

# Knowledge about “Fruits” Necessary to Evaluate Medjugorje and Other Apparitions

[New Era World News](#)

**THIS IS PART TWO** of a Series Entitled Confusion about Marian Apparitions. [Part One](#) ended with these words, which serve as a transition to a discussion about Obedience and then Medjugorje:

*“Since Satan hates the woman and her seed, we should expect anything pertaining to her, especially special visits to earth to guide and nourish her children, to be surrounded with confusion, lies, deceit, forgeries and above all else, by hatred and disobedience. And this is exactly what is found, especially on the ultra-liberal and ultra-conservative fringes. Although polar opposites, what they share in common is an affinity for **disobedience** and a **perversion of God’s mercy**, which is either (1) forgotten, shrouded in false piety or turned into an occasion for callousness and hardness toward sinners, a wish for their punishment and chastisement rather than love, mercy and compassion as flow from the Heart of Jesus to [rescue them from hell as Our Lady requested at Fatima](#) or (2) an excessive tolerance leading to a false notion of love resulting in acceptance and even justification of sin.*

The typical Medjugorje devotee will defend these supposed apparitions by citing scripture teaching that a tree is known by its fruits ([Luke 6:43](#)) and then proceed to explain how **people are praying their rosaries and fasting etc.** as if this was proof of advancement in holiness, while also ignoring that

the Scripture about good fruits is connected to another teaching about false apostles:

*“Beware of false prophets, who come to you in the clothing of sheep, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. By their fruits you shall know them” ([Matt 7:15-16](#)).*

**Fasting is a discipline that involves the body; it cannot, in itself, make a person holy because becoming holy is a spiritual matter involving the human soul.** Fasting can contribute to growth in holiness by enabling a person to acquire discipline and control of themselves, control of their passions in order that they might *begin* to make an advance on the spiritual path to holiness. Fasting-mortification is a first step; it involves disciplining the body.

Meditative prayer also involves the human body and its *sentient faculties* of memory and imagination, **faculties that human beings share with animals** (but not with angels) – **sentient faculties are *not* spiritual faculties.** Meditative prayer, like fasting, involves the lower or animal sentient faculties; they are necessary but insufficient for spiritual growth, necessary to tame and order the passions and the imagination, which have been poisoned by the world, lack of proper formation in virtue, and temptation that can arise from the angelic realm. **Mediation and fasting are for beginners,** those who are ruled by their passions and imagination or who have a difficult time overcoming them. Novices must first be cleansed or purged of these affections, that is why spiritual doctors of the Church refer to fasting-mortification-mediation as the “Purgative Way.” They represent a disciplining or purging of the mind and body without which further spiritual growth cannot be attained.

**Fasting is a discipline, which if *not* performed with the proper motive of love of God and neighbor is practically useless.** The same can be said of prayer, and esp. of

meditative prayer, which is for beginners, those who are getting prepared to walk the higher spiritual path referred to by spiritual doctors as illumination (or the “illuminative way”) associated with growth in wisdom culminating in the mind of Christ, where a person learns to understand, appreciate and ultimately prefer the wisdom of the cross. Illumination, the acquisition of wisdom leads to a still higher realm: spiritual perfection by way of love. **Perfection cannot be achieved without love; it is love that represents the highest spiritual attainment of the human soul manifest in what Teresa of Avila and other doctors of mystical theology refer to as the “Unitive Way”,** the sublime path of love. This path cannot be followed until a person has first conquered his-her passions and acquired wisdom, not just the wisdom contained in dogmatic theology, but the wisdom associated with the mystery of the Cross, mystical wisdom or mystical theology. It is only by means of this wisdom that a person is able to understand and embrace the suffering that necessarily associated with love ultimately culminating in union with God and neighbor. Few people travel this road, many come to the doors of the unitive way, but recoil to the comforts of intellectual conversation:

*“How narrow is the gate, and strait is the way that leadeth to life: and few there are that find it” ([Matt 7:14](#)).*

John Paul II discussed the mystery of suffering in his encyclical [“\*Salvifici Doloris\*”](#):

*“The words of that prayer of Christ in Gethsemane prove the truth of love through the truth of suffering...This discovery caused St. Paul to write particularly strong words in the letter to the Galatians: “I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me: and the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.”[62] Faith enables the author of these words to know that love which led Christ to the cross. And if He loved us in this way,*

*suffering and dying, then with this suffering and death of His He lives in the one whom He loved in this way; He lives in the man: in Paul. And living in him to the degree that Paul, conscious of this through faith, responds to His love with love."*

The failure of many to mount from purgation of the senses to spiritual wisdom and onward to the mystery of the cross by way of salvific love is the reason there are so few saints, but an abundance of catechists and professors (masters or quasi-masters of dogmatic theology). There are many master of dogmatic theology but **mystical theology** has few masters, it cannot be mastered in the same way as dogma – it **is not cerebral**. Mystical theology is *not* something that is learned, rather, **mystical theology must be lived**, lived in ardent love of God and neighbor according to the mystery of the Cross.

