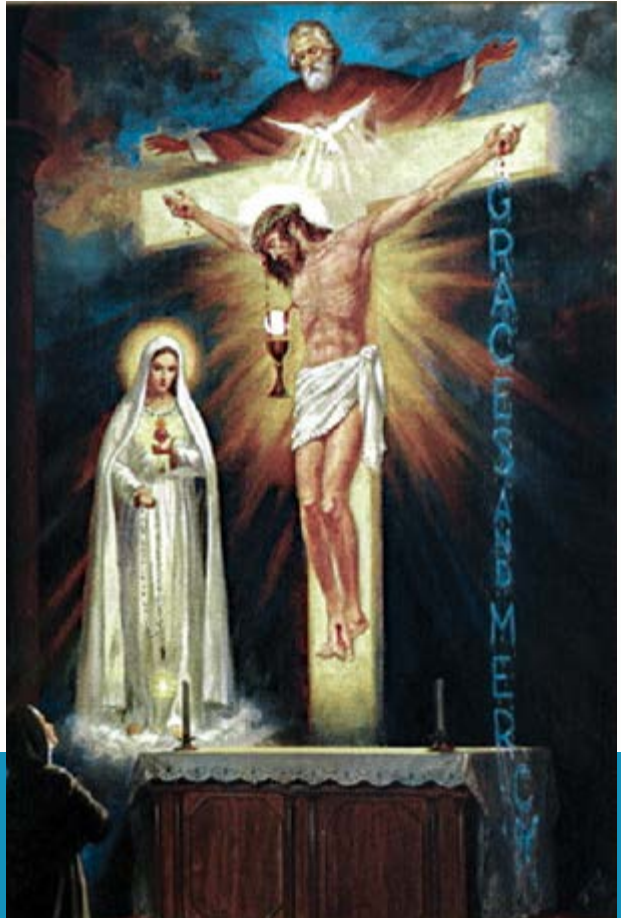


Fr. Karl Stehlin SSPX

Fatima



A spiritual light for our times

Volume II

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Preface

Fatima is the overwhelming revelation of the greatness of God's infinite love and mercy towards us poor sinners, illuminated in the mystery of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, His masterpiece. Her HEART reveals and gives to us all that God wants to give to the world, every grace of conversion and sanctification, all virtues, gifts, and inspirations of the Holy Ghost. But her HEART also becomes the "refuge and the way that leads us to God." Fatima is the spiritual vessel in which we can return to God and become saints by the faithful practice of devotion to her Immaculate Heart.

Through the heavenly confirmation and "signature" of the miracle of the sun on October 13, 1917, the essential message of Our Lady was revealed to the world with such overwhelming proof that every man of good will could believe without hesitation. But the history of Fatima is not finished with October 13, 1917. Firstly, Our Lady herself announced the continuation of her revelations on two essential matters: to explain what precisely is devotion to her Immaculate Heart, and to demonstrate the importance of consecration to her Immaculate Heart. Secondly, Our Lady would give Lucy indications of when, how, and to whom each part of the Great Secret of July 13, 1917 should be revealed. Our Lady's intention to direct the timing and circumstances of the disclosure of the Great Secret must have a very special meaning and spiritual background.

In this second volume we present for your meditation, first of all, an essential part of the message of Fatima: the life and spirituality of the three children who had the privilege to see Our Lady. Afterwards we will thoroughly analyze the last two great apparitions following July 13th, in which Our Lady taught practices of devotion to her Immaculate Heart: observance of the five first Saturdays and the consecration of Russia to her Immaculate Heart. These events together with the spiritual experiences of the three seers will give us lessons of the utmost importance about the great mystery revealed at Fatima: her Immaculate Heart!

As in the first volume, here also neither footnotes nor references to the sources are provided, but all quotations and information about the events are taken from volumes II and III of Fr. Michel de la Trinité "The Whole Truth about Fatima: Science and Facts."

Fr. Karl Stehlin

Singapore, October 7, 2016, Feast of Our Lady of the Holy Rosary

PART ONE

THE CHILDREN
— A LIVING COMMENTARY OF FATIMA

The life that the three children led after Our Lady's appearances to them is an indirect lesson from heaven for us, but a very practical one. It teaches us that when heaven appears on earth, what is of the earth is transformed by heaven's light. When Our Lady appears to a human being, that person becomes a vessel to whom the light and graces of Our Lady are entrusted. The human vessel becomes an instrument for HER to continue to pour her grace and mercy into the world. We cannot have a full understanding of Guadalupe without Juan Diego or of Lourdes without Saint Bernadette.

Not only is the eye witness testimony of the visionaries important, but also their words and especially their lives. They are the reflection as of a mirror of HER presence on earth!

These living testimonies of HER and HER message are very important for us, because while we cannot see Our Lady herself, we are able to see the visionaries as reflections of her. Since the children perfectly applied and realized the requests of Our Lady of Fatima, we can use their example and understanding of her message as a key to the true understanding of the spirituality of Fatima and the deepest intentions of the Immaculate Heart.

We can see how Our Lady chooses very different and even contrasting characters as her privileged children, and she uses them in different capacities to illustrate various aspects of her message. Jacinta was a very active little girl, a whirlwind of energy, the liveliest of the three children, one who could captivate and lead the other two. Francisco, on the contrary, was very calm, one could say phlegmatic, loving solitude and reflection. Lucy had all the qualities of a faithful witness: thorough circumspection, excellent memory, a sense for detail and especially a deep sense of honesty.

Let us consider the spirituality of each of these three children, beloved of Heaven. We will start, in chronological order of their death, with Francisco, then reflect upon Jacinta, and finally Lucy.

CHAPTER ONE

“To console God” — Bl. Francisco

It is highly significant that Francisco could see Our Lady when she appeared in Fatima, but could not hear her speak. After each apparition, Lucy and Jacinta had to tell him what Our Lady had said. In this way, Our Lady made Francisco a different kind of witness. Accustomed to contemplation in solitude, he was able to consider in a very deep manner what he had seen, undistracted by the conversation which the other two children heard. He could concentrate entirely on contemplating the apparition itself. And this was precisely the purpose of Divine Providence. Thanks to this divine plan, Francisco had the deepest possible understanding of the vision itself.

And what impressed him most during the apparitions?

“I loved seeing the Angel, but I love still more seeing Our Lady. What I loved most of all was to see Our Lord in that light from Our Lady which penetrated our hearts. I love God so much! But He is so sad because of so many sins! We must never commit any sins again.”

“...What is God? We could never put it into words. Yes, that is something indeed which we could never express! But what a pity it is that He is so sad! If only I could console Him!”

The theme of “consoling God” is so predominant in his short life that it became somehow his whole spirituality, the centre of his thoughts, words, and actions.

“Francisco, which do you like better: to console Our Lord, or to convert sinners, so that no more souls go to hell?” — “I would rather console Our Lord. Didn’t you notice how sad Our Lady was that last month when she said that people must not offend Our Lord any more, for He is already too much offended? I would like to console Our Lord, and after that, convert sinners, so that they won’t offend Him anymore!”

How did Francisco see himself consoling God?

Lucy writes: **“He spoke little, and whenever he prayed or offered sacrifices, he preferred to go apart and hide, even from Jacinta and myself. Quite often, we surprised him hidden behind a wall or a clump of blackberry bushes, whither he had ingeniously slipped away to kneel and pray, or, as he used to say, ‘to think of Our Lord, Who is so sad on account of so many sins.’”**

“If I asked him: ‘Francisco, why don’t you ask me to pray with you, and Jacinta too?’ — ‘I prefer praying by myself, so I can think and console Our Lord, who is so sad!’”

But prayer is only one aspect. We can do even more if we try to console God in our sufferings.

From time to time, Francisco used to say: **“Our Lady told us, that we would have much to suffer, but I don’t mind. I’ll suffer all that she wishes! What I want is to go to Heaven!”**

And Lucy said, **“One day, when I showed how unhappy I was over the persecution now beginning both in my family and outside, Francisco tried to encourage me with these words: ‘Never mind! Didn’t Our Lady say that we have much to suffer, to make reparation**

to Our Lord and to her own Immaculate Heart for all the sins by which They are offended? They are so sad! If we can console Them with these sacrifices, how happy we shall be.”

Francisco had personal experience of the things he told Lucy and Jacinta, especially during his long sickness which ended in his death.

“I asked him sometimes: ‘Are you suffering a lot, Francisco?’ – ‘Quite a lot, but never mind! I am suffering to console Our Lord, and afterwards, within a short time, I am going to heaven!’”

He could not imagine heaven as anything other than a place where he could **“console God forever.”**

“It won’t be long now till I go to heaven. When I’m there, I’m going to console Our Lord and Our Lady very much.”

And his last words: **“Yes, I’ll pray. But look, you’d better ask Jacinta to pray for these things instead, because I’m afraid I’ll forget when I see Our Lord. And then, more than anything else, I want to console Him.”**

When Francisco died on April 4, 1919, his parents declared: **“He died smiling!”**

COMMENTARY

1. God – our One and all

It is already evident from the apparitions of the Angel and of Our Lady that the very centre of Fatima’s message is God Himself: His glory and the worship due to Him from His creation. The world of today has completely lost the sense of God’s infinite dignity and overwhelming majesty. In reality, every creature is “nothing” before Him, not even like a little drop in an ocean without limits. Before His eternity, the history of the world, its existence from the beginning of creation until the end of time, is less than a second compared to

millions of years. All the saints teach us to be aware that we are like dust before Him and hence they humble themselves as much as they can. This was exactly the most striking mystical experience of Francisco during the apparitions: **“What is God? We could never put it into words. Yes, that is something indeed which we could never express!”**

He was so absorbed in God’s overwhelming majesty, that in going “to see Him” after his death, he feared to forget the requests of Lucy and the people. We should ask Our Lady for a similar grace, necessary for any true spiritual life and true relationship with God Himself: to be full of admiration for His tremendous glory — *propter magnam gloriam tuam* — as we sing in the Gloria at Holy Mass, and like the Angels trembling in holy awe before His majesty (Preface of the Mass). The immensity of God makes us understand the total nothingness of all creation and how ridiculous it is when man puffs himself up with his little personality and insignificant history, to consider himself and his affairs the centre of the world. This infinite majesty of God is not only a truth of Faith to be considered, but it is also an invitation to participate in God’s greatness, to “be filled with the fullness of God”, as Saint Paul says. Francisco only knew this goal for his life. When asked once what he would become, he always repeated: **“I don’t want to be anything! I want to die and go to heaven!”** But for him heaven was firstly **“to see Our Lord”** and to love Him forever. Little Francisco realized to the letter the motto of his holy patron, the great Saint Francis: **“Deus meus et omnia — My God and my all!”**

2. The only true evil — sin

Seeing God as infinite majesty and endless Love, Francisco understood the real dimension of sin. Fatima is the catechism of Our Lady, teaching us what sin really is and what its consequences are. Sin is,

above all, the worst possible insult and the negation of God's very essence — His bounty, mercy, love. If it were possible, sin would destroy His royal dignity. Sin is a most horrible negligence and ingratitude of creatures perpetrated against their Creator. If we were to receive a very precious gift from a benefactor, it is unimaginable that we would be indifferent or thankless. But it is all the more impossible to imagine that in return for a precious gift we would insult the benefactor, spit in his face, throw him out of our home or even try to kill him. But this is precisely what we do when we sin: at every moment God gives us all that we are and what we have, and we are not only often indifferent towards such an immense love, but we spit in His face and cast Him out of our souls, which are His property. Francisco could not but have the greatest horror when he realized how much we despise this infinite Love, and he exclaimed: **"We must never commit sin again."**

3. The "sadness of God"

What is the reaction of God towards sin? Indignation? Annihilation of the world? This would only be just. But on the contrary we stand before an unfathomable mystery of love and mercy! The almighty Lord of Lords lives in eternal happiness, before Whom the whole cosmos is nothing, and yet God's incomprehensible love for His creatures is like that of a kind-hearted Father who feels a pain of sadness brought on by our ingratitude. This Father goes so far as to deliver His only and beloved Son to death in an expressive act of love greater than fraternal or spousal love, and this Son sheds every drop of Blood from His Sacred Heart for us. His is the love of a sweet friend, a defender and consoler who wishes to remain in our souls forever. It is because our rebellion causes Him sorrow, that Saint Paul exhorts us "not to grieve the Holy Spirit of God."

The great mystics show us one of the deepest aspects of the mystery of God, the very essence of what it means to say that “God is Love.” To enter into the most intimate depths of HIS MOST SACRED HEART we must consider His sadness and suffering because of our sins, our hardness of heart, and our infamous pride. Already in the Old Testament God spoke through the prophet Jeremiah: “But if you do not heed this warning, My soul shall weep, and My eyes shall run down with tears, because the flock of the Lord is carried away captive.” (Jer. 13:17)

Reparation for this grieved and despised ETERNAL LOVE is the motivating cause of the militant Church until the end of the world, because until then this mystery of iniquity continues to increase from day to day: the satanic effort to dethrone the Eternal King, to reject God as principal and last end of the entire created order. It was not the 33 years of Our Lord’s life on earth alone that was a drama of infinite sadness — “My soul is sorrowful, even unto death” — but even after the Resurrection and triumphant Ascension into heaven, sinners “crucify again for themselves the Son of God and make Him a mockery” (Hebrews 6:6). Until the end of the world, the Crucified Lord will be the symbol of Christianity, especially that Lord in His Eucharistic presence; the renewal and continuation of His Sacrifice on the Cross present on Catholic altars will be the highest and most precious act of the Church; and pious meditation on the abandonment of Jesus and His sorrowful Mother will constitute the very centre of the Christian spiritual life.

4. Perfect love of God — to console Him

Our Lady comes to remind the world, that the *unum necessarium*, the “one thing necessary,” consists in seeking first and above all the kingdom of God and His justice. What is meant by His justice? That

we render to God what is due to Him — all honour and glory. That if His majesty is offended by man's sinful pride, then justice consists in a perfect reparation made to His grieved majesty, in penance, in atonement, and in all acts which re-establish order and truth.

What then is the most perfect response from us poor sinners when confronted with the agony of Our Lord and His cruel Passion? What could be the perfect act of love which God requires of us in His first and greatest commandment? Our Lord himself gives the answer: "I looked for compassion, but in vain, and **for someone to console me**, and I found none." The devotion to His Most Sacred Heart is an act of reparation and atonement, having consolation as its very purpose. The loving heart says to Our Lord: "If everywhere You knock at the doors of souls and nobody opens to You, if You are thrown out of society, of institutions, of families and even from Your own churches, if You are lonesome and despised, You the Creator and Master of all: then I wish to open wide my heart, to give You comfort and shelter and a poor but heartfelt welcome, where You can lay Your head and find a home. The more they reject You, I want to receive You; the more they forget You, I want to remember You; the more they refuse You, I want to welcome You; the more they turn from You, the more I want to turn towards You; the more they despise Your love, the more I want to honour You; the more they fill Your soul with sadness and tears, the more I want to CONSOLE YOU!"

There is no more perfect form of love from a poor sinner than this act of consolation! It addresses the horror of sin with a supernatural remedy: love for God Who is offended by sin. It is an act of authentic love. If I were to repent of an insult to a friend, my return to love cannot be as simple as "I love you," as though there had been no injury. The first act of love repairing for an insult must be sorrow for inflicting sadness on one's friend, and this sorrow implies a burning desire to restore one's friendship and offer consolation to the offended affection.

Our Lady chose the little children in Fatima to help us understand that, while the exterior acts of a person are important, the desires of one's heart are more so. Little Francisco was not able to live the life of a heroic missionary or of a contemplative monk; he could only offer his simple prayers and sacrifices, as Saint Veronica could only present a wet cloth to Our Lord in His torture. Exteriorly these things are nothing, but interiorly there is a supreme gesture of love which merited sainthood for Veronica and to have the Holy Face of the Suffering Christ impressed not only on the linen cloth, but more importantly within her very soul. And who among us is unable to imitate the simple acts of a little child in order to console Our Lord and Our Lady in their sadness at seeing so many souls go astray?

Francisco was not a contemplative religious, but his life and example were a deep and simple guide for all contemplative souls who want to live exclusively for the glory of God. Moreover, because the world denies God His due honour and glory, there is a need to make reparation. The contemplative life is a life of love, and the first act of love is to be with the Beloved, to contemplate Him and live always in His presence. The second act of love is to repair the offence by a movement in a direction opposite to that of the offence, a movement of consolation.

When will this devotion to consoling Our Lord be complete? Never! Francisco made a thought-provoking statement: **"When I'm there (in Heaven), I'm going to console Our Lord and Our Lady very much."** The reality is that in Heaven GOD will be our infinite consolation, our eternal light and perpetual peace, and at the same time His almighty and ineffable mercy will allow us to console Him and to give Him a special joy for all eternity. Even if the sadness of sin will not remain in eternity, the essence of the love of consolation on the part of the creature retains its meaning: the thankful heart of a child who wants to give joy to his Father and Mother and "consoles" THEM with his smile and a burning flame of love.

Conclusion

Through Francisco's example in his life and death, Our Lady reminds us of the greatest commandment and gives us a means adapted to this sinful age to LOVE GOD again with all our heart. The devotion of CONSOLING GOD can inflame in an incalculable number of Catholics a burning love of God in our time of widespread religious indifference and hatred of supernatural truth. The ability to give consolation is a great encouragement for us poor sinners, that in spite of our misery we can really love God more and more, and our love can be active, not empty words.

Is not the Immaculate teaching us through Francisco the most profound manner of prayer, namely her own? Indeed, in her boundless compassion under the Cross, her prayer was directed to consoling her Son. So we too must find a few moments in which to be alone with Christ exclusively to console Him, by the simple act of standing with Our Lady under the Cross. While contemporary man no longer has time for the God who created him, and is so indifferent that he finds it boring to spend an hour with Christ, we at least should show our love for Our Lord by having a little time for Him to console Him with a loving presence and compassion. But what is the outcome of such an effort? This too is demonstrated by the example of little Francisco: in a very short time his love for God had reached a high degree of perfection, and a few months later he was already allowed to see the Immaculata forever in heaven.



*Bl. Francisco
in the middle*



The little shepherd, Bl. Francisco



*The chapel where Francisco, Jacinta
and Lucia were baptized*

CHAPTER TWO

“To save souls” – Bl. Jacinta

Jacinta was very different from Francisco in character and temperament. Francisco, who had a contemplative soul, was struck above all by the sadness of God and Our Lady, and he wanted to console them by prayer and sacrifice. Jacinta had a tender and affectionate heart which was seized with fright at the sight of so many souls falling into the fires of hell: **“The vision of hell filled her with horror to such a degree that every penance and mortification was nothing in her eyes, if only it could prevent souls from going there. ‘Francisco, are you praying with me? We must pray a lot to save souls from hell. So many go there! So many!’”**

The dominant thought which haunted her and animated all her supernatural activity was the salvation of souls. She had an ardent thirst for their conversion, a genuine missionary zeal. She looked for sacrifices to offer for “my sinners.” She renounced her favorite pastime of folk dancing for the conversion of sinners. She always

made her sacrifices with this thought, a thought which was habitual for her: to suffer for sinners, to make acts of reparation in their place, to substitute herself for them, to obtain pardon for them and the grace of conversion.

“Jacinta, what are you thinking about?” — “About the war which is coming, and all the people who are going to die and go to hell! How dreadful! If they would only stop offending God, then there wouldn’t be any war, and they wouldn’t go to hell”.

“How much I love to suffer for love of Our Lord and Our Lady, just to give Them pleasure! They greatly love those who suffer for the conversion of sinners”.

