



Fr Alan Ján (Slovakia) carries the statue of Our Lady for Fr Aimé-Marie (Congo)

our hearts and when we ponder it with MARY in JESUS our lips cannot but proclaim this Good News!

Before leaving, Fr Aimé-Marie from Congo asked all of us to pray for peace in his beloved country. With complete confidence in Our Lady he obtained a tall statue of the Most Holy Virgin of Fatima to carry home. It was indeed a united effort as Fr Alan Ján carried it for him from the shop and Fr. Louis-Marie

packed Our Lady's statue securely for her journey, while Fr Bruno with the Sisters lent support by their presence and encouragement! May the fruits of this very beautiful and grace-filled encounter between Our Lady and Her dedicated Dominican Rosary Promoters be reaped in abundance and may it not be long before they meet again!

Meanwhile, may we ask you to please pray for our Rosary Promoters and also for our Novices – the future Preachers and Promoters of the Holy Rosary! Speak to young people about offering their lives to God. Invite them to think about it and to pray!



Fr. Filipe (centre) with some of the new Novices who came for the closing Mass and sang so beautifully.



Dear Rosarians and all of our Friends of Fatima, Blessed Christmas greetings!



beyond, to the entire world, blessing, warning, pleading, with all her Immaculate Heart, that souls may seek the Kingdom of her Son."

Our Lady has indeed looked out upon millions of pilgrims in this Centenary Year speaking to their hearts and calling them to Her Son. We hope that these few pages of our little newsletter give you a glimpse into the marvels that God has done in these months, at least as we have seen and experienced them from within our cloister. Your Rosary Hours prayed in your homes or parish churches have formed a precious part of this celebration. You are part of this 100 years of Fatima! Our Monastery has shared nearly 67 years in the story of Fatima. There have been many memorable moments. One of them is the privilege of having translated the Memoirs of Sr. Lucia into the English language. Sr. Mary Diane, OP was one of those who worked on this translation that was entrusted to the Nuns by Fr. Louis Kondor, SVD, who had been Vice-Postulator of the Little Shepherds Cause of Canonization.

You have also read here of the meeting of the Rosary Promoters. This too you have shared in very closely. With your fidelity to the prayer of the Rosary you too become 'promoters of the Rosary' - above all through your faith and prayer and by your response to Our Lady's plea: *Pray the Rosary everyday for peace.* It follows that those who pray and live the Rosary will become promoters of peace. They learn to build bridges where no one else would try, bridges formed with the best materials: Divine Love and Mercy!

We encourage you to continue to pray and to trust and as the Holy Father said: "Never be afraid." Where you can, invite others to join in the Perpetual Rosary Association and help form a Rosary that encircles the world so that the gift of Peace may be granted to all by God through the intercession of the Most Holy Virgin – Our Lady of the Rosary of Fatima.

*With our loving prayers and gratitude always,
Your devoted Sisters in Christ*



Friends of Fátima

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Children Saints of Fatima Heaven's Gift for the Centenary

With these words pronounced by Pope Francis at the Solemn Mass and ceremonies on May 13th the 100th anniversary of the first Fatima Apparition, the Church has recognized two new Saints:

In honour of the Most Holy Trinity, for the exaltation of the Catholic faith and increase of the Christian life, with the authority of Our Lord Jesus Christ, of the holy Apostles Peter and Paul and Ours, after having long reflected, imploring in various ways Divine help and having heard the opinion of our many Brothers in the Episcopate, We declare and define as Saints the Blesseds Francisco Marto and Jacinta Marto and we inscribe them in the catalogue of Saints, establishing that, in the whole Church, they may be devoutly honoured among the Saints. In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.



As the youngest non-martyred Saints these two children, sister and brother, hold a special place in the ranks of the Blessed in heaven. Pope Francis stated: "The canonization was not something planned at the beginning, because the procedure involving the miracle was still underway, but suddenly the expert opinions proved positive and things quickly moved forward ... and so things came together. For me it was a great joy. ... Their holiness is not the consequence of the apparitions, but of their faithfulness and the ardour with which they responded to the privilege of being able to see the Virgin Mary. After the encounter with the "Beautiful Lady", as they called Her, they frequently recited the Rosary, they did penance and offered sacrifices to bring about the end of the War, and for the souls most in need of divine mercy," stated Pope Francis. (14 May Angelus)

