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PRIVATE REVELATION

Banality and the Balkans: The Seer-ing Truth

Private revelation and "private interpretation" --- the benchmark of the Protestant Reformation --- have, regrettably, much in common in the way of cultic practices that often emerge from them, practices that as often as not arrogate a primacy in the way of revelation that presumes, however implicitly, to supersede the definitive Revelation of God in Jesus Christ that comes to us through Holy Scripture.

In some magnificent instances --- exceptions, really, --- private revelation has been the seed of wide spiritual renewal, much as we had found, and still find, at Fatima and Lourdes. Bear in mind that both Saint Bernadette and Sister Lucia had assiduously avoided publicity and sought refuge in anonymity, living the remainder of their lives in poverty and seclusion.

In other instances, the result has been less salutary for the Church. There are far, far too many to enumerate. Let the "Bayside Apparitions" to the "Seer", Veronica Leuken, suffice for us in America. So many "private revelations" have been flagrantly *contra fide*, leading the credulous and erstwhile faithful into error, sometimes very serious error --- to

the point of contention with, and disobedience to, the Church itself.

These are deep and potentially hostile waters; in many cases veritable vortices of misguided spiritual excess that implodes upon itself ignominiously ... and in an inevitable and ultimately embarrassing denouement --- an excess that results from, and thrives within, the suffocating spiritual vacuum so often experienced in our parishes-become-civic-centers, and at our sometimes shamefully trivialized Masses.

Seeking spiritual meaning, a dimension of being that is realistically tangent to supernatural realities for which they experience a connatural affinity, so many faithful Catholics flee to the first rumor of things supernatural ... to the promise of tangible realities that are either sadly lacking or simply denied them in their own pews. The disinterested and perfunctory recitation of Masses by Priests, the appalling state of increasingly secularized music and instrumentation --- the increasingly feminized complexion of the Sanctuary and Altar --- and a gospel that becomes increasingly "social" and "gender-laden", drives the thirst for authentic spirituality to be quenched elsewhere. As "New Age" and "Woman Church" spirituality encroaches on the pews, however thinly disguised, the pews become vacant in the desperate pursuit of something authentic, "something genuine", something apart from the vapid desiderations and bankrupt manifestos of aging social activists who are allowed a podium at the pulpit.

We don't find Jesus Christ there. Perhaps we can find Him ... or this failing, His Mother! ... elsewhere!

If these understandably disillusioned souls remain in the Church, they often remain a cult in the Church, a cadre, really, of the "initiated" who will bring something spiritual back to the Church --- and sadly, so often, something corrupt. The seat of authority in Rome is often effectively displaced by authority elsewhere: whether Bayside or the Balkans, the effect is the same.

When we cease to find --- when we are no longer led to --- when we are actively deprived of --- the authentic Word of God spoken once, unequivocally, authoritatively, and unalterably in the Person of Jesus Christ through Holy Scripture and in the Most Holy Sacrifice of the Mass --- we go, in our desperation, to where rumor leads us ... and if that to which it leads us speaks *decisively*, with *conviction*, even with presumed *authority* --- we will listen. It appears to us that at least *someone* is quite clear about where we are going and what we must do ... however bizarre or banal it may be. It is the human and immemorial quest for certainty, a certainty that the Church has hedged upon, to its own decimation, for the past 40 years. Not without reason did Jesus pity us as "sheep without a shepherd", knowing neither where, nor to whom, to go. He knew us well.

Deprived of the "Authentic Revelation" of God and His will in the Person of Jesus Christ, we succumb to "private revelation" and attempt to build a church within the Church, not founded on Peter ... but on the utterances of "Seers" and "Visionaries" who *will* tell us,

unequivocally, what we must do --- where our priests and bishops, in an apparent state of theological apathy, meekly and uncertainly ... "suggest" what we must do --- in deference to a "correctness" that will offend no one.

Man, however, does not want to be "correct," He wants to be saved.

"Visionaries" and "Seers" are well aware of this.