*"God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ; by whom the world is crucified to me, and I to the world. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature (things of the body)...From henceforth let no man be troublesome to me; for I bear the marks of the Lord Jesus in my body. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your **spirit**, brethren. Amen" ([Galatians 6:14-18](#)).*

Paul bore the marks of Christ in his body not as a trophy, but out of love for those to whom he ministered, those whom he served:

*"I am caught between the two. I long to depart this life and be with Christ, [for] that is far better. Yet that I remain [in] the flesh is more **necessary for your benefit**. And this I know with confidence, that I shall remain and **continue in the service of all of you for your progress** (not mine-but yours) and joy in the faith" ([Philippians 1:23-25](#)).*

No one can advance in the spiritual life if they are focused on themselves, on attaining spiritual benefits for their own advancement before men

*“And when Simon (the magician) saw, that by the imposition of the hands of the apostles, the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money, Saying: Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I shall lay my hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost. But Peter said to him: Keep thy money to thyself, to perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money. Thou hast no part nor lot in this matter. For thy heart is not right in the sight of God”* ([Acts 8:18-21](#)).

Not even prayers can be answered when the heart is turned to itself rather than to God and neighbor:

*“From whence are wars and contentions among you? Are they not hence, from your concupiscences, which war in your members? You covet, and have not: you kill, and envy, and can not obtain. You contend and war, and you have not, because you ask not. **You ask, and receive not; because you ask amiss: that you may consume it on your concupiscences**”* ([James 4:1-5](#)).

This is exactly the point being made here, viz., before any advancement can be made in the spiritual life, concupiscence must be brought under control and eradicated. I did not say that the passions need to be eradicated (they are all good) but concupiscence or *disorderliness* that arises from the passions due to a weak will usually accompanied by a dim intellect have to be dealt with if there is to be any spiritual progress. However, the intellect can be sharp, razor sharp, and the passion still pose a problem. Or, a person might overcome the passions and acquire wisdom but then fail to advance in love – that leads to a stop in purgatory. If failure to love results is due to intellectual pride

leading to schism, it might even be worse- that is up to God to decide, “who am I to judge” such things as Pope Francis has said.

As a person cannot have prayers answered on account of their asking wrongly, neither can they advance in the spiritual life if they pray and fast with the wrong intentions or without first having obtained rule over their own house, which makes possible further advancement in wisdom and love. If all a devotee does is pray for himself or for those whom he loves – he is *not* advancing, even the Pharisees and tax collectors did the same – he must pray and sacrifice for his enemies. Instead many dream of their chastisement and pray for justice and punishment – these are human sentiments *not* in accord with the mind and mission of Jesus Christ:

*“I say to you, Love your enemies: do good to them that hate you: and pray for them that persecute and calumniate you: That you may be the children of your Father who is in heaven, who maketh his sun to rise upon the good, and bad, and raineth upon the just and the unjust. For if you love them that love you, what reward shall you have? do not even the publicans this? And if you salute your brethren only, what do you more? do not also the heathens this? Be you therefore perfect, as also your heavenly Father is perfect” ([Matt 5: 44-48](#)).*

Likewise, anyone who fasts without love is wasting his time. Our Lady taught her children to fast and pray for love of others, what she referred to as Reparation Prayer, Reparation Sacrifice, “Reparation Communion” all done for love of others, especially for the poorest of sinners in order to rescue them from eternal despair:

*“You have seen hell where the souls of poor sinners go. To **save them**, God wishes to establish in this world devotion to my Immaculate Heart...If what I say is done, many souls will*

be saved, and there will be peace” ([July 13, 1917 apparition of Our Lady of Fatima](#)).

Our Lady did *not* teach the children to merely fast and pray; **she taught them to fast and pray out of love for others**. If this is not being done or being done only for those by whom the person praying is loved, there will be little advancement.

**Without love, there is no merit in such activities**. Even if a person progresses beyond the *purgative way* to the *illuminative way* and grows in wisdom so as to understand the greatest mysteries, even then, without love, such an attainment is essentially useless. Head and Heart, love and wisdom, must function together as an integral unity if there is to be an authentic expression of Catholicism. **Wisdom, no matter how great a good** (Aristotle even referred to it as the *Summum Bonum* – the greatest of all goods) **is deficient without Love**. In fact, wisdom is not only incomplete without love, it is inferior to love – it is meant to be consummate in love:

*“IF I speak with the tongues of men, and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And if I should have prophecy and should know all mysteries, and all knowledge, and if I should have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And if I should distribute all my goods to feed the poor, and if I should deliver my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.*

*“Charity never falleth away: whether prophecies shall be made void, or tongues shall cease, or knowledge shall be destroyed. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, that which is in part shall be done away... Now I know in part; but then I shall know even as I am known. And now there remain faith, hope, and charity, these three: but **the greatest of these is***

charity" ([1 Corinthians 13: 1-13](#)).

Backing up to the purgative way regarding spiritual exercises for beginners such as fasting and meditative prayer, it is dangerous to "get high on, or "prideful about", these lesser things; they cannot, in themselves, make a person holy. Holiness depends upon further appreciation of the wisdom of the cross acquired by illumination and ultimately depends upon death to self to better love God and neighbor without which no one can become perfect.

