

Documented Account of the First Ten Apparitions

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Many accounts have been made of the first apparitions of Medjugorje. Most of them are based on later sources, "embellished" by the "seers" or by the proponents of the apparitions, with more or less serious errors, omissions and inaccuracies. That's why I have decided to rewrite the story from the most reliable documents we possess, that is, above all, the audio recordings of the interrogations of the "seers" performed from 27 to 30 June 1981 by the priests of the parish, also available at the Mostar bishopric. A full transcript of them is in Ivo Sivrić's book "The Hidden Side of Medjugorje" (Psilog, Saint-François-du-Lac, Québec, 1989).

These records have some cuts, which may suggest that they were censored.

Nobody has ever questioned the authenticity of these transcripts.

On 24 June 1981, two girls, Ivanka Ivankovic, who had just turned 15 years and Mirjana Dragicevic, 16, went to the stony path that connects Biakovići and Čilići, two hamlets that are part of the parish of Medjugorje, to smoke in secret.¹ Ivanka had lost her mother two months earlier, due to asthmatic bronchitis. Around 6:15 p.m., Ivanka saw, on the hillside, a white figure and shouted: "Mirjana, look at the Virgin." Ivanka said that Mirjana did not even raise her eyes (which seems hardly credible) and replied: "Leave me in peace!"² What is certain is that Mirjana saw nothing. On June 27 she testified: "I didn't believe her [Ivanka]."³

When they went back to the village, they talked to Milka Pavlović, 13, and Ivan Dragičević, 16, and left word to Vicka Ivanković, 16, who was sleeping, and then they returned to the spot where Ivanka said she had seen the Virgin. Again, it was Ivanka who exclaimed: "Behold the Virgin!" She held in her arms something like a baby and then she covered him. Also Milka, Mirjana, then Ivan, and then Vicka, saw something. Although they strove to involve Ivan Ivanković, rather older than them, he clearly affirmed that he had seen nothing and that he did not want to have anything to do with such "childishness".⁴

It seems that the youngsters that day really saw something unusual, that their imagination and desire interpreted as being the Virgin. In support of this hypothesis, here is the testimony of Mirjana, recorded on June 27: "I didn't believe her [Ivanka]. Later on, we returned. Somehow, I saw her, then I became convinced and became excited. Is it possible that I'm seeing this? It was somehow very delightful for me."⁵ [...] "It is necessary to believe that there is something."⁶

In this reconstruction, I deliberately chose to ignore the June 27 interrogation of Ivan Dragičević because he shows himself extremely confused, seems not to understand a lot of questions, though simple, made by Father Zrinko Cuvalo, and, above all, to confuse the apparitions.

¹ Confession of Mirjana recorded on magnetic tape, kept in the bishopric of Mostar. See *The Truth About Medjugorje*, by Msgr. Žanić, Bishop of Mostar, 1990. http://www.cbismo.com/files/file/ZanicMedj_May1990.pdf

² First diary of Vicka.

³ Ivo Sivrić, *The Hidden Side of Medjugorje*, Psilog, 1989, p. 260.

⁴ Jean-Louis, Marie Martin, *Rapport sur les apparitions de Medjugorje*, 1985, p. 28. This report can be downloaded from the page <http://www.marcocorvaglia.com/medjugorje-fr/ressources-utiles-medjugorje.html>

⁵ Sivrić, *The Hidden Side of Medjugorje*, p. 260

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 264.

June 25, Second Apparition.

The "seers", who very probably read a book about the apparitions of Lourdes, knew that the Virgin appeared to Bernadette 18 times,⁷ contrary to their repeated assertions during the first interrogations:

"Father Zovko: Are you reading any book at the present time?

Mirjana: I have read. It is about Lourdes. [...]

Father Zovko: When was that, this year?