Regrettably, many of our bishops, priests, and Directors of Religious Education --- to say nothing of our seminaries ---are not. Very clearly, we will not go to those who, charged with the truth, are alternately reluctant, embarrassed, or unwilling to "speak" it. To what end?

So let us go to those who, while not charged with it, at least purport to "see" it --- let us go to the "Seers"!

This is the sad state of much in the way of "private revelation". It has the uncanny ability to metamorphose into authority. The Vicar of Jesus Christ on Earth speaks daily. Do you know of any organized group that (apart from ZENIT www.zenit.org) takes the time or makes the effort to listen, and to disseminate what they have heard from him to whom Christ has entrusted his Church?

The "Gospa" of Medjugorje, on the other hand, has delivered over 30,000 messages ... to date ... and they are, for all their simplicity, rote, and banality, published voluminously in every imaginable format --- and studied zealously in thousands of "Medjugorje Centers" in America and elsewhere.

"What has the Gospa revealed today? What are the catastrophes looming over us as the Sword of Damocles suspended by the thinnest strand of a horse's hair --- and held by the Gospa alone from plunging down upon disbelievers and sinners alike, fraught with towering anger and impending rage?"

Peter speaks but, turning no Rosaries to gold, is politely ignored.

Ivan, and five others speak (at "scheduled conferences" world wide) and the masses await with bated breath. Odd. Let us look at this notable case in point --- and undoubtedly to the consternation of many readers.

**Medjugorje: A Paradigm of Private Revelation Gone Awry ... 25 years,
30,000 (thousand) messages, and still counting ...**

The first apparition at Medjugorje in the former Yugoslavia was on June 24, 1981, occurring on the "Hill of Apparition" immediately behind which --- precisely on that day 40 years earlier --- Utashi Croats, allies of the Nazis, had massacred 600 Serb women and children for two reasons: they were not Catholics, but Orthodox Christians, and they were not fascists. The ghastly specter of scandal involving the complicity of the Franciscans with the genocidal mania of the Nazis, Croats, and Muslims has not subsided to this day (http://news.suc.org/bydate/2001/Feb_05/13.html). These are the same Franciscans who are now the spiritual managers of the "Seers" --- and what is most notable and very much to the point is that all have acted in disobedience to their local Ordinaries (that is, the Bishops of Mostar: first Pavao Zanic, and, subsequently, Ratko Peric) of the diocese in which the "apparitions" occur:

"The Franciscans who claim to be serving Our Lady at Medjugorje have been formally expelled from the local diocese of Mostar and Duvno. The expulsion was made by both the bishop of Mostar and the father general of the Order of Friars Minor. This took effect on February 21, 1999. The joint expulsion was approved by the Vatican. The rebel Franciscans continue to control parishes in the diocese in disobedience to the Church. The latest expulsions follow the expulsions of the other two Franciscans who refused to hand over the parish of Capljina in 1996. Their expulsion was confirmed in 1998".

<http://www.sfffaith.com/ed/letters/0101lett.htm>

"According to Bishop Ratko Peric of Mostar-Duvno, whose diocese includes Medjugorje, the messages now number more than 30,000, a fact that only increases his own skepticism about the authenticity of the apparitions.

Bishop Peric discussed Medjugorje with Pope Benedict XVI earlier this year during a visit to the Vatican. In a summary of the discussion published in his diocesan newspaper, Bishop Peric said he had reviewed the history of the apparitions with the pope, who already was aware of the main facts from his time as head of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.

"The Holy Father told me: We at the congregation always asked ourselves how can any believer accept as authentic apparitions that occur every day and for so many years?" Bishop Peric said.

Bishop Peric noted that Yugoslavian bishops in 1991 issued a statement that "it cannot be confirmed that supernatural apparitions or revelations are occurring" at Medjugorje.

Bishop Peric said he told the pope that his own opinion was even stronger -- not only that a supernatural element cannot be proven, but that "it is certain that these events do not concern supernatural apparitions."

<http://www.catholicnews.com/data/stories/cns/0603480.htm>

Mary, it is alleged, appears at least monthly to the ... "Seers" or "Visionaries" as their followers call them ... which means that the Mother of God has appeared well over 300

times to the "Visionaries/Seers" in the ensuing 25 years. Her Son, Jesus Christ, "publicly" appeared for 3 ...

