

# Friends of FATIMA

N.º 104

*Dear Friends of Fatima,*



*Christmas Blessings!*

The joys of 2023 included the news on June 22 that Sr. Lucia, Seer of Fatima had been declared Venerable, meaning that her life of heroic virtue has been confirmed by the Church. The next step is Beatification as soon as a miracle is approved through her intercession. May this be realized soon!

In our last *Friends of Fatima* we asked everyone to pray for the young people who would attend World Youth Day 2023 in Lisbon. We can joyfully assure you that your prayers were answered. Those days of August 1-6 overflowed with grace and blessings and it seemed the distance of 90 km between Lisbon and Fatima was erased. Youth by the thousands came to Fatima either before or after WYD. All wished to greet Our Lady who watched over this celebration of the Faith in a very special

way. Her Message of prayer and sacrifice (in abundance!) was lived by all. We also had the joy of welcoming numerous Dominicans from various countries and finally, on September 22 we received the Master General of the Order, Fr. Gerard Timoner III who graciously came to celebrate Mass and joined us for breakfast during his canonical visitation of the Province.

Amidst these joys we were ever conscious of the sorrow of war that pervades the world. In this moment, when the great cause of PEACE is in the prayerful hearts of millions across the world let us visit in spirit the silence and peace of the little cave where Jesus Christ, Prince of Peace was born. Let us go in haste with the shepherds as we sing with the Angels: *Glory to God in the highest and peace to men of good will.* May the whole world give glory to God and in return receive His PEACE.

As we prepare to celebrate the Birth of our Saviour Jesus Christ, our Community wishes to say a heartfelt thank you to all of our *Friends of Fátima* for your kind support as we assure you of remembrance of all your needs and intentions in our annual

*Solemn Christmas Novena of Masses and prayers from 16-24 December.*

This is our gift to you with our love and gratitude.

We wish you a most Blessed Christmas and a grace-filled, peaceful New Year 2024!

*In union of prayer with the Holy Family, Mother Prioress OP and Sisters*

## Sr. Mary John, OP 1931 - 2023

On 22 April our dear Sr. Mary John (Mary Perpetua Ronayne) passed from this life to the home of our heavenly Father after a brief but difficult illness, which she bore with peace and tranquillity accepting it from the hands of God. Sister died peacefully with all the Sisters around her and one of our Dominican Friars who remained throughout those final hours.



Sister was born in London. As a young woman she studied Italian graduating with honours from University College. After several years working in the field of linguistics and translating, including four years at NATO in Italy, our Sister left all to enter the Dominican monastery in Carisbrooke, Isle of Wight, UK. Sometime later, at the closing of that monastery due to so few vocations, she came to Portugal to the Dominican monastery in Lumiar (Lisbon), while it was here in Fátima that she spent her final four years of religious life. Throughout her cloistered con-

templative life Sister continued her work of translations. She was always willing to help whether the language was Italian, French or Portuguese. Among her more noted works of translation are: *I Catherine*; *My Journal of the Council* by Yves Congar, OP;

several volumes of works by Cardinal José Tolentino (Portugal) and the book, *Calls From the Message of Fatima* by Sr. Lucia of Fatima.

Asked very shortly before she died to offer some words of wisdom for those of us continuing the journey, Sister replied: *"We are in the hands of God."*

Our Community would like to thank the Provincial and the Friars of the UK Province and all the family and friends of Sr. M. John who so kindly supported her in those final months. May the precious soul of our Sister, who was a Child of Mary, rest in the peace of Christ near Our Lady of the Rosary, St. Dominic and her patron, St. John the Baptist.

*Dialogue changes us, opens our horizon of understanding*  
*Dominican National Rosary Pilgrimage 2023*



*The following is the opening homily given by Fr. Gerard Timoner III OP, Master General of the Dominican Order at the annual national Rosary pilgrimage in Fatima in late September.*

We are gathered together as one Family of God, with a common home. We make this pilgrimage to Our Lady of Fatima, our Lady of the Rosary.

