

A photograph of a person in a yellow jacket kneeling in prayer in a field. To the left is a wooden cross. The scene is dimly lit, suggesting dusk or dawn. The person is seen from behind, facing the cross. The ground is covered in dry grass and some bare branches are visible in the foreground.

Confession of a Big Sin

By A Friend of Medjugorje

Confession Of A Big Sin

by

A Friend of Medjugorje

SPECIAL STATEMENT

Medjugorje Status December 1, 2011 A.D.

No attempt is intended to pre-empt the Church on the validity of the Medjugorje Apparitions. They are private revelation waiting the Church's final judgment¹. In the interim, these private revelations **are** allowed by, and for, the faithful to have devotion to and to be spread legally by the Church. Devotion and the propagation of private revelations can be forbidden only **if** the private revelation is condemned because of anything it contains which contravenes faith and morals according to AAS 58 (1966) 1186 Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.

Medjugorje has not been condemned nor found to have anything against faith or morals, therefore it is in the grace of the Church to be followed by the faithful. By the rite of Baptism one is commissioned and given the authority to evangelize. "*By Baptism they share in the priesthood of Christ, in his prophetic and royal mission.*"² One does not need approval to promote or to have devotions to private revelations or to spread them when in conformity to AAS 58 (1966) 1186, as the call to evangelize is given when baptized. Caritas of Birmingham, the Community of Caritas and all associated with it, realize and accept that the final authority regarding the Queen of Peace, Medjugorje and happenings related to the apparitions, rests with the Holy See in Rome. We at Caritas, willingly submit to that judgment. While having an amiable relationship with the Diocese of Birmingham and a friendly relationship with its bishop, Caritas of Birmingham as a lay mission is not officially connected to the Diocese of Birmingham, Alabama, just as is the Knights of Columbus.³ The Diocese of Birmingham's official position on Caritas is neutral and holds us as Catholics in good standing.

1. The Church does not have to approve the apparitions. The Church can do as She did with the apparitions of Rue du Bac in Paris and the Miraculous Medal. The Church never approved these apparitions. She gave way to the people's widespread acceptance of the Miraculous Medal and thereby the Apparitions to St. Catherine.
2. Catechism of the Catholic Church 2nd Edition
3. The Knights of Columbus also are not officially under the Church, yet they are very Catholic. The Knights of Columbus was founded as a lay organization 129 years ago, with the basic Catholic beliefs. Each local council appeals to the local Ordinary to be the Chaplain. The Knights of Columbus is still a lay organization, and operates with its own autonomy.

See pages 23–24 for Pricing.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

The author of this book is also the author of the books Words From Heaven[®], How to Change Your Husband[™], I See Far[™], Look What Happened While You Were Sleeping[™], It Ain't Gonna Happen[™], hundreds of booklets, and other publications such as the *Words of the Harvesters* and the *Caritas of Birmingham Newsletter*. He has written more on Medjugorje and its messages 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-Hercegovina. 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 Dragičević* and Ivanka Ivanković*. Around 6:40 p.m. the same day, Mirjana and Ivanka, along with four more young people, Milka Pavlović*, the little sister of Marija, Ivan Ivanković, Vicka Ivanković*, and Ivan Dragičević saw the Virgin Mary. The next day, June 25, 1981, along with Mirjana, Ivanka, Vicka and Ivan Dragičević, Marija Pavlović* and Jakov Čolo also saw the Virgin Mary, bringing the total to six visionaries. Milka Pavlović* and Ivan Ivanković only saw Our Lady once, on that first day. These six have become known as and remain “the visionaries.”

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

These visionaries are not related to one another. Three of the six visionaries no longer see Our Lady on a daily basis. As of March 2012, the Virgin is still appearing everyday to the remaining three visionaries; that's well over 13,814 apparitions.

The supernatural event has survived all efforts of the Communists to put a stop to it, 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 thirty 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.
or **Medjugorje.com**

Confession of a Big Sin

So much of Our Lady's messages speak to us of how to approach life, how to be satisfied and content with life regardless of its circumstances. Our Lady tells us how to behave, how to act, how to think. The more we serve God, the more Satan will put every effort forward to blind us. Our Lady says, nay, exhorts us to pray, a lot of prayer. Because of this, She says that some will say we are praying too much.

June 16, 1983

“...Be prudent because the devil tempts all those who have made a resolution to consecrate themselves to God, most particularly, those people. He will suggest to them that they are praying too much...”

Yet, Our Lady says to pray unceasingly.

April 12, 1987

“...pray unceasingly...”