Mirjana: Right after I came down here. They talked about it."⁸

Besides, they thought that she would appear again and that's why, the next day, Ivanka, Mirjana and Vicka went back to the road, to the same spot. Ivanka was again the first who saw the Virgin and alerted her companions. She started to climb the hill in search of the "apparition", at first without success, while Vicka ran to the village to raise the alarm. Marija Pavlovic, 16, sister of Milka, and Jakov Colo, 10, ran to join the three girls, scratching themselves on the thorns. Jakov bled.⁹ Contrary to what most books say, Ivan Dragičević was not there.¹⁰ Several people, including Marinko Ivankovic, 43, Marija's uncle, who, very quickly, "took charge" of the "apparitions"¹¹, and his wife, rush on the road and from there they guided the "seers"¹² However, it does not seem that any of these adults subsequently reported to have seen the Virgin...

The "seers" saw a light and then the Virgin coming down from heaven on a small cloud and approaching so that they could touch her. Vicka said that when she touched the garments of the Virgin, her fingers bounced off "as if they were of steel"¹³ Ivanka instead said that it felt "like the air" or "as if we are touching silk."¹⁴ This Virgin is some twenty years old, is very beautiful, has blue eyes. She is dressed in pale gray and has a white veil. Ivan Dragičević, for his part, the next day saw a "blue cape"¹⁵ She wears a crown of stars. Mirjana said: "She has black hair and it is pulled back."¹⁶ Ivanka, on the other hand, said that "some bangs were showing."¹⁷ Ivan assured that one could not see her hair.¹⁸

The first thing the "seers", in this case Vicka, asked for was a sign. Vicka then asked Mirjana what time it was! ... and she saw that the dial of her watch had made a half turn. The "seers" saw in this "event" the expected sign. In reality, the dial, shaken by Ivanka¹⁹, had just broken off its screws.²⁰

According to Mirjana, Ivanka asked about her mother.²¹ As we shall see, Ivanka situated this fact in the next day.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 206.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 260. See also p. 257.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 301.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 222, 224, 228.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 281, 316-318, 321, 325-326, 338-339, 341.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 207.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 208.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 304.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 223.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 262.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 306.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 309.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 286 and 289.

²⁰ Msgr. Žanić, *The Truth About Medjugorje*, § 5.

²¹ Sivrić, *The Hidden Side of Medjugorje*, p. 261.

Ivanka asked the Virgin if she would come back the next day, and she replied with a nod. Then she finally said her first words: "Go in God's peace," before rising and slowly disappearing in the sky. Marija, this second day, "was unable to see her."²²

June 26: Third Apparition.

Ivanka, Mirjana and Vicka went to the same place, called Podbrdo, which means "foot of the hill" but which actually is on the hillside, and saw the Virgin. Marija joined them and also saw her. Ivan Dragičević was there, but did not play any role. As for Jakov, "he didn't hear anything."²³

The Virgin was silent and merely nodded and made "the Sign of the Cross with her head" (?). The youngsters then asked her why she came there, and she replied: "Because there were a lot of faithful," adding that they "must be together," and "that people should reconcile, that the entire world should be reconciled."²⁴

Ivanka asked about her mother, and the Virgin said: "She is well." Ivanka insisted: "Did my mother say something?", and the Virgin responded: "Obey your grandma, she is old, and she cannot do much." Questioned by Mirjana, Our Lady told her that "her grandpa is well" and recommended her to "visit the cemetery."²⁵ In sum, the Queen of Heaven and Earth served as a medium...

Vicka sprinkled the Virgin with holy water and said that she did not react.

The "seers" recited 7 Our Father's, 7 Hail Mary's and 7 Glory Be's. Although Mirjana said: "This was recommended to us by our grandmother"²⁶, they later on said that this prayer had been taught to them by the Madonna.

Only Ivan, although he said he "didn't hear anything," affirmed that the Virgin said, "You are the best faithful who have gathered here around me," and that the girls asked, "When will you come again?" The Virgin promised to return the next day.