Someone might ask: If prayer is dialogue with God, how can the repetition of “Our Father” and “Hail Mary” be *dialogical*? Is the rosary nothing but a mindless and monotonous monologue? But praying the holy rosary is entering into a *dialogue with God*. The Lord’s prayer and the first part of the Hail Mary are part of the Gospel, the word of God. Praying them allows us to listen, to ponder God’s Word in our hearts. The first words of the Lord’s prayer invites us to acknowledge the grace of being God’s children, that

we are brothers and sisters to one another. Each petition in the Lord’s prayer reveals a loving God who nourishes us, forgives us, delivers us from evil. The words of the Angel Gabriel, “*the Lord is with you*” are words addressed to Mary and to us, for God is *Emmanuel*. It proclaims God’s nearness to us. After listening to God’s word, we also address Mary: “holy Mary, pray for us...”. Then we glorify the Triune God: “glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit”. The rosary is an invitation for us to enter into a deeper dialogue with God. It invites us to participate, to join Mary in her dialogue with God.

Mary of Nazareth became part of our lives because of three short but important “dialogues”. The first is a dialogue with the angel Gabriel: “Do not be afraid. Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name him Jesus.” And Mary said: “may it be done to me according to your word” (Luke 1:26-37). **This “dialogue” made Mary the *Theotokos*, the Mother of God.**

The second dialogue took place at the wedding at Cana: “My son, they have no more wine”. Jesus seemed to hesitate: “my hour has not yet come”; but eventually granted the request of

his mother who told the waiters: “do whatever my Son tells you” (John 2:1-11). **This “dialogue” clearly shows Mary as our intercessor who urges us to obey God, to be His disciples.**

The third dialogue is at the foot of the cross: “woman, behold, your son” (John 19:26-27). It seems less of a dialogue but a monologue for there was no audible response from a grieving mother. But in the silence of her anguished heart, Mary must have repeated her response to the angel: “let it be done according to your word”. **In this “dialogue” at the foot of the cross, Jesus gave Mary to us, to be “our” Mother.**

*Dialogue changes us, opens our horizon of understanding.* When old friends who turn into foes enter into sincere dialogue, they open the possibility for a restored and renewed friendship. When persons with different persuasions and beliefs enter into authentic dialogue, they open the path to understanding each other’s point of view. When strangers welcome each other in dialogue, they begin to realize that the *other* is not so different after all.

Mary was “changed” in her loving dialogue with God, she became *Mother of God, Intercessor and Disciple, Our Mother.* When we enter into a dialogue with God, we enter into prayer, a profound conversation with God that leads to a profound change, i.e., conversion. When we

enter into dialogue with others, a foe could turn into a friend, the *other* and stranger could become *familiar*, i.e., one who is not too different from ourselves; after all, we share the same humanity, we all belong to the family of God, ***we are brothers and sisters!*** This is an important truth that Pope Francis calls our attention to in his Letters *Amoris Laetitia* and *Laudato Si*. If humanity recognizes that we have one Father and we are one family, with a common home, humanity will not only survive but flourish.

### *Dialogue Requires Love*

*“Mary was ‘changed’ in her loving dialogue with God...”* Mary clearly *listened* to the Angel with her heart and her mind. Did she not ask: “How can this be done since I am a virgin?” Receiving the Angel’s reply, given to help her understanding, she responds with all the love of her Immaculate Heart: “Let it be done to me according to Your word.”

We too, entering into dialogue with God and one another are called to use our heart and our intellect. In this way our *listening* becomes dynamic and our dialogue holy and fruitful. Too often, it seems, in our efforts to dialogue we fail to bring our heart along! Let us pray our Rosary for renewed, loving dialogue in families and in the Church.

*Personal Reflection:*

*70 Years in Fatima as a Dominican Nun of the Perpetual Rosary*

As we approach the 70th anniversary of our Monastery in the Sanctuary of Fatima, blessed by the Apparitions of the Angel of Peace in 1916 and Our Lady of the Rosary in 1917, it is time to raise our voice in thanksgiving, uniting in Mary's canticle of praise *'My soul magnifies the Lord, my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour'*. It was the Marian Year 1954 when the Church was celebrating the Centenary of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception proclaimed by Bl. Pope Pius IX and Mary's Assumption proclaimed by Ven. Pius XII in 1950. Our Dominican Fathers were restoring the ancient Province of Portugal, and wished to have the spiritual support of the contemplative nuns, founded by St Dominic himself. As Mary identified herself in Fatima as Our Lady of the Rosary they appealed to us, with our charism of the Perpetual Rosary, to make the foundation. After much prayer and pondering, ten nuns from 3 monasteries - Rome, Glasgow, Camden NJ. - formed the founding community, of which I am the sole survivor today, hoping soon to take off heavenwards on angels' wings,



uniting in Mary's Fiat and God's holy Will.

