

BELIEFS Values

Persecuted Christian to share faith

BY RENA FULKA
SPECIAL WRITER

Before being exiled from his homeland in 1987, Josyp Terelya paid dearly for refusing to give up his Christian faith. As a staunch leader of the Catholic Underground in the Ukraine, he succumbed to 20 years of torture and isolation in Soviet prisons and camps.

On Saturday, Nov. 9, Terelya will share his experiences and the story of alleged supernatural events said to have occurred in the Ukraine.

His presentation, "Heaven's Urgent Message to Today's World," which will be aided by an interpreter, follows a 7 p.m. rosary at Our Lady Queen of Martyrs Catholic Church, 32340 Pierce, Beverly Hills.

The visionary's two books, "Josyp Terelya, Witness" and "In the Kingdom of the Spirit" will be available for purchase and autographs.

"Josyp is a mystic who continues to receive visions and revelations," said Lillian Timma, office manager of the Southfield-based Medjugorje Peace Center of Detroit, which is sponsoring the event.

"He's very fascinating. Everything he says has weight. His purpose is to go out and speak what he has heard from Our Lady and to truly evangelize."

Born in 1943, Terelya was reared by his maternal grandmother who educated him in the Catholic faith.

"His mother was actively involved in destroying the church in the Ukraine," said Marge Wagner of the Medju-

gorje Peace Center. "He was a tremendous embarrassment to his parents, who were very high officials in the Soviet government."

Terelya now lives with his wife and three children in Marmora, Ontario. He has the rare privilege of being a member of the Papal Family of the Order of St. Lazarus of Jerusalem, of which Pope John Paul II is the spiritual director.

The Canadian resident's speaking engagements, books and religious paintings center on keeping the Catholic faith alive.

"I'm absolutely in awe of someone who would face death, beatings and torture, yet his faith was so strong that it sustained him," said Wagner, a Troy resident and member of St. Thomas More Catholic Church in Troy.

The Medjugorje Peace Center of Detroit was founded in Oakland County in 1991 to spread the messages of the Blessed Virgin Mary, mother of Jesus Christ.

Her urgent pleas call for prayer, fasting, conversion, penance and faith. The non-profit organization promotes these messages by forming prayer groups, offering an extensive book and tape ministry and sponsoring information nights, testimonial speakers, conferences and pilgrimages.

Its newsletter, *The Marian Observer*, reaches 1,500 local residents.

Timma and Wagner are among five founding members



STAFF PHOTO BY LARRY MCKEE

Provocative message: Oakland County residents Lillian Timm (left) and Marge Wagner of the Southfield-based Medjugorje Peace Center of Detroit display copies of mystic Josyp Terelya's books.

of the Medjugorje Peace Center, which is staffed by volunteers.

The two Oakland County women have each made several trips to the world-famous shrine in Bosnia-Herzegovina, which has drawn more than 20 million pilgrims from around the world.

"It's widely believed by many that the Blessed Virgin Mary has been appearing to six young people in Bosnia-Herzegovina since June of 1981, and

that she brings urgent messages for all people. These messages are a call to faith, prayer, conversion, fasting . . . essentially the same message of Fatima and Lourdes," said Wagner, referring to the sites of earlier Marian apparitions. "We believe so strongly in these messages of our Blessed Mother, this call to conversion and turning back to God, that we're trying in our own small way to bring people to the Lord. This is what the Blessed Mother

does. She brings people to her son."

"Going to Medjugorje is like going home to mother," said Timma, a Southfield resident and member of Our Lady Queen of Martyrs Catholic Parish. "But God is omnipotent. She comes under His call."

The Catholic Church is still investigating the extraordinary occurrences in Medjugorje and has not yet made an official pronouncement. Members of

the Medjugorje Peace Center vow to recognize and accept the Holy See's final authority regarding the apparitions.

Terelya's presentation, which is expected to draw a crowd of 500, is a witness to the impact the Blessed Mother's messages have had on his life.

For more information about the Josyp Terelya presentation or the work of the Medjugorje Peace Center of Detroit, call (810) 559-4544.

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