

FATIMA AND DIVINE MERCY

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Fatima is a message of reparation. The sins of the world have terrible consequences over the health and welfare of the mystic Body of Christ, that is, the Church, which suffers and bleeds from so many parts. The majesty of God, his honour and praise, are diminished by the present epidemic of crimes, violence and lack of love. It is necessary for us to return to God what is of his property, to return to God the honour and praise he deserves. This is the primacy of God: God is first!

A NEED FOR REPARATION

Devotion of Divine Mercy is also based on reparation. Only through reparation can Creation be returned to his Creator. Both devotions are linked in several ways. We can also think of the Apparition of the 13th of October, 1917 at the Cova da Iria, Fatima, Portugal. While the miracle of the sun was occurring, Lucia said in her Memoirs, the three little shepherds of Fatima received a revelation that summaries the main Catholic devotions in the Church that can save many souls: Our Lady of the Rosary of Fatima; Saint Joseph with the Child Jesus; "Our Lady dressed in white with a blue veil" (The Immaculate Conception-Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal?); the Sacred Family; Our Lady of Sorrows and "Our Lord Jesus blessing the world" (Divine Mercy?) followed finally by Our Lady of Mount Carmel. This image of Jesus Christ resurrected blessing the world has always intrigued me. Christ Risen is blessing the world...This Risen Christ blesses the world...The image of Jesus Christ resurrected with rays coming from him representing the graces bestowed upon earth: I like to see that this description of Jesus Christ refers "ante literam" to the Good Lord of Divine Mercy, who appeared to Sister Mary Faustina Kowalska on February 22, 1931.

GRACE AND MERCY

Precisely, at the Apparition of Tuy (June, 1929), the Holy Trinity appears to Lucia. Under the left arm of the Crucified Christ, big letters appeared like if they were of crystalline water, forming the words:" GRACE AND MERCY" This is really the slogan of Fatima: "Grace and Mercy".

The short prayer that we use to say after every decade of the Holy Rosary in the Hispanic tradition remembers us that Our Lady of the Rosary is the Mother of Mercy: "Mary is Mother of Grace, Mother of Mercy; during our life and at the hour of death, protect us, Great Lady. Amen" The slogan of Fatima is repeated after every decade of the Rosary!

IN GOD WE TRUST

"Jesus, I trust in you!" This is the slogan of Divine mercy! All is based in trust! Precisely, through the entrustment of one's life to God through the Immaculate Heart of Mary, the Fatima message is renewing our world. Pope John Paul II entrusted the world to God through the Immaculate Heart of Mary at the collegial consecration of March 25,

1984, following the petitions of Our Lady of Fatima at Tuy. In union with all the Catholic bishops of the world, to which the Russian Orthodox bishops united too in an unprecedented act of reparation, the world was consecrated with a special mention of Russia and all those nations in most need of thy MERCY! The wonderful consequences of this act of TRUST were seen: the collapse of the Soviet Union as an atheistic state; the opening of the countries of Eastern Europe to the practice of religion, beginning with Poland, the Pope's motherland, and the structural changes in Russia which have made possible the teaching of religion after school hours, the building of churches and shrines funded by the government, the return to the Church of some of its properties, the usage of crucifixes and icons of Our Lady in public schools and above all, the hunger for God experienced by many young people who are knowing for the first time the Gospel of Jesus Christ! God's mercy has prevented a nuclear Third World War and the Triumph of the Immaculate Heart of Mary has begun! The promised era of peace has been stained by the conflicts created by human free will, capable of defying God's designs. But, nevertheless, the prevention of the terrible consequences of the Cold War and those of a nuclear exchange are far more important than the local conflicts we are suffering now, that could have been prevented if the advice of John Paul II, the Great, would have been followed: "Beware of the terrible and unimaginable consequences of the war in Iraq".

A MERCIFUL LIFE STYLE

This Mother of Mercy is the same one presented by the Good Lord, Jesus Christ to Saint Faustina Kowalska. She teaches us to live a life style of merciful attitude toward our brothers and sisters, to forgive and be forgiven. She teaches us the value of meditative prayer, contemplation of the mystery of God, of Divine mercy. Through her we can know better Jesus Christ, her beloved Son. Through her Immaculate Heart the three little shepherds of Fatima discovered the infinite ocean of LOVE and MERCY that God is. Through the Light coming from her Immaculate Heart they were introduced into the mystery of God, they could see the Holy Trinity in a special revelation that was not permitted to be shared with anyone else. Through this light coming from her Heart they discovered the infinite MERCY of God with poor sinners and the terrible threat they are facing, the existence of hell, created for those who proudly do not accept God's MERCY! In this Light they could see themselves like in the best of mirrors, they could see their own conscience, their inner life, and they knew that this Light coming from the Immaculate Heart of Mary is God himself!