The greatest sufferings for her were loneliness and especially Our Lady’s revelation that she would die alone, far from her family. But she offered even this supreme sacrifice for the conversion of sinners. Thinking of this terrible night of loneliness deprived her of all consolation. On those occasions, she often said: **“O Jesus! Now you can convert many sinners, because this is really a big sacrifice.”**

“What are you going to do in Heaven?” — “I’m going to love Jesus very much, and the Immaculate Heart of Mary, too. I’m going to pray a lot for you, for sinners, for the Holy Father, for my parents and my brothers and sisters, and for all the people who have asked me to pray for them....”

When her mother seemed sad at seeing her child so ill, Jacinta used to say: **“Don’t worry, mother. I’m going to Heaven, and there I’ll be praying so much for you!”**

Besides prayer for sinners, the one for whom Jacinta prayed and offered sacrifice the most was the Holy Father himself. Certainly, the Great Secret must have impressed Jacinta in a very special way: not only the vision of hell, but also the second and the third part of the secret, especially in what concerned the Pope.

“...Jacinta called out to me: ‘Didn’t you see the Holy Father?’ — ‘No.’ — ‘I don’t know how it was, but I saw the Holy Father in a very

big house, kneeling by a table, with his head buried in his hands, and he was weeping. Outside the house, there were many people. Some of them were throwing stones, others were cursing him and using bad language. Poor Holy Father, we must pray much for him.”

“Another time, Jacinta called to me: ‘Can’t you see all those highways and roads full of people, who are crying with hunger and have nothing to eat? And the Holy Father in a church praying before the Immaculate Heart of Mary? And so many people praying with him?’”

Every time she offered her sacrifices to Jesus, she added: **“...and for the Holy Father.”**

Jacinta died alone in a hospital in Lisbon on the twentieth of February, 1920. Many people viewed her lying in the casket before her burial and they said of her: “she seemed to be alive, with her lips and cheeks a beautiful rosy color. ...The girl was dead for three and a half days, and the odour she exhaled was like a bouquet of various flowers.”

COMMENTARY

1. The horror of hell — consequence of sin

Without doubt, the vision of hell was one of the most important experiences in Jacinta’s spiritual life. Far from the superficial modernist ideology which regards the facts of hell and damnation as too much for little children, the example of Jacinta shows that youth have a very real capacity to confront this reality. Her simple and innocent insight allowed her to understand instantly that these awful tortures in an ocean of fire are nothing but the consequences of the sins she saw in the world. The reality of hell aroused in her not only a great generosity and love as well as an understanding of man’s wickedness, but also an understanding of God’s mercy to send the Immaculate Heart to save poor sinners from damnation.

The lives and spiritual experiences of Francisco and Jacinta are a complete catechism for understanding the mystery of iniquity. Francisco received the grace to understand what sin means to God, and Jacinta herself seized its dimension: sin destroys the soul so wonderfully created by God and even yet more wonderfully restored by Christ. Sin negates all that is true, good, and beautiful in man's heart. Above all, sin is death for it annihilates the source of life and being. The most dramatic, everlasting expression and consequence of sin is hell itself. It is the final and never ending torment of the soul in that ocean of fire, the torture of the denial of God which is the essence of sin. Instead of beauty there is eternal ugliness; instead of love, eternal hatred; instead of union, eternal separation; instead of happiness, eternal despair; instead of peace, eternal torment of conscience; instead of the everlasting friendship of heaven, eternal torture from the devils and the damned. Each detail of the vision of hell on the thirteenth of July shows another aspect of this awful reality: the fire tormenting souls within and without is the awful chastisement for having systematically and deliberately destroyed the beauty of this sanctuary which God gave us as the special gift of his love.

This eternal abyss of damnation helps us understand the catastrophe of sin. Jacinta is a living reminder for all of us of a message we should never forget: sin leads to hell! Sin brings so many, so many to hell! Nobody wants to destroy himself forever, nobody wants to burn eternally in the fires of hell, and therefore we must not sin! Sin is the only evil, because sin leads to this eternal damnation.

2. True love of our neighbour: to save him from hell!

As long as the sinner lives, he is constantly invited to turn from the abyss of hell, towards which he runs ever more speedily to the degree that he sins. As long as he lives, he remains the beloved child of the

Heavenly Father and the Heavenly Mother, the object of their immense and infinite love, their constant efforts to give him the grace of conversion, so that he might abandon his evil ways and allow the interior of his soul to be restored by the Precious Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Jacinta was a delicate little girl full of energy who was very affectionate towards her family and the other children in the village. As in every good woman, her heart was full of compassion for all the weak, sick, and dying. Her radiant character demonstrated her will that all around her would be bright and joyous like a fresh blossoming flower. Our Lady used these natural dispositions to develop in her the sense of eternal happiness, but also a sense of terror for the possibility of its horrible loss. This is precisely the definition of true love of neighbour, which after love of God is the greatest and most important commandment of Our Lord. Jacinta saw poor sinners as those who were on the path towards the eternal abyss, and her heart was broken to see the temple of God falling into eternal despair. The sinner ought to have had a destiny of joy and eternal happiness, but sin would instead lead him to eternal sadness, hatred and total negation of all good.

Jacinta learned from Our Lady that she — a little girl of seven years — could save many of these poor people from the everlasting fire. She did not hesitate at all: **“We must pray a lot to save souls from hell. So many go there! So many!”**

Through such a program of life Jacinta became a living example for all men to follow the essential role God called them to accomplish on earth: “This is my new commandment, that you love one another, as I have loved you!” We have explained the dimension of the “great commandment” in the commentary on the apparition of August 19th. Now, Jacinta became the living icon of such a life motivated entirely by this love of neighbour, and thanks to such tremendous inspiration, she — little as she was — became a great saint within two years.

Again, for what reason are we on this earth? If one could invent a medicine to add twenty years to each man’s life, he would be a famous

benefactor of the whole human race. However, after twenty years, people would still die. If one could give to someone not only every temporal good, but more importantly, eternal salvation itself, such that without the benefactor's help the person would burn in hell forever, what an eternal joy and gratitude that person would have for so much everlasting good while on earth, what a jubilee of thanksgiving in heaven! We can become such benefactors. If we would only agree to become instruments in Our Lady's hands, we would, by that fact, become secondary instruments in the Hands of God for the salvation of many others. More than ever before, Our Lady in Fatima calls for missionary souls, generous hearts who would forget about their temporary ambitions so as to be filled with one great ideal, following the example of Jacinta: "How much I love to suffer for love of Our Lord and Our Lady, just to give Them pleasure! They greatly love those who suffer for the conversion of sinners."

Anticipating the foundation of great Marian movements at the beginning of the twentieth century, little Jacinta demonstrates the ideal of a true "Knight of the Immaculata", a "Legionary of Mary", an instrument in her Immaculate Hands to save many souls from the fires of hell!

3. Jacinta — presence and icon of the love of the Heavenly Mother!

No doubt, the Immaculate Heart of Mary Herself formed the little girl Jacinta to become an exceptional missionary, who, according to the Patriarch of Lisbon Cardinal Cerejeira, saved more souls by her many prayers and heroic sacrifices than many missionaries together all over the world at that time.

However, Jacinta had yet another role to accomplish: if Our Lady wanted to use children "to make Our Lady known and loved", it would not only be through a message to the world. Our Lady chose Jacinta especially to be her living presence in the world. We can gather

this from the very words of Lucy: **“Jacinta was the one who received from Our Lady a greater abundance of grace, and a better knowledge of God and of virtue.”** This deeper intimacy with the Most Holy Virgin not only transformed Jacinta’s own soul through sanctification, but somehow made her the living presence of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. Through Jacinta, we can learn who Mary really is.

First, we know that she is our spiritual Mother. But when we meditate about Jacinta, praying and suffering for the conversion of her “poor sinners” whenever she thought of them, then we understand better how immense must be the love of our heavenly Mother, if Jacinta, her living icon on earth, already had such an outpouring of pity and generosity for poor sinners.

Second, we know that Mary is the Co-Redemptrix: the sorrowful Mother has an active part in the work of redemption of her Son. Therefore she is ready to offer every possible suffering and sacrifice. But we could remain in beautiful abstract considerations about the role of Our Lady in the salvation of men and forget what “all possible sufferings and sacrifices” really means. And here again the life of Jacinta gives us the light of understanding: the little girl endured every possible suffering a child could undergo. Once again, we can say that if Mary’s little icon on earth reached the fullness of sufferings largely exceeding the capacities even of very generous souls, then what then must be the sufferings of Our Lady herself for us?

Third, we can observe in Jacinta’s life, after the apparition, an absolute conviction of the efficacy of her little prayers and sacrifices to convert many souls, even if she had no visible proof of this during her life. This conviction drew upon a strong faith which was to endure great trials when she had to undergo the numerous interrogations of officials who did not believe and only wanted to corner her in contra-

dictions so as to have proof that she lied or at least that the apparitions were an illusion. We know that she suffered the most of the three seers when they were put in prison on the thirteenth of August. But neither promises nor even threats of a horrible death could make her deny her conviction and deep faith. This fact also makes Jacinta a living icon of her of whom St. Elisabeth had said "Blessed art thou, because you believed!" We cannot meditate enough on the heroic faith of Our Lady, who believed the angel's words that she would become the Mother of God without losing her virginity. She believed that the small, weak Child whom she bore in the stable and laid in a manger was not only the Messiah, but God Himself. She believed in His everlasting triumph even at the moment when He was hanging on the Cross, apparently suffering ultimate defeat. How many times God demanded of her a heroic act of faith! And just as many times she responded without even a moment's hesitation. Jacinta's unwavering faith and conviction is again a wonderful illustration and mirror of the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

Finally, the Immaculate Heart of Mary Herself was reproduced in Jacinta's own heart. Because Jacinta was so small and innocent, Our Lady could enable her to participate exceptionally in the treasures of her own Heart. We can admire the heart of Jacinta, a heart so full of mercy towards all poor sinners whom she regarded as her own; a heart so simple and trusting that the shadows of doubt never entered within; a heart so generous that it answered all of Our Lady's requests, even the request to endure the most terrible sufferings of loneliness during her last illness; a heart to live only for the honor of the Immaculate Heart and for sinners. This total forgetfulness of herself to live entirely for HER made Jacinta a perfect image of Mary's Heart in its total love towards God and men!

4. The Holy Father

Our Lady seems to have wanted to emphasize certain details of the apparitions to the seers, because through the impression made on the children, she could teach the rest of us to understand the importance of those details. Since Fatima is Heaven's great message for the latter times and an answer to present dangers, the vision of hell was evidently the answer of Our Lady to rising modernism, an ideology which would ignore, diminish, or even completely deny the reality of eternal damnation. Another important detail is the special concern of Jacinta for the Holy Father. This fact is more astonishing since little Jacinta hardly knew anything about the Pope or who he was. She received knowledge of the Holy Father and a special love for him directly from Our Lady Herself.

The Holy Father was presented to her under the most tragic circumstances: she saw him immersed in great suffering, in the midst of the worst calamities. The vision must have been very striking and awful, because she repeated so often afterwards: "poor Holy Father." This is an expression which runs parallel to another expression of Jacinta's for certain people who made a great impression on her and to whom she often referred: "the poor sinners." They are "poor" because they run the worst of risks: the danger of eternal ruin. If the fate of a sinner is the loss of his soul, what is the "ruin and danger of the Holy Father"?

Since the Pope is the head of the militant Church, the sufferings and calamities which he would have to undergo must have something to do with the ruin and destruction of the Church. In fact, the whole ambition of the devil is twofold: the damnation of men, and the destruction of his great adversary, which threatens his tyranny on earth—the Kingdom of God, the Holy Catholic Church. And because the Church is hierarchical, the central attack against the Church will be directed against the Pope.

Seeing the future of the latter times, Our Lady knows well that the succession of popes will continue until the end of the world. Jacinta

speaks only of one Holy Father, but it seems that she did not have in mind one concrete person alone but the papacy itself. At first sight, it seems that she speaks positively about him: she sees him suffering, praying, once even expressly “praying before the Immaculate Heart of Mary.” But in the same “positive sense” she also speaks about the enemies of God, calling them “my poor sinners” and having a certain pity for them. Therefore we can conclude that the same expression used for the Pope does not necessarily qualify his life or government of the Church. Also, the facts already known about the true third secret of Fatima (see Volume 3) and the many testimonials of Sr. Lucy herself tend to give a negative view by relating the failure of priests in their pastoral duties. One thing is certain: Jacinta prayed for the Pope, because the apparitions made her understand that the papacy is in danger and a great crisis is about to menace the Holy Mother Church. The devil has directed all his armies and strategies to destroy her.

Now this is a very relevant message of Fatima for our times, where we are facing the worst crisis of the Papacy and the whole Church. Through Jacinta, Our Lady wants to give us a visible guide for living in these times.

Firstly, we see that neither Jacinta nor Lucy (who did not hesitate to denounce the modernist errors insofar as they concern the message of Fatima) ever spoke disrespectfully about the Holy Father. Certainly, in the vision of the Great Secret, they saw his failures, probably even his tragic decision to lead the Church to its ruin. But their reaction to this was neither anger, nor condemnation, but an immense sorrow: “poor Holy Father.” This pity was not at all a compromise with the evil of his decisions or actions, just as pity for poor sinners did not provoke in them any doubt or a lesser awareness of the dangers of eternal damnation. On the contrary, this pity helped the children to understand even better the terrible situation in which the pope would find himself, and to give the proper answer to this crisis.

Secondly, Our Lady wants to make us aware that we can have an important influence on the Pope. Sometimes we meet people who think they can influence the Vatican using human resources, such as influential Cardinals, or through the presentation of events and rallies which would sway the Pope. Our Lady, however, teaches us another way of influence: Jacinta, a little child, could not even think about such diplomatic efforts, because she was simply a small child. We also should not place our hopes in natural solutions. Moreover, almost all of us are simple people who have no access to the hierarchy of the Church. We should leave this task to those whom God has entrusted to represent Tradition at the Vatican, i.e., our superiors who alone have received the necessary graces of state to handle such difficult matters. We, on the other hand, must believe that in following the example of Jacinta and the other two seers in simple fidelity to prayer and sacrifice, we can do infinitely more for the Pope and the Church than by engaging ourselves in affairs that are beyond our competence.

Thirdly, what was the answer of Fatima towards the papacy in crisis? Simply prayer — many prayers. Jacinta's example shows again how efficacious such prayers are. If, thanks to her prayers and sacrifices, she succeeded in saving so many souls from hell, then her prayers and sufferings for the Holy Father must have had a similar effect. Even if we do not see the consequences of our prayers now, in Heaven our eyes will certainly be opened. We have a clear assurance from Our Lady herself that even if it be after much delay, the Pope will finally obey her request. "In the end, my Immaculate Heart will triumph" is prophetic of the triumph of the Catholic Church, meaning the triumph of the Mystical Body of Christ on earth, including the Pope himself, Christ's Vicar.

5. Apostolic Prayer

Finally, Jacinta became a champion of the most important means of conversion and sanctification of souls: apostolic prayer. We can distinguish between personal and apostolic prayer. The first is the lifting up of our souls towards God to adore, praise, and thank Him, to ask pardon for our sins, and to obtain graces for us. The second is to ask for graces for one's neighbour, such as his conversion, his sanctification, or for anything else profitable to his soul. Our Lady had this second prayer in mind when she asked the children to pray for the conversion of sinners. Prayer to God on behalf of others is an essential part of the fulfillment of the great commandment to love one's neighbour. Jacinta's example steers us away from activism or an exaggerated use of human means in the apostolate. None of the external activities and projects of the apostolate are, of themselves, capable of converting even one soul, for conversion is firstly the work of divine grace. The work of the apostolate consists in the turning of the will, which is prone to evil, towards what is good, so that a person who might be far from God or even openly be His enemy, might draw near to God and become His friend.

The conversion of a soul and its salvation is the greatest grace of all. How can we draw this grace down from heaven? Our Lady teaches us that the principal means are prayers and sacrifices. Saint Maximilian Kolbe writes: "Through prayer and suffering, we can obtain many graces. External activity only prepares the way for grace, but of itself it cannot provide these graces. There is one prayer that surely corresponds to God's will, namely the request for one's own sanctification and that of one's neighbour. When we pray that the Immaculata might win all souls, then that is surely God's will. For this intention, we can offer up all our efforts, troubles and sufferings to the Immaculata, so that she might conquer the world. Once Napoleon was asked what was needed to win a battle. He answered: 'Three things are needed: Money, money, and still more money!' Just so, when it is a matter of

sanctifying souls, one needs prayer, prayer, and still more prayer... Prayer is the most misunderstood and yet the most powerful means of restoring peace to souls, of making them happy, and of bringing them close to God's love. Prayer renews the world. Prayer is the prerequisite for the rebirth and the life of every soul... To win souls for God is a very difficult undertaking. Often human means fail: fruitless conversations and discussions, projects that trickle away into the sand, publications printed in vain, and so on. But prayer never disappoints!"

Each hour of Jacinta's life was a manifestation and proof of these wise considerations.

How did Jacinta pray? What were the prayers of that seven year old child? Of course, she only offered those prayers which she had received from the angel and from Our Lady herself: the prayer of the Angel, the Rosary, and beloved ejaculatory prayers. The best devotion to the Immaculate Heart is not the recitation of many prayers, but rather the simple, intimate relationship of a child to its Mother, which is best expressed through short but very fervent and frequent ejaculatory prayers. A child who loves his mother does not say many words; often a glance or a single word is enough. When he is in danger, he calls almost unconsciously: Mother!

In today's particularly hectic world, the apostolate of ejaculatory prayer, in which Our Lady of Fatima encourages us, is the best way of remaining in union with God and elevating one's activities to the supernatural as well as doing much for the salvation of souls. If towards Mary our ejaculatory prayers are like loving sighs of a child to his mother, towards the enemy they are like bullets from a machine gun, with which we strafe him to destruction. Through the practice of ejaculatory prayer for the conversion of sinners, our fellow man is ceaselessly bombarded by prayer even if he does not realize it, while the grace of Our Lord and the compassion of the Heavenly Mother are called down on him, until one day he casts himself down overwhelmed before his Creator and Redeemer. Jacinta's own preferred ejaculatory

prayer was: "Sweet Heart of Mary, be my salvation!" Especially in the last months when it became difficult for her to say longer prayers, Jacinta repeated these short sighs of her heart to Our Lady's Heart, so everything became a constant offering of sacrifice and prayer for the conversion of sinners.

Let us conclude that Jacinta's many little prayers were so pleasing to Our Lady that not only did Our Lady fulfill the wishes of her little seer, but she transformed Jacinta into a great saint. Certainly Jacinta prayed much more for others than for herself in her short life. Our Lady's reward should always remind us of the old rule: what you do for others, you do twice for yourself!



Children of Fatima: Jacinta, Lucy, Francisco



Bl. Jacinta

The children of Fatima are standing by the tree, upon which has appeared Our Lady



The incorrupt body of Blessed Jacinta Marto during exhumation in 1935 and 1951

CHAPTER THREE

“Through the Immaculate Heart of Mary” – Lucy

Lucy’s long life was entirely dedicated to making Fatima known. She had been chosen to be the principal witness of Our Lady before the whole world, and for this purpose she received specific virtues from Our Lady. It is important to analyze these special qualities of Lucy and consider how her life became a living revelation of the message of Fatima. As Lucy was to live almost a century as a religious and messenger of the Immaculate Heart of Mary to the world, her life was entirely different from that of her cousins. Let us first recall some facts and testimonies, and afterwards see how they are a part of the “spirituality of Fatima” which we have to live if we want to be faithful to the Immaculate Heart.

