

## Living the Call of Fatima Today

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Our Lady of Fatima comes to us with a message of Hope. Fatima is hope for the world. This is a hopeful message that you and I are able to accomplish great things, bring down God's blessing and bring peace to the world.

Fatima is hope for all of us. It's not a dire prediction of doom; it's an opportunity for us to repent. We see what happens when we stray from God; we also see the blessing that comes to us when we draw close to God. And this is what Our Lady is laying out for us.

We have to go back to the sober beginnings of the message of Fatima, to the three-part secret given on July 13, 1917. The first part, the vision of Hell, is a very dark story. But without the understanding of what our faith would be without God, we can't understand the good news. The bad news is the vision of Hell, that if we reject God; if we stay apart from Him, there is no hope, there is no life. Without God, all there is left is suffering. And God would like to spare us from all of that.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> part of the vision, Our Lady says, "You have seen hell where the souls of poor sinners go. To save them, God wishes to establish in the world devotion to my Immaculate Heart."

In this we find some great mysteries being revealed. When these were being revealed, the children thought Russia was a lady; they didn't even know it was a country. At that point Russia was 3% literate. In April of 1917 Russia was forced out of WWI after losing to the Germans. The Germans had pressed on to the western front and the Russian troops went home and deposed the Tsar. And there was a six-month period when there could have been peace and they could have established a free government, but it's also the time when (Vladimir) Lenin went in and that is where we find the beginnings of the revolution. Those are the same six months that Our Lady was appearing at Fatima, those same six months when Russia was in that transitional state – after the Tsar and before the Russian (Bolshevik) revolution. The Red October. Those were conditional months, those were opportunities for grace. And yet after World War II, Russia emerges as a

world power. It becomes a nuclear power. It becomes in oppositional power to the United States and the battle spreads over the entire world and the good were martyred and suffering is happening all around. All of this coming out of Fatima.

Third part of the secret. It's interesting about the third part because it doesn't contradict either of the other parts, but what it starts to point out is the mystery of Christ. Saint Paul said in Colossians 1:24: "I make up in my body the sufferings that are lacking in Christ for the sake of his body the Church." It is a much overlooked passage; perhaps one of the most Catholic passages you can find in your Bible. What could possibly be lacking in the sufferings of Christ?

And yet, Christ is head and members. By baptism we put on the Lord Jesus Christ and we share in the Divine life of Christ, we become adopted sons and daughters of Christ. We become part of one Christ, His head and members, and Christ left part of the work of redemption to us. The entire Church shares in this work, to be co-redemptrix, co-redeeming, to put on Christ. Now our sacrifices have value.

To participate in the work of the redemption of the world. We are part of the mystical Christ, our sufferings not only count, but are necessary. And if those sacrifices, those tears, those drops of blood are gathered up by the angels at the foot of the cross and sprinkled upon the souls of people in order that they might find God; we are one mystical body, all sharing the sufferings of one another.

That's a very broad interpretation of Fatima. Think about for a bit, our sufferings, our prayers matter, because we draw down grace upon the rest of the world. That's why we have a part in this. That's also the reason that all prophecy is conditional. You saw that in the prophecy that the Holy Father is killed, and instead we find that Pope John Paul the Great survives. And you find here that we too have a role in the rebuilding of the Church and the world right now. So this is a message that is not doom and gloom, the end is near. You don't find that. Instead you find that each one of us is charged with the mission of prayer and sacrifice, deep mental prayer, deep conversion, and an apostolic life to go out and call people back to the Jesus Christ through the intercession of the Virgin Mary. So in

other words if half the world or more is headed down, we're headed back up. If the destruction is underway, so is the rebuilding.

The message of Fatima is a message of hope and you and I are partners to that. So watch out for any interpretation that is all doom and gloom and the end is near. Yes there are sufferings on our doorstep, no doubt about it. On the other hand, so too is joy. So too is the rebuilding, so too are many conversions, when people are called back, when they are converted from their sins and restored to the divine life of Christ and become true brothers and sisters – all of that is on the doorstep if we embrace the message of Fatima, if we draw close to Our Lady. That's where we want to go.