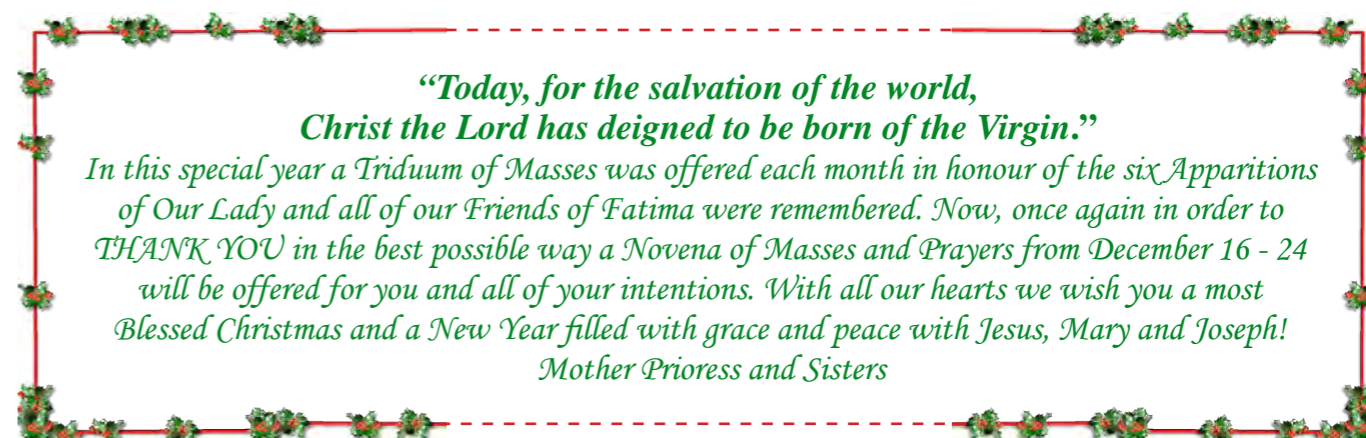
Finally, he reminds us that "Fatima has a message of peace, certainly. And it was brought to humanity by three great communicators who were less than 13 years old. That is interesting."

To imitate these child Saints is to honour God. Their charity for souls and their deep desire to console God, Who is "already so much offended", this is what compelled the Little Shepherds. Their hearts were set aflame with Divine Love and this Love filled them with zeal for souls to be saved. They teach us the Message of Fatima by their very lives!

This same message was the subject of a homily given to pilgrims who visited in August. "At Fatima, Mary invited the children Lucia, Jacinta and Francisco, to participate in the redemptive suffering of Christ." Are you willing to offer yourselves to God and bear all the sufferings He wills to send you, as an act of reparation for the conversion of sinners?" And again she said: "Sacrifice yourselves for sinners, and say many times, especially when you make some sacrifice: 'O Jesus, it is for love of You, for the conversion of sinners, and in reparation for the sins committed against the Immaculate Heart of Mary'". This idea that we can all participate in the work of salvation by accepting a share of the yoke of suffering on our shoulders, and by uniting our sacrifices and sufferings with those of Christ, is an important feature of Mary's Apparitions. The message of Fatima is a hope-filled and challenging gift to the faithful - to offer up our prayers, works and sufferings to Jesus, through Mary, as the children Saints of Fatima did, is a beautiful act of charity for the reparation of sin."

(Archbishop Eamon Martin Primate of Ireland (Armagh))

St. Francisco and St. Jacinta, pray for us!



**"Today, for the salvation of the world,
Christ the Lord has deigned to be born of the Virgin."**

In this special year a Triduum of Masses was offered each month in honour of the six Apparitions of Our Lady and all of our Friends of Fatima were remembered. Now, once again in order to THANK YOU in the best possible way a Novena of Masses and Prayers from December 16 - 24 will be offered for you and all of your intentions. With all our hearts we wish you a most Blessed Christmas and a New Year filled with grace and peace with Jesus, Mary and Joseph!

Mother Prioress and Sisters

Ave, Ave, Ave Maria...
The Centenary: A reflection from the Cloister

The voices of thousands upon thousands of pilgrims to Fatima repeat this Angelic Salutation first uttered by the Archangel Gabriel to the Virgin of Nazareth chosen from among our race to be the Mother of God. The *Ave* opens the story of our promised Redemption and the first mystery of the Holy Rosary: the Annunciation – Incarnation. Each time this *Ave* is prayed, the moment and the mystery of the Incarnation is relived. The Archangel Gabriel brings the message from God, he calls MARY to a mission, She answers Yes and the WORD, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, the Saviour of the world, becomes like us except for sin. The voices of the pilgrims singing or reciting the *Ave*'s at the Shrine can be heard from within our cloister. The Angelic Salutation rises to heaven and grace falls gently upon all of us poor sinners.



