

A MARIAN APOSTOLATE FOR OUR TIMES

Our times are characterized by a spirit of confusion, dissatisfaction, insecurity and indifference. The multiplying effect of humanity's sins, the contempt for the issues concerning God and the order established by the Creator, and the violence present in human relations, have a devastating effect over the collective spirit of our societies which become sick, weakened, old and agonising. Many people are conscious of this conduction but feel there is nothing they can do to remedy it.

The Most Holy Virgin of Fatima, echoing the Gospel of her Beloved Son, Jesus Christ, prophesied this state of affairs if humanity was not going to change its way of life and if it did not convert and do penance for the horrendous sins committed by so many unfortunate people.

The prophesy has been fulfilled. Human beings who live separated from God generate and cause grave harm to the quality of life of all by sowing dissension, enmity, hate, resentment, envy, violence and, in all, lack of love. Human happiness vanishes, peace fades away, tranquillity in the order of things disappears.

What to do when confronted by such a state of affairs? We must put into practice the spiritual measures prescribed by Our Lady of Fatima. These measures can and must change the course of history as we human beings put them into practice in our personal lives and in our relations with others. The World Apostolate of Fatima is a public association of the faithful who have undertaken the mission to spread and make live the message of Our Lady of Fatima as a very powerful tool in the New Evangelization proposed by the Holy Father, John Paul II, as a task to be performed by the Universal Church.

At the commencement of this third millennium of Christendom we must face the crisis of our times with the spiritual weapons prescribed by the Most Holy Virgin of Fatima: **PRAYER, PENANCE, CONVERSION, CONSECRATION TO HER IMMACULATE HEART, ADORATION AND EUCHARIST REPARATION**. These spiritual means represent the best of our **CATHOLIC FAITH** and it is these, and only these, that can change the course of history.

These means can transform the world to open it to the paths of grace, forgiveness, peace, justice... These spiritual means open the possibility of building the Kingdom of God on Earth among all men and women of goodwill. If we feel troubled and hurt because of the world's current religious, moral and spiritual situation, why not rid ourselves of this paralyzing stagnation and awake to a positive and promising beginning? With Mary to Jesus, and with Jesus, all is possible. Even with the most difficult and improbable transformation, this becomes easy and certain, given the power of Jesus, the Lord of History.

THE MIRACLE OF THE CENTURY

The big qualitative changes that have occurred in Eastern Europe and Russia represent a wonderful miracle of grace – a divine intervention in favour of the human beings as were heading towards a Third World War. It is therefore important to rethink things over while there is still time and to find the road towards peace and justice. The

Most Holy Virgin announced the conversion of Russia in Fatima in 1917 and that the world would be granted a period of peace. It still appears that many people do not capture the wonderful sense of this promise and its profound meaning.

What has happened in Russia from the time the Holy Father John Paul II made a collegiate consecration of Russia and the world on 25 March, 1984, as per the requests of the Virgin of Fatima, is an indication of greater graces being bestowed upon humanity waiting to be asked. This is because many of the graces that are available are not granted because no one requests them. Instead of criticizing the difficult and complex events occurring today, observers of the Russian and international arenas should use their eyes of faith to see the hand of the Lord of History in this process of transformation. The present crisis is just a unique opportunity to build a true civilization of love based on Christian principles for society (see the encyclical *Centesimus Annus* of HH John Paul II). Instead of becoming confused by our inability to understand the roads of God, and being dominated by the uneasiness felt by witnessing the laborious task of the conversion of the peoples of Russia, rather than pretending superstitiously that the effect of the collegiate consecration was going to be materialized immediately, by magic, like a fairy tale, we should concentrate all our energy and resources to evangelize our own society and our cultural environment. This should be done while assisting, fraternally, the efforts of the Universal Church, to help our brothers and sisters in the countries of Eastern Europe and the peoples of Russia to reconcile themselves with faith, to become acquainted with the Gospel of Christ and to return to their Christian roots.

THE EFFORT OF THE CENTURY

God, Our Lord, has done His part, with the assistance of Our Lady of Fatima. This has changed the direction of history and has opened a wonderful range of possibilities. It is now our turn, as disciples of Christ, to carry out our work, our commitment. The historical responsibility rests on our shoulders. It is our turn to carry out the effort of the century through the spiritual means offered by Our Lady in Fatima to transform the societies of the present world by means that facilitate the salvation of souls, so that they stop being what they are, true instruments of running souls. The task is big, but possible with the help of God, that can do all. Let us put into practice the PLAN FROM HEAVEN:

1. The meditative prayer of the daily Holy Rosary, preferably carried out with the family, at the most convenient time. This will dispel the confusion and the inaction we at present experience. It will bring PEACE to our surroundings and will open the channels of grace to receive large blessings from heavens, which will cause a true qualitative change to our lives and to our social environment.

2. The revitalizing penance will crush the evil in our soul; it will forgive our faults, thus improving the spiritual health of the Mystic Body of Christ, the Church, “which today suffers and bleeds for so many afflicted parts”. Therefore, let us contribute to the “economy of grace” whereby the situation of the People of God improves when one of His sons returns to the sheepfold, as is taught to us by the doctrine of “the communion of saints”.

3. The true conversion or return to God by the repentant heart does wonders, because “in heavens there is more joy for a sinner who repents than for ninety-nine righteous men who remain righteous”. The conversion of numerous sinners will bring the PEACE OF CHRIST to their environment, because God will be there and “where there is God, nothing is needed”.

4. The consecration to the Immaculate Heart of Mary will be the antidote against the threats of evil. By giving ourselves to Mary as her possession (“TOTUS TUUS”), she will defend us against all attack and danger that threatens our spiritual life, and despite not being exempt from falls and hard tests, we will always return to God in the knowledge that by her intercession, we will reflect and grow in the life of sanctity and presence of the Lord.

5. Eucharistic adoration and reparation will be the principal means through which our faith will attain the greatest victories, because “this is the sign that has been given to us”. In the context of the message in Fatima, the Eucharistic devotion of the Communion of Reparation of the Five First Saturdays is linked to obtaining the grace of unity among all Christians and the internal strength of the Universal Church. This means that through this practice or reparation, the Most Holy Virgin promises the real reduction of dissension and lack of unity within the Church, as well as the wonderful gift of unity with the separated brothers and sisters in the day set by the Divine Providence. This is the grace that makes us reflect on the conversion of the peoples of Russia, and to see with the eyes of faith, a grace and a mystery, the return of the Russian Orthodox Church to the full communion with the Catholic Church. Hence the recognition by the Russian Orthodox Church of the Holy Father, the Pope, the rock on which Christ founded his Church on earth. This will be the definite meaning of the culmination of the conversion of Russia as announced in Fatima. But, in order for this to take place, it is necessary first to spread the true message of Our Lady in a much greater manner as it is now, and to achieve through our apostolic effort the conversion of many sinners and that many souls put into practice the PLAN FROM HEAVEN announced in Fatima. Once numerous Christians return to the adoration and reparation of the Eucharist (“Hidden Jesus” as quoted from Francisco Marto), then will the great obstacles of this world crumble with the formidable strength of the power of God.

This is the reason why our Marian movement – the World Apostolate of Fatima – is today, more than ever, an apostolate of greater relevance, urgency and work in the life of the Church. Together with the diocesan bishops, and following the wonderful example of the Holy Father, John Paul II, the World Apostolate of Fatima is today, more than ever, the answer to the pleas of the Lady from Heaven.

©Prof. Américo López Ortiz, International President of the World Apostolate of Fatima