THREE: GOD'S NUMBER

Fatima is famous for its "triads", that is, groups of three related things: Three shepherds; three days in prison; the revelation of the Holy Trinity; three Apparitions of the Angel; three petitions of Our Lady: MEDITATIVE PRAYER, PENANCE, EUCHARISTIC REPARATION; three parts of the secret of Fatima; three times that the Angels call for PENANCE at the allegory of the third part of the secret... Now, the hour of mercy is at 3:00 PM, when our Lord Jesus Christ died at the Cross. At this hour of the day, the MERCY of God is stronger and more efficacious, thanks to MEDITATIVE PRAYER, the chaplet of Divine Mercy!

SPIRITUAL PERFECTION

Fatima and Divine Mercy are focused on making people closer to God, closer to holiness, closer to spiritual perfection.

As the Gospel says: "Be perfect as our Heavenly Father is perfect." The call to perfection, to an intimate life with Christ is the soul of both devotions that essentially are complementary to each other. But, most important of all, is the conversion of poor sinners. The Good Lord in the Cross is thirsty of sinners who convert and do penance. Our Lady of Fatima said that God wants to establish in the world the devotion to her Immaculate Heart for the conversion of sinners.

During my recent visit to Cameroon, Africa, H.E. Immanuel Bushu, Bishop of Buea, gave to me several photos of the new Shrine he has devoted to Our Lady of Fatima and Divine Mercy. First, he placed a beautiful statue of Our Lady of the Rosary of Fatima and behind it a splendid statue of Jesus Christ, Divine Mercy. The reason of such arrangement was explained by Bishop Immanuel: People are attracted to Our Lady, our Spiritual Mother, and with her assistance, they come to Jesus Christ where they can dwell in the mystery of God! I think that the good bishop's advice is very wise and profound.

DIVINE WILL

Just when I was ready to speak to Bishop Immanuel about my recent reflections on Fatima and Divine Mercy and the importance of promoting both devotions, understanding their significance and integral union, Bishop Immanuel spoke about the blessing of their diocesan shrine at Buea. On the TV at the Bishop's House, Eternal World Television (Mother Angelica's network) was showing the chaplet of Divine Mercy. It was 3:00 o'clock. The hour of MERCY!

It is the will of God that many sinners will be converted. The extraordinary calls at Fatima and Divine Mercy are ways by which God communicates his will where there is still time to convert. The time given will end and then it will be too late. But, while there is still time to convert, Divine Grace and Divine Mercy are awaiting our response.

THE ROLE OF JOHN PAUL II

A major resemblance between Fatima and Divine Mercy is that of their protagonist: Pope John Paul II, who was called in a special way to both devotions. Our Lady of Fatima spared his life after the assassination attempt by intervening in a miraculous way to deviate the bullet that could have killed him. It was God's will that he could give many more years of service to the Church and the world from the throne of Peter, becoming one of the greatest Popes of all times. Who can forget the three official visits of John Paul II to Fatima, his beatification of Jacinta and Francisco Marto, his collegial consecration of the world from St. Peter's, in compliance with the desires of the Lady from Heaven? Who can forget the special care taken to broadcast every First Saturday of the Month the meditation of the Rosary through the Vatican's Radio network? Who can forget the encounters with Sister Lucia and the correspondence with her? How to forget the conversations with the delegate from John Paul II, Cardinal Bertone with Sister Lucia on the clarifications of the third part of the secret of Fatima disclosed by John Paul II at the ceremony of beatification of Jacinta and Francisco Marto?

John Paul II was called by Divine Mercy from his native Poland to approve its message and to canonize Sister Mary Faustina Kowalska, promoting the devotion throughout the world. "Do not have fear!" still resounds in our hearts. The entrustment and confidence in Jesus Christ and his Divine Mercy! His encyclical letter: "Dives in misericordia" ("Rich in mercy") will make him known by historians as "the Pope of Mercy". It is through the practice of merciful acts that we become "ALTER CHRISTUS", other Christ, as St. Paul teaches.

John Paul II, who practiced throughout his life the Carmelite spirituality (which is the spirituality of Fatima), invested in the Brown Scapular of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, lived an extraordinary life of total entrustment to God, through Mary: "TOTUS TUUS." No wonder why he departed to eternal life on a First Saturday of the Month (the Sabbatine Privilege), precisely on the eve of the Day of Divine Mercy, the First Sunday of Easter, Sunday of Divine Mercy! On the 2nd of April, 2005 at 21.37 hours, the preferred son of the Immaculate Heart of Mary passed away to enter into the light of Christ Resurrected, the Christ of Divine Mercy! Perfect synthesis of Fatima and Divine Mercy! He did more than anyone else to promote both devotions by living in perfect consonance to the calls from heaven! May I request from all members of the World Apostolate of Fatima to do the same, to promote both devotions as our response to our times. GRACE AND MERCY!