



MY MEDJUGORJE STORY 30 YEARS LATER

by GREG SCHLUETER

This month marks the 40th Anniversary of Our Lady's purported apparitions in Medjugorje, beginning in June of 1981. As a Catholic, my faith in Jesus Christ is anchored in public revelation. I'm availed to the Church's final determination. All that said, here is my story.

I first heard of Medjugorje in the 80's among very devout, pro-life, Marian people. I'd read an article by a secular newspaper journalist sent over there to cover the happenings; he was not a practicing anything; his marriage was on the rocks; he had a powerful conversion and spoke of the multitudes in confession lines, in mass, of conversion.

Post-college (Miami University, 1990), while working for Human Life International, on a Saturday morning in May of 1991, while praying at an abortuary, someone handed me a brochure about Medjugorje. What struck me was a statement along the lines, "If God wants you to be there, He'll make a way." Coming up was the 10th Anniversary of the purported apparitions, June, 1991.

I didn't have any money, time off of work, it was a month away, and frankly, didn't so much care to go there. It was off my radar. However, while praying my Rosary that night, I was "haunted" by a beautiful, peace-evoking, inaudible voice (sense), "I want you to be with me."

You know how that goes. Mind games. Imagination. Impression. Needless to say, it didn't stop. To sleep, I had to answer. At 1am, I flicked on the light, pulled out the brochure, found an address, and jotted a note to the director along the lines: "I read your brochure. It's possible I'm suppose to be there. Most likely not. I have no money. Sorry to bother you. Thanks for your time."

I didn't think a thing of it until two weeks later I got a reply, in so many words saying: "Just when your note came in I received another note from a regular pilgrim: 'I can't make it this year. Please accept this money to provide for a young person to go to Medjugorje.'"

Ok then.

To make a very long story short, I joined hundreds of amazing pilgrims from Rhode Island and Massachusetts on a big Lockheed L-1011. All along the way and throughout we experienced extraordinary grace outpoured in the Sacraments, praying the Rosary (daily three sets), Chaplet of Divine Mercy, and testimonies of the visionaries. With an emphasis on authentic conversion and peace, the persistent messages: Prayer, Mass, Fasting, Confession, Bible.

Yes, I experienced the "Miracle of the Son," saw the miraculous glow around "Cross Mountain," evidenced a number of miraculous, physical healings. Having attended Catholic schools my entire life, it was all the difference

between head knowledge-- a bunch of words-- and the Word coming alive. A profound sense of "God with us."

The ultimate miracle was profound conversion taking place in our formidable group and around us. Conversions that have only deepened up to this day-- thirty years later. On that trip alone more than few "heard" and accepted their calls to the priesthood and religious life. It inspired me to initiate the "Mary Talk" in the Cleveland and then Erie TEC programs, continuing to this day. From which came more priests.

It prompted my attending Franciscan University to work as an evangelist/admissions leader, resulting in the Heart and Soul Programs literally reaching thousands.

At FUS in the very first few weeks it flowed into connection with an amazing Eucharistic miracle that inspired a household ("Servants of the Eucharistic Heart of Jesus"), set me up for leading Light and Life Foundation that reached throughout North America, then discerning/living with Fr. Benedict Groeschel and moving on to Mount St. Mary's Seminary in Emmitsburg, MD, where I was moved to found Mount 2000 - a Eucharistic weekend for 1500 every year going strong now over 22 years, a context of literally thousands of amazing conversions and dozens of vocations.

It flowed into my vocation of husband and father, and leading youth and young adult ministry in Erie, Pennsylvania, bringing the largest group of pilgrims in the world to World Youth Day in Toronto following 9/11. This was a seedbed from which came at least 16 priests and a few religious, so much leading up to and through our current marriage and family movement.

All of which resulted in innumerable spiritual and physical healings, evidence of the Kingdom among us.

Our Lady is the spouse of the Holy Spirit. True fire of the Holy Spirit can not be contained. Over the years it is proven to be set ablaze. (Luke 12:49) Eternal connections made in heaven are revealed temporally on earth. Particularly through our children.

How moving that our son, Joseph, founder of Damascus Worship on the Damascus Campus in Ohio, will be leading worship for the program I started over 20 years ago -- Mount 2000. Or the connection with then Fr. Kevin Rhoades 20 years ago while discerning the CFR's while living with Fr. Benedict Groeschel at Trinity Retreat. Years later he became Bishop Kevin Rhoades and, as a board member for Ave Maria University, met this dynamic young lady with a suspiciously familiar last name, dating another dynamic Catholic leader from his home diocese. So Bishop Rhoades with Anne Marie and Colin Stroud, with all our families, came together last week as he presided over their beautiful witness to the iconography of the Holy Trinity in marriage.

So, availing to the Church's final determination with regard to Medjugorje, with my faith in Jesus Christ ultimately anchored in public revelation: If all this connected, prolific "Kingdom" through someone as imperfect, sinful, and pathetic as me-- multiplied thousands of times over by others who have been to Medjugorje-- if all this is of Satan, he is one horrible strategist.

"But test everything; hold fast what is good."

1 Thesalonians 5:21



GREG & STEPHANIE SCHLUETER

have been blessed with seven children (one in heaven) through 24 years of marriage, newly adding an amazing son-in-law. Before launching a Catholic family movement (ILoveMyFamily.us), Greg's companies developed integrated marketing, mission and media production for Hollywood movies and corporations (Imago Dei). Stephanie is a wife, homemaker and homeschooling teacher extraordinaire.

Dear Brothers & Sisters in Christ,

Our world is pining for good news. God's supply is *you*. Your short, moving story of "God with us" will make a big difference in someone's life.

Right now you can think of at least one moving moment in your life. An example of "God with us." Please take a moment now to simply email me the possible subject of your story. If you're motivated, sure, write it out (no more than 500 words). We'll help you land it. Many will be blessed. We want to feature a new story every week.

Thank you in advance!

So blessed to be united in building the Kingdom,



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