

October 11, 2020

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

We are approaching the 103rd anniversary of the last apparition of the Virgin Mary at Fatima on October 13, 1917. The Blessed Mother promised to leave a sign that she had truly visited three shepherd children with a message for all people. Thousands of people were present for the supernatural sign that occurred on that day. Here is a poetic account of the "miracle of the Sun" which appeared in a newspaper article in a secular political publication of that time:

"By ten o'clock, the sky becomes completely cloudy and without delay it begins to rain, and rain hard. Sheets of rain batted around by a rough wind punish faces, soaking the road and drenching to the bone travelers deprived of head coverings or any other protection. But nobody becomes impatient or stops, and if someone takes shelter under a canopy of trees next to the walls of the farm buildings or the distant houses that bend over the road, others continue the march with an impressive persistence, like some ladies whose clothes are pasted to their bodies from the effect of the force and pertinacity of the rain, resembling people who had come straight out of a bath!

The shrubland around Fatima, where it is said that the Virgin appears to shepherd children of the hamlet of Aljustrel, is dominated to a great extent by the road that runs to Leiria, and along it are affixed the vehicles that drove pilgrims and spectators there. More than one hundred automobiles, someone said, and more than one hundred bicycles, and it would be impossible to count the diverse cars that block the road, one of them the public transport bus from Torres Novas, inside of which mingle people of all social conditions.

In addition to the body of pilgrims, thousands of people from many miles around, faithful who have come from various [Portuguese] provinces, natives of Alentejo and Algarve, of the Minho and Beira regions, congregate in the vicinity of the small holly oak tree which, according to the little shepherds, the supernatural vision chose as her pedestal and which could be considered the center of an ample circle inside of which other spectators and faithful accommodate themselves. Seen from the road, the sight is simply fantastic. The prudent country-dwellers, enclosed within their head coverings as within tents, observe many of them, the thinning out of economical bags of rations along with the spiritual conduct of sacred hymns and decades of the rosary.

There is no one who fears burying his or her feet in the drenched soil, in order to see up close the holly oak above which they raise a coarse portico with two wobbly lanterns... The groups alternate singing praises to the Virgin, and a terrified hare, leaping out of the tall brush and away, scarcely diverts the attention of a half dozen children who catch it and leave it prostrate with blows from sticks...

And the little shepherds? Lucia, ten years old, a visionary, and her little companions, Francisco, nine, and Jacinta, seven, still have not arrived. Their presence is signaled maybe a half-hour before the time that was indicated as coming from the apparition. The girls, crowned with flowers, head to the site in which the portico is erected. The rain falls incessantly but nobody loses patience. Cars arriving late reach the main road. Groups of monks kneel in the mud and Lucia asks, or orders, that hats be brought to them. The order is passed along and obeyed promptly and without reluctance. There are people, many people, as if in ecstasy; people deeply moved, on whose dry lips prayer is paralyzed; astonished people, with immobile hands and watery eyes; people who seem to feel, to touch the supernatural...

The child affirms that the Lady spoke to them more than once, and the sky, still menacing, begins, suddenly, to clear up overhead; the rain stops and it is affirmed that the sun is going to inundate the countryside, the sun that the cold morning sadly took away...

The hour advances and oversees this multitude, which dispassionate calculations of educated persons immune to mystical influences compute to be thirty or forty thousand people... The miraculous manifestation, the announced visible sign is about to produce itself – many pilgrims assert... And then a spectacle makes itself present, unique and unbelievable to anyone not a witness to it. From the summit of the road, where cars congregate and many hundreds of people remain whose valor became scarce in

venturing upon muddy earth, the entire immense multitude is seen turning towards the sun, which presents itself free from the clouds, in its zenith. The star resembles a plate of opaque silver and it is possible to stare at the disc without the most minimal effort. It doesn't burn; it doesn't blind. It may be said to be an eclipse in progress. But a colossal uproar suddenly arises, and the spectators that are closest are heard to yell: ~ Miracle, miracle! A marvel! A marvel!

To the amazed eyes of those people, whose attitude transports us to biblical times and who, pale with astonishment and with heads uncovered, face the blue sky, the sun trembled, the sun had never-before-seen brusque movements beyond all cosmic laws – the sun “danced”, according to the typical expression of the peasants. Perched on the step of the public bus from Torres Novas, an elderly man whose stature and physiognomy, at the same time sweet and strong-willed, reminiscent of Paul Déroulède, facing the sun, recites the Creed in a clamorous voice from beginning to end. I ask who he is and they tell me he is Mr. João Maria Amado de Melo Ramalho da Cunha Vasconcelos. Later, I see him address those around him who keep their hats on, vehemently begging them to remove them in the face of such an extraordinary demonstration of the existence of God. Identical scenes play out elsewhere and a lady cries out, deep in affliction, indeed almost in a fit of suffocation: - What a shame! There are still men who don't take off their caps before such an incredible miracle!

