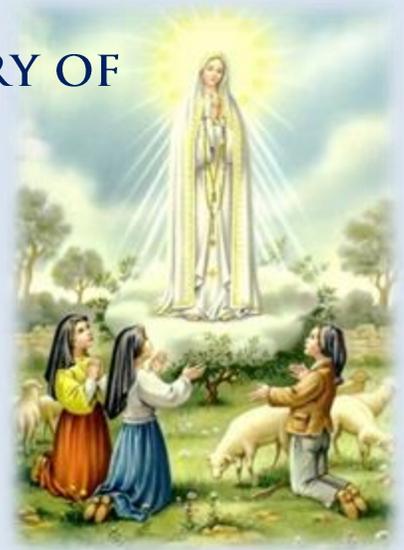


CELEBRATING THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF *Our Lady of Fatima*



June 13, 2017

Historical Context of the Message of Fatima

“I will put enmity between you and the woman. Between your offspring and hers; He will strike at your head, while you strike at his heel.” Gen. 3:15

“A great sign appeared in the sky, a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet and on her head a crown of twelve stars... then another sign appeared in the sky: it was a huge dragon, flaming red, with seven heads and ten horns ... The huge dragon, the ancient serpent known as the devil or Satan, the seducer of the whole world, was driven out; he was hurled down to earth and his minions with him.... His fury knows no limits, for he knows his time is short.” (Rev. 12: 1, 3, 9, 12)

The two quotes above, one from the first book of the Bible and one from the last book of the Bible, remind us that history is an ongoing battle between God and the devil for human souls. Genesis foretells that in the end evil will be crushed, or in the words of the Fatima apparitions “in the end my Immaculate Heart will triumph.” The book of Revelation tells us that the devil knows he is a loser; God and His Immaculate Mother will defeat his plans. Fatima and Russia’s conversion are an episode in this story of Salvation.

Why was Mary’s message about Russia so timely? In 1917 Russia would have been considered “Holy Russia;” its people deeply devoted to their Orthodox faith, starting with the Tsar himself. Those who heard from the children that Mary identified Russia as a source of atheism would have been surprised and puzzled. But diabolical designs had been unfolding in Russia that would burst onto the world stage with the Bolshevik takeover of its government less than a month after the last apparition of Fatima.

First, let us look at the remote preparations for Russia being able to spread its errors throughout the world. 2017 is the centenary of several events: the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Revolt, the 300th anniversary of Freemasonry (founded in England) and the 100th anniversary of Fatima. Let us start with the Renaissance, although the “leaven of wickedness” (2 Thes 2:7) has been around since the beginning.

With the Renaissance, we see the secularization of knowledge. The high middle ages had the same resources and knowledge available to them – we think of brilliant thinkers such as Sts. Thomas Aquinas and Bonaventure – the shift is in the focus of this knowledge. The medieval synthesis between faith and reason focused more on the ultimate end of human existence: God and Heaven. The Renaissance makes man “the measure of all things” instead of the “apex of God’s creation.” This shift away from God and the Church He founded continues with Luther’s questioning of the Church’s authority to forgive sins and interpret Scripture. Next the “Enlightenment” where truly atheistic philosophy or militant atheism starts to deny God’s existence and say that what we used to call “god” is just the forces of nature that science discovers and explains.

In England in 1717 we see the foundation of the first Masonic Lodge. Freemasonry, although on the surface seeming to be benign to religion, is a secret society bent on destroying all organized religion, especially Christianity. This movement starts to influence and take political power in several countries, including Spain, Mexico and France.

And so, in France, we have the first “Godless” state. From its inception, the French Revolution and its legislative body the National Assembly promulgate anti-Christian legislation. God and religion are excluded from public life. Even the seven-day week is abolished because of its basis on the Genesis account of creation, and the “décade” takes its place; secular “feast days” replacing the Holy Days of the Church. Convents and monasteries are closed, priests murdered, the king and royal family executed. Robespierre comes to power and rules with his Reign of Terror, his chief prosecutor and inventor of methods of mass murder is Fouquier-Tinville. By the end of this Terror there are around one million people killed as enemies of the state, most of them the Catholic resistance of the Vendée region.