I'd like to look for a moment at the symbolism of the statue of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. This is Our Lady of Fatima here, the other is the Immaculate Heart and there you will find the heart exposed and her hands outstretched. The mantle and the dress are white, all symbolizing purity, light integrity, chastity, excellence. The ornament around the edges is all gold, standing for her royalty. The open heart is the greatest secret of the revealed Fatima because we find there that Mary opens herself to God by saying yes. As you and I ought to do as well.

We recognize all of those offenses against her Immaculate Heart and the ways that we can begin to do reparation.

In the IH of M is a flame and the flame represents God Himself, the most Holy Trinity dwells in her heart and God is a living fire and that fire dwells in Mary. Her heart is on fire with the love of God and so must our hearts be. Not just good.

Watch out for this notion in our world that the goal is to be good. Or the goal is to be nice. There is no virtue of niceness. We are being holy and joyful and zealous for the kingdom. We find here again that there is a little globe that hangs from our Lady and it symbolizes the world, and her heart is bigger than the world and that there is no problem too great for her to handle.

Again we find that the statue is barefoot, symbolizing the humility and again that star which is near the base of the statue symbolizes the new evangelization. That's what this is all about. You and I are to be partners

with her. Mary is preparing a new Pentecost to draw down the Holy Spirit upon the world.

Have you ever noticed that at the first Pentecost, Mary is gathered with the Apostles. It was Mary who drew down the Holy Spirit And it is Mary who draws down the Holy Spirit on the infant church, just as she said yes to the message of the Angel, and by the power of the Holy Spirit she conceived the God man in her womb, the great act of the incarnation God was made present in flesh within her by the power of the Holy Spirit. Mary drew down the Holy Spirit, so too she draws down the Holy Spirit on the church at that Pentecost.

And now she does so again for us because she is spouse of the Holy Spirit, and so we find here another big mystery. Mary is always with us.

Now let's look more closely at the apparitions to Sister Lucia at Pontevedra, 1925 and 1926. Here's where she begins to reveal more of the 2<sup>nd</sup> secret and that more is being asked of us by means of reparation. On Dec. 10, 1925, the Most Holy Virgin appeared with the Child Jesus. She explains the First Saturdays. The Great promise: "Look my daughter..."

That was an invitation to the sacramental life of the church and an invitation to the interior life of prayer. That's exactly what Jesus is inviting all of us to in the mysteries of the Gospel, to share in the Divine Life, the sacramental life of the Church and the life of prayer, when he says, go to your room, close the door and pray to your Father in secret. This is the very same thing coming to us from Our Lady.

Despite the reservations from confessors, Lucia was soon urged to make this request known and there is the story of early February 26, 1926.

Met a little boy, a child, and she asked him if he knew the Hail Mary and he said "Yes," and she asked him to recite it with her. She's inviting this child to pray and she's teaching him. At the end of the three Hail Mary's and he remained silent. I asked him if he knew St. Mary's church and he said, "yes," and she said to go there and pray , "Oh my Heavenly Mother, give me the child Jesus."

A little later she sees the child again and she asked him, have you asked the Heavenly Mother for the Child Jesus, and the child turned to him and

said, "Have you revealed to the world what the Heavenly mother asked of you."

So we find her great mysteries. It was the Christ Child himself. The superior told Lucia she didn't think she could do it, but the child said, with grace all things are possible. Our Lady asking us to do these things. That's what she asked of Lucia; she's also going to ask it of us.

Sister Lucia gave a series of questions about the apparition at Pontevedra and one of the questions was, "Why 5 Saturdays and not nine or seven in honor of Our Lady of Sorrows."

She prayed to Our Lord who enlightened her and after a few days she was in the chapel on this night of May 29-30, 1930, and speaking to our Lord, she writes, "I suddenly found myself more intimately possessed of the Divine presence. If I'm not mistaken, here's what he revealed to me: "My daughter, the reason is simple, there are 5 kinds of offenses and blasphemies uttered against the Immaculate Heart of Mary:

1. Blasphemies against the Immaculate Conception
2. Blasphemies against her perpetual virginity
3. Blasphemies against her divine maternity while refusing to recognize her as mother of all men
4. Blasphemies against those who publicly seek to place in the hearts of children, indifference and scorn, and even hatred towards this Immaculate Mother
5. Offenses of those who outrage her directly in her holy images.

There my daughter is the reason why the IHM asked me to request this small act of reparation and inconsideration of it to move my mercy to forgive souls who have had the misfortune to offend her.

As for you, seek unceasingly by your prayers and sacrifices to move my mercy with regard to these poor souls.