The Virgin, on leaving, said: "Go in God's peace."²⁷

Without a doubt because of nervous tension and pressure of the crowd, Ivanka, Mirjana and Vicka fainted and cried and Marija was about to faint.

Then the latter moved away from her companions. The day after, she declared that after walking and stumbling, among some thorny bushes, she had come close to a "huge pond" although there is not the slightest piece of water near Medjugorje, and that there she had seen the Virgin and, above her, a gray cross without Jesus. The Virgin said: "Reconcile the people," and asked for news about the other three girls!²⁸

Father Zrinko Cuvalo, who illegally exercised his ministry in the parish of Medjugorje and who every evening questioned the "seers", was present.²⁹

That day, a Franciscan told his assembled colleagues that the Virgin had taken their side in the famous "conflict of Herzegovina" which opposed (and still opposes) them to the bishop of Mostar about the allocation of the parishes. The "apparition" will insistently do so later on.³⁰

June 27: Fourth Apparition.

Father Jozo Zovko, pastor of Medjugorje, who was absent, returned to his parish. He and Father Cuvalo separately questioned the "seers". Father Viktor Kosir, who was also at Medjugorje

²² *Ibid.*, p. 210.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 214.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 211; see also p. 254.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 212

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 263.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 224-226.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 213.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 235-236.

³⁰ Martin, *Rapport sur les apparitions de Medjugorje*, p. 80.

without authorization, attended the questioning of Father Zovko. In the following days, only the latter two priests interrogated the "seers".

In the afternoon, the police took the "seers" to Čitluk, a town a few miles away, to be examined by a doctor. They were to be examined by a psychiatrist, but when the hour of the apparition approached, they rebelled and returned to Biakovići without anyone trying to retain them.³¹

At the instigation of Marinko Ivankovic,³² the "seers" separated to "test" the Virgin, but they all perceived a light on the hill. They climbed, running, finding themselves together: Ivanka, Mirjana, Marija, Vicka and Jakov. The following day Ivan affirmed not having been there nor having seen anything.³³ Marija was the first who saw the Virgin coming. Father Cuvalo, who was there again, stood in front of them, taking pictures... and filming them!³⁴ I personally watched a super-8 movie of this fourth apparition at the house of a certain Dominik Korać, in 1984, at Hamzići. I had understood that he was the author, but it was probably the film made by Father Cuvalo. A German photographer, Walter Furhoff, got a copy of it and in turn created another copy for Louis Bélanger,³⁵ a professor of parapsychology from Quebec and publisher of the book by Sivrić. Unfortunately, Walter Furhoff is untraceable and Louis Bélanger is refusing to release his copy... The memory I have of this film is now inaccurate. Here is what I wrote in 1985: "The seers were troubled, worried, especially Jakov, who looked at the others with a hangdog expression. Nobody looked in the direction of Our Lady, most of them closed their eyes and lowered their heads."³⁶ Not the slightest trace of "ecstasy"...

Marija seems to have been the first who saw the Virgin coming.³⁷ She acknowledged that they had "whispered [*we were agreeing*] what questions to ask" to the Virgin. She started to say: "Grgo [*Kozina*]³⁸ told her..." when, unfortunately, Father Cuvalo interrupted her.³⁹

Our Lady called the "seers" "my angels". They asked her to leave a sign, and she responded by disappearing!⁴⁰ Ivanka and Mirjana said on 30 June: "Whenever we ask her [*for that*], she gradually disappears."⁴¹

The incident happened the day before to Marija, that is to say, an additional apparition of the Virgin accompanied by a gray cross, seems to have inspired at least Mirjana, who said that it was repeated that day for three girls (probably Ivanka, Vicka and herself).⁴²

Mirjana asked Our Lady about the accusations brought against the "seers" of taking drugs or of being epileptic, and the Virgin told her not to pay attention to them, adding: "There has always been so much injustice in the world." Questioned about her name, the Virgin answered: "The Blessed Virgin Mary".⁴³ Only later she will claim the name of "Queen of Peace"!

