Today, August 11, 2010, the Medjugorje visionary Marija Lunetti gave a talk to pilgrims in Medjugorje. She encouraged them to follow Our Lady’s messages of prayer, conversion, and fasting. Marija gave practical advice for all pilgrims visiting Medjugorje...

“I want to bring Our Lady’s messages closer to you through this testimony. How many are here in Medjugorje for the first time? Please raise your hands. I see that probably more than 80% are visiting Medjugorje for the first time. Welcome from the bottom of my heart. Our Lady said we are Her hope.

“I want you all to be touched by Our Lady, and I want Her to lead you as She has been leading us these 29 years. My suggestion to you, and especially to those of you here for the first time, is to not look at anybody or to be attached to anybody. Use this prayer time wisely.

Marija, the Medjugorje visionary, during a recent apparition of Our Lady. Marija receives the 25th message from Our Lady and often shares her testimony to pilgrims. Marija gives practical advice for all those seeking to encounter Our Lady.
“Thank God we pilgrims have so many places here to go to pray: Apparition Mountain, Cross Mountain, the Adoration Chapel and the Church. Many mornings, when I go to Apparition Mountain, I meet many pilgrims at the site of the first apparitions. There is a sign posted calling for silence, but there is much noise. I ask them to be quiet and remind them that this is a quiet place of prayer, but many times this is in vain. I tell them that if they feel the need to pray aloud that they should go behind a bush, so as not to disturb other pilgrims.

“To answer Our Lady’s call to live Her messages, we do not have to become priests or missionaries in Africa. We need to become good examples in our own neighborhoods. In the beginning, when Our Lady invited us to prayer, it was hard, but eventually it became a joy for us. By following Our Lady, we simply fell in love with prayer. When Our Lady asked us to pray more, we happily did that. Our Lady asked for all the Mysteries of the Rosary to be prayed everyday. We responded, even though everyday and all day long pilgrims would be at our houses. One day my mother said that our house was no longer ours, but it resembled a railway station with pilgrims constantly coming and going. Since we didn’t lock our doors, pilgrims would go on into the house. Many early mornings, Italian pilgrims would come and knock on our door and would proceed to go in without an invitation. At 10:00 a.m., German pilgrims would come and my father would tell them it was mealtime. These people would quietly stay outside and pray the rosary. Oh well, Our Lady wanted me to marry an Italian, and I did.

“Again, I tell you to find a time and place for prayer. Do not look to others, but begin yourself to pray. Our Lady first chose Apparition Mountain, a rugged mountain to call us to come and pray. This was a problem for Father Jozo, the pastor at the time. He would ask why Our Lady didn’t appear in the Church. He said that the living Jesus was present there. He could not understand why the throngs of people would choose to go to such a rugged, thorny mountain day and night to pray. Trust me; this is because the mountain, every thorn, every rock, and every bush have been blessed by the presence of Our Lady, because Our Lady chose that place to meet us, and to talk to us and to pray with us.

“She chose us, the six visionaries to witness Her presence and to show us that She is the Mother of God. On the third day of the apparitions, Vicka’s grandmother gave us Holy Water and told us to sprinkle it toward the apparition. She told us to say to Our Lady, that if you are from God stay, but leave if you are not from God! Our Lady smiled and said, ‘I am the Blessed Virgin Mary and I am the Queen of Peace.’

“Only in God can we find peace, and that is why Our Lady invites us to pray. She says that every prayer we pray with the heart is close to God. That is also why She invites us to pray more. Early on, Our Lady asked that prayer groups should be started. She stressed that the first
prayer group should begin in our families, and then begin them in our parishes. She told us to open our family Bible and read Holy Scripture. Our prayer group was a mix of young people and adults.

“The evening prayer program here in Medjugorje was Our Lady’s desire. Our Lady always invites us to take with seriousness Her messages regarding conversion. She tells us to put God in the first place in our lives. She invites us to desire the presence of God in our families and live prayer. Remember, God created us in His Image, and without God, we cannot have joy and happiness. Our Lady invites us to be open to prayer.

“The first prayer that we prayed with Our Lady was The Creed, 7 Our Fathers, 7 Hail Mary’s, and 7 Glory Be’s. Our Lady does not pray the Hail Mary with us, but looks at us and smiles. We still pray this today after Holy Mass, kneeling, giving thanks to Our Lady for staying with us these many years. The dearest prayer to Our Lady is the Rosary, and She invites us to pray the whole Rosary everyday. In Medjugorje, before Croatian Mass, two mysteries of the Rosary are prayed to prepare our hearts for the presence of Jesus in the Eucharist.

“Our Lady began by giving a message every Thursday to help the village toward conversion. She invited us to personal prayer. She asked for one hour of personal prayer and later asked for three hours of prayer. You can see pictures of the six of us kneeling in the Church during the early days of the apparitions. It was hard because we were not used to that. When we protested to Our Lady, She just smiled and asked us if we would sacrifice for a friend that may come to visit us. Would we be willing to prepare for the visit through hard work? She said She wanted Jesus to become our greatest friend, and no sacrifice was too great for Him. Our Lady told us to spend more time with Him so He could become our greatest friend. Slowly we got used to sacrifice.

“Today, I am married with four boys. My prayer times now are during my work, such as today, when preparing lunch I prayed a Rosary. We can pray during our work, cleaning house, taking the kids to school. I was in Mexico giving a testimony, and I was speaking to a Cardinal and a Bishop about this same thing. The Bishop said he remembered his own mother doing the very same thing. She prayed in this way during her whole life. She was the mother of twelve children and he said they never lacked for anything, but learned to pray at her knee. He said his mother would prepare meals for a blind neighbor. I repeat to you that Our Lady does not need us all to go to Africa to become missionaries but to live love in our own homes.
“Once I spoke with another Bishop regarding how society takes and discards things with little or no thought. Also, I think many do the same with people. Our Lady wants to show us that each one of us is important, and we are not to choose this culture of death such as abortion and euthanasia. The elderly are told not to suffer, but to end their life through euthanasia. Society terms it “sweet death.” I heard of a person in Italy that was being starved to death by her family. She went into a coma, and the family thought she had died. A visiting nun saw that she was alive and asked if she could care for her. This is the culture that we live in today.

“Our Lady invites us to fast on bread and water every Wednesday and Friday. She tells us that with prayer and fasting even wars can be stopped. My first experience with fasting was joyful. My mother jokingly said she was the happiest, because she did not have to cook, and the kitchen stayed clean. My father was practical and said the money saved from food expenses would be put aside and given to the poor. I want to encourage all of you to fast. Through fasting, evil spirits can be dispelled. Bad habits, like cursing, can be overcome. I knew a bus driver that cursed with every other word. I told him to stop cursing people and to start saying ‘God Bless You.’ This little thing helped bring him to conversion. Now, when he sees angry people out of his bus window, he yells out ‘God Bless You!’ He says they usually smile and this brings him pleasure.

“Thank God for giving us Our Lady, our Mother these 29 years. You must convert and change your lives. Take Our Lady to your families and homes and pray. Our Lady says to take a pathway to prayer which will lead to love, which will lead to forgiveness and healing.

“Tonight, I will see Our Lady, and I will ask our Lady to intercede for you. Our Lady’s simple words invite us to change our lives. She begins with ‘Dear Children’ and ends with, ‘Thank you for having responded to my call.’ I pray Our Lady will say this same thing to us in Heaven. God bless you.