Throughout this Centenary year we have received visitors from all corners of the world. Many said to us: "I felt called to come to Fatima this year" or "Our Lady called me to come..." There were Priests and Bishops, lay people and religious and many Dominicans among them. There were families, sometimes a few members to represent all, and at times entire families who arrived from very distant lands east and west. These beautiful families filled with faith and trust in God gave pleasing witness to God and encouragement to all of us. We were especially happy to hear of so many young people who wished to come...some did come and once again we heard: "It was Our Lady who called me here!" Yes, indeed, Our Lady of Fatima was and is calling Her children!

From around the world we were deeply grateful to receive word from other Dominican Nuns who were united with us in prayer and celebration in their own monasteries. There were many parishes, dioceses, various catholic organizations, youth groups and whole nations who honored Our Lady of Fatima in this special year. New shrines of Our Lady of Fatima were erected with great love. From all the nations of Europe, Middle East, Russia, USA, many countries of Africa and so many nations of the Orient, pilgrims came. Even at the headquarters of the UN in New York City a conference was given on 12th of May by Archbishop Auza on Fatima with the Pilgrim Virgin statue present. Thus, we can say that there was a torrent of graces flowing forth through the Shrine of Fatima this special year.

Yet, with all of this light and grace many of our Friends of Fatima may have heard that Portugal, the *Land of Holy Mary*, experienced an unprecedented drought. It

was reported that 90% of the country was under severe drought conditions having had almost no rain this year. Alongside this, and owing to it, there were the great fires of June and October which caused many deaths and enormous destruction of land and property. Thus, this extreme lack of rain and at the same time floods of grace. We might ask: Why this stark contrast?

Our Lord knows. But in this we were reminded of the global concern for the problem of 'desertification' of vast regions where reduced rainfall and other factors leave the people with shrinking supplies of fresh water. We realize also

that there is the 'desertification' of the soul and the spirit of man and nations. Today, men and women face two quite contrasting phenomena: religious indifference or 'desertification' of the soul of man and on the other hand religious persecution. For those who may suffer from the culture of religious indifference a visit to Fatima challenges them to the depths of the heart and the light of faith is rekindled or lit anew. For those who suffer persecution for the sake of Christ, a visit to Fatima causes them to know the strength and the power of Mary's Virginal, Maternal and martyr-like Love shown at the foot of the Cross on Calvary. In the words of one pilgrim this summer: "As Our Lady was being taken back to the Capelinha, as I looked at Her, I had this strange feeling of super strength. She, I believe, was giving me a glimpse of Her overall care for us and telling me not to doubt..."

Fatima is an oasis in a spiritual desert: No one leaves without being refreshed in mind, heart and spirit and in faith, hope and love. In Fatima, Mary teaches us to be protagonists and not antagonists. A Mother always works to create and maintain conditions of peace in her family. She is the first to promote dialogue towards reconciliation and peace. Indeed, in Fatima our Mother forms us to be protagonists – to be builders of peace wherever we are. And again, Fatima is like a multifaceted diamond in the setting of the Gospel. For our times – for 100 years is like a day to the Lord – this jewel shines light, the light of grace on our path. Our Lady gently reminds us of our membership in the Mystical Body of the Christ when she invites us to pray and sacrifice for our brothers and sisters because we are indeed our brothers' guardian (Gen 4: 10).

The mystery of the Annunciation-Incarnation opened with the Ave, and that Ave continues wherever and as often as the Rosary is prayed.

Closing of the Centenary with the Dominican Rosary Promoters from around the World



Our Lady with Her new crown

With joyful anticipation our Community prepared for the visit of the Provincial Rosary Promoters from around the world. The General Promoter of the Rosary, Fr Louis-Marie Ariño-Durand, OP, who will soon complete his mandate after 10 years, had invited all the Rosary Promoters to meet here in Fatima in this centenary year. Thus from October 10 –

14 after almost 50 years the first international meeting of the Promoters took place. The Friars who came represented Africa, South America, Europe (Western and Central) and Asia. From Santa Sabina Fr Orlando Acevedo, Socius for the Apostolic Life came with Fr Christopher Eggleton, Socius for the USA Provinces, who is also the newly appointed General Promoter of the Rosary. On the 12th the Master of the Order, Fr. Bruno Cadoré arrived in Fatima to join the Promoters and to preside at the closing Mass on the 14th.

