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# Fatima for Today

The Urgent Marian Message of Hope

Abridged Edition

Foreword by Raymond Cardinal Burke

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This book is lovingly dedicated  
to  
the Immaculate Heart of Mary,  
Mother of God and our Mother,  
and to  
Pope John Paul II  
who made the Consecration of Russia  
and to  
Pope Benedict XVI  
who has told us to  
learn, live and spread the message of Fatima!

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## FOREWORD

During his historic visit to the Shrine of Our Lady of Fatima on May 13, 2010, His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI spoke of the maternal instruction of the Blessed Virgin Mary to all mankind, which she communicated through her chosen messengers, Blessed Francisco Marto, Blessed Jacinta Marto, and the Servant of God Lucia dos Santos. Summarizing the content of the teaching conveyed through her six apparitions between May and October of 1917, which were prepared by the three apparitions of the Angel of Peace, His Holiness described Our Lady of Fatima as “the Teacher who introduced the little seers to a deep knowledge of the Blessed Trinity and led them to savor God Himself as the most beautiful reality of human existence.”<sup>1</sup> His Holiness continued by quoting expressions of the most tender and profound love of God, which were inspired in the seers by the apparitions and message of Our Lady of Fatima and of the Angel of Peace.

Through her apparitions and message, the Mother of God, as she always does, led Francisco, Jacinta, and Lucia more surely and fully to our Lord Jesus Christ, God the Son Incarnate, and through him to God the Father and God the Holy Spirit, with whom he is one in being. In the words of Pope Benedict XVI, “Our Lady helped them to open their hearts to universal love”, that is, to the love of God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, who loves all men and desires only their eternal salvation.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Pope Benedict XVI, “Homily during Mass celebrated in the square at the Marian Shrine: Prophetic mission of Fatima for the salvation of the world,” *LOs-servatore Romano*, English ed., May 19, 2010, p. 11.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

The Blessed Virgin Mary came to visit mankind at Fatima at a time when many had grown forgetful of God and his all-loving plan for our salvation, and many had grown rebellious before the Law of God by which he orders all things for our good. Having alienated themselves from the universal love that comes to us from God alone, they fell prey to a destructive selfishness of heart, which was most dramatically and tragically manifested in the horror of the First World War. The great temptation in a world beset with the gravest of evils was to lose hope in divine love and thus to cease responding to divine love with pure and selfless love. Knowing the severity of the temptation that his children were suffering, God the Father sent to earth the Blessed Virgin Mary, the mother of his only-begotten Son, in fidelity to her mission as Mother of God, which she first accepted at the Annunciation and which she expressed so clearly at the Wedding Feast of Cana. When the wine stewards of the newly married couple at Cana found themselves in a most distressful situation, it was the Blessed Virgin who was immediately aware of their distress; who interceded with her Divine Son to save the newlyweds from embarrassment; and who, with total confidence, instructed the wine stewards: "Do whatever he tells you."<sup>3</sup>

In all our times of crisis, both personally and as a society, the Virgin Mother of God is always immediately aware of our distress and is always interceding on our behalf before the throne of God. She also faithfully counsels us, with deepest motherly love, to do what our Lord Jesus Christ tells us, to turn over our lives to him through prayer and penance. In the most critical moments of our earthly pilgrimage, God the Father has favored us with an extraordinary sign of the Virgin Mary's maternal love, that is, with her visits to us by way of apparitions and messages. Regarding her appearances

<sup>3</sup> Jn 2:5.

at Fatima, the Holy Father observed: “At a time when the human family was ready to sacrifice all that was most sacred on the altar of the petty and selfish interests of nations, races, ideologies, groups and individuals, our Blessed Mother came from heaven, offering to implant in the hearts of all those who trust in her the Love of God burning in her own heart.”<sup>4</sup>

Through the Consecration of Humanity to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, the Shepherd of the Universal Church, the Venerable Pope Pius XII, prayed that the maternal care of the Blessed Virgin Mary, most perfectly represented in her sinless Heart, might lead all men to the Heart of Jesus, the font of their eternal salvation.

Reflecting upon the human context, individual and societal, of the apparitions of the Mother of God at Fatima, it is not difficult to perceive the critical importance of our Lady’s message for our own time, an importance strongly underlined for us by the Venerable Pope John Paul II and by his successor Pope Benedict XVI. We too live in a time when many are ready to sacrifice all, including the lives of innocent and defenseless unborn brothers and sisters; the lives of those who have the first title to our care—the aged, the critically ill and those suffering with special needs; and the great good of marriage and the family, the first cell of the life of society, on the altar of selfish individualism and tyrannical relativism. Many in our day have turned away from God and have rebelled against the most fundamental teachings of his life-giving Law—the teaching regarding the inviolable dignity of innocent human life and the teaching on the integrity of the faithful, indissoluble and procreative union of one man and one woman in marriage—and have

<sup>4</sup> “Homily during Mass celebrated in the square at the Marian Shrine . . .”, p. 11.

thus found themselves profoundly unhappy and without hope, gazing into the terrifying emptiness of hell.