The Virgin did not say anything on her own initiative, except to say "My Angels" and "Go in God's peace." She remained silent, patiently waiting for the questions. So she replied that the Franciscans had to "firmly believe,"⁴⁴ without clarifying whether she spoke of faith in God or of

³¹ Sivrić, *The Hidden Side of Medjugorje*, p. 265.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 261.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 308.

³⁴ Marija asserted that on tape. *Ibid.*, p. 235.

³⁵ See his blog "Medjupedia" <http://en.louisbelanger.com/>

³⁶ Martin, *Rapport sur les apparitions de Medjugorje*, p.8.

³⁷ Sivrić, *The Hidden Side of Medjugorje*, p. 235.

³⁸ Grgo Kozina was an attentive and – it seems – objective observer of the first apparitions. He made some audio recordings of the apparitions of 28 and 29 June (Ivo Sivrić, *The Hidden Side of Medjugorje*, p. 407).

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 240.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 267, 287.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 375.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 268.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 268.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 269.

faith in the apparitions. The "seers" asked her to appear to the people and she replied: "Blessed are those who don't see and believe!"⁴⁵ In reality, the author of this message was the grandmother of Ivanka, as the latter testified that morning, that is to say, before the apparition!⁴⁶

The people walked on the veil of the Virgin (a veil that came down to the ground, although she stayed on her small cloud!), and struck her, causing her to disappear. She reappeared after Marinko and the others moved the people away. That day, she appeared four times!⁴⁷

Jakov heard nothing of what the Virgin said, except: "My angels!"⁴⁸
Fathers Zrinko Cuvalo and Viktor Kosir attended to the apparition.

June 28: Fifth Apparition.

At the instigation of Marinko, the "seers" directly went to the place of the apparitions. Mirjana was the first who saw.⁴⁹

Vicka "hollered at the top of her voice," asking the Virgin to leave a sign.⁵⁰

The "seers" asked the Virgin why she did not appear in the church, and she replied by repeating what she had said the day before and by expanding it a bit: "Blessed are those who don't see and believe! Believe firmly as if you see me!" clearly confusing faith in God and faith in the apparitions.⁵¹ She replied the same thing to a question about the Franciscans. The "seers" "frequently" asked her why people flocked there, and she "constantly" responded that they should not lose their faith and be together all the time (?). Then she promised to return the next day⁵² and went away after saying: "Go in God's peace!"⁵³

Ivanka claimed that she did not see nor hear people around her when she was speaking to the Virgin:

"Ivanka: I hear nothing. I only hear the Gospa, when I ask her. And the people, I don't see at all, only the Gospa."⁵⁴

But Father Zovko will lead her to contradict herself:

"Father Zovko: Do you hear people talk while you are conversing [*with the Gospa*]?"

Ivanka: I have heard from others that people curse.

Father Zovko: Why have you heard the lady-doctor question the Gospa?

Ivanka: She kept persuading [*poking*] me: 'Ask her this, ask her that.' She became a nuisance."⁵⁵

Jakov heard nothing of what the Virgin said, except: "My angels!"⁵⁶
That day, the Virgin appeared twice.⁵⁷

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 282-283.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 216.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 283.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 276.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 281-282.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 278.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 282-283.

⁵² *Ibid.*, pp. 284-285.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 295.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 304.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 325.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 276.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 283.

June 29: Sixth Apparition.

In the morning, the authorities took the "seers" to the Mostar hospital for examination and in order to try to dissuade them from continuing. Ivan did not accompany the others on the hill.⁵⁸

Also this apparition was filmed,⁵⁹ but this film mysteriously disappeared. There is an audio record. Here is a transcript of this recording:⁶⁰

The "seers" prayed an Our Father and a Hail Mary, sang a hymn to the Virgin and a Glory Be, then knelt and whispered: "My Madonna, will you..."

