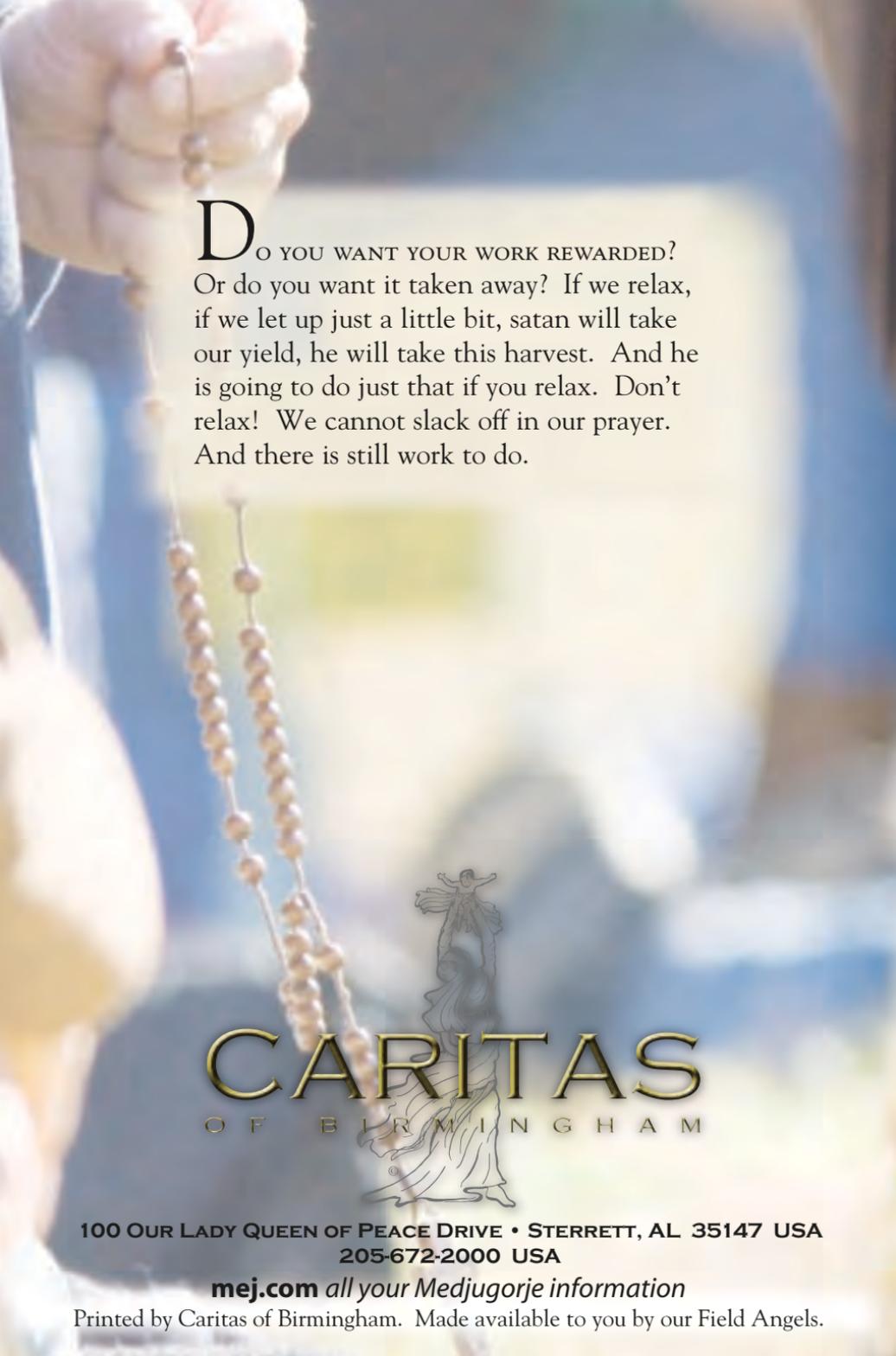
*Pilgrim  
Scotland*

Look for the St. Michael statue.

Caritas of Birmingham Mission House is operated by the Community of Caritas.

The Mother house is located at: 100 Our Lady Queen of Peace Drive • Sterrett, Alabama 35147 USA

**www.mej.com** Extensive up-to-date information on Medjugorje as it happens.



**D**O YOU WANT YOUR WORK REWARDED?  
Or do you want it taken away? If we relax,  
if we let up just a little bit, satan will take  
our yield, he will take this harvest. And he  
is going to do just that if you relax. Don't  
relax! We cannot slack off in our prayer.  
And there is still work to do.



**CARITAS**  
OF BIRMINGHAM

100 OUR LADY QUEEN OF PEACE DRIVE • STERRETT, AL 35147 USA  
205-672-2000 USA

**mej.com** *all your Medjugorje information*

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