We can be certain that the Mother of God is keenly aware of our situation and that she seeks to draw us to herself and thereby place our hearts, one with her Immaculate Heart, into the Sacred Heart of Jesus. In her maternal love, she draws us to the Heart of Jesus, in which . . . alone we will find both the purification of our sins and the inspiration and strength of the immeasurable and ceaseless love of God for us. Ultimately, she desires to lead us to the Mystery of Faith, to the Holy Eucharist, the medicine and nourishment that heal us of sin and strengthen us against the temptation to sin, thus rescuing us from the fruit of sin: everlasting death, the horror of which the Mother of God permitted the three little seers to contemplate during her July apparition.

Father Andrew Apostoli of the Capuchin Friars of the Renewal has understood the desire of Our Lady of Fatima to speak to us today. With great care and thoroughness, he provides for us the full context of the events at Fatima and then describes the three apparitions of the Angel of Peace and the six apparitions of the Mother of God to Lucia, Francisco, and Jacinta. He also describes the apparitions to Sister Lucia at Pontevedra and Tuy in Spain, through which Our Lady of Fatima made ever clearer what she asks of us for the conversion of our lives and the transformation of our world in anticipation of the Final Coming of our Lord Jesus in glory to inaugurate “new heavens and a new earth”<sup>5</sup> In a manner which is most accessible and, at the same time, complete and accurate, Father Apostoli helps us to know the maternal instruction of Our Lady of Fatima and, following it, to know

<sup>5</sup> 2 Pet 3:13.

and “savor”, in the words of Pope Benedict XVI, the mystery of divine love in our lives.<sup>6</sup>

As Pope Benedict XVI declared in his homily at Fatima on May 13, 2010, and as Father Apostoli illustrates so fully and well in this book, Our Lady of Fatima leads us to enter more deeply into the mystery of the Holy Trinity, the mystery of the love of God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—poured out for all mankind without cease and without boundary. Father Apostoli helps us, in a most sound and thorough manner, to hear more clearly the instruction of Our Lady of Fatima and to follow it faithfully. His book, which you will now be blessed to read, is truly a most worthy instrument by which Our Lady of Fatima continues to speak to our hearts from her Immaculate Heart.

In the second part of the Secret of Fatima, the Mother of God promised: “My Immaculate Heart will triumph.”<sup>7</sup> The then Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger has helped us to understand the profound meaning of the promise made by Our Lady of Fatima to the three little seers. Asking what may be the meaning of our Lady’s promise, he declared:

The Heart open to God, purified by contemplation of God, is stronger than guns and weapons of every kind. The *fiat* of Mary, the word of her heart, has changed the history of the world, because it brought the Saviour into the world—because, thanks to her *Yes*, God could become man in our world and remains so for all time. The Evil One has power in this world, as we see and experience continually; he has power because our freedom continually lets itself be led away from God. But since God himself took a human heart and has thus steered human freedom towards what is good, the freedom to choose evil no longer has the last word. From that

<sup>6</sup> “Homily during Mass celebrated in the square at the Marian Shrine”, p. 11.

<sup>7</sup> *The Message of Fatima*, p. 16.



time forth, the word that prevails is this: “In this world you will have tribulation, but take heart; I have overcome the world” (Jn 16:33).

The message of Fatima invites us to trust in this promise.<sup>8</sup>

It is my hope and prayer that, through your study of Father Apostoli’s handbook on Our Lady of Fatima, our Lady will draw you ever closer to her Immaculate Heart and that, one with her Heart, your heart, resting in the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, will know the triumph of divine love and eternal life.

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Archbishop Emeritus of Saint Louis  
Prefect of the Supreme Tribunal of the Apostolic  
Signatura  
Solemnity of All Saints, 2010

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 43.

## PREFACE

I am very grateful to Ignatius Press for the invitation to write this book on Our Lady of Fatima and her important message for our time. All throughout my life I have been devoted to Our Lady of Fatima. I heard about her message when I was a young boy, and it made a deep impression on me. Like Lucia, Francisco and Jacinta, I have prayed for the salvation of souls as our Lady asked. I also have practiced the devotion of the Five First Saturdays for many years and have tried to encourage others to do the same. So it was a delightful challenge to write this book.

My intention was to write a book that would combine three essential elements about Our Lady of Fatima. First, there are the historical facts of the apparitions by our Lady and by the Angel of Peace. I tried to present these facts as fully as possible, especially stressing the words our Lady and the Angel of Peace spoke during each of their apparitions. Second, there is the message of prayer, sacrifice, suffering and holiness of life. I am sure more people will be drawn to this message when they understand its meaning and importance. Third, there are certain questions and objections that have been raised concerning the message of Fatima, such as: Was the consecration of Russia to the Immaculate Heart of Mary made properly by Pope John Paul II? Was the third secret of Fatima fully revealed by the Vatican? For years people have been asking me these questions. In this book I have tried to present clear evidence that both of these tasks have been fulfilled. The Pope has done his part; now we must do our part by good Christian living, by prayers for the conversion of sinners, by the fulfillment of our duties in life and by using the graces the

Holy Spirit has been pouring forth into our hearts. Our Lady had told the children at Fatima that God wanted devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary to be spread throughout the world. If this book can contribute in any small way to the spreading of this devotion, the author will be richly rewarded for the efforts involved in writing this book.