In these 7 decades, we have seen Fatima developing from village dimensions to a great city, surrounding the Chapel of Apparitions requested by Our Lady, the Basilicas with the Tombs of the Little Shepherds, the spacious Esplanade for the multitude of pilgrims, the Parish Church where the Children were Baptized and their homes, the sites of the Angel's Apparitions, Our Lady's August Apparition (when the Children were in prison), the Via Sacra and Calvary Chapel. And the wonder is that all this is due to the heavenly Messages of the Angel of Peace and Our Lady of the Rosary transmitted to three innocent children and for all humanity: Messages of Conversion and Peace, of Penance and Salvation, of Prayer and Reparation, repeating the Angels' song *'Glory to God in the highest and Peace on earth to those of good will.'* In Lucia's Memoirs that we were entrusted to translate for the English-speaking world, we know how heroically the Little Shepherds responded to these appeals, so that Francisco and Jacinta who died young

are canonised Saints, and Lucia who lived to almost 98 has recently been declared Venerable.

In our cloistered life, founded by St. Dominic, we respond to the Lord's invitation «Come, follow Me» in the Order of Preachers for the Salvation of Souls, echoing Dominic's lament «What will become of sinners!» and the Saviour's call 'Repent and believe the Good News', so much in harmony with the Message of Fatima, that includes Consecration to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, the daily Rosary and First Saturdays devotion, bringing renewed faith, hope and love to all humanity. In conclusion, let us recall the amazing Miracle of the Sun on 13 October in Fatima, promised by Our Lady 'so that all may believe', illustrated in the canticle *Benedictus* that we sing daily in Lauds, our Morning Prayer: 'God visits us like the dawn from on high, to shine on those who live in darkness and in the shadow of death, and to guide us in the way of Peace.'

*Sr. Mary Diane*

*of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, OP*

(Our Sister from Co. Wexford (Ireland) is graced with 98 years and was one of the team of Sisters who translated [Fatima in Lucia's Own Words](#) for the English speaking world.)

*It all began with an invitation...*



Memorial card with his two Rosaries, gifted to our Monastery by his family.

At the close of 1949, the French Canadian Dominican Fr. Pius-Marie Gaudrault, OP, who was assigned the work of restoring the Order in Portugal, visited Mother Mary Louis Bertrand, OP in Rome to invite her to make a new foundation in Fátima of the Perpetual Rosary Nuns. Fr. Pius-Marie was familiar with the Perpetual Rosary Sisters since it was in Canada that our Founder Fr. Damien- Marie Saintourens, OP was assigned in the late 1800's after leaving France for the New World. After fervent prayer, M. Mary Louis Bertrand accepted the invitation and a new journey began for the '*missionaries of the Ave*'!

We render thanks to God for Fr. Pius-Marie's inspiration and invitation. He watched over the building of our monastery but sadly died one year before the actual opening. So very dedicated to the Holy Rosary it was fitting that he should be called Home on the feast of St. Louis Marie Grignon de Montfort - 28 April 1953. (To be continued...)

## *WYD Volunteers and Pope Francis Reflect on Their Experience*



Fatima Shrine watercolour by Mary

### *From Rosa...S. America (Colombia)*

It [WYD] makes me feel so alive and hopeful to see how many people are gathered in this same place, celebrating the beauty of life and faith all over the city, sharing their love for God and for their neighbours, proving that the differences of culture and language don't have to be a barrier but can be a bond that brings us together, to enrich us, to help us discover the world. For me it is like living in a perfect world, where everyone wants the best for all and where peace and God's presence can be appreciated everywhere...

I found myself surrounded by thousands of volunteers coming from all over the world to serve and contribute to making this dream come true. That's the most rewarding experience I'm taking with me. I have this innocent dream that if the whole world lived the WYD as we did, there would be no wars at all. That would be my advice to the world, a huge invitation

to everyone to live this experience at least once in a lifetime.

I learned more about myself and about how other people live their faith in their daily lives. This whole experience helped me get closer to God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit...