In Mexico, we are familiar with anti-clerical Calles government and the persecutions and martyrs of the Cristero movement memorialized in the movie "For Greater Glory". Portugal experienced a similar take over. On October 5, 1910, (the same year as Jacinta Marto's birth) the Republic of Portugal takes power after the assassination of its Catholic King Carlos. Dominated by Free Masonry the new republic enacts anti-Christian legislation, deportation of bishops, closing of religious communities and monasteries ... the same scenario as we have already seen unfold in France, Spain and Mexico. Only in the small country parishes, such as Fatima were a few priests still free to exercise their ministry.

The 19th century sees the arrival of Atheistic Liberalism that puts individual freedom above just demands of others, of authority and of God. In 1848, Karl Marx *Communist Manifesto* is published. According to Richard Wurmbrand in his book "Was Karl Marx a Satanist?," Marx is quoted as saying that communism will not really work politically, but is the most efficient way of leading souls to Hell.

Let us now look at the proximate preparation for the Bolshevik takeover of Russia. Tsar Nicholas II was married to Alexandra, the daughter of Queen Victoria. After four daughters, Alexei was born. He suffered from hemophilia and Alexandra was desperate to find a cure for her son. Enter Rasputin, a supposed monk, who was known for his participation in spiritualism and Satanism. Through the Tsarina, he wielded a corrupting influence over the Russian court. Prince Yusupov and others decided that Russia's salvation lay in the assassination of Rasputin. He was poisoned with at least six doses of cyanide, shot in the heart, beaten in the head with two pound cudgel, shot again, thrown head first into the frozen Neva River... When the body was recovered from the river, the autopsy showed that the cause of death was drowning!

August 1, 1914 Russia enters World War I against Germany and Austria. Tsar Nicholas II abdicates in March of 1917 and an interim government housed in the Smolny Institute in Petrograd takes over. The Communist party is only a small minority in this administration. But on the night of November 7, 1917 Lenin, disguised as a worker, is smuggled into the building and the Bolsheviks seize power, ruthlessly cutting down their opponents. Lenin finds his own "Fouquier-Tinville" in the person of Felix Dzerzhinsky, founder of the Soviet secret police, later the KGB.

Tsar Nicholas II and his family are murdered in July, 1918. The “Red Terror” under Joseph Stalin will go on to kill an estimated sixty million of its citizens, including starving to death as many as seventeen million Ukrainians.

Western journalist defended the USSR, saying these claims were lies. But Malcolm Muggeridge, disguised as a worker, managed to visit Ukraine and smuggled out pictures of the Ukrainian famine, which was solely due to Stalin taking all the grain from this region and selling it to the West to buy equipment for his war efforts. The Nazi holocaust pales before these atrocities.

Although the USSR had the goal of world domination for Communism, the real error that it spread through the world was atheism, a practical atheism, a society where there is no place for God because he does not even come to mind. Anatoly Lunacharsky, the first Soviet Minister of Education said,

“All the world’s religions were poisonous; the most dangerous was Christianity, as it taught mercy and love of neighbor, whereas in Communism hate was of prime importance, as it was only thanks to hate that the world could be conquered.” (*Fatima Mysteries*, p. 137)

The co-founder of the Communist party in Italy, Antonio Gramsci, spoke of the “long march through the institutions” that was necessary to eliminate Christian influences from education, politics, art, fashion, customs... (*Fatima Mysteries*, p. 193)

Pope Pius XI in his encyclical *Divini Redemptoris* written in 1937 outlines the errors of Communism. First a dialectic materialistic evolution applied to the social order. Class struggle is purposely stirred up by hatred so as arrive at the utopia of a classless society. Second, the atheism already described above. Third, a depriving of human person of his freedom and dignity, Communism reduce s him to a mere cog in the State machine. The State determines morality – what is good for the State is right. It negates the inviolable rights of life, marriage, parents to raise their children and private property.

