

Work Camp 2009



Work Camp 2009

We arrived in Medjugorje on July 25th for our week of work camp and another week of pilgrimage.

Our group from St. Peter's Church in Forest Lake, MN, met up with other groups from Texas, New York, Washington, etc., in Split, Croatia. From there we took a bus along the Adriatic Sea then inland to the parish of Medjugorje.

Our home for the next two weeks was the Pansion of Vesna & Vlado Ostojic, which was situated half way between Mother's Village and St. James Church.



Work Camp 2009



Our mission for the week was to work on various projects at Mother's Village – a complex of humanitarian communities started by Fr. Slavco Barbaric in 1996.

We would be working with men of all ages from the Merciful Fathers Community. Under the guidance of Fr. Svetozar Kraljevic, these men were in various stages of a three-year drug rehabilitation program.

Our physical mission was to work on these projects, but our spiritual mission was to work with and support these men on their journey.

Work Camp 2009



Our primary project was to greatly expand the 'orchard' of pomegranate trees. Since the ground is so rocky, additional topsoil was brought in aid their survival!



Our first day of planting was so successful that we ran out of prepared field to work with. While additional fields were created, we worked on clearing rocks from the orchard.

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Our daily lunch break was always preceded with Holy Mass in the chapel at Mother's Village.



All of our meals during the work week were provided – breakfast and dinner at Vesna's and lunch (sometimes with a short nap) at Mother's Village.

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If it became too hot (100°F+) we worked on 'inside' projects. These included the 'harvesting' of lavender for making sachets that are sold to raise money for the Village.



First dried lavender branches are stomped on to remove the loose flowers. Then the branches are trimmed to remove remaining flowers, which are then sealed in cloth bags to make the sachets.

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We also worked with the men of Merciful Fathers Community in making items that are sold to support the community.

This included rosaries made from Job's Tears, ceramic mosaics, etc.

Some members of the group trimmed trees in the orchards and harvested the lavender bushes to be dried.



Pilgrimage 2009



In our spare time during the week of work camp, and during our second week in Medjugorje, we experienced the spirituality surrounding the apparitions of the Blessed Virgin Mary.



A statue of Gospa (Mary) now stands at the area on Podbrdo (Apparition Hill) where she first appeared to six children in 1981. The Blue Cross marks the area on the hill where the visionaries later met in secret for their daily visits.

Pilgrimage 2009



St. James Church with its outside altar.



The Statue of the Risen Christ on the grounds of St. James. The statue continuously 'weeps' at Christ's right knee.

Pilgrimage 2009

One of the highlights of the trip was an invitation to the chapel of Marija Pavlovic-Lunetti, one of the six visionaries.

We were present in the chapel during Marija's visit from Mary.

After the apparition, Marija thanked us all for being there, saying the Mary blessed us, and blessed the religious articles that we had brought with us!

Mary asks that we continuously pray the Rosary for peace.



Pilgrimage 2009



Climbing Krisevac (Cross Mountain). The way up the mountain is marked with bronze reliefs of the Stations of the Cross.



This 15-ton monument was built in 1933 to mark the 1900th anniversary of Christ's Redemption on the cross. All materials were hand carried up the mountain.

Pilgrimage 2009



Our second week in Medjugorje coincided with the 20th International Youth Festival Mladifest.

This brought hundreds of priests and thousands of youth from around the world for a week of prayer and activities.

During the week, talks were given by several of the visionaries. Some of the men from the Merciful Fathers also spoke, telling of their struggles with addiction and their rehabilitation through conversion, work and prayer.

Pilgrimage 2009



Our trip was not all work and no play!

We were able to enjoy a cool and relaxing day at the river. The mountain water was cold but a refreshing contrast to the 100°F temperatures.

Pilgrimage 2009



We cannot end without thanking those who made our adventure a lasting experience. Vesna and her family were the ultimate hosts. We could not have asked for better friends (and the food was outstanding!). Slavita was our guide throughout the two weeks. Her knowledge and passion about the history and goings on in Medjugorje are second to none.

Miljenka coordinated our work camp with Mother's Village. In a word – she is awesome!

Pilgrimage 2009



Finally, our sincere thanks to: Ben Fellows (l) and Jeff Reed (r) for their years of work and dedication to St. David's Relief Foundation; to Mother's Village; and to the people of Medjugorje.

Thank you also for organizing and hosting our memorable work camp and pilgrimage. Blessings on you both!