However, in addition to the sentient exercise of meditative prayer and mortification associated with the purgative way, there is a third element found at the beginning, throughout, and at the end of the spiritual ascent to perfection: Obedience. **Of the three, mortification, meditative prayer and obedience, it is the latter that is most important.** In fact, one extremely small act of obedience, such as putting the lights out at 10 PM, is greater than the greatest act of mortification done without love, such as willingness to be endure torture out of hatred or pride.

Obedience is for beginners and for well-advanced proficients as well. **Obedience is greater than sacrifice**, unlike fasting and meditative prayer, **obedience is a spiritual exercise.** it is a spiritual exercise **because it involves the will, which is a spiritual faculty of the rational soul.**

Obedience does *not* differ in *degree* from mortification, it differs in *kind*; it is altogether of another species. Because it is a spiritual operation, it always exceeds that which is merely sentient or physical. The lowest operation of the higher spiritual power exceeds the highest operation of a lower physical power. The soul is the eternal spiritual image of the Holy Trinity, the body, without the soul, is merely finite dust having some likeness to God but *not* His image and not eternity.



Thus, a simple act of obedience transcends the greatest act of mortification if not elevated by love (because love emanates from the spiritual soul)!

Unfortunately, disobedience comes in great droughts at Medjugorje. As indicated, meditative prayer (such as the rosary) and fasting etc. are *not* necessarily fruits. **There are 12 fruits and they all flow from LOVE not one of them is mortification or mediation, because the fruits are all spiritual.**

### **The Twelve Fruits of the Holy Spirit:**

*“charity, joy, peace, patience, benignity, goodness, longanimity, mildness, faith, modesty, continency, chastity (for love of God). Against such there is no law. And they that are Christ’s, have crucified their flesh, with the vices and concupiscences.”* ([Galatians 5:22-24](#)).

So when a Medjugorje devotee claims that rosary and fasting are fruits; he-she is speaking incorrectly. Fasting and meditative prayer might be manifestations of fruit if done out of love – as was said above, all the fruits flow from charity or love:

*“The first disposition of the [human](#) mind towards the [good](#) is effected by love, which is the first of our emotions and the root of them all, as stated above ([I-II:27:4](#)). Wherefore among the fruits of the [Holy Ghost](#), we reckon “[charity](#),” wherein the [Holy Ghost](#) is given in a special manner, as in His own likeness, since He Himself is love. Hence it is written ([Romans 5:5](#)): “The [charity](#) of [God](#) is poured forth in our hearts by the [Holy Ghost](#), Who is given to us.” The [necessary](#) result of the love of [charity](#) is [joy](#): because every lover rejoices at being united to the beloved. Now [charity](#) has always actual presence in [God](#) Whom it loves, according to*

1 John 4:16: “He that abideth in charity, abideth in God, and God in Him”: wherefore the sequel of charity is “joy.” Now the perfection of joy is peace” (St. Thomas Aquinas, Q 70, A 3).

From there Aquinas goes on to demonstrate that all the fruits flow from love because they are manifestations of the operation of the Holy Spirit in the Soul, the Holy Spirit who is Love.

Thus, prayers fasting and all manner of piety are not indications of the working of the Holy Spirit *if* they are unaccompanied by love, love of God manifest in a willingness to die to self, do be obedient, to suffer for the good of others, to suffer with **joy** and **peace**, which actually are **fruits – these are the fruits to be looked for**. However, when Medjugorje is examined, it is readily seen that not only are these fruits often absent, **there opposite corruptions are often abundantly present**. Understanding this helps to grasp exactly what the “Holy Office” intended when it stated:

“We must resist error even when it masquerade as piety.”

Scripture confirms this insight by the Holy Office; it also reveals how to spot error – error cannot hide forever behind a **masquerade of piety** nor can it hide behind **ersatz love** like Judas hid behind the purse whose contents he spent on himself. Error is revealed in concupiscence, worldliness, in lack of peace, the tranquility of spirit that comes forth from wisdom and love nurtured by humility **and obedience**:

*“Now I beseech you, brethren, to mark them who make **dissensions** and offences contrary to the doctrine which you have learned, and avoid them. For they that are such, serve not Christ our Lord, but their own belly; and by pleasing speeches (ultra-conservatives) and good words (ultra-liberals), seduce the hearts of the innocent. **For your***

*obedience is published in every place. I rejoice therefore in you (not in them who are disobedient). But I would have you to be wise in good, and simple in evil. And the **God of peace crush Satan** under your feet speedily. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you” ([Romans 16: 17-20](#)).*

At Medjugorje disobedience is all over the canvas as will be demonstrated in the next article. As reported in [Crisis Magazine](#):

*“In Medjugorje, we are confronted with the counter-intuitive phenomenon of the Madonna (Herself) encouraging disobedience to the successors of the Apostles, and disobedience of some Franciscans to Vatican directives.*

[Pope Francis has](#) directed that the matter be looked into and has recently indicated that the process of investigation is “nearly complete.”

[Go to Part III: Church has Taken Tougher Stance on Medjugorje Waiting Final Pronouncement](#)