Jakov: "She likes it, she is laughing..."

Grgo: "Tell us all you see...", then: "Go, Vicka, talk aloud."

Vicka, in a low voice: "My Madonna, how many days will you stay with us...?" She repeated the question in vain.

Jakov, too, repeated it and he got an answer: "As much as we want." Then he asked: "My Madonna, will you leave us a sign?"

Grgo remarked: "He speaks in a low voice, it is not clear..."

Then Jakov said in a low voice: "She'll be back tomorrow," and then he repeated it aloud.

Vicka murmured: "My Lady, would you like to say something to these people?", and Jakov, resolutely: "Only that they have to believe strongly."

A voice from the crowd: "There is one God and one faith," which is a local way to profess faith. Vicka then said: "She said that there is one God and one faith."

Vicka: "My Madonna, will we be able to endure, to continue it? Many persecute us because we see you...," then: "She said: 'Yes, you do, my angels.'" Then Grgo: "Repeat it so that people can hear it," and Vicka continued "...so that you have a strong faith and hope."

Vicka: "My Madonna, can this young woman [*a doctor*] touch you...? My Madonna... She is silent."

Mirjana, in a low voice: "There are incredulous Judases, let this woman get near."

Grgo: "A woman is about to touch the Virgin ... here, here, there..."

Vicka: "She is leaving. She is rising. She is leaving... Is she leaving?"

The "seers" started again to sing a hymn.

Mirjana: "She said that there are always incredulous Judases, let the woman get near", then: "Let's ask for this child... This little child, what's his name? ... She'll be back..."

They sang.

Jakov: "There is a light, a light" ... "She is there ..."

Vicka: "The name of the little child is Danijel Setka [*he is 4*]⁶¹ .. My Madonna, when will this child begin to speak, when? One day? Make a miracle, so that the world may believe."

But the Virgin simply looked at the child without saying a word. Vicka insisted, imploring her repeatedly: "Say a word, talk a little, my Madonna." Jakov again came to her rescue: "May the people believe strongly and the child will be healed..."

Grgo: "The Virgin is rising. The youngsters say that she's rising."

Jakov: "The first time she said, and I have rightly understood, she said that the child must believe and he will be healed," as Vicka, immediately, and Ivanka, the next day, confirmed.⁶² And the next day Father Zovko noticed: "How can the child believe when it is so little?"⁶³ As a matter of fact, he will not be healed.⁶⁴

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 322.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 322.

⁶⁰ Made by Grgo Kozina, available at the Mostar bishopric, transcribed in Italian in the book by M. Margnelli and G. Gagliardi *Le apparizioni della Madonna*, Riza Scienze, 1987.

⁶¹ Sivrić, *The Hidden Side of Medjugorje*, p. 335.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 319.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 335.

⁶⁴ Msgr. Žanić, *The Truth About Medjugorje*, § 21.

Father Zovko was rightly astonished that the Virgin could confuse the "incredulous" Thomas and Judas, the "traitor"!⁶⁵

This Virgin spoke very little. Here is what Ivanka herself said on this subject: "Whatever we ask her, she answers. Otherwise, she doesn't talk."⁶⁶ According to Ivanka, Marinko wrote the questions for the Virgin.⁶⁷

Vicka said: "She was circumventing" and "She didn't know [*what to say*]!"⁶⁸

Vicka, while sleeping, kept on saying: "Leave a sign!"⁶⁹

That day, Father Tomislav Vlašić, pastor of Čapljina, a nearby village, met the "seers" and invited them to his parish.⁷⁰ Later the "seers" will deny that this happened.⁷¹ Father Vlašić succeeded Father Zovko as their "spiritual director."

