

“Go into the whole world and proclaim the gospel to every creature. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved; whoever does not believe will be condemned” (Mk 16:15-16). “An anti-Christian outlook seeks to minimize the Cross, to empty it of its meaning, and to deny that in it man has the source of his new life. It claims that the Cross is unable to provide either vision or hope. Man, it says, is nothing but an earthly being, who must live as if God did not exist” (Ut Unum Sint 1).

In 1917 the Virgin Mary came to three shepherd children in Fatima: Lucia, Francisco, and Jacinta. “For one terrible moment, the children were given a vision of hell. They saw the fall of ‘the souls of poor sinners.’ And now they are told why they have been exposed to this moment: “in order to save souls”—to show the way to salvation.”ⁱ The Blessed Mother carried a rosary in her hand and told them to “Say the Rosary every day, to bring peace to the world and an end to the war.” The children heeded the message of the Blessed Mother and they told others. In essence they fulfilled the command of Jesus to “Go into the whole world and proclaim the gospel to every creature.” In time, Lucia became a Carmelite Nun and devoted her life to prayer ... always encouraging others to pray the Rosary for peace.

As they prayed for peace World War I came to an end, but evil reared its head elsewhere and Communism took hold in Russia. The Blessed Mother called the world to pray for the conversion of Russia but her message was not universally heeded. Instead of peace, the world suffered through a second World War and the Cold War. And Communist leaders, denying the existence of God, spread their evil throughout the world, causing great harm to the Russian people as well as wars and persecutions of the Church throughout the world.

Where evil abounds, grace abounds all the more. Carol Wojtyla had a great devotion to the Blessed Mother. And he was a believer in Christ. Mark’s Gospel tells us of the signs that accompany those who believe. “In my name they will drive out demons.” After becoming Pope, he traveled to Poland and called people to holiness. He asked them to stand up for their God given rights. The millions who heard the Word of God proclaimed for their particular circumstances rose up and demanded the human rights given by God ... and we saw the demon driven out. Communism fell in Poland and throughout the Eastern bloc including Russia. In 1917, the Blessed Mother had asked for the consecration of Russia to her Immaculate Heart ... Pope John Paul II consecrated not only Russia but the entire world.

Mark’s Gospel tells us of the signs that accompany those who believe including speaking new languages. Before becoming Pope, Carol Wojtyla was already fluent in many languages. He continued to study languages even as Pope. He once spent 6 months learning the basics of the Romanian language so that he could talk to the Romanian people in their native tongue for a 6 day papal visit.

Mark’s Gospel tells us of the signs that accompany those who believe to include picking up serpents with their hands, and if they drink any deadly thing, it will not harm them. The Soviet Union, the evil empire, the serpent saw what John Paul was doing and they sent a Bulgarian agent into Saint Peter Square on May 13, 1981. Pope John Paul II believed that he was protected by Our Lady of Fatima on that fateful day when a trained assassin fired a bullet at him from only a few feet away. The Pope survived the attempt on his life, offered forgiveness to his assassin and later on placed the bullet removed from his body into Our Lady of Fatima’s crown.ⁱⁱ

Mark’s Gospel tells us of the signs that accompany those who believe include laying hands on the sick so they will recover. With the Gospel of Life, Pope John Paul II addressed the societal illness of the culture of death:

“Humanity is called to a fullness of life which far exceeds the dimensions of his earthly existence, because it consists in sharing the very life of God. The loftiness of this supernatural vocation reveals the greatness and the inestimable value of human life even in its temporal phase. Life in time, in fact, is the fundamental condition, the initial stage and an integral part of the entire unified process of human existence. It is a process which, unexpectedly and undeservedly, is enlightened by the promise and renewed by the gift of divine life, which will reach its full realization in eternity (cf. 1 Jn 3:1-2). At the same time, it is precisely this supernatural calling which highlights the relative character of each individual's earthly life. After all, life on earth is not an "ultimate" but a "penultimate" reality; even so, it remains a sacred reality entrusted to us, to be preserved with a sense of responsibility and brought to perfection in love and in the gift of ourselves to God and to our brothers and sisters” (Evangelium Vitae #2).

Jesus’s command to those first disciples is a command to every generation and every believer. Lucia, Francisco, and Jacinta, the three children from Fatima, heard the call and shared the Good News. You too are called: “Go into the whole world and proclaim the gospel to every creature.”

ⁱ Cardinal Ratzinger, CDF catholicnewsagency.com/resource/56398/the-third-part-of-the-secret

ⁱⁱ Ibid /38893/the-modern-miracle-of-fatima