From the time of the apparitions, Lucy was the one who suffered the most. One would expect that the privilege of such an intimacy with Our Lady would make the life of the seer a constant joy and thrilling

happiness. For Lucy it was the contrary: the apparitions became a source of constant sorrow and humiliation inflicted on her by those whom she loved most: her own family and former friends who mostly followed the negative outlook of the parish priest. Such was her life in the years following the apparitions, during which she had to undergo many cross-examinations. The greatest suffering for her was the frequent accusation that she had lied: **“While there were some who admired me and considered me a saint, there were always others who heaped abuse on me and called me a hypocrite, a visionary and a sorceress. This was the good Lord’s way of throwing salt into the water to prevent it from going bad. Thanks to this Divine Providence, I went through the fire without being burned, or without becoming acquainted with the little worm of vanity which has the habit of gnawing its way into everything. They are all mistaken. I’m not a saint, as some say, and I’m not a liar either, as others say. Only God knows what I am.”** At the end of the first interrogation for the canonical process she was asked a final question: “Are you quite certain that the Blessed Virgin really appeared to you?” She responded with this firm and solemn declaration: **“I have the certitude that I saw her and that I am not mistaken. Even if they were to kill me, nobody could make me say the contrary.”**

In June of 1921, Lucy left Fatima definitely, first for college and afterwards to enter religious life. Upon arriving at college, she was introduced to others under a different name, and was obliged **“never to say anything to anyone regarding the events at Fatima.”** For four years, day after day, she had to carry the very heavy cross of obedience to this command. Although it was easy for her to keep silence regarding herself, it was no doubt a heavy burden to be forbidden to speak of Fatima. It was also a sorrowful trial for Lucy that she knew nothing of what was going on at home in Fatima, for she was now totally separated from her family and heard from them very infrequently.

However, in her letters at that time to her family, we find a simple, courageous, humble, modest and thankful soul. Expressions of thanksgiving for the education she was receiving and the good example of the superiors are frequent. Canon Barthas writes that she was not free of imperfections, but if she realized that she had hurt anyone, she would immediately ask pardon very gently. Her calm bearing and balance was especially striking, and she always kept an even temper. There was nothing of the neurotic about her, or even of the nervous or sentimental. One of her directors declared: "I only saw her weep once, and that was when she thought of her home town."

In 1923, when enrolling in the girls association "The Daughters of Mary", she received an extraordinary grace: "After six years of real trials, it was on this day August 26, 1923, that Our Lady for the first time came back to visit me. This was when I entered the Daughters of Mary. She said that she agreed to be my true Heavenly Mother, since I had left my earthly mother for the love of her. Again she recommended to me prayer and sacrifice for sinners, saying that a great number are damned because they have no one to pray and sacrifice for them." Although she was completely successful in hiding the fact that she was the seer of Fatima, she could not conceal her tender devotion towards her Heavenly Mother. Her Mother Superior wrote: "On numerous occasions the sisters came to tell me that she had something extraordinary with Our Lady, because when she spoke of her, she was always different from other people, and people noticed that she had an extraordinary love for the Most Holy Virgin."

In October of 1925, she entered the congregation of the Dorothean sisters, where she continued her life of simplicity and perfect obedience. Up until 1929, the majority of her fellow sisters were unaware that she was the seer of Fatima. Her daily duties were simple, and her spirituality was to put into practising the message of Our Lady by living the religious rule perfectly and giving herself entirely to the Holy Hearts of Jesus and Mary. Of the important revelations she had during

this time, she faithfully and patiently “made them known” to her superiors and spiritual directors. What made her suffer the most was the general refusal to accept and to realize the requests of Our Lady, and what filled her with joy and thanksgiving was the adherence and zeal of those who propagated the devotion to the Immaculate Heart and afterwards made efforts to have Russia consecrated.

All the apparitions and revelations presented in the following chapters touched Sr. Lucy’s inner being. She wrote letter after letter and received visits from high members of the hierarchy and many priests. But even when she experienced a lack of trust or refusal, in the midst of these immense sufferings she always maintained her role, faithfully and constantly passing on heaven’s requests and messages to the ministers of Our Lord, even when those messages consisted of awful threats and announcements of the worst calamities. To pray and sacrifice herself for these intentions was the rule of her whole life!

When Jacinta’s body was transferred to the cemetery of Fatima in 1935, the local bishop ordered Sr. Lucy to write a biography of Jacinta. Her answer reveals the degree of her spiritual life. She firmly declares that she wrote “solely and exclusively for the glory of Jesus and the Blessed Virgin,” and she continues, **“I now take up this work, in spite of the repugnance I feel, since I can say almost nothing about Jacinta without speaking either directly or indirectly about my miserable self. I obey, nevertheless, the will of Your Excellency, which, for me, is the expression of the will of God. I begin this task, then, asking the most holy Hearts of Jesus and Mary to deign to bless it, and to make use of this act of obedience to obtain the conversion of poor sinners, for whom Jacinta so generously sacrificed herself.”** She made the same declaration for all the other memoirs and public writings; she never wrote anything of her own initiative, but always and only on the express order of the bishop. She always had an extreme reluctance and repugnance to write, especially when it came to writing down the

secrets. When she was ordered to write down the Third Secret, she even fell into a mysterious and dangerous illness.

Sr. Lucy was always a humble religious. In 1948, she obtained the papal indult to enter the Carmelite order. The testimony of the nuns was unanimous all her life long: "She was very cheerful and very simple. Her conduct was always dignified and reserved in responding to the affability with which she was received everywhere," testified the Mother Superior of Tuy. The numerous priests who knew her well were equally unanimous that there was nothing extraordinary in her appearance, words, or expression. She was always moderate and well balanced. "She does not like to speak about the apparitions. When she is obliged to do so, she does it with naturalness, with modesty, but with assurance.... She is endowed with a very faithful, rapid, extraordinary memory. ...She shows great docility to the orders of her superiors, in which she always recognized the divine authority." (Canon Galamba)

In all her trials, humiliations and constant sufferings her refuge was always the Immaculate Heart: **"The Immaculate Heart of Mary is my refuge, especially in the most difficult hours. There I am always secure. It is the heart of the best of mothers; it is always attentive and it watches over the least of her children. How this certainty encourages and strengthens me! In her I find strength and consolation. This Immaculate Heart is the channel by which God makes the multitude of His graces pour into my soul. Help me to be grateful to her and to correspond to such great mercies. ...Our Lord told me a few days ago: "I desire very ardently the propagation of the cult and the devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, because this Heart is the magnet which draws souls to Me, the fire which makes the rays of My light and My love shine over the earth, and the inexhaustible well causing the living water of My mercy to pour over the earth."**

“...Do not think I am sad, that I cannot go there. I offer this sacrifice with pleasure, because with this we save souls, and I always remember the great promise which fills me with joy: ‘I will never leave you alone. My Immaculate Heart will be your refuge and the way which will lead you to God.’” I believe that this promise is not for me alone, but for all souls who wish to take refuge in the Heart of their Heavenly Mother, and let themselves be led along the paths traced out by her. ...It seems to me that such are the intentions of the Immaculate Heart of Mary: to make this ray of light shine before souls once more, to show them once more this harbor of salvation, always ready to welcome all the shipwrecked of this world.” One can say that her life was an explanation of the GREAT MEANS of SALVATION in the latter times: MARY’S IMMACULATE HEART!

The life of Sr. Lucy in Carmel was one of self-immolation and continuous spiritual suffering. From 1950 onwards, one can find such statements in her letters as “I am pained that the consecration of Russia has not been done as Our Lady requested it.” In 1955, Sr. Lucy was reduced to silence, and without the express permission of the Holy See, no one could meet and speak with her. As long as she was able, she had spoken and written about the trials to come. Although she was not allowed to reveal the third part of the secret, Sr. Lucy now realized that the prophecies announced in it were to be fulfilled before her eyes. Even if the disastrous realities of the Second Vatican Council and its reforms were directly concealed from her, through the visits of her relatives (amongst whom were also priests) she could sense the “diabolic wave which overflows the whole world,” and many times she spoke about “the last and final battle between the devil and Our Lady,” about the strategy of the devil “to overcome souls consecrated to God.” Knowing that the hierarchy of the Church had turned away from the requests of Our Lady, she said: **“We should not wait for an appeal to the world to come from Rome on the part**

of the Holy Father to do penance. Nor should we wait for the call to penance to come from our bishops, nor from the religious congregations." She not only foretold chastisements but also gave important means to overcome the forthcoming calamities: **"That is why now, it is necessary for each one of us to begin to reform himself spiritually. Each person must not only save his own soul but also all the souls that God has placed on our path."** Before being reduced to absolute silence in 1974, Sister Lucy still had permission to write a certain number of letters. All of these letters address the crisis in the Church and a diabolical disorientation. She exhorts her correspondents to fidelity and vigilance against the diabolical powers at work in the world, destined to cause many people to lose the faith. In order to remain faithful, it is necessary to remember the requests of Our Lady at Fatima: to pray and make sacrifices for the conversion of poor sinners, to faithfully continue the daily recitation of the Rosary, to persevere in devotion to the Immaculate Heart, and to accomplish acts of penance. This would be the hidden life and immolation of Sr. Lucy until her death.

COMMENTARY

After having recalled briefly the life of Sr. Lucy, we now want to comment on the most important elements and how to apply this important part of the "spirituality of Fatima" to our life.

The life of the seers of Fatima was like a living reflection in which we can see the desires of the Immaculate Heart. She formed and guided all three of them to be an illustration of what Our Lady names "the devotion to her Immaculate Heart". Therefore, in the measure that we follow the example of their virtues, we will sanctify ourselves, and the wonderful promises of Our Lady will be realized in our own souls. From Francisco, we learned perfect love of God in the prayer

of consolation; from Jacinta, we learned perfect love of neighbour by praying for the conversion of sinners. From Lucy, we will learn how to live constantly in the light of the Immaculate Heart, how we can please her, how to offer our trials and sufferings, and how best to fulfill our duties of state.

1. The Immaculate Heart — always our refuge

LLucy's spirituality could be put into one sentence: all things always, everywhere, and totally in and with the Immaculate Heart of Mary! All her thoughts, words and actions were literally submerged in the depths of Our Lady's Heart. There was no occasion, no event in her life, which could be an exception to that law. Sr. Lucy was compelled to give all to her. It is easy to see at what point this realization entered into her life. When Our Lady appeared for the first time and asked the children: "Will you...?" The answer was immediate: "Yes, we want to." It was like the echo of Mary's own "Fiat" before the angel. Even though Mary was then so young, she never retracted this willingness throughout her life, but rather, with every day it became more firm, more generous.

Let us consider first of all Sr. Lucy's prayer life. We can distinguish two major preoccupations in her spiritual life: ardent devotion to the Sacred Heart hidden in the tabernacle and frequent meditation of the mysteries of the Holy Rosary. What is peculiar to Sr. Lucy is the fact that she bound her entire prayer life to the Immaculate Heart of Mary: **"This Immaculate Heart is the channel by which God makes the multitude of His graces pour into my soul. Help me to be grateful to her and to correspond to such great mercies."** Through the Immaculate Heart of Mary, Sr. Lucy discovered the treasures and infinite love of the Sacred Heart; in the light of the loving flame of the Immaculate Heart, she meditated on the mysteries of the Rosary. On the other hand, meditation on the Sacred Heart and the mysteries of the Rosary helped

her discover the unlimited depths of the Immaculate Heart. Meditation on these two most holy Hearts was like a circulation of love: hidden in the Immaculate Heart, she grew in love towards the Heart of Jesus; and in the Heart of Jesus she grew in love towards Our Lady's Immaculate Heart. Perhaps the most perfect expression of her entire spiritual life can be found in the words of Our Lord Himself when He said to her: **"I desire very ardently the propagation of the cult and the devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, because this Heart is the magnet which draws the souls to Me, the fire which makes the rays of My light and My love shine out over the earth, and the inexhaustible well causing the living water of My mercy to pour over the earth."**

Besides hours of daily prayer, Sr. Lucy had to fulfill many other duties of state, first as a student and then as a religious sister. Here again, many ejaculatory prayers to the Immaculate Heart were a source of strength for her to accomplish faithfully and conscientiously what God willed of her through her superiors. Whether these duties were sublime or banal, she accomplished them with the same devotion; if possible, she would have laid aside the "noble duties" to choose the humble ones instead. In this spirit, she wrote the memoirs which were to become so famous, as they were later made into a book entitled "Sister Lucy speaks about Fatima". It is very interesting to note how she accomplished this noble task of writing: **"Having no free time at my disposal, I must make the most of the hours when we work in silence, to recall and jot down, with the aid of paper and pencil which I keep hidden under my sewing, all that the most holy Hearts of Jesus and Mary want me to remember."** The fulfillment of her duties of state absorbed her so much that her superiors did not cease to praise her diligent application in all she did. She was convinced that in this way she could best please the Immaculate Heart of Mary and also efficaciously work for the conversion of sinners.

This supernatural Marian spirit was also visible in her relationship with others, and in the first place with her superiors, spiritual directors,

priests and even bishops. There is nothing of vanity or self-flattery in anything she said, wrote, or did, but her frank speech was always marked with a deep respect for the holy office of her superiors. There was never any unmeasured or inappropriate word or gesture towards them during her entire life. On the contrary, she expressly stated many times that she saw in them the authority and love of Our Lord Himself. This attitude never changed, even during moments of trial and humiliation from the hierarchy.

Sr. Lucy shows us what “consecration to the Immaculate Heart” really means: not just a few pious prayers, but an entire way of life. Our Lady of Fatima invites us to lead a similar life in and with her Immaculate Heart through the example of Sr. Lucy. If we did so, everything in our ordinary daily life would change for the better: our prayers, our contacts with our neighbour, our sacrifices, and our understanding of our role and our duties of state. All components of our lives would find harmony if they were accomplished in union with her Heart; they would become more fruitful for our salvation and the salvation of other souls, and Our Lady would find much consolation in our lives.

2. Patience in suffering and trials

From the first apparition on May 13, 1917, Lucy, the eldest of the seers, had to undergo the brunt of the trials, sufferings, and humiliations that followed the event. Those trials were made heavier for her because they largely came from those whom she loved and respected most: her own mother and sisters, and from civil and spiritual authorities. Our Lady teaches us through Lucy that our daily life might be one of contradiction and humiliation. Our Lady foresaw terrible times in the near future when faithful Catholics would be routinely despised, ridiculed, and humiliated not only by enemies of the Church but also from within the family of the Church.

Confronted by such heavy blows, how should a Catholic behave? Sr. Lucy shows us the example.

There is nothing of resentment in Sr. Lucy's behavior. Even when her mother was very harsh to her and for a long time would not believe in the apparitions, and was even unjust towards her, responding to her with bitterness instead of a mother's love, Lucy never turned away from her, never had an angry word of reproach for her. On the contrary, when she was in the convent, she longed for her mother, prayed for her and always showed the love of a child towards her. And when Lucy was kidnapped together with Francisco and Jacinta by the local authority, a tinsmith from the nearby town of Ourem, and put in prison among criminals, she never despised anyone. She only had one thought for her worst enemies, that of pity for their misery and a prayer for their conversion. When one disappointment after another came from the disbelief of the Church's hierarchy and their refusal to accomplish Our Lady's requests, and Lucy was so saddened and even heartbroken, still she never manifested anger or any negative emotions in her behavior. On the contrary, the more she realized that someone was under the influence of the evil spirits, the more she prayed for that person.

One of her great sufferings was loneliness, not only physically, as when she had to leave her home forever, but also spiritually, when she felt that nobody understood her and everyone was against her. Through every difficult trial, she never showed despair or discouragement. When things went wrong, she immediately had recourse to the Immaculate Heart of Mary and confided to her all her worries and trials: **"The Immaculate Heart of Mary is my refuge, especially in the most difficult hours. There I am always secure. It is the heart of the best of mothers; it is always attentive and it watches over the least of its children. How this certainty encourages and strengthens me! In her I find strength and consolation."**

3. “Even if they kill me, I cannot lie”

Another quality of Sr. Lucy was her determination to be honest always. She herself relates that her mother instructed her never to tell a lie! And in this light, her mother’s severe behavior after the first apparition is understandable, because Lucy’s mother was convinced that Lucy had lied. This hatred of dishonesty, together with an excellent and faithful memory, were necessary qualities for Lucy to be an eyewitness of the apparitions and messenger of Our Lady. Throughout the many interrogations during her life, the slightest contradiction was never found, though sometimes there were insignificant mistakes in certain dates or circumstantial evidence. These mistakes never affected her faithful presentation of the words and intentions of Our Lady. Such objectivity can be considered as a miracle itself, because generally one will forget even important details of the past after a lapse of many years.

Sr. Lucy knew from the beginning that being absolutely true and faithful to her task would be a dangerous and exhausting undertaking. The first danger that comes from being chosen in such an extraordinary manner is the temptation to take advantage of the situation for oneself, giving way to human inclinations towards pride, feeling oneself better or more important than others. A second danger is that one could use the privilege in an inordinate manner or abuse the privileged position of a world famous seer. As a visionary at Fatima, Lucy had great moral authority among those who approached her; she could easily have used her position to direct other people’s lives, intruding in their affairs and trying to manage them. She could have attracted people to herself to receive their admiration or to feel their dependence on her. A third danger was the possibility of coloring the facts and events linked to the apparitions in a way to make herself look good; it would have been easy to emphasize her own role at Fatima and add subjective ideas or personal interpretations to the simple facts. The final danger was of a different kind. It was that she become

pusillanimous under the opposition and attacks directed against the apparition and its message, yielding to the all too human tendency to discouragement, being weighed down by the heavy consequences of her truthfulness.

Lucy overcame these four sizable dangers in an admirable way. She understood the privilege that was extended to her as an extraordinary grace to which she had to be unflinchingly faithful and for which she was absolutely unworthy. Frequently, she asked for prayers to correspond to this grace and never to neglect or betray it. She also understood the limits of her competence and duties: her mission was to be a witness, a messenger of Our Lady's message. To Fr. Fuentes, she said: **"My mission is to indicate to everyone the imminent danger we are in of losing our souls for all eternity if we remain obstinate in our sins."** With great simplicity and without considering earthly influences, good or bad, she was witness to the words and requests of Our Lady at all costs, even under the threat of death. In this way, she fulfilled literally Our Lord's words to the Apostles: "You will be my witnesses, even to the end of the world".

Here we have another example of the "spirituality of Fatima," the behavior and quality of those who really want to live the devotion to the Immaculate Heart. We have to concentrate and be entirely occupied with what heaven asks from us and fulfill it faithfully, even at great personal cost. We must firstly be faithful to the greatest treasure we have received — our Catholic faith — no matter what it costs. Concretely, Our Lady also wants us to be HER witnesses and messengers in the world in which we live. If we claim to be "traditional," does this not mean that we must transmit faithfully (traditio) what we ourselves have received? This is our true mission, and the worst betrayal would be to lose our focus on the truth, to change or colour the message we have received, to make use of the grace we have received merely for our own profit, for our vanity, or for dominating others. In other words, there is nothing more opposed to the reality

of the Immaculate Heart of Mary than to speak half-truths. They are the worst kind of lies, leading us to put our own interests before the objective message which we must deliver to others.

The other lesson we can learn from Our Lady, through Sr. Lucy, is to keep within the limits of our competence and duties, not to be occupied with examining and judging what others are doing. When Lucy saw that others did evil, she responded with prayer and sacrifices for them, but she never judged their intentions, never assumed an authority for herself for which she did not have the grace of state. We should likewise be so eager to do what Divine Providence has given us to do that we simply have no time or interest to judge other people. The vocation of the steadfast Catholic of our times is to “be faithful until the end, and you will earn the crown of glory.” We cannot deny or reject the truth we have received, but when others do not honor God and thus imperil their own salvation, we must still do our duty!

