

A Saint is Born on the Knees, Not Through Education

What makes a saint, and what prevents it?

This is an excerpt from a talk given by Fr. Jozo to English speaking pilgrims. It was originally published on Wednesday, October 3, 2007. Fr. Jozo tells of what makes a saint, and what prevents it. The Medjugorje messages are raising modern day saints by calling us back to the simplicity of the Gospel in these modern times. These apostles renew their families, parishes and the Church.

What I desire to say to you is that there is a faith, a tradition, a family raised in an education that rests on the Bible, the living Word of God. The living Word of God is eaten. It is nurtured, and this is done when a person is in prayer. As he prays, he listens to the Word of God and is nurtured. Such a family in such an environment gives birth to spiritual vocations, and finds blessed happy families.



Fr. Jozo continues to inspire pilgrims from around the world with his powerful testimony to Our Lady's presence in Medjugorje. His witness has been constant throughout the 26 years of Our Lady's apparitions.

I have just finished a seminar with the Spanish. An aide to the Cardinal and one of the greatest theological minds, exceptionally gifted and talented, has visited many universities, has many titles, and at the end of the seminar, he said, *?I was just rushing to grow and grow. My intellect and my knowledge grew and I fell.?* He became sick. He fell into depression because he was the man who rushed to know more and forgot to pray. Our Lady healed him here. And it gained now his

returning, but from the other side of all that he has gained. Powerfully he witnesses how necessary it is to have the spirituality that he found at the seminar: Our Lady's spirituality. She is the one who made him in love with Her messages, with Her.

How necessary it is today to come to Medjugorje. You must not feel that it is far away, that the ocean separates us. No, it is bridges of love and grace that connect us. Our Lady has bridged the furthest islands and you have come. Each one of you is invited and no one is here by accident. You have not wandered astray here. You are called here. And here you have said, *"Here I am."* That is why I am very happy that I am able to meet you here on this tomb of

the martyrs and say to you, Our Lady says to you ?*You are important to Me. I have chosen you. I need you.*? Why? Because in your country and in your church, it is intellectual values that are excentuated ? to know. But to know and to believe are not the same. To know and to believe are different values. To know is intellectual value and to believe is the entire person: a grace given man that he may feel the joy to be, to give thanks to God, to kneel down before his God. To give honor and glory and praise to Him. To say I love you to Him. To follow Him. And the proof of the faith is to die for the faith. The proof for the faith is to live according to the faith and not to know the faith alone.

The problem is not to know the Ten Commandments and to learn them. Many children know them from the catechism, but to learn to live them ? to learn to live the Commandments of God. That is the strength of the church: we are here to learn to live the Commandments. Therefore, it is not possible to say Our Lady is not doing anything new, saying anything new. No, Our Lady is doing all things new. She is creating of us a Church that believes, a Church that prays. Our nature is prayer. But we have lost it. We speak with God in prayer, but we have stopped speaking to Him, and that is why atheism has been born, atheism in the families. And the families say *?Oh, let your parish priest teach you to believe. Let the parish priest prepare your Communion. Let your parish priest prepare you for Confirmation*

.? No. The parish priest cannot substitute the holiness, devotion, and the faith of the family. Family can only come with faith to the parish community. The parish community, like the sea, receives a family and enriches it. The family gives contribution of itself to the parish and the parish bestows so many blessings and supports the family.

Our faith is not a theory. There is no theory about our faith or church. We have martyrs and saints. We have people whom we have lost, who no longer pray. We have marriages that have fallen apart. That unity, that holiness, that love, in our arrogance and audacity we have cast under our feet with our arrogance and audacity.

**We have humiliated our own children,
while we were called to witness to them ? to
witness the faith and show them the way.**



Fr. Jozo was 40 years old when the apparitions began in the church of St. James in Medjugorje while he was pastor there. His outspoken convictions and belief in Our Lady's apparitions led him to be singled out by the communist police and he was sentenced to prison for three years. Although he was released after 1 ½ years, the experience left an indelible mark on his soul. He once said that every priest should have to spend time in prison for the sake of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. His experience

was difficult and he bore great suffering, but also, the seeds of that suffering bore great fruit in his spiritual life.

When Jesus on Golgotha says "behold your Mother," a great miracle takes place. St John is beneath the cross. As he took the Mother, all the eyes cast upon Him and upon Her. All those who despised Jesus, started to persecute him. St. John ended up on the island Patmos, in isolation. I see his isolation, through isolation in prison. In prison, when you are in isolation, you are placed into a room where there is no light. You don't have a watch. You don't know what time it is. You don't know what day it is. You don't know how many days you

have been in there. You lose complete contact with time, contact with people, and contact with your environment. You are isolated. That is the most difficult punishment a person can have. That is the greatest punishment. Only a person who has God and meditates on Him and His love can survive this, a person who feels that as a blessing, a grace. Jesus beneath the cross says ?behold your Mother.? With that word we do not stop taking the Mother unto ourselves. We continue to take Her as our own. St. John was persecuted because of that and ended up on the island Patmos. This is why persecutions are not anything new in Medjugorje. The communists persecuted the faith. They are those who feel they are not obliged to believe, who say ?*we do not believe*

.? Those who want to retain their own theories about Our Lady, about Mass, about prayer have a fear, because there is a theory about everything. There is a system pertaining to everything. In theology we have learned systems, a way of reflection about faith. But such systems do not give birth to saints, as I have said. A saint is born on the knees, becomes Catholic in prayer and through prayer, not through education. Not through studying. Not through accumulation of knowledge. Information does not give birth to saints. Prayer gives birth to saints. Sacramental life gives birth to saints. How necessary it is to know that.

-Fr. Jozo Zovko

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Fr. Jozo's talk above illustrates clearly that far too often, intellectualism pervades the clergy. It is this very thing that often can block the spirit of Our Lady.

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Understanding Our Lady's Messages