And, later on, some ask others if they saw it, or what they saw. The majority confesses to have seen a trembling or dancing of the sun, but others declare to have seen the smiling face of the Virgin herself, and swear that the sun spun around like a wheel of fireworks, that it descended almost to the point of burning the earth with its rays... There are those who say that they saw it successively change color... It's close to three o'clock in the afternoon. The sky is swept of clouds and the sun continues its course with the habitual splendor that nobody dares to face directly. And the little shepherds? Lucia, the one who speaks with the Virgin, announces in dramatic fashion and with manly bearing while being transported from group to group that the war will end and that our soldiers were going to return... Even such news does not increase the jubilation of those who listen. The celestial sign was everything. There is an intense curiosity to see the two girls with their garlands of roses, and there are those who try to kiss the hands of the “little saints”, one of whom, Jacinta, is more inclined to faint than to dance, but the reason everybody was yearning to touch her — the sign from heaven — was sufficient to satisfy them, to root them in their simple and naive faith. Walking vendors offer portraits of the children on postcards and other cards that display a soldier of the Portuguese Expeditionary Corps “thinking about the help of his protectress for the salvation of the Fatherland” and even an image of the Virgin as being the figure of the vision... " From A translation of Avelino de Almeida's firsthand account of the Miracle of the Sun, published on October 15th, 1917, in O Século's daily edition by John Nahrgang

As we have reflected upon in recent bulletin articles, many believe that the time of the fulfillment of the messages of Fatima and many other prophecies is upon us. Whether or not, there is an extreme urgency to live the requests of the Virgin Mary at Fatima so that humanity may be saved from greater calamities and for a life lived in the love of God. We are reminded of the basic messages of Mary at Fatima and her call to conversion of heart:

"The message of Fatima, which is essentially that of the Gospel, can be summarized into 4 points:

1. PERMANENT CONVERSION, knowing that “The greatest obstacle to man's journey towards God is sin, perseverance in sin, and, finally, denial of God (St. John Paul II, Homily in Fatima, May 13, 1982).”
2. LIFE OF PRAYER, including that of the HOLY ROSARY;
3. REPARATION not only FOR OUR SINS BUT FOR THOSE OF OTHERS AS WELL through SACRIFICES, thereby living the communion of saints.
4. Through the CONSECRATION TO THE IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY, “She not only calls us to be converted: SHE CALLS US TO ACCEPT HER MOTHERLY HELP TO RETURN TO THE SOURCE OF REDEMPTION (ibidem),” her Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ.

Dear friends, let us THANK Our Lady for her maternal love and solicitude for our well-being and let us TAKE HEED of our Heavenly Mother's message, asking her help with filial love and devotion to put into practice what She asked from us.

TOP 12 QUOTES OF OUR LADY OF FATIMA'S MESSAGE TO THE WORLD

1. PUNISHMENT OF THE WORLD: Our Blessed Mother can no longer restrain the hand of her Divine Son from striking the world with a just punishment for its many crimes.
2. AMENDMENT OF LIFE: " I have come to warn the faithful to amend their lives and ask pardon for their sins. They must not continue to offend Our Lord, Who is already too much offended."
3. FIVE WARNINGS: " If my requests are not granted, Russia will spread her errors throughout the world, provoking wars and persecutions against the Church. Many good people will be martyred, there will come another great war, and various nations will be destroyed. "
4. WAR: " Wars are a punishment for the sins of mankind."
5. SINS OF THE FLESH: "More souls go to Hell because of the sins of the flesh than for any other reason."
6. MODEST FASHIONS: " Certain fashions are being introduced that offend Our Lord very much."
7. SINFUL MARRIAGES: " Many marriages are not good; they do not please Our Lord and are not of God."
8. DAILY ROSARY: " Say the Rosary every day to obtain peace for the world. And after each decade say the following prayer: 'O my Jesus, forgive us our sins, save us from the fires of Hell, and lead all souls to Heaven, especially those who have most need of Thy mercy.'"
9. PRAYER AND SACRIFICE: " Pray, pray a great deal, and make sacrifices for sinners, for many souls go to Hell because they have no one to make sacrifices and pray for them."
10. DEVOTION TO THE IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY: "God wishes to establish in the world devotion to my Immaculate Heart. If people do what I tell you, many souls will be saved and there will be peace."
11. FIRST SATURDAY DEVOTION: "I promise to help at the hour of death with the graces needed for salvation those who, on the first Saturday of five consecutive months, go to confession, receive Holy Communion, say five decades of the Rosary and keep me company for fifteen minutes while meditating on the mysteries, with the intention of making reparation to my Immaculate Heart."
12. WORLD PEACE: " Tell everybody that God gives His graces through the Immaculate Heart of Mary. Tell them to ask graces from her, and that the Heart of Jesus wishes to be venerated together with the Immaculate Heart of Mary, for the Lord has confided the peace of the world to her... In the end my Immaculate Heart will triumph, Russia will be converted and there will be peace."

Taken from <https://www.catholicsstrivingforholiness.org/may-13-our-lady-of-fatima-summary-and-top-12-quotes-of-our-lady-of-fatimas-apparitions/>

Fr. Derda and Fr. Steve will be headed to the State Capitol grounds in Lansing on Tuesday, October 13 where a final Rosary Rally will take place this year to pray for all the people of our state and country during these most intense times. Please consider joining us if your schedule permits, or pray at home. Public and private prayer for the world is absolutely essential right now.

May Our Lady of Fatima protect us all and keep us close to Jesus during these days of the fulfillment of both the Mercy and Justice of her Son!

In Mary, the Queen of Peace, Fr. Derda, Fr. Steve, Deacon Russ and Deacon Ed