How mysterious. How powerful. We find here in 1929, Our Lady appeared at Tuy and confirmed the necessity of this devotion that she requested at Pontevedra with these words,

“Souls are so numerous whom the justice of God condemns for sins committed against me that I have come to ask for reparation. Sacrifice yourselves for this intention and pray.”

Just yesterday I received an email of a group of people doing a play where they are depicting the Blessed Virgin Mary as a lesbian. These are blasphemies. These are insults, and you and I pray for those people who perpetrate these things, that they might not be condemned, not suffer the just punishment of God for what they've done, insulting the honor of the blessed virgin mary. It's going on all around. So Our Lady is the one who intercedes for them.

Again this touches on what we call the economy of Grace. I mentioned before Colossians, 1:24 that you and I are participants in this great mystery, that our sacrifices and prayers matter because we are active participants in the economy of grace.

By performing this devotion, we participate in the mystery of the Communion of Saints. It makes the salvation of souls really depend on our own generosity because of the BVM constituted by her son as mediatrix of all graces cannot act alone. She needs us to lovingly make small devotions of reparation in order to save souls from hell. We give her the treasures of grace and she works miracles with it. We supply our participation and with the merits that we gather up and giving them to Our Lady, she brings about the conversion of sinners. This is called the economy of salvation, the economy of grace.

We are active participants; It's not me and Jesus alone. It's not whatever me and Jesus do is fine and everyone else is on their own. We are our brother's keeper, and that goes back to Genesis, Cain and Able. Our prayers and sacrifices are important for the conversion of sinners. When we gather them up and give them to Our Lady, she wins the conversion of souls with them. That's part of this mystical body; that's why the angel is standing there at the foot of the cross gathering up the blood of the martyrs.

You've heard the church talk about more martyrs in the last century than at any time in the history of the church. And this century may perhaps be greater than the last. More martyrs. Perhaps it will be the blood of the unborn, perhaps all those who though euthanasia are put down. It's happening now. And we find that these are witnesses and their sacrifice is

part of that being gathered up by the angels and winning graces for the rest.

Those offenses against the IHM and how should we understand these blasphemies?

The first sin, blasphemies against Immaculate Conception. The Immaculate Conception reveals the plan and the model for salvation and the gift of holiness. Mary was conceived without original sin to be the new Eve. If the first Eve had failed by her disobedience and brought all of mankind into sin and death, because sin causes death, so the new Eve will be the one who brings life, She brings Jesus Christ Who brings life into the world. And she's not only the mother of Jesus Christ, but the mother of all those born again in Jesus Christ. The denial of her Immaculate Conception is the denial of her role as the new Eve, the mother of the Incarnate Word of God and her role as co-redemptrix and therefore as model of the Church.

For many people this is an uncomfortable teaching, but the Church is co-redemptrix, the entire church shares in the work of redemption. The entire church because we have put on the Lord Jesus Christ, we are sharing in the work of redemption and the one who's the model of the Church is Mary. Therefore she is coredemptrix. It's the mystery of the economy of grace that God Himself has arranged.

2<sup>nd</sup> blasphemy is against her perpetual virginity. By the power of the Holy Spirit, she cooperates in bringing about the incarnation. It's the next attack upon her.

The virginity is significant. This celibacy for the sake of the kingdom is spiritually fruitful. Many do not understand this and in fact, they deny this. It's very powerful, not only in her life but in the lives of the priests and religious, a very powerful gift to the church, which also is being denied.

The third: Against Our Lady's divine maternity; her spiritual mother of all mankind. St. Maximillian Kolbe speaks about this, and he says so while their union, that is the union of Mary and the HS, is not of the same order as the hypostatic union, linking the human and the divine natures of Christ, it remains true that Mary's action is the very action of the Holy Ghost, for Mary is the spouse of the Holy Ghost. She is raised to such a height of perfection, above all creatures, that she accomplishes in everything the will

of the Holy Ghost who dwells in her since the first instant of her conception.”

Thus the Holy Ghost, the sanctifier, through his holy spouse, could conceive, give birth to, nurture, prepare and offer up as a sacrifice, both the Divine Child as head and the elect as the mystical body of Christ.”