One of the highlights was a moment of prayer together. On the evening of the 11th we united in our Chapel to pray the Glorious Mysteries of the Rosary. At the 5th mystery we offered to Our Lady a new crown for Her centenary. After Fr. Orlando gave a beautiful blessing, Fr Louis-Marie graciously

placed the crown on Our Lady. This statue of Our Lady has been present in our Monastery since its foundation.

It was in Fatima each time that She appeared that Our Lady asked us to pray the Rosary everyday for peace. In the final Apparition, as promised, the beautiful Lady revealed her name: "**I am the Lady of the Rosary.**" Our Lady entrusted this great plan for peace and the eternal salvation of souls to three small children. The Little Shepherds of Fatima thus became promoters of the Rosary par excellence! The grace of their 'Yes' to Our Lady at the first Apparition when Mary asked if they were willing to offer themselves, remained with them always to help them fulfill their "fiat". As a result, the Rosary plan for peace is known all over the world. Today, we invoke



Fr. Master, Fr. Louis-Marie, Fr. Christopher and Fr. Orlando at the closing Mass 14 October

the loving intercession of St. Francisco and St. Jacinta for our Rosary Promoters. We also wish to express our heartfelt gratitude to those Friars who responded to the call of Our Lady to come to Fatima to meet together in prayer, to speak, to share and to plan for the future of their Rosary mission in their Provinces. Long before they arrived we had kept them all in our prayers, beseeching the graces they would need for their great mission in the Order. There are so many ways to promote the prayer of the Rosary: simple side-walk preaching of the Rosary can be as efficacious as the most eloquent of homilies. To be seen walking with Rosary in hand can be a silent means of promoting the Rosary. *The Rosary places the Gospel in our hands. When we pray it devoutly the Gospel takes root in*



Friars and Nuns pray together the Holy Rosary in the Monastery Chapel 11 October

“...and the Virgin’s name was Mary.” Lk 1:28

Who is MARY?

Shrine and Sanctuary of God...

St. Andrew of Crete wrote for the feast of the Nativity of Mary Sept. 8: “On this day a **shrine is built for the Creator of the universe.**” Later on St. Louis de Montfort would write: “Not even in His abode where He rules over the cherubim and seraphim, not in any place in the whole universe, is God more magnificently and more divinely present than in **Mary, His sanctuary**: and only by a mighty privilege is it granted to any creature however pure, to enter that sanctuary.” (*Treatise on True Devotion*) Fatima is God’s ‘Sanctuary’, His ‘Shrine’... From here, Mary wishes to form every heart into a shrine and sanctuary for Her Son.

Mediatrice of all graces...

St. Bernard exclaims in his sermon on the Aqueduct: “Life everlasting! A never-failing fountain which irrigates the whole extent of the paradise of God! ... Now, what is this fountain of life if it be not Christ the Lord? ... This stream from the heavenly source descends to us through an Aqueduct ... **The Aqueduct itself is always full**, so that all may receive of its fullness (Jn 1:16), yet not the fullness itself. You have already divined ...to whom I allude under the image of an Aqueduct which, receiving the fullness of the Fountain from the Father’s heart, has transmitted the same to us, at least in so far as we could contain it. Yes, for you know to whom it was said, **‘Hail, full of grace’**. (Lk 2:28) And from St. Louis de Montfort: “God has chosen Her for the **treasurer, steward, and dispenser of all His graces**, so that all His graces and all His gifts pass **through Her hands**..” And finally, St Maximilian Kolbe: “Truly, **your presence alone attracts the graces which convert and sanctify souls**, since grace flows into all of us from the Divine Heart of Jesus by passing **through your maternal hands**.” (Act of Consecration to the Immaculate Virgin 16 Oct 1917).

From *Fatima in Lucia’s own Words* we read: “We stopped, astounded, before the Apparition. We were so close, just a few feet from her, that we were bathed in *the light which surrounded her*, or rather, which radiated from her... Our Lady *opened her hands* for the first time, communicating to us a light so intense that, as it streamed



from her hands, its rays penetrated our hearts and the innermost depths of our souls, making us see ourselves in God, Who was that light, more clearly than we see ourselves in the best of mirrors.” (May, June, July and October 1917) Fatima is a place of Grace... a place of Mercy... where Living Waters flow through God’s ‘Sanctuary’, His ‘Shrine’ the heavenly Aqueduct, the one

who is “full of grace”.

