

## Timeline of the Catholic Church's Official Responses to Medjugorje

**12<sup>th</sup> May 2019:** Pope Francis decides to authorize pilgrimages to Medjugorje, **which can now be officially organized by dioceses and parishes.** This announcement was made during Mass at the parish shrine of Medjugorje, which has become a destination for millions of pilgrims, by the Apostolic Nuncio Luigi Pezzuto in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Archbishop Henryk Hoser, the Holy See's Special Apostolic Visitor.

"Considering the considerable flow of people who go to Medjugorje, and the abundant fruits of grace that have sprung from it, this authorization is part of the particular pastoral attention that the Holy Father intended to give to that reality, aimed at encouraging and promoting its good fruits."

This announcement does not enter into doctrinal questions relating to the authenticity of the account of the six visionaries of what has happened in Medjugorje since June 1981, *a phenomenon that has not yet been concluded.* Of the six visionaries, at that time children or young people, three assure us that they still have a daily apparition of the "Queen of Peace", always at the same time in the afternoon and wherever they are: they are Vicka (who lives near Medjugorje), Marija (who lives in Monza) and Ivan (who lives in the United States but often returns to Medjugorje.)

{ Source: Vatican news <https://www.vaticannews.va/en/pope/news/2019-05/pope-authorizes-pilgrimages-to-medjugorje.html> }

**1<sup>st</sup> August 2018:** Papal Nuncio for Bosnia-Herzegovina, Msgr. Luigi Pezzuto, opens the annual Youth Festival in Medjugorje by presiding at Holy Mass.

**22<sup>nd</sup> July 2018:** Archbishop Henryk Hoser moves to Medjugorje and begins his assignment as apostolic visitor for the parish of St. James. With this action, the Vatican has effectively placed Medjugorje under its direct control and guidance. At the evening Mass of welcome for Archbishop Hoser, the Papal Nuncio for Bosnia-Herzegovina, Msgr. Luigi Pezzuto, concelebrated the Holy Mass – a first for any Vatican official. The Papal Nuncio accompanied Hoser and read a letter from Pope Francis announcing Hoser's appointment in Medjugorje.

In his homily, Archbishop Hoser spoke about why people come to Medjugorje: "Pilgrims come to Medjugorje from faraway regions, from approximately 80 countries of the world. . . ,” he said. “. . . Let us now ask the fundamental question: Why do so many people come to Medjugorje every year? The clear answer is this: they come to meet someone, to meet God, to meet Christ, to meet His Mother. And then to discover the path that leads to the joy of living in the house of the Father and of the Mother; and ultimately to discover the Marian way as the more certain and sure one. This is the path of the Marian devotion that has been taking place here for years.” Later in his homily, Archbishop Hoser said, “This is what the peoples’ devotion in Medjugorje looks like: in the centre is the Holy Mass, Adoration of the Most Blessed Sacrament and the sacrament of Reconciliation. And all of this is followed by other forms of devotion: the Rosary and the Way of the Cross, which have turned what in the beginning used to be sharp stones into smooth paths.”

“Archbishop Hoser made a point to invite all believers to go to Medjugorje, if they are able, and to receive spiritual renewal. “I would highly recommend it. I would say that it is the pilgrimage of spiritual change, conversion, and strengthening of faith – you can experience all of that there.”

**31<sup>st</sup> May 2018:** Pope Francis nominates Archbishop Hoser a second time “as special apostolic visitor for the parish of Medjugorje.” According to the statement released by the Holy See’s Press Office, the mandate will last for “an undefined period and “ad nutum Sanctae” (at the Holy See’s disposition). Once again, Archbishop Hoser will exercise “an exclusively pastoral office” in continuity with his first mandate which came to an end recently. The Holy See’s Press Office explains, “the mission of the Apostolic Visitor has the aim of ensuring a stable and continuous accompaniment to the parish community of Medjugorje and to the faithful who go there as pilgrims, and whose needs require particular attention.”

