

## The Holy See's "Press Conference" on Medjugorje with the Special Envoy, Archbishop Henryk Hoser, April 5, 2017

### The Best News from the Holy See about Medjugorje in Years!

This is a Summary, of Archbishop's Press Conference. The entire text can be found at web site below.

On Wednesday, April 5, 2017, at 4 pm, an hour-long press conference of the Special Envoy of the Holy See for Medjugorje, Dr. Henryk Hoser, was held in the Hall of St. John Paul II. *Note on February 11, 2017, the Holy Father, Pope Francis appointed a Special Envoy of the Holy See for Medjugorje, his Excellency Archbishop Mons. Dr. Henryk Hoser, the Bishop of the Archdiocese of Warsaw – Praga in Poland.*



This is from the actual text from what Archbishop Hoser said about the impressions he gained while in Medjugorje in the past week:

- Ladies and gentlemen, good afternoon to you all. At the very beginning, I ought to give you some explanations and I owe you a few apologies too. The scope of my mission was defined by the Holy See. As we have heard, it is about determining the pastoral situation of the pilgrims in Medjugorje. This is my first visit to Medjugorje, I came here without knowing the exact situation here, but I knew this was an international pilgrimage destination.

First of all, I would like to emphasize a very important fact, that Medjugorje once was not known in the world at all. It was a small place, lost in the hills, which is what its name actually means. **Today, Medjugorje is known all over the world, and it should be pointed**

**out that pilgrims come from eighty different countries.** When it comes to the importance of this place of pilgrimage, it could be compared to others too. **For instance, two and a half million pilgrims come to Medjugorje each year, while six million go to Lourdes. Nevertheless, Lourdes exists for 150 years, while Medjugorje is hardly 36 years old.** This is a time to make a first balance, a first estimate that could be highly important for the future development of this place.

How come so many pilgrims come here? On one hand, they have surely heard about the Medjugorje apparitions that began in 1981. On the other hand, **those who come here, discover something extraordinary. The first aspect is the environment, the atmosphere of peace and of reconciliation. It is also an atmosphere of inner peace, peace of the heart.** They also discover a huge range of profound spirituality. They re-discover or discover for the first time in their lives the meaning of the sacred reality. In Medjugorje, they can have an experience with sacred time and sacred space. Sacred means it is something withheld in a special way in relation to God.

Usually we hear that Medjugorje is a place of Marian devotion, and that is the truth, however, if we enter into the depth of it, we can see that **devotion in Medjugorje is very Christ-centered,** as the center of devotion is the celebration of the

Eucharist, the transmitting of the Word of God, Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, when man discovers that the Blessed Sacrament is the real presence of Jesus in His divinity and in His human nature. Some discover here the prayer of the Rosary, which is meditative prayer on the mysteries of our faith. Finally, as they pray the Way of the Cross, they enter into the Easter mystery, meaning the Passion, Death and Resurrection of the Christ. I shall conclude this overview, with the strongest point on the sacrament of forgiveness, personal and personalized confession.

**Medjugorje is a very fertile land from a religious perspective. In these years, we can count 610 religious and priesthood vocations born in Medjugorje.** Most of them come from Italy, the United States and Germany. When we are aware of the crisis of vocations, particularly in the old Christian countries, and in Western Europe, **it is clear that there is something new here, something remarkable.**



If we calculate the number of the ministered Holy Communion, as this is the only way to establish the number of pilgrims, of course including the margin of error, **there have been 37 million Holy Communion ministered in the period from 1986-2016.** However, the number of pilgrims is even bigger, as not all of them receive Holy Communion.

When it comes to the estimate of the situation in Medjugorje, there are three different areas to differentiate.

**The first area is the parish that exists for a long time**, which serves the parishioners who are here, who live here and whose number has increased in the past ten years by a thousand of those who came to live here, perhaps even more than that. This parish, that has its own history, built a cross on a hill in Medjugorje in the thirties of the past century, and has accepted today's phenomenon of Medjugorje. Part of the history of this parish is also special, the personal history of those whom we call the visionaries.

**The second area: pilgrims.** As I already said, up to 2.5 million of them per year. This number tends to grow, too. Surely, this is a huge challenge for the priests who are here. This phenomenon has caused development of the existing infrastructure that needs to respond to the needs of pilgrims, and part of that is this Hall, the Adoration chapel, the open area for the celebration of Holy Mass outdoors. Those were some of the elements added according to the needs of pilgrims who were coming here. On the other hand, we can see how this place is developing. There are more and more hotels, restaurants, shops **and this already reminds me of little Lourdes. It is not known that Lourdes is second in France, after Paris, according to the number of hotels in it. Perhaps this is the future of Medjugorje in relation to Sarajevo.** So, the number of the inhabitants is increasing, as well as the capacity of accommodation of pilgrims.

**However, we can see the third area, too. There are the communities that came here, associations, social and charity activities,** we think there are around thirty of them. Some of them received their inspiration from Medjugorje, their roots are from here. There are also those who arrived from

the other countries, they were founded somewhere else, but they came here so they would live this atmosphere, this phenomenon of Medjugorje.

**There are also seminars ----So, all this shows an intensity of Christian life here in Medjugorje and this is a type of model that could be applied to other places.**

What shrines have to offer in this world today is of such a kind, that **Pope Francis has transferred the issue from the Congregation for the Clergy, to the Congregation for the New Evangelization.** People there receive what they cannot find at home. In many of our old Christian countries, individual confession no longer exists. In many countries, there is no Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, many countries do not know about the Way of the Cross, there is no prayer of the Rosary. In French Brittany, I was once told that the last time they prayed the Way of the Cross was thirty years ago. Surely, such dryness in the areas of the spiritual and the sacred is causing a crisis in faith in general.

People here come to the source; this is where they discern a thirst for the sacred, a thirst for God, a thirst for prayer **which they discover to be an immediate contact with God.** They feel, I would say the Divinity, thanks to the care of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

In Medjugorje, the emphasis is on Mary as Queen of Peace. One could say this is nothing new, as there are churches throughout the world consecrated to the Queen of Peace, but if we observe the world context of our lives today, we can see something that **Pope Francis refers to as the third world war in pieces.** This means in fragments. Civil wars are the cruelest form, the one that destroys and hurts the most. You, who live here in the Balkans, have recently lived one such war. **I lived in Rwanda during the**

**genocide.** Now you can see that Syria, in the Middle East, the country of the oldest Christian identity is being destroyed even with the use of chemical weapons. This is our landscape today. There are so many political conflicts in each country. **So, in my opinion, it is important to pray to Our Lady of Peace. The specific role of Medjugorje is extremely important here.**

**You, my dear friends, should be the carriers of the joyful news. Say to the whole world that in Medjugorje we can find the light again. We need those special places of light in the world that is sinking into darkness.** I would also like to say to you that you can register for a seminar here, whatever the theme, you might discover things that you cannot even imagine. Thank you!

The second part of the conference was for press members to ask some questions here is one of them.

(Sanja Pehar, Radio MIR Medjugorje asks): **“After the experiences you received in these days, where do you see Medjugorje in the new evangelization that the Church is emphasizing so much?”**

**- I think that Medjugorje is already in the new evangelization. The numbers I have given prove that.**

*(Let us praise the Lord for a marvelous press conference and share the good news!)*

**For complete text see:**  
<http://www.medjugorje.hr/en/news/information/the-press-conference-of-the-special-envoy-of-the-holy-see-mons.-henryk-hoser,8796.html>

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