

# L'OSSERVATORE ROMANO

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*Unicuique suum**Non praevalerunt*

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## HOLY FATHER GRANTS APPROVAL FOR MEDJUGORJE DEVOTION

# 'The Queen of Peace'

Note from the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith



The Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith, with the assent of Pope Francis, has granted approval for devotion linked to Medjugorje, recognizing the abundant spiritual fruits received at the Sanctuary of the Queen of Peace, without making a declaration on the supernatural character of the Marian apparitions.

Beginning with the words "*The Queen of Peace*," the Note about the Spiritual Experience connected with Medjugorje was signed by Cardinal Víctor Manuel Fernández and Monsignor Armando Matteo, respectively Prefect and Secretary for the Doctrinal Section of the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith.

Pope Francis approved the Note on 28 August. It recognizes the goodness of the spiritual fruits linked to Medjugorje, authorizing the faithful to adhere to it – according to the new Norms for discerning these phenomena – since "many positive fruits have been noted in the midst of a spiritual experience, while negative and dangerous effects have not spread among the People of God".

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## The shepherd's heart and the people's faith

By ANDREA TORNIELLI

The official green light for the devotion and spiritual experience that began in Medjugorje in June 1981, when six children reported seeing Our Lady, was made possible thanks to the abundant positive fruits observed in the parish, which over 1 million people from around the world visit every year. These fruits include pilgrimages, conversions, people returning to the Sacraments, and troubled marriages that begin a path of healing.

These are the elements that Pope Francis has always observed, even when he was a bishop in Argentina, affirming that popular piety which moves so many people toward shrines must be accompanied, cor-

rected when necessary, but not stifled.

When judging alleged supernatural phenomena, attention must always be paid to the spiritual fruits. This perspective of the Successor of Peter corresponds to new norms published in May that have detached the Church's judgment from the more demanding recognition of a supernatural event. The latter may still come, but it is no longer necessary to wait for it to authorize liturgies, devotions, and pilgrimages, provided there are no deceptions or hidden interests, the messages are orthodox, and above all, many positive experiences are confirmed.

Thanks to Pope Francis' heart of a shepherd, the pronouncement on one of the most well-known and controversial Marian apparitions of

the last century has taken place. It is a decision that does not come as a surprise.

Already in May, Cardinal Fernández, responding to a question about Medjugorje, had said: "With these regulations, we think it will be easier to move forward and reach a conclusion." This is not an unprecedented approach, as attested by the words used by then-Cardinal Ratzinger in the book-length interview, "The Ratzinger Report": "One of our criteria is to separate the aspect of true or presumed 'supernaturality' of the apparition from that of its spiritual fruits. The pilgrimages of ancient Christianity were directed toward places about which our modern critical spirit might sometimes be per-

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