**August 2017:** Papal envoy to Medjugorje, Archbishop Hoser, gave an interview in Poland, in which he said, among other things, the following: “Specifically, I think it’s possible to recognize the authenticity of the first [seven] apparitions as proposed by the Ruini commission,” Hoser said. “Besides, it is difficult to get another verdict, because it’s difficult to believe that six seers will lie for 36 years. What they say has been consistent. They are not mentally incompetent. A strong argument for the authenticity of the apparitions is their faithfulness to the doctrine of the Church ... In any event, this movement will not stop and should not be stopped, because of the good fruit that grows out of it,” Hoser said. “It is one of the most alive places of prayer and conversion in Europe - and has a healthy spirituality.”

**May 2017:** The findings of the Ruini Commission, which was so esteemed by Pope Francis, are made public. The commission recommends that the first 7 days of the apparitions be approved, and that Medjugorje be turned into a pontifical sanctuary. The commission made no recommendations about the any of the apparitions which occurred after the first 7 days.

**30<sup>th</sup> March 2017:** Papal Envoy, Archbishop Hoser, arrives in Medjugorje to evaluate the pastoral needs of Medjugorje and report back to the Holy Father. Upon his arrival in Medjugorje, Archbishop Hoser made the following statement to the gathered crowd: “We call Her here, the Queen of Peace. ... Therefore, that honouring, so intensive here, is of the greatest importance and is necessary to the whole world. ... We need a Heavenly intervention. The presence of our Blessed Virgin Mary – that is this intervention. It is God’s initiative. ... Therefore, I would like to encourage and fortify all of you, on behalf of the Pope, as his Emissary ... Those who come here discover something extraordinary ... They discover a huge range of profound spirituality. We can see that devotion in Medjugorje is very Christ-centred,”

“Medjugorje is a very fertile land from a religious perspective. In these years we can count 610 religious and priesthood vocations born in Medjugorje. ... When we are aware of the crisis of vocations ... it is clear that there is something new here, something remarkable.” “The specific role of Medjugorje is extremely important here. ... You, my dear friends, should be the carriers of the joyful news. Say to the whole world that in Medjugorje we can find the light again. We need those special places of light in the world that is sinking into darkness.”

**11<sup>th</sup> February 2017:** Pope Francis appoints Archbishop of Warsaw, Poland, Henryk Hoser, as Papal Envoy to Medjugorje.

**2014:** The Cardinal Ruini Commission completes its investigation of Medjugorje and submits finding to the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith.

**2010:** The Vatican forms a new commission to investigate the apparitions of Medjugorje. The commission is headed by Cardinal Camillo Ruini, retired Vicar General of Rome and is made up of 16 members. Noticeably absent from this commission is the bishop of Mostar.

**1991:** The new commission issues an official statement about Medjugorje. They have one of three options to choose from: 1. Certain of supernatural origin; 2. Not yet certain of supernatural origin; 3. Certain of NO supernatural origin. The commission chooses option 2: Not yet certain of supernatural origin.

In Summary, the 1991 Commission makes the following statements:

1. That it cannot YET be determined whether Medjugorje is of supernatural origin;
2. That pilgrims ARE allowed to visit Medjugorje;
3. That priests ARE allowed to go there to tend to the spiritual needs of the pilgrims.

(This remains the Church's official position on pilgrims going to Medjugorje until May 2019.)

**1986:** The Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith (CDF) under Cardinal Ratzinger (later Pope Benedict) rejects the findings of the bishop's commission, disbands the commission the local bishop created, and creates a new commission to investigate Medjugorje. From that point on, the local bishop (and all his successors) were stripped of all jurisdiction over the apparitions of Medjugorje.

**1986:** The Bishop of Mostar submits a negative decision about Medjugorje to the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith.

**1984:** The local bishop, of the diocese of Mostar, forms a commission to investigate the events in Medjugorje.

**June 1981:** The Apparitions of Our Lady, Queen of Peace, begin in Medjugorje.