June 30: Seventh Apparition (at Cerno)

The "seers" in chorus ensured that they, and only they, decided to go to Cerno, a plain covered with Mediterranean vegetation a few kilometers from Medjugorje, to see if the Virgin would appear to them there.⁷² Two women, the civil servants Ljubica Vasilj-Gluvić, a member of the party, and Mica Ivankovic, a cousin of the "seers", who was not a member, accompanied them by car. This version is in contradiction with what Mirjana said: "Mica said that some sort of inspection would take place, so it would be better if we would move to some other place to see if...", and Vicka concluded: "...the Gospa will appear..."⁷³ The women at first confirmed the version of the "seers".⁷⁴ However, during the interview, Mica finally admitted having been the creator of this plan: "Nobody led me into this. I, alone, in some way, since I studied some psychology in the school, wanted to see the reality of how the children would behave at the other place." She then explained how she had been disappointed, on Podbrdo, not having been able to closely observe the "seers" because of the crowd...⁷⁵ Ljubica, besides, claimed that the office of the District of Čitluk had agreed in advance to pay all expenses.⁷⁶ The "seers" were happy with this arrangement because they could no longer bear the pressure of the crowd.⁷⁷

Once again, Ivan was absent. Our Lady asked about him, with great et legitimate astonishment of Father Zovko⁷⁸.

At the suggestion of Mica⁷⁹, the Virgin agreed to appear in the church.⁸⁰ The "seers" thus hoped to feel less pressure from the crowd.⁸¹ This pleased also the authorities, who did not allow religious gatherings outside places of worship,⁸² and Father Zovko, who had insistently suggested to Ivanka to say that the Virgin had asked the "seers" and the crowd to come to the church to pray

⁶⁵ Sivrić, *The Hidden Side of Medjugorje*, p. 319.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 320.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 321.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 341-342.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 332.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 344.

⁷¹ Audio recording. Cf. Martin, *Rapport sur les apparitions de Medjugorje*, p.31.

⁷² Sivrić, *The Hidden Side of Medjugorje*, p. 359.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 347.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 365.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 369.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 367.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 351, 354.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 373-375.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 361.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 346-347.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 354.

⁸² Marco Corvaglia, *Medjugorje: è tutto falso*, Antepima, 2007, p. 35.

the rosary. He would give a microphone to the "seers".⁸³ But he himself noticed: "[*Our Lady*] does not have to agree with it but rather that you agree."⁸⁴ He clearly suggested to Mirjana to transfer the apparitions in the church.⁸⁵

Our Lady revealed that she would appear only another three times, until Friday.⁸⁶ Let's remember that the day before she had promised she would appear as long as the "seers" would. Thus, the "seers" did not want anymore. Their weariness will be apparent in their interrogations. This "end of the apparitions" was programmed by Marinko. Ivanka said: "Marinko told us to tell [*the people*] that the Gospa would not be coming any more."⁸⁷

That very morning, Mirjana had said to Father Zovko: "Something keeps telling me: two to three more days."⁸⁸

On that day, Jakov naively explained how he ascribed to the Virgin the answers he developed himself: "When I'm asked a question, I think to myself that she [*the Gospa*] is going to tell me this, and she does tell me that, it's in me."⁸⁹

A little later he dreamed up: "One of them pulled out a revolver and pointed it toward us and said: 'I'm going to kill you all!' " But he was immediately belied by a voice (probably another "seer") and by Mica.⁹⁰

The "seers" claimed in unison that Mica had seen the Virgin, which she immediately denied.⁹¹

The two "organizers" provided the "seers" the questions to be asked the Virgin.⁹² They recorded the apparition⁹³ but this recording mysteriously disappeared.

July 1: Eighth Apparition?

We can know nothing for sure about this apparition, if any apparition there was, as the testimonies of the "seers" and of Father Zovko are very contradictory.