I want to give thanks to Almighty God for the graces needed to accomplish this undertaking. May this book give honor and glory to the Most Holy Trinity. I also want to thank the Blessed Virgin Mary, whom I felt was asking me to write this book to assist in bringing about the triumph of her Immaculate Heart.

I also want to thank the many people who have contributed in various ways to the writing of this book. First, I would like to express my gratitude to His Excellency Raymond Cardinal Burke for taking time out of his busy schedule to write the foreword. Next, I want to thank all the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal, especially those in my local community, who assisted me in so many ways in preparing this manuscript. I also wish to thank all the Franciscan Sisters of the Renewal and the many other people who supported me with their prayers and encouragement. Finally, I wish to thank Elaine Curzio, Tiffany Gulla, Penny Wolfe and Gerri Kearns. May Jesus and his Blessed Mother reward all who have helped to make this work.

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## MARY

### *The Only Woman Whose Coming Was Foretold*

Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen often said that Jesus was the only man whose coming into the world was preannounced. No other great world leader or religious figure ever had his coming foretold. Even Jesus' mission was known before he entered the world. His mission was to overcome evil by his saving death on the Cross. In a very similar way, we can say that the Blessed Virgin Mary was the only woman whose coming into the world was foretold: "Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son . . ." (Is 7:14). Her mission was also known before she came into this world; she was to share in the saving sacrifice of her Divine Son. Hers was to be a mission of spiritual warfare in order to help obtain the final victory over evil prophesied in God's curse of the serpent:

I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel. (Gen 3:15)

The Blessed Virgin Mary plays a pivotal role in the great struggle between good and evil—between her Divine Son and his disciples, and Satan and his followers. In the Book of Revelation, we see powerful images depicting the hatred of

the devil for the woman who bears the Savior, for the Lord himself, and for the Lord's followers:

And a great sign appeared in heaven, a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars; she was with child and she cried out in her pangs of birth, in anguish for delivery. And another sign appeared in heaven; behold, a great red dragon, with seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems upon his heads. His tail swept down a third of the stars of heaven, and cast them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was about to bear a child, that he might devour her child when she brought it forth. . . . Then the dragon was angry with the woman, and went off to make war on the rest of her offspring, on those who keep the commandments of God and bear testimony to Jesus. (Rev 12:1-4, 17)

The Blessed Virgin Mary is a central figure in God's plan of salvation. She plays a major role, second only to her son, in the work of redeeming the world. This role involves her in continuous conflict with Satan. At Fatima, however, our Lady assured us that the final victory would be hers: "In the end my Immaculate Heart will triumph!"

### **Mary's Important Role as the New Eve**

Our Lady's role is so significant because God wants to defeat the devil by the same means with which the devil had conquered our first parents. This divine plan was a favorite theme among the Fathers of the Church. Here is how Saint John Chrysostom expressed the role of Mary:

Christ conquered the Devil using the same means and the same weapons that the Devil used to win. The symbols of our fall were a virgin, a tree and death. The virgin was Eve (for she had not

yet known man); then there was the tree; and death was Adam's penalty. And again these three tokens of our destruction, the virgin, the tree and death, became the tokens of our victory. Instead of Eve, there was Mary; instead of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, the cross of the Lord; instead of Adam's death, the death of Christ.<sup>1</sup>

Adam, as head of the human family, was our representative before God. So only his disobedience became the original sin for mankind. Eve, however, was an accomplice in the wrongdoing. She did not deserve the name Eve, which means mother of all the living (Gen 3:20), because she helped bring about the spiritual death of her children.

Our Lady, on the other hand, deserves to be called the New Eve. She does not represent us in the work of redemption; that role belongs to Jesus Christ, the New Adam who alone is our eternal high priest and victim for our sins. However, Mary was as much an accomplice in the work of redemption as Eve had been in the Fall.

### *At the Annunciation*

At the Annunciation, Mary fully accepted God's will for her life in humility and obedience, as can be seen in her response to the archangel Gabriel. She had been told by the archangel that she would conceive and bear a son, who would be called Son of the Most High. When her question about how she would conceive because she did not have relations with Saint Joseph was clarified by the archangel, our Lady did not hesitate to respond humbly and trustingly: "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word" (Lk 1:38). As the sin of Eve contributed to bringing spiritual

<sup>1</sup> "On the Cemetery and the Cross" (*De coemeterio et cruce*), in *The Liturgy of the Hours*, vol. 4 (New York: Catholic Book Publishing, 1975), p. 1660.