

## VareseNews

### The Ultras of prayer, devotees of Medjugorje gather at the Stadium

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*The prayer gathering, with **Marija Pavlovic**, one of the six clairvoyants from Medjugorje, is returning to the PalaWhirpool Stadium, in Varese. The gathering will be on 16 February, from 8.30 am to 7.30 pm. On the occasion of the event, we interviewed Gigi Leva, one of the historic members of the Varese Association "Amici di Medjugorje" ("Friends of Medjugorje").*

"We're gathering for the **fourth consecutive year**, but with a delay of a couple of months, due to some scheduled events and related organisational problems. It's true that the crisis has affected the flow of American and Asian pilgrims to Medjugorje, but again in 2013, the Western countries lived up to expectations; in fact, as always, we Italians were the most numerous."

The person speaking is **Gigi Leva**. With Dr Comeri, Leva is **one of the historic members of "Amici di Medjugorje"**, the non-profit association in Varese that has operated for years with the place of worship in Herzegovina. "Our gathering at the beginning of 2014 gives me a positive feeling," Leva continued. "This might be the year of an important change. **Maybe the Church will go beyond everything we know about Medjugorje** and guide its devotees along the path of faith that has been indicated by the Pope and called for by the Virgin Mary. My longing for this pastoral journey, that continues to be under the protection of Rome, is extremely personal."

#### Which event led to it?

"Among the people, there is fervour, trust, participation and faith, like in the 1980s, when the appearances started. Today, we repeat the days of continuous and intense prayer, which **has become huge**, also throughout the world, due to the fact that we are living in an era of communication never experienced before."

#### And Varese is there, in the frontline ...

"This is because, for many centuries, we, the people of Varese, have had a very close relationship with the Virgin Mary, with intense references, from the Virgin of Sacro Monte, to Our Lady of Sorrows of San Vittore. Mary Queen of Peace of Medjugorje has been welcomed with both love and happiness; she is everybody's Mother, always gentle, always providing comfort and hope, in every moment of our lives."

#### Why do you give this dimension to your annual gatherings in Varese?

"For various reasons, not all devotees can go on a pilgrimage to Herzegovina, so we bring a bit of Medjugorje here, with the word and the prayer of the clairvoyants, particularly **Marija**, who has known us for years, with rites and very learned churchmen, with equally important laypeople, who give exceptional testimonies. And so, everybody's knowledge and awareness grow, and we come away from these gatherings stronger as Christians and as people. Even

the entertainment is marked by faith and serenity.”

### **Are there any problems for the fourth meeting?**

“The technicians will have to work by night, because the stadium is hosting sports events, even on Saturday night. The services will be guaranteed, like in previous years, including bus links to the stations; times and contents of the programme will follow tested models. We all want to gather again for a great collective prayer to the Virgin Mary. For us and for our, actually her, town. A whole day of words of life, prayer, silences, meditations, confessions and communions. Certainly, in Masnago, there are different ways to be Ultras.”

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[redazione@varesenews.it](mailto:redazione@varesenews.it)