4. Simple, humble, obedient — a copy of the Immaculate Heart

How can we best live through such difficult lives in the modern world? Sr. Lucy provides a living example of behaviour for a devoted child of the Heavenly Mother, a slave of the Queen and Knight of the Immaculate Heart.

Lucy’s example, like that of Jacinta, speaks more to us than her words by providing us a living replication of the qualities of Our Lady Herself. No one can please Mary if he does not imitate her virtues. No one can say that he practices devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary if he neglects to conform his heart to her Heart, his life to her life.

What was Lucy’s predominant virtue? Her superiors unanimously declared: “Her most striking virtue was the simplicity with which she practiced all the virtues.” She was an echo of Our Lord’s words:

“If your eye is simple, your whole body is lightsome”, meaning no duplicity, no “politics”, no diplomacy or calculation. Lucy’s simplicity was a participation in the simplicity of Our Lady herself. There was nothing complicated about Lucy’s personality: it only mattered for her to say what pleased God, and to say it in a way that would please God. Her interior thoughts and desires were also simple; she would never complicate matters, nor was she influenced by concerns about what others would think of her. The only thing that mattered was the truth, spoken with delicacy and reverence, and with simplicity.

Our own love for unchanging truth and our desire that others also know the truth — the traditional doctrine of the Church — would have much greater effect if we would be simple in our words and actions, following the example of Sr. Lucy. But one cannot be simple without being humble. Sr. Lucy was fully aware of her unworthiness. In many of her letters, in every memoir, she emphasizes her limitations and asks for prayers that no proud or subjective attitude would interfere with the mission she had received. She never used the Fatima apparitions as a means to exalt herself. When contradicted, she always kept her place; she never counted on herself, but only on Our Lady. This humility was especially visible when she experienced the reluctance of bishops and priests whom she asked to propagate devotion to the Immaculate Heart; she would complain delicately, but she never accused or manifested impatience with them, surrendering the matter instead into the hands of Our Lady.

Concerning the virtue of obedience, Canon Galamba wrote: “She shows great docility to the orders of her superiors, in which she always recognizes the divine authority. She is no less respectful to her spiritual directors as to the venerable Bishop of Leiria.” It was always about seeing the will of Our Lady in the authority of her superiors, even when she did not understand them. This unquestioning obedience of Lucy could be misunderstood, if we were to forget the role assigned to her from the Immaculate Heart of Mary. Up to her death, Sr. Lucy

would not reveal the great secret to the world, because Our Lady did not want it manifested in that way. Sr. Lucy did not discuss nor take the initiative; she would only do what was within the framework of obedience.

Here, however, we might raise an important objection: why did Sister Lucy not resist and refuse the *Novus Ordo* which was introduced in her convent in the early 1970's? Why did she not speak of Vatican II, Modernism, and the *Novus Ordo*? Could her behavior not be understood as implicit advice for Catholics to obey the modernist hierarchy and to collaborate in the "auto-destruction of the Church" and therefore the eternal damnation of souls?

In our opinion, the contrary is the case! After a thorough analysis of the message of Fatima and especially of Sr. Lucy's example, we have a key to understanding true obedience and an example to follow in this worst of all crises. This true obedience, far from requiring cooperation with the superiors who tear down the Church, demands prudent opposition to them.

But first, we must understand in what obedience consists. One must be obedient to those who are the lawful voices of God's will. But should a superior require one to do or say something against God's will, then he is not an instrument of God's will in that particular instance. This is the teaching of the Church, notably that of Saint Bernard and Saint Thomas Aquinas.

What was Lucy's own situation? In 1917, her superiors were her own parents and parish priest. However, she was materially "disobedient" to them when they required her to retract her account of the visions and she refused. When civil and ecclesiastical superiors put pressure on her to act against what she knew to be God's will (e.g., to reveal the third secret before its time or to reveal it to people other than the Pope and the bishop of Leiria, to whom she had been told to reveal it), she never acquiesced. In every other situation, she obeyed perfectly. The apparitions of Our Lady, and in particular the great

secret of July 13th, gave her deep supernatural light to understand the upcoming attack on the Church. However, in her modest and simple life as a Carmelite sister, she had no opportunity or means to know the modernist errors in detail, errors such as ecumenism, religious liberty, and the Novus Ordo Mass. This is quite understandable because of her life's circumstances: she was a cloistered nun. In a Carmel convent, there was no contact with the world and its events. The Novus Ordo was introduced in a very conservative way at the convent. Although she certainly suffered a lot seeing signs of the diminishment in faith, Marian devotion, and spiritual life, still in all these things she had not received clarity, and since no superior directly asked her to do anything evil, her subjective perception was that nothing harmful for faith and morals was being asked from her. Therefore she continued to obey.

The principle of obedience, then, is the following: if you clearly see the will of God contradicted by His ministers, you must choose the will of God, even if they would kill you! If you were to recognize a wish or order as sinful or a clear contradiction to God's will, you must refuse, or better, you must "obey God rather than men." But if, by invincible ignorance, you do not have full knowledge of the evil — if the orders of the superiors do not seem to be in contradiction to faith and morals — then you must obey.

To receive a clear understanding of the present crisis is a special grace and privilege. It is even a coalescence of many graces, found by contact with wise people, faithful, priests, literature, films, and other means which help one to discover Catholic tradition. To receive the motivation to seek out the truth and to have the courage to be informed and to find the traditional Mass is itself a great work of grace, comparable in some ways with the graces and privileges the children of Fatima received.

Does this mean that those who have not received the grace and illumination to find this "hidden pearl" will be rejected? Most tradi-

tional Catholics needed a long time to correspond to this grace, and an equally long time to understand the evil fruits of Vatican II and the Novus Ordo. It is at the moment of receiving such a grace that one must respond to the call of God, and be responsible for cooperating with that grace, or refusing it.

Returning to Sr. Lucy, she had received from Our Lady an order to transmit faithfully to the world Our Lady's message of salvation, her requests to save us and convert sinners, even in our apocalyptic times. This Lucy did, and she did it so clearly that even ecclesiastical superiors were afraid of her. When they reduced her to silence, she never changed her attitude; her last correspondence with her friends and family members shows clearly that she had accomplished her mission faithfully. But to explain is not to govern! She had to explain; others had to execute. And when she saw that they would not follow through with the wishes of Our Lady, she prayed!

We are living in a world faced with the publicly bitter fruits of the Second Vatican Council in its devastating reforms and consequent insults to the honor of God and His Holy Mother. We have received a certain objective knowledge of the truth, and just as Lucy during and after the apparitions refused to obey the orders of her superiors on certain matters, so we have to refuse to "obey" when authority would lead us to abandon or change the truth.

But again, like Lucy herself, we have not received from God the special mission to lead the churchmen or guide the people of the entire world, nor have we received from God the responsibility to judge evildoers. We have not received from God the grace to resolve this crisis. But we have received the grace to be witnesses and messengers of the truth, even until the end of the world!

5. The Immaculate Heart — consolation during crisis

The Immaculate Heart was Sr. Lucy's refuge and great consolation, enabling her to never despair, never give up. She received from Our Lady a deep and special understanding of the difficult times to come: the message of the great secret made her understand profoundly the final attack of the devil against the Church and souls. When writing down the Third Secret, Lucy was in agony; she was deeply affected seeing the future triumph of evil in the world and in the Church, the desertion of the good, the abandonment of the faith, and the dangers of eternal damnation for so many.

Lucy's example teaches us that we have to understand the present situation in the Church in the light of the Immaculate Heart. The agony of the Holy Mother Church is to be compared with the agony of Our Lord Himself. And what did Mary do when confronted by all the mortal enemies of her Divine Son? She did not judge them; we do not find in her any trace of anger or pessimism. As Co-Redemptrix, she prayed for them and offered her Son's sacrifice for their conversion. Similarly, Sr. Lucy always called for penance and prayer when she spoke about the crisis and especially about the defection of priests. She did not respond to bad example with words, but with good example. The more desperate the situation, the more she had recourse to the Immaculate Heart, asking for the conversion of sinners and for the fulfillment of her requests for the sake of the Church, the world, and souls. She never sought any consolation from people, but only from the promise of Our Lady: "In the end, my Immaculate Heart will triumph!"

We should also meditate more often on this clear and categorical statement, as though Mary would say to us: "Whether you decide to be with me or against me, I will triumph! But I invite you to share my triumph with me, and therefore you should trust me blindly! Faithfully fulfill my will and be entirely focused on pleasing me. Then I will

guide you through every dark night, trial and temptation. My Heart will then be your refuge and the way which leads you certainly to God, to holiness!"





Lucy



*Sr. Lucy as a sister of congregation
of St. Dorothy in Pontevedra*



Sr. Lucy with Bishop da Silva

PART TWO

THE APPARITIONS OF OUR LADY
AT PONTEVEDRA AND TUY

CHAPTER ONE

Pontevedra – Devotion to her Immaculate Heart

We can see the interior lives of the three seers as an immediate response to the messages received from Our Lady. In this way, we can grasp the spirituality of Fatima, the interior mysteries revealed by Our Lady: the poor sinner's perfect love of God in consoling Our Lord, perfect love of neighbour to pray and offer all he can for the conversion of sinners and to save them from hell, and the Immaculate Heart of Mary as the golden sanctuary where God visits us with all His graces and where we return to Him, uniting our nothingness to the purest love of our heavenly Mother's Heart.

This awareness allows us to understand better the great apparitions announced on the thirteenth of July, when she came again with the precise intention of establishing the worldwide devotion to her Immaculate Heart and to ask for the consecration of Russia.

When Our Lady revealed her Immaculate Heart to the world for the first time on the thirteenth of June 1917, she promised: "To whoever

embraces this devotion, I promise salvation!" Before reading what follows, we should return to the message of Our Lady on that day and meditate on the amazing promises she gave then (see book one, chapter 10, pages 87 to 91). More than eight years after that day the time had come to unfold in a very concrete and detailed manner the practice of the devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, which happened in two steps: firstly, the message, given by our Lady herself together with the Child Jesus in Pontevedra on the tenth of December 1925, explaining the practice of this devotion; secondly, the motives behind these practices together with some concrete details concerning certain aspects of this devotion. These details pertain to an apparition of the Child Jesus at the same place on February 15, 1926 and the revelation of Our Lord on May 29, 1930 in Tuy.



*The apparition in Pontevedra
on December 10, 1925*

Pontevedra on December 10, 1925

After receiving the sacrament of Confirmation on October 24, 1925, Lucy entered the religious life in the same institute of the Dorothean sisters which had accepted her as a student three years previously. It was on the evening of December 10th, when the 18 year old postulant was returning to her cell that she was visited by Our Lady and the Child Jesus. She wrote her account in the third person:

The Most Holy Virgin appeared to her and by her side, elevated on a bright cloud, was the Child Jesus. The Most Holy Virgin rested her hand on Lucy's shoulder, and as she did so she revealed a heart encircled by thorns, which she held in her other hand. At the same time, the Child said:

"Have compassion for the Heart of your Most Holy Mother, covered with thorns, with which ungrateful men pierce It at every moment, and there is no one to make an act of reparation to remove them."

Then the Most Holy Virgin said:

"Look my daughter, at my Heart, surrounded with thorns with which ungrateful men pierce me at every moment by their blasphemies and ingratitude. You at least try to console me and announce in my name that I promise to assist at the moment of death, with all the graces necessary for salvation, all those who on the first Saturday of five consecutive months shall confess, receive Holy Communion, recite five decades of the Rosary, and keep me company for fifteen minutes while meditating on the fifteen mysteries of the Rosary, with the intention of making reparation."

COMMENTARY

When we speak of devotion, there are always two parts: the external part which consists in specific practices, and the internal one which indicates the spirit and the deeper meaning of these practices. “Devotion” means that one is drawn to the object of his devotion. Not only are certain acts to be given to the beloved, but also one’s whole heart and soul and life, for the beloved must become the centre of one’s attention. In such devotion, concrete practices are very simple, modest and easy to accomplish, but to grasp the meaning of the practices and the path that brings one into the very centre and depth of the Immaculate Heart is a lifelong effort and a work of God’s grace and our constant collaboration with these graces.

1. Consolation — Compassion — Reparation

The key element or “soul” of devotion to the Immaculate Heart is a loving effort to have compassion for her sorrows, to console her by acts of reparation and atonement. After having meditated on the example of Blessed Francisco, we know better what the essential part of this devotion means, to console the Holy Hearts of Jesus and Mary. It is interesting to note that these three terms — compassion, consolation, and reparation — are united as a single interior attitude in every aspect of this devotion.

The desire to console God becomes focused here in an important way: even though among ourselves we can console each other by sharing pain and suffering, we cannot apply this strictly to Our Lord and Our Lady because Their Passion is infinite, and we limited creatures cannot objectively do anything to diminish or to lessen it. The love of compassion is the only thing which remains. If a mother who loves her child above all must see him suffer terribly, she at once would rather take the pains from the child and endure them herself.

Her pain is twofold: first, to witness the torments of her child, and secondly to be so helpless that she cannot do anything to alleviate his pain. But the child, in spite of the helplessness of his mother, knows her immense love and desire and her determination to do what she can for him, to the degree that is possible. This love of compassion is somehow greater than many other forms of love. If someone has an active love for his beloved, then he can at least have the satisfaction that he has done something, and there is a risk of hidden complacency in himself. But if he cannot do anything, he finds himself entirely impoverished, humiliated to the very depths in his helplessness. The more love is impoverished, the more humble it is.

Precisely this form of love of helplessness, in its incapacity to do anything but commiserate and suffer in one's heart, participates in that which the beloved suffers bodily, physically, and this is the deepest consolation that one can give to the Immaculate Heart of Mary; it is the most efficacious reparation, because nothing repairs the sin of pride more than humble love. It is indeed an astonishing mystery: the compassion and helpless contemplation of the sorrowful heart of Our Mother has an immense power of restoration: in the measure that I love, I assist in the work of restoration! Devotion to the Immaculate Heart activates all the potentialities God has created in our hearts, but we all too often neglect to use these powers. The vision of a Heart surrounded with thorns breaks open our hearts of stone to perform acts of pity for HER, regret, consolation, and compassion with HER. This is the highest quality of love which unites us totally with the beloved.

2. Holy Communion in the Immaculata

The very centre of the devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary is the sacrament of Holy Communion, although the reception of the

most holy Body and Blood of Our Lord would seem to have nothing directly related to Our Lady.

How then can the Holy Communion be the most important element in devotion to HER? We find the answer to this question in the beautiful Eucharistic hymn: "*Ave verum Corpus, natum de Maria Virgine*" – "Hail, true Body, born of the Virgin Mary!" The Body of Christ which we receive in Communion was formed in the womb of the Immaculata, Body from her body, Blood from her blood. Without her mediation, there would be no Eucharist. Thanksgiving for Holy Communion is therefore always thanksgiving also to the Virgin Mary as the source of the Most Blessed Sacrament.

The Immaculate Heart of Mary is really the Mediatrix between us and the Sacred Host, the place in which we encounter Our Lord Himself. Therefore when Christ enters our souls, He first finds the sanctuary of the greatest love, her burning Heart, and in her, symbolically hidden under her protective mantle, He finds us. Her mediation at this moment is of capital importance: in the Blessed Sacrament, the Almighty continues His act of love to the utmost; He humbles Himself in the sacramental Host, an act of His omnipotence and an accomplishment of a whole series of interior miracles, each of which is greater and more significant than the creation of the whole world. And yet we receive Him with such carelessness, lethargy, indifference and distraction! Should we not fear that our declarations of love sound ridiculous and in any case unbelievable, since they are often pronounced with an alarming lack of attention?

Even if we were to assemble the worship and devotion, the gratitude and love of the saints at this moment, what is all this in comparison with Christ's own infinite act of love? But now we unite our hearts with HER HEART: SHE loves Christ more than all

creatures. Through her union with the Holy Ghost, she is privileged to love Christ with God's own love. Therefore when we receive Him, we can offer to Him a most precious treasure which pleases Him infinitely, and in that way be sure that our wretched hearts are most pleasing to Him through her presence.

How then, should and must we receive Holy Communion? We are not unlike a little child who is invited, along with his mother, to a festive banquet. The child sees the wonderful things spread out on the table and knows intuitively that everything is delightful, but has no idea where to begin and does not know what foods go together to make a delicious meal. A child cannot help himself. He would have no way of knowing what the right dishes are, and he would go away from the table hungry, no matter how lavishly it had been prepared. Fortunately his mother is there, and she makes the selection, puts the food on a plate, and then feeds the child. So it is with us at the infinitely abundant table of the Eucharist. We are little children in the spiritual life, ignorant and weak. What do we know about the divine nourishment that has been prepared for us? We do not know what is best for us. And if we try to serve ourselves by receiving the bread of heaven with our own wisdom, then like little children we let the food fall to the floor and spill the precious drink and walk away from the table hungry and empty! But if Mary is with us, everything is different. She gives us what is best for us and makes sure that the splendid food does not fall to the ground. She knows her Son and His graces very well, and she knows us very well too — after all, she is our mother. So if we are filled with good thoughts and intuitions, we will love with her Heart, and she will worship, give thanks and make petitions in us and through us. In short, the presence of the Immaculate Heart of Mary in our hearts creates in us the best possible dispositions for the worthy and fruitful reception of this Sacrament.

3. Communion of reparation

The essence of devotion to the Immaculate Heart is communion of reparation. Let us return for a moment to the notion of “reparation.” We already saw that it is the most important expression of our love as repentant sinners. If one were to love someone with all one’s heart but offend him terribly without just cause, then this grieves the erring person more than he can say and he would wish that he could undo the wrong. Such a loving person would make every effort to prove to the beloved person who has been offended how sorry he is to have done such a thing to him. He would like to make amends, remove with words and deeds the wrong that was done, by doing better than ever before.

This is reparation!

Therefore, if one goes to Holy Communion in the spirit of reparation for the sins which have been committed against the Immaculate Heart of Mary, then one sees himself standing before Christ, Who is the One most affected when someone insults His dearest Mother. We try to console Him and with that motivation make reparation for those offences. This means that Mary guides us to have the most profound dispositions, by which we can receive Christ most worthily.

At Fatima, the Immaculata indicates the way that leads us back to God, and this path is none other than a more profound understanding of the grace that Christ Himself has given to us.

Just as St. Louis de Montfort taught us to revive the graces of Baptism through Mary, and St. Maximilian Kolbe the graces of Confirmation in the same way, so Mary herself at Fatima leads us into the utmost depths of the Mystery of all mysteries on earth, namely that of union with God in Holy Communion.

4. Confession in the spirit of reparation

Another part of the devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary is the sacrament of Penance, which should be received in the same spirit of reparation. What is Mary's role in helping us to make such a good confession?

Here too she can prepare the best dispositions in us, awakening in us an increasingly perfect contrition. For example, the more something dirty is brought to light, the more one sees the dirt. The closer I bring my sinful heart to the Immaculate Heart, the more I am filled with loathing for sin. What is ugly appears even uglier in its true reality, and what is wicked fully discloses its terrible perversity. Thus, in Mary's light, the sinner finds a deeper knowledge of his sins; his conscience becomes more keen and delicate. But in particular, he experiences an increased loathing and sorrow for his sins, the more he places himself in the light of her loving, motherly Heart. More and more he discovers how much sin betrays love, and scorns and tramples underfoot the most tender affections of the Heart of his Mother. And this arouses in him a greater contrition: "O Mother forgive me, and ask forgiveness for me from your Son!"