And Mary said... The “I am” of Mary...

In the book of Exodus we read that Moses asked God to tell him his name as he feared the Israelites would not believe him. God replied: “I AM WHO I AM. Tell the Israelites ‘I AM’ sent me to you.” (Ex 3:14) Thus God revealed His name, His identity to His People. In the Gospel of St. John we find the “I am” of Our Lord seven times beginning with “I am the Bread of life” (Jn 6:3). In St Luke’s Gospel we find the “I am” of Mary. “How can this be since *I am* a virgin?” (Lk 1: 34) and then: “Behold, *I am* the handmaid of the Lord...” (Lk 1: 38) Each *I am* of Mary is enfolded in the ‘I AM’ of God. Apart from God we are not, our identity and consequently our dignity cannot be known.

In various Apparitions of Our Lady, again we find Her *I am*. To St. Juan Diego Mary said: “*Am I* not your Mother...?” and to St. Bernadette Soubirous Our Lady announced: “*I am* the Immaculate Conception” In Fatima, the Servant of God Sr. Lucia, began a dialogue with the Mother of God at the first Apparition when she was just 10 years old. This dialogue with the Queen of Heaven continued and grew until her death at the age of 97. Lucia asked Our Lady first of all “Where do you come from?” “*I am* from Heaven.” (May 1917). Later on Lucia asked the Lady to tell them Her name and to work a miracle so that all may believe. Our Lady replied: “In October I will tell you who *I am*...” And so She did. “***I am the Lady of the Rosary.***” Mary’s “*I am*” is always Her revelation of identity in God, Who said to Moses: “*Tell them I AM sent me to you*”



12 May Arrival of His Holiness Pope Francis at the Chapel of the Apparitions



“The Pope’s first gesture in Fatima was a long prayer before the statue of the Virgin in the Little Chapel of Apparitions before offering her the age-old homage of the golden rose. The impressive silence was interrupted only by the chirping of birds, despite the hundreds of thousands of people gathered on the expansive plain where three of Francis’ predecessors have come over the last 50 years. And prayer was the very reason for the brief journey of Pope Francis, who, before the evening’s Rosary, defined himself as a pilgrim of light, peace and hope, who had come only to pray to the “Lady robed in white,” who a century ago manifested “the purposes of God’s mercy”.

“As a Bishop robed in white”, His Holiness came in order to remember those who, “robed in the splendour of their baptism, desire to live in God and tell the mysteries of Christ in order to obtain peace”. In this way, the Pontiff said, “we will be the Church robed in white, the whiteness washed in the blood of the Lamb, blood that today too is shed in the wars tearing our world apart”... (L’Osservatore Romano, 19 May 2017)



“...With Christ and Mary, we abide in God. Indeed, “if we want to be Christian, we must be Marian; in a word, we have to acknowledge the essential, vital and providential relationship uniting Our Lady to Jesus, a relationship that opens before us the way leading to Him” (PAUL VI, *Address at the Shine of Our Lady of Bonaria*, Cagliari, 24 April 1970). *Pilgrims with Mary*... But which Mary? A *teacher of the spiritual life*, the first to follow Jesus on the “narrow way” of the cross by giving us an example, or a Lady “unapproachable” and impossible to imitate? A woman “blessed because she believed” always and everywhere in God’s words (cf. Lk 1:42.45), or a “plaster statue” from whom we beg favours at little

cost? The Virgin Mary of the Gospel, venerated by the Church at prayer, or a Mary of our own making: one who restrains the arm of a vengeful God; one sweeter than Jesus the ruthless judge; one more merciful than the Lamb slain for us?

Whenever we look to Mary, we come to believe once again in the revolutionary nature of love and tenderness. In her, we see that humility and tenderness are not virtues of the weak but of the strong, who need not treat others poorly in order to feel important themselves... This interplay of justice and tenderness, of contemplation and concern for others, is what makes the ecclesial community look to Mary as a model of evangelization” (Ap. Exhort. *Evangelii Gaudium*, 288). With Mary, may each of us become a sign and sacrament of the mercy of God, who pardons always and pardons everything.”