Zovko said that while the police was searching the "seers" to arrest them, they run "toward the church." There he was praying when he heard a voice saying: "Come out and protect the children." Outside, he saw them arriving, while running and crying: "The police are chasing us." He locked them in the rectory, and they had their "first vision" there.⁹⁴

Vicka gave a very different version: that day, she said, the situation was "a bit easier." Two emissaries of the municipality took Marija, Ivanka and her brother Marijo, Vicka herself and her sister Zdenka by car "to the Church" and they all three had an apparition "in the car." The emissaries invited them to "some sort of refreshments," but they refused, then they took them to church and "went off"! Vicka did not talk about any apparition at the rectory, where they, however, went.⁹⁵

⁸³ Sivrić, *The Hidden Side of Medjugorje*, pp. 326-328.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 322.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 336-338.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 346.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 317.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 331.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 363.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 366.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 360-362.

⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 361.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 363.

⁹⁴ Svetozar Kraljević, *The Apparitions of Our Lady at Medjugorje*, Franciscan Herald Press, 1984, pp. 41-42 and recording.

⁹⁵ Janko Bubalo, *A Thousand Encounters with the Blessed Virgin Mary in Medjugorje*, Friends of Medjugorje, 1987, pp. 46-48.

One could suppose that the "seers" who came running and crying to the church were only Jakov, Ivan and Mirjana, but, in this case, it is surprising that Zovko talked about "the children",⁹⁶ without specifying that it was only half of the group, and that Vicka, questioned about the three other "seers", responded only: "They did [*that is, they saw*]. I think they did. At least Ivan. He later related that to me"⁹⁷ and did not speak about this first apparition at the rectory, yet so decisive for the course of events, neither about the "experience" of Zovko, whom she venerated! (Cf. her diaries)

July 2: Ninth Apparition?

For this apparition, documents are missing.

It is quite possible that there had been no apparition ("official", at least) that day, as the "Domenica del Corriere" of September 19, 1981, wrote. Indeed, we could not understand why the journalist, who also wrote that on July 3 last apparition took place, would have invented it.

It seems however that, that evening, the "seers", at the request of Father Zovko, recounted the apparition (or was it the previous apparitions?) in the church, during Mass!⁹⁸

The one of July 3 took place at the rectory in the presence of three priests and two lay men, including a journalist. The "seers" sang a few hymns and prayed seven Our Father's, seven Hail Mary's and seven Glory Be's. Jakov said: "There she is!" and they instantly knelt. The apparition of the Virgin lasted for almost ten minutes, then she went away and came back for five minutes. It was one of the girls visionaries who signaled her return. The only thing we know about what the Virgin said, is that it was her last apparition. Nobody, however, announced it to the crowd.⁹⁹

In the following days, July 4 and 5, the Virgin appeared again¹⁰⁰ and she will keep on appearing every day until today!

In conclusion I would draw the reader's attention to some points:

These first "apparitions" were not accompanied by any ecstasy or synchronism, which makes meaningless all subsequent pseudoscientific studies on this subject. Only later the "seers" learned their "choreography."

During these apparitions, the Virgin transmitted none of the key messages that the "seers" later claimed having received from her in those days, that is to say, among others: "Peace, peace, peace!", "Pray, pray, pray!", and "Fast!".

The "message" of those early days was, without question, completely shallow, including what was, in a proven way, suggested to the Virgin. Father Zovko was the first who noticed it!¹⁰¹

Finally, it is worth noting that the "final group" of the "seers" had not yet made up at the eighth apparition, since Ivan was absent and Jakov heard nothing! Note also that all the "seers" are either cousins or very close.¹⁰²

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⁹⁶ Kraljević, *The Apparitions of Our Lady at Medjugorje*, p. 42.

⁹⁷ Bubalo, *A Thousand Encounters with the Blessed Virgin Mary in Medjugorje*, p. 48.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 70-71.

⁹⁹ Sivrić, *The Hidden Side of Medjugorje*, p 67.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 292, 295, 297, 333.

¹⁰² Corvaglia, *Medjugorje: è tutto falso*, pp. 23-24.