



A Profound Sense of Grace

By **Jerry Morin**

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At the beginning of the year 2000, I felt a tremendous pull to go back to Medjugorje – it was nine years since my last visit. I had many emotions as the pilgrimage got closer. I kept thinking of how much my life had changed in those nine years: my conversion, speaking and singing, then playing the trumpet across the country, losing my sister to cancer, losing my mom, getting married to Regina, and now my own family with two precious little girls.

The thought kept arriving that I should take my father's trumpet to Medjugorje and play the Ave Maria from the top of Krizevac, just out of gratitude to Our Lady. I took 40 pilgrims with me last September [2000]. The day finally came when we climbed the mountain at 6:00 a.m. and I had my dad's trumpet in my backpack. I'm not sure anyone knew I had it with me except my brother, Maurice, from Massachusetts, who accompanied me on this pilgrimage. This was very special for him, for he had heard and read many stories about Medjugorje, es-

pecially from my mother. Now he was here with me.

My brother was extremely close to my dad before he died in 1971. It was emotional for both of us as I carefully took dad's trumpet out of the backpack, faced the village below, closed my eyes and played the Ave Maria from my heart, with tears streaming down my face. Maurice, too, was in tears. Later, I was asked by Father Svet to play it at the English and Croatian Masses. What a privilege!

One of the pilgrims, a wonderful, quiet, holy lady, looked up and took this picture from below. When she developed it, she immediately called to say she was sending it to me right away. Then she began to explain the reason for her pilgrimage.

She lives in Nebraska, had known of our ministry for sometime and wanted to go on this pilgrimage. She has three children and felt called to have another but her husband was adamantly against it. She prayed constantly in Medjugorje to receive the peace to accept God's Will for her life. While in the village, she was unexpectedly given an authentic relic of St. Gerard, the patron saint for expectant

mothers. I found this mystifying, since my mother named me Gerard, after St. Gerard.

When this lady returned home, her husband approached her to say he had been thinking about the possibility of another child while she was gone. She was very surprised. I was amazed at her experience and then the picture arrived. I was brought to tears when I saw it. When she called me to perform a concert this spring at her parish, she said she was pregnant. Internally, I could hear the soft words, "Thank you for your faithfulness."

I have waited to share this with anyone, for I wanted to see what kind of effect the picture would have on me, over time. After five months, I find that everytime I gaze on it, a profound sense of grace comes over me. All the emotions my brother and I experienced while I played the Ave Maria are felt again everytime I view it. Maurice says he experiences the same sensations as well, when he looks at it.

I am grateful to God and Our Lady for so many things and so many people and now for giving me this picture to gaze on for the rest of my earthly life. ■