At Pontevedra, the Blessed Virgin put the sacrament of Penance in even broader context: when making a confession, we are to consider all the offences committed against her Immaculate Heart, because sin is never an individual crime alone, but it affects the whole world. When one member of humanity and the Mystical Body suffers, all others suffer with it. This is the reality that through our personal sins we place ourselves in the enemy's camp against the armies of God, shouting "Crucify Him!" striking His Mother on the face. This thought throws into greater relief the value of the sacrament of Penance as purification of such terrible revolt against Almighty God and His Mother.

At Fatima, the sacrament of Penance is not only depicted as a personal absolution from sin, but it acquires an additional value

that encompasses a worldview: "I am sorry not only because I have offended you, my heavenly Mother, but because I do not want anyone at all to offend you. It hurts me terribly that I, your unworthy child whom you have loved so much, have offended you. It hurts me equally to see that your Heart is wounded by so many thorns, by anyone who sins against God." Repentance thus expands to take on universal dimensions, nearly unlimited because it embraces, in its contrition, the countless number of sins of humanity which that contrition represents. In just this way, we make amends not only for our own share of offences committed against God, but for all the evil which saddens our heavenly Mother. This all-encompassing resolve is very pleasing to the Immaculate Heart, drawing God's grace of conversion on many souls. This is why she promises the salvation of many souls if we practice devotion to her Immaculate Heart.

We see that devotion to the Immaculate Heart is essentially sacramental; this devotion helps us penetrate the depths of these sacraments which we receive so often, safeguarding us from a spirit of the routine or superficial reception of a mere ceremony, obligation, or duty. The Immaculate Heart of Mary only desires for us a perfect union with her Son, but this union is dependent on a similarly perfect reception of the sacraments He instituted for our sanctification.

5. Meditation

It is very interesting that the third aspect essential to this devotion is what we call mental prayer. We will read below how Sr. Lucy understood this practice of the devotion, which is most important after reception of the sacraments. It is through meditation that we begin to fruitfully consider the mysteries of our faith, to analyze them, to understand the reasons and important circumstances of these mysteries. It renders our prayer intelligent in the sense that we

“read inside” (*intellegere* from *intuslegere*) the words and penetrate the sacred realities they represent. According to all masters of the spiritual life, one can never come close to God without this form of prayer. If a child speaks to his parents only with phrases learned by heart or speaks without thought and reflection, there is obviously a lack of intimacy and filial love. Exterior devotion to the Immaculate Heart is, according to Our Lord’s words, very “little”. However, it must include this meditative form of prayer which even devout Catholics often overlook. The Immaculata Herself appears as a Mother who teaches her children how to pray, and she points out which prayers are essential for spiritual progress and interior union with God.

Equally noteworthy is how Our Lady refers to the duration of meditative prayer, requesting fifteen minutes. She explains that the reason for this length of time is in honour of the fifteen mysteries of the Rosary. Because Our Lady foresaw the impending world crisis, she would discretely give remedies at Fatima many years in advance. By this remedy, she confirmed that the devotion of the Holy Rosary consists in the meditation on its fifteen mysteries, nothing more or less.

Perhaps she also wanted to make this rather difficult prayer more easily accepted by the faithful who could be put off if it were lengthy. We should also ask ourselves what we do in the space of fifteen minutes in our daily lives? We would be surprised when considering many routine preoccupations of daily life — the time needed to rise in the morning, to wash and dress, take breakfast or coffee, the break between two lessons — to find that each is approximately a quarter of an hour. On a spiritual level, the average time of a priest’s sermon or catechism for adults, thanksgiving after Holy Communion, common recitation of Lauds and Vespers, the Chant of Compline — all this also generally takes fifteen minutes. Perhaps Our Lady wants to encourage an appreciation for a better use of each fifteen minute period during the day? Why not enliven each minute with the spirit of reparation and consolation? Why not make these

portions of time a meditation on a mystery of the Rosary, such as the life of Our Lord and Our Lady? The first fifteen minutes of the day can be offered as consolation to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, and the evening prayer can be united to the same intention as the prayer of the Holy Family in Nazareth at the close of the day.

Whatever may be her precise intention for this fifteen minute period, it is sure that the space of fifteen minutes certainly has significance in our daily schedules. Similarly, fifteen minutes of meditation are significant for our spiritual lives, to enlighten each day with the object of our meditations. In other words, a fifteen minute meditation has a power coming from heaven to sanctify the whole day and to remind us of the presence and protection of Our Lord and Our Lady.

6. The Rosary

The last practice given by Our Lady in the spirit of reparation is the Rosary. At each apparition, she pleaded "Pray the Rosary daily!" Why is the Rosary so important in these latter times? Because it is a perfect way to enter into the mysteries of Jesus through Mary. The ROSARY IS A SHORTCUT to enter the depths of the mystery of OUR LORD; the Rosary is for the busy man of our times. It is THE easiest means to meditate not on every mystery but on the most essential mysteries of our Faith that concern our salvation. The Joyful mysteries, the coming of CHRIST into this world, emphasize that the centre of creation is not man (versus the modern cult of man), not paradise on earth, not one's own brief life, but CHRIST OUR LORD present among us. These mysteries fix our eyes on Him Who helps us overcome the inclination to choose deceptive and easy illusions as the centre of our lives. The Sorrowful mysteries show us the WAY we must live on earth: "Take up your cross daily!" It is the

great law of love, which consists in forgetting oneself and offering oneself for the glory of God and the salvation of souls, by following the sufferings of Our Lord. And the Glorious mysteries show us the purpose for which we live: not for earthly success, but for the eternal glory of the Risen Lord. In these three sets of mysteries, we have the true path (Christ Our All), the means (Way of the Cross), and the purpose (Eternal Glory) of our lives. The Rosary frees us from walking the world's path to a dead end. It gives success to life by means of contemplation THROUGH AND WITH MARY.

As our devotion to the Holy Rosary grows, so this prayer becomes more and more a way to lead us to a perfect knowledge of God's mysteries, in which, according to the words of Our Lord, there is already the seed of eternal happiness.

1. MARY, by the Rosary, draws us into the depths of the Mystery of God Himself! In the Rosary, she reveals to us the admirable Mystery of mysteries, the Holy Trinity. God Himself is close to us through the prayer of the Rosary. The loving Heart of our Mother wants to give us, her children, the most marvellous gift of all: God Himself!

In the **Joyful mysteries**, we discover God the Father Who is the origin and source of our greatest good, our salvation, as well as each subsequent good. He sent His Son to earth! God the Son is the revelation of God on earth, the spiritual Sun which dispels the darkness of the world in His Nativity and enlightens the doctors of the Law in the temple. God the Holy Ghost cooperates in the mystery of the Incarnation and through His inspiration the grace of God enters the world in a new way, firstly in the Visitation of Our Lady and the sanctification of John the Baptist in the womb of his mother Elizabeth, and afterwards in the presentation of the Child Jesus in the Temple where He enlightens and sanctifies Simeon and Anna the prophetess.

In the **Sorrowful mysteries**, we contemplate the active love of Our Lord's infinite mercy. Here Our Mother reveals to our eyes the depths of the Heart of Jesus during His agony in Gethsemane. What happened there? We suddenly hear the pulsing of the Heart of Him Who is most holy, most beautiful, most perfect, and now crushed under the weight of the infinite horror of sin. We see an incredible gesture of mercy in His acceptance of this degradation, so that He can pay the price for sin and destroy it in the sacrifice of His own life. At the same time, we see the Father's mercy, in that He sends the angel of the agony to bear up His Son in the darkness of that garden, so that Our Lord could manifest God's merciful love to the very end. The scourging and crowning with thorns is God's tremendous mercy in action. The darkness of sin is now cast out by the awful payment of the Most Precious Blood, the mangled Body, and the Head pierced by the thorns. The Mercy of God is no joke, having nothing of sentimentalism about it. The Son of God shoulders every possible oppression in order to make sinners free from the burden of sin. The mercy of God brought forth our redemption, but at what a price! Can we not understand the carrying of the Cross and the death of Christ as the special presence of the Holy Ghost in this work of God's mercy? He is there as Christ rises three times after falling, there in the help and consolation He received from Simon of Cyrene and Veronica, and especially in the presence of the Mother of Sorrows on the Way of the Cross — behind all this, the Holy Ghost discretely reveals Himself, bringing the work of redemption to its final and ultimate completion. As the whole drama culminates on Calvary, each Divine Person is there: the Father Who sacrifices, to the very consummation, His possession, His only Son! The Son who loves "to the very end" while undergoing every possible suffering! And the Holy Ghost present in the Immaculate Heart of Mary standing beneath the Cross, the flame of God's eternal love in her heart burning with compassion and infinite sorrow!

INFINITE LOVE appears in the **Glorious mysteries**, the unfolding of the everlasting efficacy of the whole work of salvation. Interiorly, in these mysteries, we are present at the final and eternal revelation of God's glory, holiness, and majesty, above all in the triumph of God's love in the miracle of the Resurrection. The Ascension is the triumphant return of Christ to heaven, together with the members of His Mystical Body. The central mystery is the coming of the Holy Ghost — THE FIRE OF GOD'S LOVE! In heaven, every desire will be fulfilled in eternal peace and endless happiness. The most perfect realization of this happiness is presented in the last two Glorious mysteries, when through the Immaculata, all of creation begins to return to God. The coronation of Mary is both the definite revelation of the totality of God's love, Who fills her with Himself more than all angels and saints in heaven, and the ultimate victory and fulfilment of God's plans in the created order, when "God will be all in all!"

2. Mary teaches us the deepest purpose of creation. She makes us understand who we really are or what we ought to be in God's eyes. Saint Thomas Aquinas teaches that she is the representative of humanity. Thus, it is only in her that we can reach our own fulfilment, which is union with Jesus Christ Who is given to us by her, Who purifies, transforms, sanctifies, and finally glorifies us.

In the **Joyful mysteries**, she appears as the origin, the source, the fountain, and the solemn beginning of our true life as "children of God". In her, we begin to understand the reality of creation: the source of life is not in ourselves but in God, on Whom we are totally dependent. Each Joyful mystery shows a "beginning," a revelation of the source and fountain of life, and the creature as proceeding from this Divine source.

After the commission of Original Sin, the entire world was in expectation of the Saviour (Romans 8:20–22), standing in need of

deliverance from the slavery of sin and the devil so as to be given “the freedom of the sons of God”. This deliverance begins in *the Annunciation*, when her “Fiat” to the angel invited the Son of God into this world. At this moment, a creation bound in slavery to the devil and lost in darkness received an overwhelming light and was



liberated in order to be rebuilt on a new foundation, new principles, a new law. Because God is now with us (Emmanuel), there is a new centre of gravity, a new form of life, a “newness of heart”: in the measure that we orientate everything towards this centre, which is GOD IN US, all is made wise, harmonious, beautiful, pure, and holy.

The *Visitation* presents us with another beginning, the inauguration of God’s work of grace through the sanctification of Saint John. This highest gift was brought to the Precursor by Mary; her Visitation was the beginning of his holiness. But God does not change: what He did once, He continues to do. If the first miracle of grace was accomplished through Mary, God will continue to pour His grace into the world through her. Through Mary, Our Lord Jesus Christ visits each soul



giving it sanctifying grace, and this is the beginning of our return to God, the beginning of a new world.

The *Nativity* reveals that this recreated world exists not only in the depths of the heart or in an invisible intimacy. Man needs to see,



to hear, to touch. This new foundation of life must be made visible, or else no one can build on it. How does Eternal Wisdom become visible to humanity? In the form of a little child. Until the end of the world, Mary will continue to appear to mankind with this Child in her arms, as witnessed in so many pictures and icons.

What does this mean for us? It shows us the way in which we must build our lives on the foundation of God's grace, by becoming little children, HER children.

The *Offering in the temple* is also a beginning, an introduction to the most essential and sublime human act, the beginning of whatever is true, good, and wise: offering! Again, Mary was the first to make this offering, and her sacrifice was the greatest: She gave back to God all that she had. She offered the soul of her soul, the heart of her heart: her own Son. Only 40 days before, she had received Him from the Father, and already she gives Him back, offering Him in the Temple. This is an occasion to meditate on the great principle which must dominate our spiritual lives: if you want to receive, you must give! If you want more, you must give more. Only he who gives all, receives all! Meditating on the mystery of the finding of Jesus in the Temple,

we can see that the Immaculate Heart gives us another essential condition for new spiritual life in her. By our own strength, we will never be able to offer sacrifice and bring order and harmony in our lives. Only by constantly seeking Our Lord, His face, His will, His doctrine, can we rise above our narrow and closed world. He who seeks, finds!



In the **Sorrowful mysteries**, Mary is our guide, the “way which leads us to Heaven.” This is the dramatic path of our return to God.

Our first experience of returning to God is often very humiliating, and as the *meditation of the Agony* shows, we are unable to take even one step on our own: like the Apostles, we sleep; like Judas, we betray, we flee, we run away, we abandon Him. Turning in desperation to her, we retrace our steps to hear the agonizing cry of the Saviour: “Give me the chalice full of your sins! I will take them all! I will pay for them all!” Unless we first abandon ourselves and



our sinfulness and accept His mercy, we cannot receive Him as Saviour.



Then the *scourging at the pillar* and the crowning with thorns should awaken in us a heartache of realization: "It is I who provoked You with my impurities and my pride. I myself took part in Your torture! And now, with Your mercy, I can return to the right path, but I see that I am the most helpless being in the world. I must see how

my sins and those of others have tortured Your holy head and body." Such helplessness is itself a torment for one who loves, who wants to do something for his beloved! This experience forms in us an essential condition for a solid and constant return to God: compunction and humility.



On the *Way of the Cross*, we finally begin to love in action with Simon of Cyrene, helping Our Lord to carry the cross, wiping His face with Veronica. Throughout our return to God, we are able only to accomplish mean "nothings", totally insignificant in themselves, but always done with a deeper

love! But only in the last mystery do we receive the new law which must govern our lives, without which we cannot persevere on the path to God: to assist at His Passion with her, to meditate on the wounds of our Saviour always and everywhere with her eyes, and to love Him with her sorrowful Heart. Therefore an essential act of our lifelong return to God is participation in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. Together with her at the foot of the Cross, united with her, we also receive her as our own Mother from Our dying Lord, and through her render our hearts more like His own, with love for God and for the salvation of souls.

In the **Glorious mysteries**, Our Lady presents to us the only purpose of our lives, the final destination of the way back to God. She reminds us “why and for what everything is,” because she knows how easily we forget the most essential and the “one thing necessary.” Above all, she gives us the courage not to despair when trials and adversities would seem to obscure the way to heaven.

Meditation on the **Resurrection** should fill our souls with wonder. Such a triumph of Christ over all — how great is God’s love! Who can stand against it! It is for this that Christ rose from the dead, to show us our own future resurrection. We will also rise, if we climb with perseverance the summit of the spiritual life, practicing the greatest commandment. The glorified humanity of Our Lord is the model and the form of our future glorious life in heaven. Love



for love! If we will love Him until the end, if we are crucified and buried with Him, we also will rise from the dead with Him.



When we meditate on the *Ascension*, Our Lady will show us the triumphant victory march of the King of Kings, His glorious return to the Father. How was He greeted in heaven by the blessed? Their response is what we call the ecstasy of love, in which every eye is focused on Him Who entered the heavenly kingdom. Mary

fills us with her own fascination at the sight of Christ, King of Love, “clothed with a garment down to the feet, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. And His head and His hair were white as white wool and as snow. And His eyes were as a flame of fire... His voice as the sound of many waters... and His face was as the sun shining in his power.” (Apocalypse. 1:13–16) The glorious figure of the risen Lord should touch us as it touched Paul when Christ appeared to him before the gates of Damascus: thrown to the earth, Paul was forever afterwards a prisoner of Christ’s Love, a servant, friend, and apostle of Christ. From that day forward, Paul lived for one purpose only: “My life is Christ!” This is also Mary’s greatest desire, that we be possessed like the Apostle of the Gentiles and like herself — by a tremendous love of her Son.

The *Coming of the Holy Ghost* brings us to the Cenacle, where the Holy Ghost will “enkindle the fire of His Love” in the us, just as He did on the day of Pentecost in the hearts of Our Heavenly Mother,

the Apostles, and disciples. We see her surrounded by them — what a fascinating gathering! It is difficult to imagine how Mary appeared when the fire of the Holy Ghost penetrated her. Later in history, she would appear to privileged souls, visionaries who would try to explain her heavenly beauty and majesty. At Fatima: “She



was more brilliant than the sun, and radiated a light clearer and more intense than a crystal glass filled with sparkling water, when the rays of the burning sun shine through it.” At La Salette: “Suddenly I saw a beautiful light, brighter than the sun... I looked attentively towards this light. First it was immobile, but soon afterwards I saw in it another light, even more brilliant and moving, and in this light a most beautiful Lady.” At Lourdes: “She was different from the figures of other people because from her came an incredible light, and she was beautiful, so miraculously and completely differently beautiful, that Bernadette, even if she would have been a perfect painter, could not have been able to portray her beauty even with the most perfect instruments. ...Bernadette saw a thin figure of middle height. She looked very young, a girl about 20 years old. But this beauty and youth had in itself something extraordinary. It seemed to be a youthfulness which never passed and could never pass — an eternal youth. And yet something else in that youth was impossible to put it into words. It was as if one could join the grace of a childlike most pure virgin with the grave and infinite understanding, the unlimited goodness of a mother, and the monarchic majesty of a queen.” Can we not see in these descriptions the power

of the Holy Ghost, praising her beauty, in whose light He wants also to draw us to the heights of His Love?



Our Lady was the first to reach the eternal summit. Her life soared back to heaven like a flame of love; she literally died of love. This becomes apparent in her *Assumption*, when she reached the end of the pilgrimage, as the first of all humanity, to which place afterwards she brings all her children. The death of Mary

is to be considered in the context of the fullness of her love, as a death caused by love. Her Love was so immense that nothing could hold her any longer on this earth. Therefore her passing was so entirely different from the death of any other human being, that many Fathers of the Church wouldn't name it death, but rather *dormitio*, like a falling asleep, after which she 'woke up' being assumed into heaven.



The last Glorious mystery is a chant of wonder for her everlasting triumph. But we should not think that now that she is in heaven, she is therefore far from us who remain below on earth. Heaven and its Queen are not far, because she

continues to take care of her children here and now. The *Queen of Heaven* and of all creatures should draw the focus of our eyes and our hearts. Through her, all her children are called to receive the crown of glory. Meditation on this mystery of the Rosary should inspire us with the desire to live more in the thought of heaven than the cares of the earth. There beyond is the great reality; here, only shadows. There is our home and our hearts; here, our exile. In her we can exclaim with St. Francis: "My God and my All!"



CHAPTER TWO

The Spirit of Devotion to the Immaculate — Pontevedra (February 15, 1926)

In Pontevedra, Our Lady opened her Heart wide with an invitation for her beloved children to enter into it by way of a devotion that she herself has given us. This devotion is so important that Heaven intervened to give both practical guidance and a deeper spiritual understanding of it.

Two months after the apparition on February 15, 1926, the Child Jesus appeared to the postulant Lucy, asking her: “Have you revealed to the world what the Heavenly Mother asked you?” — “My Jesus! You know what my confessor said to me in the letter I read You. He said that this vision had to be repeated, there had to be facts permitting us to believe it, and that the Mother Superior alone could not spread this devotion.”

“It is true that the Mother Superior alone can do nothing, but with My grace, she can do anything. It is enough that your confessor gives you permission, and that your superior announce this for it to be believed by the people, even if they don’t know to whom it was revealed.”