Think about that, that Mary and the Holy Spirit offered up the Christ Child, Jesus Christ, the Godman, and the mystical Christ, This is a great gift. This one sacrifice of Calvary being renewed and re-enacted daily on the altars of the world, merits the redemptive grace which the Holy Spirit can then apply in and through the agency of His spouse. It is truly the work of the sanctifier accomplished in and through the Immaculate Heart of Mary. It is her sacred office for which the Holy Ghost stands as sponsor.

4<sup>th</sup> blasphemy: Those who seek to open and to foster in the hearts of children, indifference or contempt and even hatred to the Immaculate Mother. There you find that play, talking about Mary as a lesbian. There was another play only a week ago that was on the news of a group of student actors depicting Mary as having an abortion. These are blasphemies.

This sin is essential denial of Mary’s sacred office continuing in the future, of raising up young children, raising up the next generation. One of the things that undermines this is modern sex education which robs the children of their innocence, closing their hearts to God even from the earliest days.

5<sup>th</sup> sin – Offenses of those who outrage her holy images. One scholar who writes about this, it’s not just the desecration of her pictures and statues of our Lady, but of priests and religious who have now become targets. They are holy images who share in her mission. All of these are now being desecrated today.

So the five first Saturdays is about reparation, but it leads us into the Sacramental life of the Church where God pours out Divine power and it leads us into the interior life where God pours out His personal love for us.

Starts with the sacramental life – confession. That’s where we renew the innocence once given us in Baptism. And here we renounce Satan, reject sin and its ability to separate us from God, and demonstrate a desire to be

with Christ. We reassert Mary's own perpetual virginity, her response and all of these gifts are restored. Our attitudes are reshaped by the Sacrament of Penance. Remember this is a time for us to confess all of our mortal sins and God wipes it away.

Next is Holy Communion. Reception of HC establishes us as members of the Mystical Body of Christ, intimately united with the Divine Head and entirely disposed to be Mary's own children. Makes us having that precious blood flow within us.

The Rosary which we are invited to say, we have recourse to Our Lady in prayer and it follows the office that she continually fills at the side of her Divine Son as Mediatrix of all graces. When we pray that rosary we find ourselves filled and protected with Mary. Initially people will say 'Oh it's so repetitious,' and Fr. Benedict Groeschell said the prayer form is actually called a 'mantra.' We're using the words of God but you go beneath the words and enter into the meaning of the words and as the beads slip through our fingers we enter into the mystery of the incarnation, the mystery of the birth of the Godman, the mystery of the Eucharist. All of these things we enter into far deeper than we could have if we only sat there with our own pious meditations. So this rosary is a powerful thing.

And the 15 minute mediation allows us to enter deeply within the mystery. The Rosary is something to be prayed daily. Sometimes you'll find it's wonderfully refreshing; sometimes it's challenging. Do it anyway. There's power there. At the end of the Rosary there is often peace. Our Lady does this. She brings peace. She'll do this in times of great temptation. The Rosary itself becomes the means to enter in, to go down deep into our hearts. To close our eyes and to be at peace.

You've got to enter deep within yourself and there you will find peace. You'll lead in various ways into the meditations.

In all of this, Fatima is a school of prayer. Watch out for those centering prayers that tell everybody to just empty yourself – that's Buddhist. Christian prayer and meditation fills us with God, fills us with the Heavenly mysteries. When we find ourselves enter deeper into the mysteries, it's there that God is able to bring peace, instruction and light to our soul. We enter within because the Kingdom of heaven is within.

So we're going to pray our Rosary, we're going to make this 15 minutes of meditation we are opening ourselves up to great things, that's what God wants to give us. So Fatima becomes this friendship with Our Lady; we're saved in and through God's family. It's her divine maternity over us, it's the school of the sacraments, it's the school of prayer. It's the interior life, it's the very place where you and I enter deep within.

But it's also leads us out of ourselves to an apostolic life. It's not just about the interior life. We are sent out to speak the Word, sent out to call people back from a world of darkness. Perhaps they won't like it, but they need to hear the words anyway. In season or out of season, welcome or unwelcome, St. Paul tells us. There are moments in the apostolic life when we are summoned to do something more, summoned to greatness, to be apostles, to be ambassadors to Christ.

Fatima is this wonderful place where you and are drawn into the heart of Our Lady and there we are made her true children filled with her own life. We find ourselves there entering the sacramental life, the interior life and the apostolic life, all for the good of the Church.