12 May Vigil Mass Homily of Cardinal Pietro Parolin

“Dear Pilgrims to Fatima,

With joy and gratitude, we have gathered at this Shrine that commemorates the Apparitions of Our Lady to the three shepherd children. We join the throngs of pilgrims who in these hundred years have come here to show their trust in the Mother of Heaven. We are celebrating this Eucharist in honour of her Immaculate Heart. In the first reading, we heard the people exclaim: “You averted our ruin, walking in the straight path before our God” (Jdt 13:20). These words of praise and gratitude were addressed by the city of Bethulia to Judith, their champion, whom “the Lord God, who created the heavens and the earth... guided to cut off the head of the leader of our enemies” (Jdt 13:18). But they take on their full meaning in the Immaculate Virgin Mary. Thanks to her offspring – Christ the Lord – she was able to “crush the head” (cf. Gen 3:15) of the “ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world”. He, in turn, “was angry with the woman, and went off to make war on the rest of her children, those who keep the commandments of God and hold the testimony of Jesus” (Rev 12:9.17).

As a Mother concerned for the trials of her children, Mary appeared here with a message of consolation and hope for a world at war and for the Church in travail: “In the end, my Immaculate Heart will triumph” (Apparition of July, 1917). In other words: “Trust! In the end, love and peace will triumph, because God’s mercy is stronger than the power of evil. What seems impossible to men is possible to God”. Our Lady also asks us to join in this battle of Her Divine Son, particularly by the daily recitation of the Rosary for peace in the world. Even though everything depends on God and his grace, we still need to act as if everything depended on us, by asking the Virgin Mary that the hearts of individuals, the homes of families, the history of peoples and the

fraternal soul of all humanity be consecrated to her and placed under her protection and guidance. She wants people who entrust themselves to her! “If they do what I tell you, many souls will be saved and have peace” (Apparition of July, 1917). In the end, what will win the war is a heart: the Heart of the Mother will obtain the victory, at the head of millions of her sons and daughters...

From East to West, the love of the Immaculate Heart of Mary has won a place in the heart of peoples as a source of hope and consolation. The Second Vatican Ecumenical Council met in order to renew the face of the Church, and presented itself essentially as the Council of love. The faithful, the bishops, the Pope did not fail to heed the requests of the Mother of God and of man: the whole world was consecrated to her. Everywhere groups and communities of believers continue to grow. Awakening from yesterday’s apathy, they now work to show to the world the true face of Christianity...

In the midst of great concern and uncertainty about the future, what does Fatima ask of us? Perseverance in the consecration to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, shown daily by the recitation of the Rosary. And what if, despite our prayers, wars continue? Even though immediate results may not be evident, let us persevere in prayer. Prayer is never useless. Sooner or later, it will bear fruit. Prayer is capital in the hands of God; He turns it to good account in His own times and ways, which are very different from our own...Let us pray at this evening vigil as a great pilgrim people, following in the footsteps of the Risen Jesus, enlightening one another and helping one another to advance, based on our faith in Christ Jesus. The Fathers of the Church tell us that Mary conceived Jesus first in faith and then in the flesh, when she said “Yes” to God’s call to her through the angel. But what took place in a singular way in the Virgin Mother takes place spiritually in us whenever we hear the word of God and put it into practice, as the Gospel says (cf. Lk 11:28). Imitating Mary’s generosity and courage, let us present our bodies to Jesus so that he can continue to dwell in our midst. Let us offer him our hands to caress the little ones and the poor, our feet to draw near to our brothers and sisters, our arms to shore up the weak and to work in the Lord’s vineyard, our minds to think and plan in the light of the Gospel, and above all, our hearts to love and make decisions in accordance with God’s will. In this way, may the Virgin Mother shape us, pressing us to her Immaculate Heart, as she did with Lucia, Blessed Francisco and Blessed Jacinta. On this centenary of the apparitions, with gratitude for the gift which the event, the message and the shrine of Fatima have been throughout the past century, let us join our voices to that of the Virgin Mary: “My soul magnifies the Lord... for he has looked with favour on the lowliness of his servant... his mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation” (Lk 1:46-50).”