“But my confessor said in his letter that this devotion already exists in the world, because many souls receive You every first Saturday of the month, in honor of Our Lady and the fifteen mysteries of the Rosary.”

“It is true, My daughter, that many souls begin, but few persevere to the very end, and those who persevere do it so as to receive the graces promised. The souls who make the five First Saturdays with fervour and to make reparation to the Heart of your Heavenly Mother, please me more than those who make fifteen, but are lukewarm and indifferent.”

“My Jesus! Many souls find it difficult to confess on Saturday. Will You allow a confession within eight days to be valid?”

“Yes. It can even be made later on, provided that the souls are in the state of grace, when they receive Me on the first Saturday, and that they had the intention of making reparation to the Sacred Heart of Mary.”

“My Jesus! And those who forget to form this intention?”

“They can form it at the next confession, taking advantage of their first opportunity to go to confession.”

COMMENTARY

This revelation of Our Lord at Pontevedra is much more important than it seems at first. It is not only practical guidance from heaven, but it is a solemn reminder from Our Lord Himself to focus on what is essential, the foundations or directives on which devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary must be established.

Our Lord provides His first directive in His answer to the objection that Sr. Lucy's Superior did not have the power to propagate this devotion in the Church: "It is true that the Mother Superior alone can do nothing, but with My grace, she can do anything." The keyword of this sentence is "my grace", which means how to place ourselves always on the supernatural level. Fatima is a practical treatise on the doctrine of grace. It illustrates the triumph of grace over nature, of supernatural life over the purely natural life. The purpose is to open up immense graces of conversion and sanctification to the world, by people fulfilling the requests of Our Lady. The promises of Fatima are so far beyond the reach of nature that only an absolute and blind confidence in God's grace can enable us to accept the message. In exchange for simple practices of devotion, Our Lord offers enormous benefits: the conversion of Russia, the restoration of the Church, and the salvation of many souls. Since these results are so far out of proportion to our little actions, Fatima is asking for a clear resolve on our part to see life from a supernatural perspective, a perspective without which we are powerless and "can do nothing". This complete trust in Almighty God's grace coupled with blind and faithful observance of Our Lady's requests can certainly bring tremendous results.

Our Lord's second directive concerns perseverance and selfless disinterest: "It is true, My daughter, that many souls begin, but few persevere to the very end, and those who persevere do it so as to receive the graces promised." Our Lord refers to two real disorders in the spiritual life which often render many of our efforts impotent, so that what was begun with enthusiasm often ends in defeat. These two defects diminish the value and efficacy of our devotions: it is the failure to persevere and a personal selfishness which only looks for "profit", which only performs the devotion in order to receive favours. It is easy to see how these two attitudes are closely related: if after some time we do not experience any noticeable benefits, we are inclined to

abandon the devotion. Therefore we must always be vigilant against such an attitude and purify our intentions. Frequent meditation on the immense love of the Immaculate Heart of Mary will lift our spiritual life from the heavy weight of human selfishness and help us accomplish her will firstly and most importantly as a personal and reciprocal act of love towards her, enlivened with a pure desire for God's glory, for her honour and consolation, and to bring her "bouquets of flowers", i.e. many souls. Remembering the great generosity of Our Lady, shown through miracles and favours throughout history, can be a more than adequate motivation to believe with confidence that she is mighty and will fulfill her promises — when she pleases — and that she will certainly do it at the right time for us.

The third directive of Our Lord regarding devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary aims to increase the quality of our devotion: "The souls who make the five first Saturdays with fervour and to make reparation to the Heart of your Heavenly Mother, please me more than those who make fifteen, but are lukewarm and indifferent." All too often our devotions betray an imperfect understanding of prayer, focusing mostly on the exterior words and number of times we have prayed. We focus on the ritual — the body — of our prayers, and we neglect the soul, which is the essential part of prayer. Our Lord reminds us that all true prayer must come from the heart, and its value lies not in its length but in our fervour and our purity of intention. We should always strive for a quality of prayer which is really pleasing to God. What pleases Him most? Two attitudes: "fervour" and "spirit of reparation". Our Lord Himself teaches us through the spirit of reparation built into the message of Fatima how to grow in fervour and enrich our prayer: we must have a genuine sorrow to see the most beloved God so constantly offended, united with a desire to console Him.

CHAPTER THREE

The reason for the “Five Saturdays Devotion” — Tuy (March 29, 1930)

Wanting to have more clarity regarding the devotion to the Immaculate Heart, Sr. Lucy’s confessor asked: Why does Our Lady want the consecration of five Saturdays — not nine, or seven in honor of the sorrows of Our Lady? In a revelation on the 29th of May, Our Lord Himself gave a reply:

“My daughter, the reason is simple. There are five types of offences and blasphemies committed against the Immaculate Heart of Mary:

1. Blasphemies against the Immaculate Conception.
2. Blasphemies against her Virginity.
3. Blasphemies against her Divine Maternity, in refusing at the same time to recognize her as the Mother of all mankind.

4. The blasphemies of those who publicly seek to sow in the hearts of children indifference or scorn, or even hatred of this Immaculate Mother.
5. The offences of those who outrage her directly in her holy images.

Hear, My daughter, the motive for which the Immaculate Heart of Mary inspired Me to ask for this little act of reparation, and in consideration of it to move My mercy to pardon souls who have had the misfortune of offending her. As for you, always seek by your prayers and sacrifices to move My mercy to pity for these poor souls."

"Those who wouldn't be able to accomplish the conditions on Saturday, can they do it on the following Sunday?"

"The practice of this devotion will be accepted also on the Sunday following the first Saturday, if my priests for an appropriate reason give this permission to those who ask for it."

COMMENTARY

This revelation is a wonderful introduction to new perspectives in the message of Fatima. It is an important explanation of the dimension of certain sins which offend Our Lord and Our Lady. In the previous apparitions of the Angel and of Our Lady, we understood that sin is a cause of "sadness" to God and that it is the cause of damnation for poor sinners; special attention was given to the most common sins: those of impurity, anger, hatred, jealousy, pride. There had also been warnings against the sins attributed to the "errors of Russia": terrible indifference towards the immense love of God, neglect of one's salvation, an overwhelming materialism and desire for earthly pleasure, and world institutions described in the Apocalypse as the beast in the service of the infernal dragon.

In this revelation, Our Lord speaks of a different sin. For the first time in the revelation of Fatima, we hear reference made to blasphemy, a sin belonging to the worst category of sins against the first commandment of God.

The malice of sin can vary in its intensity. When a sinner commits a moral evil — a sin — without being aware of the offence he commits against God, his sin is not as grave, although he still objectively commits a sin. More often, a sinner chooses moral evil knowing very well that it is evil in some way, such that there is a subjective sin as well. In this case, the evil of the sin is more intense. For example, if someone were to rebuke your mother, convinced that she was deserving of reproof and scorn, there is no subjective sin if he was induced, through error, to believe that she deserved such treatment. In itself, however, such an insult is still objectively an offence and an injustice against your mother. In this way, very often Protestants objectively offend the Mother of God and blaspheme her when they denigrate her privileges and honour, even though subjectively they are not guilty because they are without understanding, blinded by an invincible ignorance coming from their attachment to the teachings of a false religion.

And what in this revelation is considered as blasphemy? The heresies denying the fundamental doctrines of faith concerning Our Lady! Heresy is the worst intellectual sin, more terrible than any other sin, the greatest attack against God — worse than murder or adultery. We know that from the beginning of the Christian era, heresies have always been amongst the devil's most effective weapons against the Church. Through heresy, he seeks to destroy or at least weaken the Church. But of all heresies, the most offensive are those against Our Lady! They dishonour her in three ways: firstly dishonouring her inner beauty and immaculate purity, secondly dishonouring her role in the work of salvation among men, and lastly even dishonouring her spiritual presence in

her beloved children in the measure that they resemble her, as well as in her holy images.

Such heresies offend and insult the gracious Heart of Mary much more even than the “errors of Russia”, and Our Lord’s urgent appeal to Lucy for reparation emphasises the weight of such offenses. Since we are clearly in the last times, Fatima’s message shows us that such blasphemies against Our Lady must have something to do with the second apocalyptic beast in the service of the infernal dragon, described as the “false prophet”, who appears “like a lamb but speaks like the dragon”. To this argument one might object that all mentioned blasphemous heresies (except the 4th one) recall ancient attacks against Our Lady, especially that of the Protestantism, and have nothing to do with the trials of the latter times.

The answer to this objection is, according to Cardinal Cerejera, Fatima initiates a new era in the Church and in history — “the era of the Immaculate Heart of Mary” — and that the latter times are entrusted to the power of that Woman in the Apocalypse who will be victorious in the final conflict. This exactly is the key to understanding the words of Our Lord: the final battle between heaven and hell will be a conflict between Satan and the Woman. Although the devil vehemently attacks her, he knows that his power ultimately will be futile because he cannot overcome her. So he hurls his forces against her in desperation and hatred, to ridicule her, calumniate her, incite indifference towards her among men, trying to turn men away from her to their eternal damnation (4th reason). Against these attacks Our Lord calls for acts of reparation, which take the offensive in this desperate war between the devil and the Woman. Through reparation, we stand by her side and shield her honour from the enemy’s hostility. The more the devil and his forces insult her, the more we must surround her with love and fidelity. Each act of reparation, with a single blow, repulses the enemy, weakens his power, and reduces his forces by converting souls and enlisting

them in Our Lady's army as Knights, understanding and defending the honour of their Mother.

Let us now consider one by one the blasphemies mentioned by Our Lord and try to understand what they mean for us, for only if we comprehend the strategy of the enemy and the extent of his attacks can we effectively counterattack through devotion to her Immaculate Heart!

1. Blasphemies against the Immaculate Conception

Three movements in history have denied the dogma of the Immaculate Conception of Our Lady. Protestantism categorically refuses to attribute any special privileges to Mary, since Protestants have chosen to regard her as a sinner like the rest of mankind. The schismatic Orthodox, on the other hand, generally believe in the privilege of the Immaculate Conception, but they do not recognize it as a dogma — a revealed truth of our faith — but simply as a pious opinion of theologians or at most as the common belief of the Church. Lastly, there are Catholics who, infected with the errors of modernism, doubt the privileges of Our Lady and consider the cult of devotion towards her as exaggerated, outdated, or even in contradiction with the “new” Church, in which the Immaculate Conception is an obstacle to the “unity” of all Christians. The decree on ecumenism at the Second Vatican Council distinguished between primary doctrines common to all Christians and other secondary, often controversial, doctrines. In order for all Christian religions to come to an agreement, the decree implied that secondary teachings of the Church should be set aside, and among such “secondary” teachings they placed the Immaculate Conception. Hence, in the name of ecumenism, that dogma of faith has been set aside and ignored, leading to the practical rejection of a recognized and

defined dogma. Such infidelity on the part of Catholics themselves is certainly the worst blasphemy against the Mother of God.

We can go even further: the Immaculate Conception of Our Lady has an eminent practical significance for us. While she alone was conceived without Original Sin, for the rest of mankind, human nature is severely damaged, and this Original Sin is like a poison which we must remedy in ourselves, because sin infects human nature with an inclination towards evil which we must fight our whole lives. Thus we find ourselves engaged in a constant spiritual struggle against the enemy of mankind, who induced Adam to sin in the beginning and wounded human nature so deeply. We can become weary, confused, and discouraged because of the constant struggle and the apparent difficulty of the spiritual life. Appealing to the Immaculate Conception in prayer is an enormous help for us: her spiritual influence continues with the struggle on our behalf, by rejuvenating our fallen nature with the grace of God. When we are close to her, we can see more clearly the poisonous effects and damages of sin, and hence also the remedy for our weakened human nature. How does she communicate this insight to us? By way of contrast, by placing our fallen humanity in the light of her Immaculate Heart. Then we can discern the hidden sources of corruption and the perfidious snares of the devil; near her, we are inspired to embrace the ideals of her integrity, purity, and humility.

From this perspective, we can understand the destructive, demoralizing effects of denying the Immaculate Conception. Such a heresy is a willful blindness to the pure and perfect plan which God had for us in the beginning, the plan for us to have a perfection similar to that embodied in Our Lady. She is the living realization of man's highest capacities, and the enemies of truth would make us forget this masterpiece of God's grace. As an architect is incapable of building a monumental structure if his plans are lost or taken away, so without the Immaculate Conception we are incapable

of constructing an authentic spiritual life. To make reparation for this blasphemy is to restore to the world the perfect ideal of God's creation.

2. Blasphemies against her Virginity

The Catholic Church affirms the perpetual virginity of Our Lady. The essence of her virginity consists not only in the physical integrity of her body but more importantly in her pure and total consecration to God. In both these senses, she was a virgin before, during, and after the birth of Our Lord. This privilege of maternal virginity belongs to Mary alone. It means that her maternity did not take anything away from her virginity; it was rather a marvellous virginal consecration. Her great beauty can be found in the depths of her virginity, which is, as it were, the characteristic of a perfect masterpiece in God's hands. To deny Mary's virginity is to deny God's power and glory. Once her perpetual virginity is denied, it must be replaced by weakness of the flesh, a soul inclined to evil, defiled by the stain of the Original Sin, loss of virginal beauty in the one whom God chose as His own Mother. Mary is reduced to a purely human condition, a simple woman, a common but good young girl. Protestantism, by conceiving Mary in this way, dishonors the perfect work of God in Our Lady. As debased as Protestantism is in its regard for Our Lady, those within the Church who deny her privileges are worse, because their infidelity is a betrayal of the explicit teaching of the Church; they would destroy the Church from within by their dissimulation. For a while, it was almost impossible for the Church hierarchy to correct or condemn modernists, since they seemed, on the outside, to be faithful devotees of Our Lady. In their insidious words, however, they would then rationalise away her privileges and so empty her of honour. Pope Saint Pius X was able to see through their strategy

when a modernist periodical “betrayed” itself by openly denying Mary’s virginity. The holy Pontiff rushed to condemn their perfidy.

To appreciate better the importance of the Immaculate Conception, we have to remember that throughout the history of the Church, consecrated virginity has always been held in high esteem by Catholics. Just as the priest is seen as embodying the presence of Christ on earth, so the consecrated virgin is considered to be a living symbol of the presence of the “Virgin of Virgins”. This Hebraism “virgin of virgins” means that Mary is not only preeminently a virgin, but that she is the archetype, the ideal of all virginity. Pope Pius XII teaches: “That virginity owes its origin to Mary is the testimony of Athanasius, and Augustine clearly teaches that ‘the dignity of virginity began with the Mother of the Lord’” (Encyclical *Sacra Virginitas*, No 65). Mary’s virginal example is the source of beauty in every virgin, the interior wellspring of harmony and integrity. However, because this perfect masterpiece of God is a woman, of all the creatures that He made, women, and especially virgins, have a special relationship to Mary, and their most profound destiny consists of becoming, so to speak, rays of this sun, faint images and copies of it. From each of these images a ray of that primordial plan of God is projected into the dark world, like a final hint of paradise, like a secret gleam of that “new heaven and new earth”. This, above all else, is the great duty of woman: to be an image, a living icon of the Immaculata. That is why it is so necessary for a woman, a virgin, to follow her prototype. Mary gives the example of the virginal life and vocation, and the perfection of feminine nature comes about through conformity to her: to the extent that a woman reflects her in her life, she becomes precious, strong, pure and preternaturally beautiful. All the saints have cast themselves into her Heart like molten material into a mold, and in that way they were formed according to her example. She encompasses all sanctity within herself, she is the source of all the most varied forms of virginity,

from the most obscure girl who, unknown to the world, performs her service with the utmost modesty, to the most exalted, extraordinary missions of those women who are meant to show the world the strength and power of virginal beauty, such as St. Catherine of Sienna or St. Joan of Arc, the Maid of Orléans, or St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus.

The Church, in praying to Mary or speaking about her, uses a magnificent title: *Beata Maria semper Virgo* — Blessed Mary, ever Virgin. In doing so, Mother Church emphasizes the timeless, constant and perpetual character of Mary's virginity. The word *semper* testifies to a virginity in Our Lady which transcends the changeable and passing nature of the world, to a personal quality in her which is permanent and eternal. Thus Mary, *SEMPER VIRGO*, represents in the created order the boundless virginal beauty of a pure, ardent, and infinite love of God. Every virginal soul participates in her own perpetual virginity, and the Church further teaches us that, in Heaven, this participation is characterized by a special mark of distinction, worn by the Blessed, called the "aureole" or halo. Virgins as well as martyrs and doctors of the Church possess this special reward in heaven corresponding to the particularly glorious and outstanding nature of the victory they won in the pursuit of their heavenly crown.

With this in mind, we can better understand how depraved are the blasphemies of those who reject the Immaculate Conception. Their heresy obliterates the memory of the most beautiful expression on earth of God's purity, Our Lady. To attack the perpetual virginity of Our Lady is to attack God's wisdom and creative love itself.

3. Blasphemies against her Divine Maternity, and rejection of her role as Mother of mankind.

Here Our Lord speaks of a double blasphemy, not any more against the person of Our Lady but against her twofold salvific mission: the first mission is her role in the life of Our Savior Himself, the second is her role as Mother of His Mystical Body. The fundamental dogma regarding Our Lady is her Divine Maternity. It is the fundamental privilege of her person, upon which all of her other privileges and her role in Redemption are based. Bl. John Henry Newman explains that all Christian denominations recognize that Mary is the Mother of Jesus Christ, but many of them have the incomplete vision of the ancient heresy of Nestorianism, which sees Mary only as the mother of the humanity of Jesus, and does not accept her as the Mother of God. As a result, they deny her participation in the work of Redemption, and do not see Mary as having a role in our personal salvation.

Our Lady's spiritual Motherhood is her essential mission in the Church with the members of the Mystical Body. To deny her spiritual Motherhood is to refuse to hear and understand the most precious testament of Our Lord as He hung dying on the cross giving us His own Mother as our Mother: "Son, Behold your Mother". If we do not embrace the meaning of those words, then Mary has no relationship to us, as we will have no place among the members of the Church. If such is the case, then her interventions in history and especially her particular apparitions can only be empty illusions, terrible deceptions of the faithful. Such a blasphemy directly dishonors the mystery of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, which is so clearly revealed throughout the entire message of Fatima as the inexhaustible love of our heavenly Mother for her children, to whom she gives all that she receives from God and possesses in herself.

On a practical level, Mary's motherhood is the exemplar and measure of perfect motherhood on earth, which is meant to be

an echo of Our Lady's Divine Maternity. Each human mother can live out her motherhood perfectly by seeing it in the light of Mary's motherhood. Christian parents should see their children as a gift of God, should see in each of their children the presence of the Divine Child. Conceiving and carrying the child in the womb should become a living reminder and "re-presentation" of Mary's conception of the Incarnate Word and her bearing of Jesus Christ in her heart. The birth and raising of a child should be understood as a divine mission, that is, as a presentation and proclamation of Jesus Christ to the world: Christ can thus be seen in every soul. Jesus Himself reaffirms this when He says that whoever does His will on earth is His "brother, sister, and mother."

Moreover, the Catholic doctrine of Mary's Motherhood shows us the true relationship between Our Lady and Our Lord as the pattern of our relationship with Jesus Christ. Here on earth, He wants to be revealed to us at first in the same way that we become aware of a child, as one who is small and insignificant to the world. In the same way, He conceals Himself in the Eucharist under the unassuming appearances of bread and wine. He wants us to love Him as Mary loved Him — that is, as a mother loves her child — for there is no more tender relationship of love on earth than that of a mother and child. But the ideal relationship that He reveals to us is not merely the natural and physical union of a mother and child, or a motherhood stained by Original Sin and selfish human needs. What is "maternal" in our relationship with Christ is the act of entering into the ideal of Mary's person and taking her maternity as our guide to closeness to Jesus. We must discover the particular way in which she is the Mother of the eternal Son, how she raised Him, lived in His presence, and spoke with Him, because she united the most profound reverence for His majesty with the deepest possible intimacy of a pure love. In order to preserve our union with Christ from being abstract and unreal, God gave us a realistic and

intense, concrete ideal of a mother and son, for is not the experience of fatherhood and motherhood one of the most sublime realities in human life?