Thousands upon thousands make "pilgrimages" to Medjugorje in the hope of seeing their Rosaries turn gold (an often cited "supernatural" occurrence ... although of the many, many, thousands, I have known none who have brought one gold Rosary back).

That a far greater and authentic miracle occurs in the humble Mass of every parish throughout the world where ordinary bread and wine are turned into the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ is, apparently, less ... sensational. How is the hidden Christ, eluding our senses in the Sacred Species of Bread and Wine, to contend with an unparalleled opportunity to see and even speak with a "Seer", a "Visionary" --- perhaps with with *several* of them --- who (unlike Saint Bernadette or Sister Lucia) make themselves eagerly available to the well paying crowds and whose itinerary rivals the peregrinations of Saint Paul. Consider the following:

<http://www.medjugorje.org/ivanse.htm>

This site lists Ivan's (one of the 6 Seers or Visionaries) Speaking Schedule for 2006 --- there are 24 --- and a "*Prayer Experience Package*", stating that:

Your **Prayer Experience Package** Includes:

- Quality Air and Ground Transportation
- Air Conditioned Accommodations (double & triple occupancy, Private baths)
- Hot Breakfast & Dinner Daily (served by Ivan & Family)
- English Speaking Tour Guide
- Meetings with Fr. Jozo & other visionaries (when available)

- Prices are for New York departures and do not include airline tax. Prices are subject to change. If seats are no longer available in class quoted, reservations will be made at a higher rate. Deviations will affect tour prices. Please ask us about airfare rates from your city.

Furthermore, the site, in the classical parlance of the lucrative travel and tourist industry, offers:

***** **Exclusively for our Prayer Experience Pilgrims*******

- Special Times of Prayer & Group Meetings & Discussions with Ivan in our home chapel
- Unlimited use of our private home chapel (apparition room)*, books & tapes
- Ivan will take you back and share his experience of the first days of the apparitions during a private tour guided by Ivan. Relive the first days of the apparitions as

though you were there.

- Morning Prayer & Rosary together daily
- Ivan will take group to Apparition Hill for Prayer & Meditation
- There will be plenty of opportunities to speak privately with Ivan during your stay

And all for just under \$2000.00 dollars US

<http://www.pilgrimages.com/prayerexperience>

[Quite a bargain ...

Of course, there *is* one official proviso:]

- **"WE CANNOT PROMISE THAT THE GROUP WILL BE ABLE TO ATTEND AN APPARITION WITH IVAN. Simply because we are not sure when our Blessed Mother will stop appearing to him." (ibid.).**

Of course ... We can never tell, after all, when these things may cease after 25 years and counting

The point?

Medjugorje is roughly 5,000 miles from Boston.

Your Bible is beside your bed (or ought to be). The Altar of God is very likely a few minutes from home.

If you lust after the extraordinary, the "supernatural", if you long for the holy, and wish to be witness to and the recipient of the greatest miracle of all time ---- *go to Mass*. It is not likely that your Rosaries will turn to gold, but perhaps something far greater still will come to be transformed: your very heart. Two things *surely* will be transformed --- mere bread into the Body of Christ, and the simplest wine into His Blood.

When you have read the Bible and all that God has definitively said to you once and for all time in and through His Only Begotten and Beloved Son; when you can recite Scripture chapter and verse ... and *still* you long for the Balkans, go. But you will not find there what you have failed to find in Jesus Christ --- Who comes to ***you*** in the Most Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, in the words of Sacred Scripture!

Such magnificent humility!

Would that we learn from God and see with eyes that see, rather than through the eyes of others who are "Seers" for us.

Suggested reading:

http://news.suc.org/bydate/2001/Feb_05/13.html

<http://www.medjugorje.org/mediv1.htm>

http://www.culturewars.com/CultureWars/Archives/cw_feb98/surmanci.html

http://www.culturewars.com/CultureWars/Archives/cw_feb98/surmanci.html



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