Cardinal Parolin incenses the statue of Our Lady of Fatima surrounded by white roses 12 October

13 May Morning Mass and Canonization Homily of His Holiness Pope Francis

“[There] appeared in heaven a woman clothed with the sun”. So the seer of Patmos tells us in the Book of Revelation (12:1), adding that she was about to give birth to a son. Then, in the Gospel, we hear Jesus say to his disciple, “Here is your mother” (Jn 19:27). We have a Mother! “Oh! What a beautiful Lady!”, as the seers of Fatima said to one another as they returned home on that blessed day of 13 May a hundred years ago. That evening, Jacinta could not restrain herself and told the secret to her mother: “Today I saw Our Lady”. They had seen the Mother of Heaven. Many others sought to share that vision, but... they did not see her. The Virgin Mother did not come here so that we could see her. We will have all eternity for that, provided, of course, that we go to heaven.

Our Lady foretold, and warned us about, a way of life that is godless and indeed profanes God in his creatures. Such a life – frequently proposed and imposed – risks leading to hell. Mary came to remind us that God’s light dwells within us and protects us, for, as we heard in the first reading, “the child [of the woman] was snatched away and taken to God” (Rev 12:5). In Lucia’s account, the three chosen children found themselves surrounded by God’s light as it radiated from Our Lady. She enveloped them in the mantle of Light that God had given her. According to the belief and experience of many pilgrims, if not of all, Fatima is more than anything this mantle of Light that protects us, here as in almost no other place on earth. We need but take refuge under the protection of the Virgin Mary and to ask her, as the Salve Regina teaches: “show unto us... Jesus”.

Dear pilgrims, **we have a Mother**. Clinging to her like children, we live in the hope that rests on Jesus. As we heard in the second reading, “those who receive the abundance of the grace and the free gift of righteousness

exercise dominion in life through the one man, Jesus Christ” (Rom 5:17). When Jesus ascended to heaven, he brought to the Heavenly Father our humanity, which he assumed in the womb of the Virgin Mary and will never forsake. Like an anchor, let us fix our hope on



that Humanity, seated in heaven at the right hand of the Father (cf. Eph 2:6). May this hope guide our lives! It is a hope that sustains us always, to our dying breath.

Confirmed in this hope, we have gathered here to give thanks for the countless graces bestowed over these past hundred years. All of them passed beneath the mantle of light that Our Lady has spread over the four corners of the earth, beginning with this land of Portugal, so rich in hope. We can take as our examples Saint Francisco and Saint Jacinta, whom the Virgin Mary introduced into the immense ocean of God’s light and taught to adore him. That was the source of their strength in overcoming opposition and suffering. God’s presence became constant in their lives, as is evident from their insistent prayers for sinners and their desire to remain ever near “the hidden Jesus” in the tabernacle. In her Memoirs (III, 6), Sister Lucia quotes Jacinta who had just been granted a vision: “Do you not see all those streets, all those paths and fields full of people crying out for food, yet have nothing to eat? And the Holy Father in a church, praying before the Immaculate Heart of Mary? And all those people praying with him?”

Thank you, brothers and sisters, for being here with me! I could not fail to come here to venerate the Virgin Mary and to entrust to her all her sons and daughters... Whenever we experience the cross, Jesus has already experienced it before us. We do not mount the cross to

find Jesus. Instead it was he who, in his self-abasement, descended even to the cross, in order to find us, to dispel the darkness of evil within us, and to bring us back to the light.

With Mary’s protection, may we be for our world sentinels of the dawn, contemplating the true face of Jesus the Saviour, resplendent at Easter. Thus may we rediscover the young and beautiful face of the Church, which shines forth when she is missionary, welcoming, free, faithful, poor in means and rich

in love.”

At the end of the Holy Mass on 13th October the pilgrims who filled the sanctuary square were greeted by Holy Father Francis via video from Rome. He gave his blessing and His message was as follows:

“Never be afraid, God is infinitely greater than all of our problems. He loves us very much. Go forward in your journey without losing sight of the Mother, like a child who feels safe when



close to his mother, we too are safe when close to Our Lady. She is our surety. And to conclude, I want to give you a counsel: never to put the Rosary aside, never put the Rosary aside but to continue to pray it as She asked.”

That we may grow in our true devotion to Mary our Mother as Pope Francis asks us in Fatima... “Let the faithful remember that true devotion...proceeds from true faith, by which we are led to recognize the excellence of the Mother of God, and we are moved to a filial love towards our Mother, and to the imitation of Her virtues.” And in particular for Dominicans these words are especially encouraging: “...when She is the subject of preaching and worship She prompts the faithful to come to Her Son, to His Sacrifice, to the love of the Father.”

Lumen Gentium 8: 65, 67