Again, these practical but inspiring characteristics of the Divine Motherhood of Our Lady are lost if the doctrine of her spiritual motherhood is denied. From this, we see how attacks on fundamental dogmas regarding the Blessed Virgin can demolish the entire edifice of our spiritual lives.

4. Blasphemies of those who publicly seek to sow in the hearts of children indifference or scorn, or even hatred, of this Immaculate Mother.

Besides the direct blasphemies of doctrinal perversion and heresy, there are also the indirect blasphemies of immorality. Abortion, for example, is immoral but not directly blasphemous. Depraved sins of this category are called “scandals” because they lead the innocent into evil. The worst among such sins is the seduction of children, particularly into sins against chastity. According to the Gospel, such sins are among the worst of evils, so that it would be better that the one through whom such scandals came “had not been born”. The heart of a child is innocent and open. A child absorbs all that he receives and is formed by all that enters his mind and heart. If a child is exposed to evil, he will easily be disposed to evil for the rest of his life.

However, scandal can also be blasphemous if such immorality directly insults God and His mysteries. Our Lord refers to such blasphemous scandal in those who are endowed with authority (politicians, employers, teachers, parents), who use their authority to induce their subordinates to sin. The heart of a child is like fertile ground, in which whatever is planted will grow, whether it be good

or bad. So Our Lord rightly refers to those who publicly “sow” indifference, scorn, and even hatred against the Virgin Mary, in the hearts of the young. This is the crime of scandal.

What reparation are we called upon to offer for these crimes? We are asked to make atonement for the furious assaults of the enemy by which he damns so many souls and blinds them to the grace of conversion. In his crimes against youth, Satan attacks with his most base strategy, his lowest form of malice, taking advantage of the innocence and simplicity of children who are unable to defend themselves. This is comparable to an armed force invading a defenceless city and killing the elderly and the children.

Such a cowardly way of “fighting” has become universal and public today in the form of indoctrination. The youth, from their earliest years, have revolutionary ideology whispered into their ears, a strategy that is recognized and approved by those in authority. The first step is to sow indifference, an approach used widely by Communists, Freemasons, and modernists. It creates the atmosphere for a general outlook on life which affects a person’s entire attitude. The secular environment in families and schools, a public life dominated by the things of this world — these make materialism the heart of human existence. Almost imperceptibly, secularism fills a human being with a penetrating emphasis on oneself — the ego — along with an obsessive desire for freedom from constraint. Such a mentality makes people superficial, giving them an habitual attitude toward the transcendent truths of the faith. It leads to an equally dismissive and trivializing attitude regarding the lures and temptations of the enemy. Goodness and the pursuit of virtue become boring; evil becomes attractive. All that is not of the world is viewed with indifference.

The enemy knows well enough that there is one great remedy for this spirit of indifference: the reality of the overwhelming love of a heavenly Mother for her children. Even the devil cannot uproot

that deepest of relationships among men, the relationship of mother and child. He knows with certainty that she alone can rescue endangered youth and restore enthusiasm for the service of her Divine Son and the salvation of souls. Satan is therefore bitterly determined to sow indifference towards her among men and in this way to obscure the reality of the Divine Motherhood.

No one hates something to which he is indifferent: he simply does not care. So in order to make men hate Our Lady, the devil excites men to scorn the ideals of purity and virginity. And since Our Lady is the model *par excellence* of these transcendent virtues, scorn of purity and virginity is in fact an insult to HER who is the source and exemplar of all that is pure and consecrated. What begins as scorn is quickly followed by hatred, for if someone is poisoned by impurity, then he will hate more and more that which bothers his conscience. The impure will first look with jealousy on the innocent and pure, then that jealousy will turn into hatred, because the pure of heart have a certain beauty and youthful vigour of spirit, whereas the impure quickly lose the vitality of life.

5. The offences of those who outrage her directly in her holy images

This last blasphemy is a direct and personal offence against Our Lady, more so than the iconoclasm of the 8th century which was a misunderstanding of the worship of God and the saints. This new form of blasphemy is prompted by a hatred of Mary and a rejection of God; it is directed against images and representations of Our Lady. It is the final step in the devil's overall strategy against Our Lady which begins by insinuating errors (the three first blasphemies mentioned by Our Lord), then subtly changes mentalities (the fourth), and finishes by an open war on her presence in the world

symbolized by her holy images. To see the reality of this attack, it is sufficient to recall the fate of Communist countries since 1917, for wherever the “errors of Russia” were spread there were always persecutions of Christians accompanied by the destruction of the symbols of their faith.

This outline of blasphemies against God and the Virgin Mary is a study of the tactics and forces of the enemy of the Kingdom of God. Because God has given command of His “camp” in the latter times to His Holy Mother, all attacks of the enemy are directed against the “Woman clothed in the sun”.

6. Our response

Our Lord’s conclusion in explaining these blasphemous assaults is a clear directive for reparation: **“Hear, My daughter, the motive for which the Immaculate Heart of Mary inspired Me to ask for this little act of reparation, and in consideration of it, to move My mercy to pardon souls who have had the misfortune of offending her. As for you, always seek by your prayers and sacrifices to move My mercy to pity for these poor souls.”**

Our Lord proposes mercy as a remedy for such hostile blasphemy. He confirms once more the great importance and profound value of acts of reparation, one of the fundamental themes of Fatima.

The revelation of God’s merciful plan unveils the sovereignty and majesty of Jesus Christ, before Whom the most violent attacks are as nothing. If we consider His words more closely, we will immediately find a very important distinction between the sin of blasphemy in itself and the poor sinners who commit it. Our Lord gives no quarter to the infernal dragon, his devils, and ideologies, but He extends a plentiful mercy to poor, misled souls.

Heaven has formed a strategy against hatred and blasphemy: to defeat the enemy by winning over souls through conversion, to make lambs of the wolves. The ready pardon of Jesus Christ will convert many souls who are attracted by His mercy and pity. He extends this pardon, however, only through the intercession of His holy Mother, and she does this in the measure that we “seek by prayers and sacrifices” to beg mercy for sinners.



CHAPTER FOUR

Sister Lucy explains the Devotion of the First Saturdays

Sister Lucy took this beloved devotion so much to heart that she constantly turned to it in her letters. She often repeats the five conditions given by our Lady and asks her correspondents to practise it themselves, and also “to make it known and embraced by many other people.”

She expresses her enthusiasm for the devotion in the following words: “It seems to me, that we are fortunate to be able to give our dear Heavenly Mother this proof of love, for we know that she desires it to be offered to her. As for myself, I avow that I am never so happy as when each first Saturday arrives. Isn’t it true that our greatest happiness is to belong entirely to Jesus and Mary and to love Them, and Them alone, without reserve?”

“The greatest joy that I experience is to see the Immaculate Heart of our most tender Mother known, loved and consoled by means of this devotion.”

“Your Reverence cannot imagine how great is my joy in thinking of the consolation which the Holy Hearts of Jesus and Mary will receive through this lovable devotion, and the great number of souls who will be saved through this devotion.”

Sr. Lucy also tells us how she arranged and performed her meditations for each first Saturday:

“Here is my way of making the meditations on the mysteries of the Rosary on the first Saturdays. First mystery, the annunciation of the Angel Gabriel to Our Lady. ...I will meditate on the manner in which heaven proclaims that the Most Holy Virgin is full of grace, blessed among all women and destined to become the Mother of God... the humility of Our Lady, recognizing herself and declaring herself to be the handmaid of the Lord. ...How I must imitate Our Lady in her humility, what are the faults of pride and arrogance, through which I most often displease the Lord.... On the second month, I make the meditation on the second joyful mystery. The third month, I make it on the third joyful mystery and so on, following the same method of meditating. When I have finished the five first Saturdays, I begin five others and meditate on the sorrowful mysteries, then the glorious ones, and when I have finished them I start over again with the joyful ones.”

“The holy Hearts of Jesus and Mary love and desire this cult, because They use it to draw souls to Them, and therein lie all Their desires: to save souls, many souls, all souls!”

COMMENTARY

Sister Lucy wanted devotion to the Immaculate Heart to penetrate our whole lives. She often declared that the first Saturday devotion

to the Immaculate Heart is a pattern which can be applied to our everyday lives, simply because we must carry our devotion to her every day, not only once a month.

If we were to ask ourselves what our spiritual lives should look like, we would have to admit that we are faced with a dilemma: how do we fulfill our daily duties of state and at the same time “pray without ceasing”? We find it difficult to put harmony and order into our day, since the atmosphere of the world militates against the peace of order, and the rhythm necessary for the cultivation of good habits is disrupted by restlessness, constant preoccupation, noise, changing trends, and the countless distractions of technological media. We are far removed from the proverbial times of simple peasants or contemplative monks, whose daily lives were peacefully governed by laws of nature and a natural environment. The very pressure of life has made it difficult for us to concentrate, especially in our prayer life.

Our Lady’s message takes these difficulties into consideration and the devotion to her Immaculate Heart is her answer to these problems. The simple spiritual practices she taught at Pontevedra help us understand what is really important in our daily lives. When a person practices devotion to the Immaculate Heart, Our Lady communicates her own inner life to that soul and so renders the soul capable of living in a state of constant recollection, even in the midst of a busy daily schedule.

Consider her life on earth. She and St. Joseph would have had to work very hard every day except the Sabbath, without much time reserved specially for prayer. BUT she always prayed — there was not one moment without ejaculatory prayer in her heart! And she surely always kept certain times reserved for meditation on the Word of God, for praying the psalms, and for contemplation. Yet we must not lose sight of the fact that her daily life was typical of life in any small Mediterranean village, in which her time would

have been spent in conversation with other women, in helping the old and sick, in hard manual work (gardening, cooking, washing). We know from tradition that she rose very early in the morning and that the first hours of the day belonged exclusively to God. Her work throughout the rest of the day was done as an uninterrupted act of love for God and for the salvation of souls.

This reflection on our Lady's life provides us with an important insight: what is essential to our lives is not our activities but our guiding intention. Our intention, fixed at the beginning of the day, can communicate a spiritual atmosphere to all of our activities during that day. At Pontevedra, Our Lady teaches us how to form this intention in the spirit of reparation. We have already seen that a spirit of reparation can be a perfect expression of love in us poor sinners for the all-merciful Lord. God is attentive not so much to what we do, but the intention with which we accomplish our work. To be able to do everything with the greatest LOVE takes time and practice, but the practice of a pure intention becomes easier if we see all things, and especially our crosses and sufferings, in the light of the Immaculate Heart, to whom we can offer immense consolation and make reparation for the innumerable offences, negligences and indifferences of so many of her beloved children. This spirit of a love of compassion for the best of all mothers has to penetrate all of our actions, from the most important down to the least important. The more we focus on fostering this spirit, the more authentic is our devotion to her Immaculate Heart.

As the human being is a composition of soul and body, his devotion, too, is composed of "spirit and body": the spirit or intention and the exterior practice. We have just explained the "soul" of the devotion to the Immaculate Heart. In Pontevedra Our Lady gave concrete practices of devotion to help us understand that such practices are to be the pillars of our daily lives, and that they are both necessary and sufficient to guarantee our perseverance in our

pursuit of holiness in the spiritual life. These devotional practices are Holy Communion, the sacrament of Penance, recitation of the Rosary, and fifteen minutes of meditation. During her apparitions in 1917 she asks the three children to say many ejaculatory prayers.

For someone who wants to be Our Lady's true child and slave, these practices of devotion on first Saturdays can easily be applied to daily Catholic life. Every one of our days could include the activities of a First Saturday: morning prayer (with spiritual communion if one cannot physically attend Holy Mass), daily Rosary, daily meditation, evening prayer (with examination of conscience and reparation), and many ejaculatory prayers — all in a spirit of reparation, which is nothing other than the PURE LOVE OF GOD Whom we offend so often and Whom we continue to offend. This is a spirit of LOVE OF GOD which offers reparation THROUGH THE IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY. By this spirit, we are constantly with her, and every moment of the day is a new occasion to prove our Love for her, to offer all that we are and all that we do, to her. Of course, our lives remain the lives of poor sinners, but daily devotion to her Immaculate Heart sanctifies us in spite of ourselves.

Reviewing each day in relation to Our Lady's daily life in Nazareth is also the best way to make our examination of conscience in the evening, by seeing what part of the day was most out of touch with her own life. In HER LIGHT, we can easily discover our faults and sins, our infidelities and betrayals, our laziness and indifference. We should ask her to change our daily lives, especially the elements of our life which differ from, or are contradictory to, her own Heart. Should we discover a deep abyss between ourselves and Our Lady, we should never be discouraged, because it is already an immense grace to be able to put our lives in the LIGHT of her life. We cannot forget that she is a mother, happy that her child sees what he must do; she can repair what is wrong in our lives and give us grace to do better in future.

CHAPTER FIVE

Tuy – the Consecration of Russia to the Immaculate Heart

On June 13, 1929, Sr. Lucy received the last apparition relating to Fatima's message. Our Lord revealed to her a magnificent vision of the Most Holy Trinity, which she commented: "I understood that it was the mystery of the Most Holy Trinity that was shown to me, and I received lights about this mystery which I am not permitted to reveal." We will consider and comment on the famous "vision of Tuy" in our third volume.

Here we focus on the revelation of Our Lady to Sr. Lucy. In her memoirs she wrote:

"Then Our Lady said to me:



*The vision
on June 13, 1929
in Tuy*

‘The moment has come when God asks the Holy Father to make, in union with all the bishops of the world, the consecration of Russia to my Immaculate Heart, promising to save it by this means. So numerous are the souls which the justice of God condemns for sins committed against me, that I come to ask for reparation. Sacrifice yourself for this intention and pray.’

“Later on, by means of an interior communication, Our Lord said to me, complaining: ‘They did not want to heed My request! Like the King of France they will repent and do it, but it will be late. Russia will have already spread its errors throughout the world,

provoking wars and persecutions of the Church: the Holy Father will have much to suffer.”

Later in 1930, Sr. Lucy wrote further on the meaning of the apparition and Our Lord’s requests: **“The good Lord promises to end the persecution in Russia, if the Holy Father will himself make a solemn act of reparation and consecration of Russia to the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, as well as order all the bishops of the Catholic world to do the same. The Holy Father must then promise that upon the ending of this persecution he will approve and recommend the practice of the reparatory devotion already described.”**

On August 29, 1931, Sr. Lucy said: **“As I was asking God for the conversion of Russia, Spain and Portugal, it seemed to me that His Divine Majesty said to me: ‘You console Me very much by asking me for the conversion of those poor nations. Ask it also of my Mother frequently, saying: Sweet Heart of Mary, be the salvation of Russia, Spain, Portugal, Europe and the whole world. At other times say: By your pure and Immaculate Conception, O Mary, obtain for me the conversion of Russia, Spain, Portugal, Europe and the entire world. Make it known to my ministers that if they follow the example of the King of France in delaying the execution of my request, they will follow him into misfortune. It will never be too late to have recourse to Jesus and Mary.’”**

COMMENTARY

Since this vision is the last public message of Fatima, we must thoroughly consider every word of the message. We also have to remember that Our Lady referred to this future vision on July 13, 1917, having the intention to explain to the world the devotion to her Immaculate Heart.

1. Consecration — keyword of Fatima

One of the essential elements of devotion to Our Lady's Immaculate Heart is consecration. Consecration to Our Lady consists of an act of will — a decision — through which a human person takes a step outside of himself, towards Mary. He gives himself completely to Mary as his Mother and Queen, in order to discover and possess Christ. Through such an act of consecration, he does nothing other than imitate Christ Himself, Who gave Himself completely and entirely to Mary. Our Lord belonged to her as a child belongs to his mother. Christ received His humanity from her; He willed to be completely subject to her during thirty years of His life; he accomplishes the work of salvation through her, and for all eternity He will be her Son, always honoring her wishes. Consecration to Mary is therefore essential to the imitation of Christ. For one who desires to imitate Christ perfectly, however, the consecration must be total.

What is a total consecration? It is a complete gift of oneself to Our Lady, sealed by a public act, as opposed to a mere devotional act expressing love of Our Lady. In other words, there is a difference between a consecration to Mary that is a devout request and an actual *consecratio*. The first consecration is a legitimate expression of love for Mary, for example in the prayer, "O my Queen and my Mother, I am all thine", or a child's consecration to Mary on the occasion of his or her first Holy Communion. The authentic *consecratio*, in contrast, consists in the gift of self (*donatio*). Through this offering, one dispossesses oneself and no longer acts as proprietor and master of his own life and actions, but rather acts in all things as Our Lady's subordinate, conforming to her desires in everything. Saint Louis Mary Grignon de Montfort writes: "we give her all that we possess both in our natural life and in our spiritual life as well as everything we shall acquire in the future in the order of nature, of grace, and of glory in heaven. This we do without any reservation, not even of a penny, a hair, or the smallest good deed. And we give for all

eternity without claiming or expecting, in return for our offering and our service, any other reward than the honour of belonging to our Lord through Mary and in Mary" (*Treatise of the True Devotion*, paragraph 121). In the words of Saint Maximilian Kolbe: "There is nothing more perfect than the union of our will with hers.... Only if we uproot from ourselves everything that comes from self and allow the Immaculata to lead us fully and completely, will we reflect her completely in ourselves". Accordingly, he who has consecrated himself to Our Lady will make use of his material goods according to Mary's desires and intentions. The same holds true for his entire person, which he employs exclusively according to her wishes. He intentionally gives no place to any thoughts, wishes, desires, or ideas that would not give pleasure to the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

An act of consecration is a special moment in our life, the fruit of patient preparation and effort. We can compare it to the patient gathering of many individual flowers, which are finally presented as a complete bouquet, in an offering of homage to, and veneration and worship of, the object of one's love. It is to entrust something precious acquired by hard work throughout one's life, to another. There is always something distinctly exceptional and unique about an act of consecration.

Sr. Lucy frequently wrote that all people and institutions should be consecrated to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. Consecration to Mary should begin with individuals and then proceed to the consecration of families, communities, parishes, schools, religious institutions, even nations and the entire world. Such consecrations are so pleasing to Our Lady that whenever and wherever something has been consecrated to her in the past, she sent down a shower of graces on the ones who offered themselves and their lives so generously to her.

2. The Consecration of Russia

The only request of Our Lady at Tuy is the consecration of Russia to her Immaculate Heart. There are two reasons why she asked for the consecration of that nation and not another one:

The first reason is, that since its conversion to Christianity, Russia has had a special devotion to Our Lady. Pope Pius XII himself mentioned this fact in his Act of the Consecration of the World to the Immaculate Heart of Mary: "...The innumerable icons, monasteries and shrines all over Eastern Europe are proof of the religious fervour of these people, fervour which they owe to the 'All Holy, Virgin and Mother of God.'" Although Russia followed the Eastern schism, it was certainly not the people themselves who chose to be separated from the Catholic Church; they were misled by the political and religious rulers, so it is understandable that Our Lady would have a certain predilection for these people and desire to have them brought back to the unity of the Roman Catholic Church.

