

APPARITION HILL

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FILM INVESTIGATING SUPERNATURAL EVENT MATERIALIZES ON DVD AFTER THEATRICAL SUCCESS

Bosnia-Herzegovina—On June 24, 1981, the Virgin Mary reportedly appeared to six children near Medjugorje, then a small village in communist Yugoslavia. Now, exactly 36 years later—on June 24, 2017—an award-winning documentary investigating the claims is being released on DVD and Blu-Ray.

Since premiering last year, *Apparition Hill* has consistently filled cinemas in the USA and beyond. The film seeks to answer a difficult question: *Does Medjugorje represent a miracle of Biblical proportions, or an epic hoax?*

The children, now adults, claim that she continues to appear, in part to entrust them with secrets about the world's future. The alleged miracles have drawn millions of people and propelled Medjugorje into one of the most visited pilgrimage sites in the world. According to a report published on May 14, 2017, the Vatican commission investigating the phenomena concluded that the first seven apparitions, at the very least, were "supernatural." On the other hand, some remain skeptical about Medjugorje—even Pope Francis, who, on May 13, seemed to praise the commission's approval of the first apparitions but expressed personal doubts about the later ones.

Apparition Hill began in February, 2015, when director Sean Bloomfield announced an online contest inviting people of all beliefs and backgrounds to submit videos stating why they should win one of seven free trips to Medjugorje. Aiming to keep the film as objective as possible, Bloomfield and co-filmmaker Cimela Kidonakis chose two atheists, a young mother with cancer, a struggling addict, a Catholic with doubts about Marian apparitions, a father with ALS, and a believer raising nine children by himself. Along with co-producer Jessi Hannapel, Bloomfield and Kidonakis interviewed each member of the group before, during, and after the two-week trip to Medjugorje.

"We never expected every member of the group to be so deeply affected by the experience," said Bloomfield. "But that's exactly what happened. For example, one of the atheists has gone back to Medjugorje several times, and he even made rosaries for the cast and crew."

In May, 2016, *Apparition Hill* screened in twenty cities and spread from there. Since then, over 50,000 people have seen the film in theatres, most of them drawn by word of mouth. Everything about the movie, in fact, has been grassroots—including two successful crowdfunding campaigns, a box office run in 50+ cities, and the screening program managed by *Little Flower Strategies* which allowed anyone to host the film at a local theater. The roughly 200 hosted screenings around the world have raised over \$250,000 for charities. The film earned recognition in several film festivals and was among the 145 documentaries to qualify for the 2017 Oscars.

"We knew we had captured some beautiful moments," said Kidonakis, "but it wasn't until we saw the intense audience reactions that we realized how much impact the film had on people. Many who saw the film in theaters were so moved that they went on to host their own screenings."

Stella Mar Films is set to release *Apparition Hill* as part of a 2-Disc Set (DVD: \$29.95/BLU-RAY: \$36.95) which also features 30 bonus videos totaling 135 minutes and a 12-page behind-the-scenes booklet. In addition, while hosted screenings are still being held in theaters, parishes and organizations can organize public viewings of *Apparition Hill* as early as June 24, 2017 with a Movie Night License Kit which includes DVDs to sell at the door. The *Apparition Hill* 2-Disc Sets and Movie Night License Kits are now available for pre-order at www.apparitionhill.com.

For more information, contact Sean at Stella Mar Films (sean@stellamar.org/800-565-9176).

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