

## Introduction

It seemed to be written. I had to go to Medjugorje. I couldn't erase what was engraved in the mystery of the heart and which, inexplicably, I had left printed on paper perhaps perceiving intuitively that my own spiritual journey should lead me to that remote site of the world. Because in "The Virgin Mary's eyes" – a novel I wrote about the Virgin of Guadalupe -, I said through one of the characters: "The end of our journey was Medjugorje, situated in the former Yugoslavia. There I saw Mary cry because war didn't stop, although she was acclaimed by many all over the world as Queen of Peace." And I said it without knowing anything about the history or the place.

However, as these things always have their comings and goings, in 1999, when we travelled to Italy with Julieta, my wife, and she suggested visiting the Marian sanctuary of Bosnia-Herzegovina, I thought it wasn't the right moment. But this year 2000, Holy Year, year of the Christian Jubilee and of pilgrimages, what was written presented itself once again. In this case, the invitation came from a friend who was a priest. "I'm travelling to Medjugorje. Why don't you come with me?" he said. That simple. That complicated. But finally I accepted. There was something, which formed part of that mystery and which made me accept, mingling the intentions of going on a pilgrimage with those of investigating what was happening there and, perhaps, writing something afterwards.

Later, as it was only to be expected, I invited my wife. Later on, two great friends on this journey of faith with whom we shared the same spirituality joined the group of pilgrims (we were thirty three in all).

But who was it that was really inviting me and inviting us? Who was the call from? The pilgrimage organizer gave me a possible answer, however strange it might have sounded at that moment. “She’s the one who invites. Mary is the one who call us through others.” And, in this way, we got ready to go. It was really a great joy. A group of friends travelling to one of the Virgin Mary’s sanctuaries, the *Gospa*’s, (which in Croatian means “Blessed Mother”). And in spite of all the doubts I was burdened with, I let myself be guided, because maybe it was the Virgin who was calling me, as she has done and continues doing so with every one of the inhabitants of this world, since those remote times when Jesus’s miracles started at Cana in Galilee. Since Mary told the servants at the wedding, when the wine had finished: “*Do whatever he tells you.*” Because Mary’s invitation is always the same, to take us to Her Son.

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