Since the October Revolution in 1917, however, Russia has become the main vehicle and instrument of anti-Christian forces, a stronghold of Marxist atheistic ideology. The apparitions of Our Lady at Fatima are a response from Heaven to the Russian revolution. The two events are so close in time that Our Lady seems to be rallying the forces of the Church militant against this new threat: Fatima is her battle standard in opposition to the Communist revolution in Moscow. This is the second reason for the special importance of Russia: never before in history had an entire nation become such an instrument in the hands of Satan. As a result, Our Lady chose to make Russia the central battlefield in her spiritual warfare. The main thrust of her forces is through an extraordinary counter-attack. We would expect an appeal for special prayers, penances, sacrifices, and other ordinary means of conversion. She does not ask for these things, but rather asks for something much greater: the consecration of Russia.

When we consider this request to consecrate Russia, however, we are confronted by a special problem. How is it possible for one person to consecrate another? And would such a consecration be effective if the person were consecrated against his will, and if he were even an open enemy of the Church? If we understand consecration as a pious expression or a plea for mercy, then it is easy to see how such a prayer could be made for the enemies of the Church. Mothers often consecrate their children to Mary, even when their children are in spiritual danger or are estranged. While we can understand the consecration of Russia as such a pious desire on the part of the faithful and a solemn plea to Our Lady to have pity on Russia for the conversion of the nation, such an interpretation is yet inadequate and does not require the cooperation of the hierarchy of the Church and the pope himself.

There is, however, a deeper meaning to this appeal for consecration: through God's merciful design, the faithful can effectively become instruments in His hands for the conversion of souls. Jesus Christ requires our participation in the expansion of His kingdom and His conquest of the world. This teaching of the Church is expressed in the encyclical of Pope Pius XII *Mystici Corporis* (par. 106): "God's inscrutable providence has decreed that these graces should not be granted to us all at once; but their greater or lesser abundance will depend in no small part on our own good works, which draw down on the souls of men a rain of heavenly gifts freely bestowed by God. These heavenly gifts will surely flow more abundantly if we not only pray fervently to God, especially by participating every day if possible in the Eucharistic Sacrifice; if we not only try to relieve the distress of the needy and of the sick by works of Christian charity, but if we also set our hearts on the good things of eternity rather than on the passing things of this world; if we restrain this mortal body by voluntary mortification, denying it what is forbidden, and by forcing it to do what is hard and distasteful; and finally, if we

humbly accept as from God's hands the burdens and sorrows of this present life. Thus, according to the Apostle, 'we shall fill up those things that are wanting of the sufferings of Christ in our flesh for His Body, which is the Church'".

Our Lady herself at Fatima taught that the salvation of a great number of souls depends on our prayers and sacrifices. The spiritual foundation of the great Marian movements — movements such as the Legion of Mary, the Militia Immaculatae, and the Blue Army of Our Lady of Fatima — consists in the vocation of an elite to become channels of grace from the Immaculate Heart of Mary to all souls for their conversion and sanctification. Our Lady wants us to be her instruments; she wants us to pray and sacrifice for her other children who are lost in heresy, schism, Judaism, and Freemasonry. The lives and sacrifices of Jacinta, of Saint Therese of the Child Jesus, and of many other saints prove the power of this instrumentality for the conversion of the enemy. Our Lady not only speaks of the conversion of individuals, but of communities, institutions, and even of nations, and especially the conversion of Russia, where the most bitter enemies of the Church are gathered.

Our Lady requests a most unique act of prayer: an act of entire surrender of self, a holocaust, in the sense of consecration. In this supreme offering, all is to be given to her, without excluding anyone or anything.

The infinite and almighty mercy of God has equipped us with this powerful weapon of consecration to be turned against the soldiers of the enemy; it will overthrow their designs, shake them to the depths of their persons, make them doubt the evil cause in which they have joined, and weaken their resolve to fight, in order to liberate the good will that lies buried within them and which the enemy's propaganda had suffocated. In theological terms, this special act of consecration obtains for those estranged from God a special actual grace — the Preparatory Grace — which prepares the souls of men

for the coming of God, disposing man little by little to open himself to the light of Truth and the supernatural life, towards conversion. This is the precise role that the Blessed Virgin has played throughout history. By her powerful prayers in heaven, by her apparitions and by her presence in many shrines on earth, she opens hearts that do not yet possess sanctifying grace, and prepares them for the grace of conversion, delivering them from the ranks of the enemy. This is the promise of the Immaculate Heart, if her requests are fulfilled.

3. The Pope in union with all the bishops

Our Lady requested not only the consecration of a particular nation bound by the power of the apocalyptic beast, but also that this consecration be offered by a particular person for it to be efficacious.

Any person can consecrate himself, and, in the sense explained above, he can consecrate others as well. At Fatima, however, Our Lady required that this act be accomplished by the highest authority on earth, the Pope. And not only the Pope, but the Pope together with all the bishops of the world, i.e., Peter and the college of apostles, represented by the bishops.

There is only one situation in the history and life of the Church in which the pope acts visibly with the bishops on earth: it is a universal council, when the head of the Church calls all the bishops of the world together for an extraordinary act of the highest authority in the Church (extraordinary magisterium) regarding the most important matters in the life of the Church. There have only been twenty-one councils in the entire history of the Church.

It is clear, then, that Our Lady has tied this act of consecration to the highest extraordinary authority in the Church. What does this mean? Why has she done this?

The *first*, most obvious reason would be to show the whole world the overwhelming importance of her message at Fatima as the “last means of salvation” at the time of the world’s final conflict. The more important the action, the more it depends on a higher authority for its execution. Because Our Lady requests the consecration of Russia by the Pope and all the bishops, she indicates that her request is extremely important. Such a weighty request cannot be taken lightly.

Secondly, her request is bound up with the exercise of the highest magisterial authority of the Church, the authority which is used to solemnly proclaim certain doctrines as articles of the Faith, drawn from revelation and apostolic tradition. Proclamations thus made “*ex cathedra*” are called dogmas. The last dogma to be proclaimed by the Church was the Assumption of Our Lady, body and soul into heaven. Since then, we have waited for another doctrine concerning the Blessed Virgin to be proclaimed as a dogma: that Our Lady is Mediatrix of all graces, meaning that she is the repository of all graces of conversion and sanctification, and that it is her role to distribute these graces to souls. The Second Vatican Council should have been the occasion to proclaim this doctrine a dogma of the faith, as a great number of bishops and fathers of the Council were requesting it, but the Modernist bishops at the Council prevented it from happening. All the apparitions of Fatima fully demonstrate the fact that the Immaculate Heart of Mary is the channel for all graces of conversion and sanctification of mankind, both individually and socially. Her promise of the conversion of Russia is nothing but the supreme exercise of her power as Mediatrix. The might of her power is strikingly unveiled in the miracle of the sun, but her conversion of an entire nation separated from the Church and at enmity with God would be even more striking. How fitting it would be if the Pope, together with all the bishops of the world, proclaimed the dogma of Our Lady Mediatrix at the same time as fulfilling her request

for Russia's consecration, stating: "We believe that Our Lady is the Mediatrix of all graces. Since she promises to give these graces of conversion to the poorest and most abused nation on earth, we want to fulfill her desire to consecrate it to her in homage of our firm belief in the efficacy of the dogma we have just proclaimed".

Thirdly, Our Lady's request for Russia's consecration demonstrates that Fatima is an extraordinary and universal event of the Catholic Church, in the Catholic Church, and for the Catholic Church. She will not circumvent the order established by her Divine Son: whatever comes from heaven must pass through the established hierarchy of the Church. There is no exception to this rule, as if there were two sets of parallel authorities in the Church, with the ordinary care of the Church belonging to the hierarchy, and extraordinary intervention belonging to Our Lady for those who benefit from her apparitions. Clearly she wants the message of Fatima to be counted among the most important manifestations in the universal Church, and this has to be recognized from its supreme authority, "the Pope together with all the bishops". Throughout the first volume we have considered how the apparitions of Fatima are solemn reminders of various doctrines of the Church, especially the truths which are the most neglected and condemned in our contemporary world, even among Catholics. Submission of the highest authority of the Church to the requests of Our Lady would renew these forgotten and despised teachings of the Church.

Fourthly, one of the most important roles of the Pope and bishops is to lead Catholics in the spiritual fight. The Church on earth is a militant Church, constantly in battle against a terrible enemy. When the "errors of Russia" began to spread throughout the world, Pope Pius XI (and later Pius XII) immediately understood that Communism was a frontal assault of the enemy to destroy the Church. It is the gravest responsibility of the Pastor to defend his sheep and to find

appropriate means to lead the counterattack or at least to control the damage caused by the enemy. When the Turks attacked Catholic Europe, it was the popes who organized the resistance, and it was through their initiative that Christian forces won strategic battles at Lepanto (1571), Vienna (1683), and Peterwardein (1716). The popes themselves were not military commanders of Christian armies, but they established important prayer crusades, uniting the Christian world in the prayer of the Rosary. Today, however, the attack of Communism against the Church is much worse than previous conflicts, and again this time, the Popes do not have to organize armies or propose novel means of defence: Our Lady herself is there to lead them to a brilliant victory. Was not the striking miracle of the sun more than sufficient to prove how mighty she alone is? Are not the many miracles of conversions associated with devotion to her Immaculate Heart no less striking proof that her requests at Fatima really ARE the true solution and surest defence of the Church and souls? At Tuy, Our Lady summoned the Pope and all the bishops, as if to say to them: "My beloved Sons! I come to give you the sovereign means of victory over the worst of all attacks in the history of the Church. Come and take this gift!".

Finally, while the present crisis in the Church is primarily a crisis of the papacy and hierarchy with many years of negligence and toleration of heresies within the Church, this solemn act of the entire hierarchy together with the Pope would re-establish the Church's unity of government behind Our Lady, rallying Catholics around the everlasting Catholic truths of which Our Lady reminds us at Fatima. The consecration of Russia would be a solemn call for the "Restoration of all things in Christ". It would implicitly condemn every error and heresy of our times. Moreover, it would be the beginning of the cleansing of the Church herself from the errors that followed the Second Vatican Council. This last effect would take place immediately, since the consecration of Russia to the Immac-

ulate Heart would necessarily be an end of “ecumenism” and at the same time a call to all non-Catholics for conversion.

Our Lady demands that this act of consecration be solemn and public, because the errors of Russia themselves are public and universal. A public act of consecration also emphasizes the universal dimension of Fatima; it is not a mere personal private devotion. Our Lady is not Queen of some hidden or secluded realm, but Queen of our own world, of our own human race. She is OUR LAST HOPE, and she must be publicly recognized by mankind! Public honour and recognition of her is public honour and recognition given to God, since He entrusted His Church to her in the latter times.

Two other details deserve mention:

Firstly, Sr. Lucy makes it clear that this act should be both an act of consecration and of reparation. This shows again the importance of reparation in Fatima’s message. Reparation removes obstacles to grace, militates against evil, effectively and actively repudiates sin and error, and prepares for the re-establishment of the truth. The errors of Russia perpetuate insult and blasphemy against the first commandment. After being exposed to such evil, only an act of reparation can restore one’s disposition to choose the truth once more, and in a broader sense to dispose Russia to be once more the kingdom and land of Our Lady.

Secondly, all is not finished once Russia converts. Once Russia returns to the Faith, Our Lord requires a continued effort on the part of the Pope and bishops to promote and extend devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. In particular, they must continue to approve and recommend the devotion of the five Saturdays. From this perspective, the consecration of Russia appears as a solemn inauguration of the “Reign of Mary,” which will continue to

advance through the conversion of many souls, especially through the devotion of the five Saturdays. We can never finish giving Our Lady all that Our Lord wants us to give her!

4. Marvellous Promises

The consecration of Russia will have its effects. The promises given by heaven should be a powerful motivation to accomplish Our Lady's request, since those promises demonstrate both the immense mercy of God towards poor sinners and the power He has given to Our Lady, so that everybody might understand His special love for her, His masterpiece, and the role He has given her in the latter times of the world.

The first promise is the end of the persecution of the Church and a period of peace. There will be a check to Communist power, allowing the truth to illuminate the world once more. Our Lady's promises do not only concern an alleviation of physical suffering and trials, through a period of peace, but they have a spiritual dimension as well, in that the truth will be restored and many people will be saved.

The second promise is the conversion of Russia, which will bring to an end a thousand year old schism with the return of an entire nation to the Holy Mother Church. Humanly speaking, it is impossible to imagine such a complete conversion, especially since this particular nation seems to be rooted in its errors and hostility towards the Catholic Church. But we should not forget that Ukraine also belongs to the people of the "Holy Rus", and since 1561, a considerable number of Christians there have joined the Catholic Church. Byzantine Catholics have also given many saints and martyrs to the Holy Mother Church beginning with Saint Josaphat, as well as many martyrs after the Second World War under the Soviet regime. Could

it not be that Heaven has already prepared for the return of all of Russia to the Catholic Church, since many of her ancestors have already made the step?

The third promise is a “time of peace” given to the Church, when the truth will again brighten the world. It will be the “era of the Immaculate Heart”, foreshadowed by the Marian era after the apparitions of Fatima in the first half of the twentieth century.

All these promises are only conditions for the most important promise: the reign of the Immaculate Heart of Mary with widespread fruits of conversion, sanctification, and holiness.

All these promises were given under condition, however, that the requests of Our Lady are fulfilled. In case of negligence or refusal, we do not know to what extent these promises will still be fulfilled. But there are other promises that we can be sure of, the promises concerning the refusal of her requests. These promises, too, are prophetic, and their exact realisation in the aftermath of the failure of Church hierarchy to cooperate with Our Lady’s requests is no less a proof of the veracity of Fatima. We will consider these promises now.

5. The tragedy foretold at Fatima

Despite such promises of Divine Providence in the message of Fatima, following the last requests of Our Lady there is a terrible prophecy of the consequences should her requests be refused. We will consider them further in the next volume of this series, but for the moment we can pay attention to her words:

“They did not want to heed my request! Like the King of France they will repent and do it, but it will be late. Russia will have already spread its errors throughout the world provoking wars and persecutions of the Church: the Holy Father will have much to suffer.”

“Make it known to my ministers that if they follow the example of the King of France in delaying the execution of my request, they will follow him into misfortune. It will never be too late to have recourse to Jesus and Mary.”

The prophecy shows clearly different epochs or stages of development: first the refusal, then repentance, and the finally the fulfillment of her requests.

Due to the negligence and delays of the hierarchy, the catastrophes she predicted will begin to unfold: Communism will spread across the world with brutality and war in its wake; the Church will be immersed in her own catastrophes, involving especially the Holy Father and his ministers, who will suffer the same punishment as the King of France.

Twice Our Lord refers to the misfortunes of the King of France. He alludes to the apparition received by St. Margaret Mary Alacoque in Paray-Le-Monial, France, on June 17, 1689, in which she was told by Our Lord: **“Make it known to the eldest son of My Sacred Heart, that just as his temporal birth was obtained by devotion to the merits of My Holy Infancy, in the same way he will obtain his birth into grace and eternal glory by the consecration which he himself will make to My Adorable Heart, which wishes to triumph over his own, and through his efforts, triumph over the great ones of the earth as well. It wishes to reign in his palace, to be painted on his standards and engraved on his arms to make them victorious over his enemies, bringing these haughty and proud people to their knees before him to make him triumphant over all the enemies of Holy Church.”**

In a letter of August 28, 1689, St. Margaret Mary spoke again in greater detail of the immense graces the King would receive if he answered the requests of the Sacred Heart. The Jesuits had been specially chosen to teach devotion to the Sacred Heart and to convey the desires of the Sacred Heart to the King. Insofar as the Jesuits

would fulfill this mission, they would be enriched with graces and blessings in return. It was also implied that if, on the contrary, they did not comply, they would be chastised. The King of France himself, King Louis XIV, refused to accept the words of the Sacred Heart, and consequently his power declined. After his death, France underwent revolution from within and without, beginning with the false philosophers of the Enlightenment and the establishment and spread of Freemasonry throughout the 18th century. Then, on June 17, 1789 — exactly one century after the request of the Sacred Heart — the French revolution broke out. King Louis XVI was imprisoned and beheaded only three years later.

We can now better understand this terrible prophecy of Our Lord to Sr. Lucy: the sovereign pontiffs will draw down misfortune on themselves and on all of Christendom by their lack of docility to heaven's voice, just as happened to the Kings of France two centuries ago. As we approach the centennial of the apparitions of Fatima, we might also ask if the postlude to the apparitions will unfold more swiftly 100 years later.

We cannot know how these things will be fulfilled, but we do know that **“it will be late, but not too late.”** If we have recourse to the Hearts of Jesus and Mary, the worst can be avoided. When her requests will be fulfilled and how much devastation must fall upon us or how many will be saved from its terror will depend on our recourse to Jesus and Mary! This should fill our hearts with zeal and courageous motivation to be apostles of Fatima with all our hearts and all our strength!

CONCLUSION:

All these considerations should help us grasp the “totality of Fatima”. Fatima is the constant presence of our Heavenly Mother in these latter times:

Her requests — our way to holiness

Her promises — our consolation

Her mercy — our purification

Her graces — our sanctification

Her triumph — our glorification

Our devotion — the honour and glory of Our Heavenly Mother

Our consecration — the guidance and protection of Mary, Our Queen

Our reparation — the joy of her immaculate beauty

Our conversion — the power of her powerful intercession

Our efforts for the conversion of sinners — the leadership of Our Commander in chief

Our obedience — THE TRIUMPH OF HER IMMACULATE HEART

Summary of the Third Volume

What we intended to be the second and last volume of our explanation of Fatima needed to be divided into two books to better present an abundance of material. After meditating on these pages, you will certainly share our conviction that Fatima's apparitions of 1917 have been, for many of the faithful, an unknown event, even though all are called upon to hear and understand the messages of Our Lady and to make the spirituality of Fatima their own. We know with certainty now everything said by Our Lady and her requests, except for the contents of the famous Third Secret.

This brings us to the last part of our studies and meditation. We will entitle the third volume *The Disclosure of the Great Secret of Fatima*. In order to understand more fully the phenomenon of Fatima, we will first speak briefly of the marvellous fruits which have sprung from devotion to the Immaculate Heart throughout the world in the twentieth century; and we will consider a strange paradox: wherever the message of Our Lady of Fatima is made known, recognized, and loved, there is a certain triumph, while, on the other hand, her sworn enemies seem to hold the upper hand and continue to prevent a widespread fulfillment of her requests.

We will consider the tragedy of the failure to consecrate Russia to the Immaculate Heart as she requested, and the yet more tragic duplicity of the hierarchy of the Church regarding the Third Secret. But this twofold tragedy does not frustrate God's plans; He and only He can overcome evil and draw out a greater good, so that even man's wickedness serves His designs in the end. The final word of Fatima will be the triumph of the Immaculate Heart. Therefore, FATIMA occupies a place in the very heart of the Church and in the centre of the world in the latter times: Fatima is the living and active presence of the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

These books are all written to prepare for the 100th anniversary of the apparitions in Fatima in 2017. At the same time, another outstanding Marian movement also celebrates its 100th anniversary in 2017: the foundation of the Militia Immaculatae of Saint Maximilian Kolbe. We will see that this coincidence has a deeper significance. Later, in a special chapter, we will compare Fatima with the M.I. and try to understand what is really at stake in 2017 and the years following, as Fatima's echo in time continues the unfolding of Our Lady's message to us.

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‘The moment has come when God asks the Holy Father to make, in union with all the bishops of the world, the consecration of Russia to my Immaculate Heart, promising to save it by this means. So numerous are the souls which the justice of God condemns for sins committed against me, that I come to ask for reparation. Sacrifice yourself for this intention and pray.’

Our Lady to Sr. Lucy during the vision on June 13, 1929 in Tuy



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