If we listen to the world, what Our Lady suggests is not practical because what Our Lady requests, by the world's thinking, is impractical. It is easy to rationalize away that we cannot pray three hours a day, much less unceasingly! It is the same for the physical changes Our Lady asks of us to make in the way we live. Our Lady asks us to live a new way, but the human voice within us will cry out that Our Lady doesn't really mean for us to change our life's direction, rather just pray a little more, convert perhaps a little more. No! This is not the case. Our Lady calls for a radical change in answering Her call, not toward the world but toward the spiritual life connected to God.

1986

“...We must walk and advance in the spiritual life, affected by these messages.”

Today it is the only sure way to happiness and the protection of children and their innocence, all of which the world slays. Yes, it means sacrifice. It means not following one's own will, not being able to accept what the world bombards us with, such as T.V., movies, materialism, pleasure, ease, and comforts. But the giving of these to God, choosing His will leads to a much purer, much simpler way to live, where we trust God will guide and take care of everything. In fact, Our Lady tells us a profound message of how to be happy, how to live, and

yes, how to be free and untangled by problems which are ever present.

1984

“If you want to be very happy, live a simple, humble life, pray a great deal, do not delve into your problems, but let yourselves be guided by God.”

Our Lady again repeats that it is simpler not to delve into problems, let God act.

1984

“Do not complicate matters...Take the simple way, do not delve into your problems, but let yourselves be guided by Jesus Christ.”

Since these are Our Lady’s words, we can rest and be at peace regardless of problems or difficulties, that Our Lady will handle them, change them, use them for our protection and/or our growth. But if we do not want to change, God’s Cross, which He allows and even sends, will overwhelm us and drown us. The Cross in the spiritual life is not the fault of others, but a motivation to change and mold us into a new being, in order to bring fullness of joy and happiness.

July 25, 1989

“...Open yourself to God and surrender to Him all your difficulties and crosses so God may turn everything into joy...”

These trials which Our Lady has told us of, come our way many times by the Father's hand, and they will strengthen and protect us when one is of a good attitude with good will, wanting to change, but on the other hand, will damage us if we are of a bad attitude, with a bad will. The fruit of following Our Lady's messages, sacrificing our lives which is to lead to happiness, can do so only if one possesses a good will and good attitude towards such. In addition, one must be willing to change, have and accept a way that will many times go against what one would want for their lives today, but by making a decision in the present will lead to a better future. For those who seek the will of God in their life, they cannot present God with a laundry list or check list of their expectations, desires, or wants. Happiness will never come to us by this way, rather by forgetting self and abandoning our life to God. There are two paths, two ways of looking at everything which can bring us to satisfaction or discontentment. It is not the surroundings or others who determine this, rather your own heart. All of us could use a big change of heart. What

follows is something that we could have written here ourselves because it matches so closely our thinking.

Confession of a Big Sin*

I have a confession to make. A real confession. Of real sin. I have a great sin that has lain hidden in me for a long time, unrecognized, unconfessed, unrepented.

It's not your common, everyday brand of sin — not included in the usual list: pride, greed, jealousy, immorality, drunkenness, stealing, etc. These are easier to recognize, easier to fight against. This sin is different. It's like a traitor within me, lying in wait to jump out and trip me up, over and over again.

It has become like a cancer, living and growing inside me, dragging me down, away from God, and dragging others with me. So I need to expose it, to confess it publicly to all who will listen. And I'm not afraid to confess it to you, because you have sinned in the same way.

The sin is this: I have been unhappy! Repeatedly — at the slightest provocation unhappy!

“Oh, come on now,” you say, “it's not a sin to be unhappy! Everybody gets unhappy.” Yes. Everyone gets

* Confession of a Big Sin comes from the Marians of the Immaculate Conception
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unhappy. And it is sin. Dangerous sin, because it's habit-forming, extremely contagious, and seldom diagnosed as sin. It's usually viewed as something like a cold — it just happens to us, and we have to endure it until it goes away. We don't really have any control over it.

But that's a lie. Part of the Great Lie. We do have control over it. My unhappiness is not caused by something that happens to me. It is caused by my response to something that happens, a response generated by my attitude, my way of looking at things. Is my glass half full? Or is it half empty? It's a matter of perception, and the way I choose to perceive things determines my emotional response to them.

*Let me give you an example: **Two men looked out from prison bars. One saw mud; one saw stars.***

Several years ago, I came upon this old verse as I was reading a book by Fr. John Powell, SJ, and it has stuck with me ever since. Powell's book is entitled Fully Human, Fully Alive. Its basic premise is that our happiness is not determined by our situations, but by our personal perceptions of these situations. The two men in the verse share a common experience (through prison bars). It's their way of viewing the experience that shapes its meaning.