We see in our own times, the loss of faith and hope in Western culture. The exclusion of God and religion in schools, politics, media and business, shows just how pervasive these errors have become. The Pew Research

Center report from 2015 shows that Catholics have dropped from 23.9% of the U.S. population to only 20.8%. The national trend is also showing that for every two converts to Catholicism, there are five Catholics leaving the faith. Our children, educated in Catholic schools, are being indoctrinated and converted to moral relativism and practical atheism by movies, social media, music, pop-culture, universities and fashion.

All that being said; there is still hope. In those places where the message of Fatima was heeded, the “errors of Russia” have been stopped. On May 13, 1931 Portuguese bishops consecrated Portugal to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. A year later, Antonio de Oliveira Salazar Prime minister of Portugal, rebuilt the government inspired by Catholic Social teaching. The Bishops of Portugal renewed the consecration of Portugal on May 13, 1938 in order to be spared the fate of Spain. Even though sharing borders with Spain, Portugal avoids the bloody Civil war in Spain, which took the lives of around 7,000 Catholic martyrs in between 1936-39.

Bishop Correia da Silva, bishop of Leiria seeing the fulfillment of the Fatima prophecy, endorses the First Saturdays’ devotion in his diocese on Sept. 13, 1939. Portugal remains a neutral country during World War II, and is spared the carnage of the rest of Europe. After the death of Salazar in 1968, a power struggle ensued for the future of Portugal. In 1974 the Armed Forces Movement (MFA) and Portuguese Communist Party take control. A group of Portuguese women found the National Rosary Crusade to save the country from communism. Parliamentary election in 1975 show the unexpected defeat of the MFA and Communist Party, the Portuguese constitution is revised to remove establishment of a socialist system in Feb. 1976. (*Fatima Mysteries*, p. 283) In thanksgiving, this Rosary crusade continues to the present.

Oct. 22, 1942 Pope Pius XII consecrated the world to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, then Oct. 31 consecrated Russia in Rome, but only Portuguese bishops joined him, and again on Dec. 8. Our Lord’s response to Sr. Lucia is that it is not what He asked for but He will shorten the war, because of the Pope’s attempt to comply.

In Poland in 1946 Card. August Hlond leads the Polish church in consecrating Poland to the Immaculate Heart of Mary and promoting first Saturdays among the people. The Church in Poland fares better than other Communist

bloccountries. Just as Jan (John) Sobieski drove out the enemies of Catholicism at the siege of Vienna in the seventeenth century, another John (Pope John Paul II) was raised up by God and His blessed Mother to defeat the global ambitions of the USSR. When Pope John Paul II with a significant number of the worlds' Catholic Bishops (and even some Orthodox bishops) consecrated the world with an implicit reference to Russia on March 24-25, 1984, Sr. Lucia confirmed that this act completed the request of Our Lady. Only five years later, we see the fall of the Berlin Wall and the dismantling of the Soviet Union with almost no violence.

If Russia is not completely converted, it is because we the Catholic people need to do our part to heed the message of Fatima more completely in our own lives. The Pope has done his part, let us now go and do ours. The world's present darkness and violence must be met with believers living lives of repentance, prayer and sacrifice of daily duties and sufferings for the conversion of sinners, consecrating ourselves to Jesus through Mary, and making the five First Saturdays in reparation to the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

One last thing, Sr. Lucia in her letter to Card. Carlo Caffarra, founding President of the Pontifical John Paul II Institute for Studies on Marriage and Family, prophesied that "the final battle between the Lord and the kingdom of Satan will be about marriage and the family." As our hearts are wrung by witnessing the breakdown of the family through abortion, contraception, divorce, same sex "marriage", pornography, and human trafficking to name a few. We need not stand helpless. God has told us what we can do through the message of Fatima. The hearts of Jesus and Mary are attentive to our prayers and sacrifices.

Sources and suggested further reading:

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