I think we can safely assume that neither man is overjoyed about being in prison. But one looks beyond the confines of his immediate situation and finds something to rejoice about. The other allows the pain of his situation to color his view of everything and thus remains a prisoner in spirit as well as in body. To the pain of his unavoidable suffering, he adds the unnecessary pain of being unhappy about it.

I used to think of sin in a very narrow, punitive way. Sin was simply an offense against God, something “mortal” or “venial,” something wrong for which I needed to be punished. And I had neat little lists of these offenses categorized in my mind. I’m not saying this view was all bad. As a matter of fact, today’s world might benefit from a greater awareness of sin.

What I am saying is that my view of sin was incomplete. I tended to try to avoid the mortal sins, the serious offenses against God, and I didn’t worry too much about the venial ones. I never realized that sin is also an offense against myself. I never saw my sin in the larger sense of “sinfulness” — a state of being that carries with it its own punishment, that cripples me and prevents me from being who I could become — that makes me see mud when I could see stars.

Why is my unhappiness a sin? Because, like all sin, it is a turning away from God to focus on myself, my desires, my problems, my pain. And, like all sin, it's a form of rebellion.

All my unhappiness can be traced back to something I want and can't have. It's all related to desire. I have expectations for myself, for others around me, and even for God. I want to be able to control things; I want the sun to shine; I want my car to start; I want to be on time; I want people to like me — in short, I want things to follow my script, from moment to moment. It's all self. No wonder St. Therese said, "I forgot myself, and henceforth I was happy."

Part of my problem has been that I thought suffering and sadness were the same, but they're not. Suffering is unavoidable. We all have it — a lot of it. Some things just hurt! And there's nothing I can do about it — or almost nothing. The one thing I can do is decide not to make it worse by being unhappy about it. But most times I don't do this, because the only way to keep from being unhappy about suffering is to accept it, and I don't want to do that. Herein lies my sin. When things don't follow my script, I rebel against them. I don't want to suffer, so I refuse to accept suffering, and as a result I'm miserable. I'm not only in pain; I'm unhappy about being in pain.

I remember a scene from Herman Hesse's book, Siddhartha that suggests very powerfully that, though suffering is unavoidable, unhappiness is not.

Siddhartha has just gone through a period of deep suffering but, through his acceptance of it, he has grown and is able to retain an inner peace, even in the midst of a very painful grief. His wise friend looks at him and says, "You have suffered...yet I see that sadness has not entered your heart."

This is what it really means to be a Christian — to have joy in our hearts, trusting that, no matter how bad things seem, God can turn all things to good for those who love Him. St. Paul admonishes us to "rejoice in the Lord always and in all things give thanks" (1Thes. 5:16–18). What a powerful teaching! Rejoice always. Give thanks in all things, not just the good things, but the bad as well — even pain, suffering, failure, tragedy.

What this teaches us is that happiness isn't a feeling. It's a chosen attitude, an inner peace that comes from trust. Joy isn't the absence of sorrow. It's the presence of God. And if we allow the presence of God to penetrate deeply into us, even in the midst of great pain, we will be happy.

But can we really do this? Or is this just an unrealistic, pious theory? In his book, Man's Search for Meaning, Victor Frankl shares the conclusions he came to as he observed himself and his fellow inmates of the death camp at Auschwitz. He noticed that, under the same basic circumstances, some of the prisoners became animals, others retained their human dignity, and still others became willing martyrs. "We who lived in concentration camps," he writes, "can remember the men who walked through the huts comforting others, giving away their last piece of bread. They may have been few in number, but they offer sufficient proof that everything can be taken from a man but one thing: the last of the human freedoms — to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one's own way." In another sense, mud or stars.

So this is my confession, and my resolve: Yes, I have sinned, but I'm not going to be unhappy about it. Trusting God, no matter how dark it seems, I'm going to look out and begin to see the stars.

* * * * *

So for Our Lady's messages to be fruitful in our lives, we must have the right view — do we see mud or stars, joys or misery, future or only the storm? For those who delve into their problems, only misery awaits (mud); for those who give them to Our Lady, it is the stars.

July 25, 1989

**“...Open yourself to God and ‘surrender’
to Him all your difficulties and crosses so
God may turn every thing into joy...”**

It's Our Lady's promise, and we believe joy awaits all those who do not reject but rather accepts Our Lady's above message.

With Our Love,
A Friend of Medjugorje
On behalf of Caritas of Birmingham
and the Community of Caritas



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