### *From Mary...USA*

This was my first time attending World Youth Day... I had a deep desire for Catholic fellowship and thought that volunteering with others who have a similar desire to serve the church would help me form lasting friendships... Attending WYD just filled me with even more awe and appreciation for the number of religious men and women who have dedicated their lives to serving the church and the diversity in which each culture practices their faith. It was such a sight to see and hear young people proclaim their love for God in unique ways throughout the week. And coming from NY where there is a shortage of priests and churches are closing, it was beyond inspiring to see the streets filled with men and women boldly living out their religious vocations and clothed in Christ with their habits, to attend Masses with hundreds of priests, and watch countless nuns share their vocation stories and joy with others! ...It was a great opportunity to take a step

back and see what really roots us all in our faith and how we can accompany each other and cultivate a deep relationship with God. It was this mix of awe and wonder with retrospection on how to uphold the teachings of our church and journey with others around the world that made WYD so meaningful.

### ***From Micaela...S. Africa***

I am a Portuguese South African, ...Although I attended a catholic school; there were very few people in my high school that practiced the catholic faith most were unbelievers.

The WYD experience helped me realise, that in a very materialistic world of trends and social media, there are many young people from all over the world that depend on God and the continuity of His church... for many young people the Catholic Church offers exactly what the modern world lacks – continuity, stability, guidelines

for living a Christian life, reverence, stillness, peace... Following God is one grand adventure... there definitely isn't a dull moment. It's not easy. Oftentimes it's confusing and uncomfortable. But I do think it is worth it. God calls us to live a life of courage and by doing so, God asks us to do things that may not always make 'sense'. God's way is different from our way, His thoughts are different to our thoughts...I think as believers in Christ, we often use the words *faith* and *trust* in a very wishy washy kinda way... 'Just have faith' or 'Don't worry about it, just trust God'. But actually, what I have learnt is that faith and trust are action words, and God will test whether we really do have *faith* and *trust* in Him. God wants us to put our money where our mouth (and hopefully our heart) is. To go out on a limb for Him, and it is in trying to do this, that we come as lose as we possibly can to our *true* destiny.

### ***From Holy Father Francis...***

“While in Ukraine and other places in the world there is fighting, and while in certain hidden halls war is planned... World Youth Day showed everyone that another way is possible: a world of brothers and sisters, where the flags of all peoples fly together, next to each other, without hatred, without fear, without closing up, without weapons. The message of the young people was clear: Will the ‘great of the earth’ listen to it? I ask myself: Will they listen to this young enthusiasm that wants peace? It is a parable for our time, and even today Jesus says: ‘He who has ears, let him hear! He who has eyes, let him look!’ We hope that the whole world will listen to this Youth Day and look to this beauty of youth going forward.”



# Dear Members of the Perpetual Rosary,

Thank you for your fidelity, for your commitment to meet once each month with Our Lady in your Rosary Hour of Guard. Some members are now joyfully beginning, while others, from whom we have heard, have been members for 30 and 40 years! Thank you very much!

Recently, we received a little treasure in the form of a small French prayer book entitled *Saint Rosaire* or Holy Rosary. This tiny book (see photo) is 200 years old (1824) and includes many pages on the Perpetual Rosary. The following thoughts are taken from this book.



The Rosary that we call perpetual does not comprise a different confraternity but only a continuation and an extension of the Rosary devotion. The name Perpetual Rosary is given because it is recited every day, at every hour without

ceasing and without interruption. This is an admirable development of the Rosary made in honour of God and the Most Holy Virgin across the whole world; like the Angels and Saints

praising and glorifying God continually in Heaven. He Himself inspired this devotion in a religious of the Order of St. Dominic. All Christians are exhorted to embrace this devotion.

There are three strong motives, among many others, that ought to oblige the Faithful to engage in this holy Association. The first is based on the love and the recognition that we owe to the Holy Virgin. The second is in the charity



## Perpetual Rosary Association

I promise to form a part of Our Lady's Guard of Honor by joining the Perpetual Rosary Association, and pledge myself to an Hour of Guard once a month:

Day of month (1st; 5th, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_ Hour chosen \_\_\_\_\_ am/pm

Christian and Surname \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

*(If you are already a member of the Perpetual Rosary Association, you do not need to enroll again. Offerings to help with the cost of printing and mailing are gratefully received)*

that we ought to exercise towards our neighbour i.e. praying for the conversion of sinners, for the dying and for the souls in Purgatory. The third motive is in regard to the personal benefits that belonging to the Association can bring, including a share in all the prayers and spiritual merits of the other members.

The Rosary, as we know is a Gospel prayer born in the Immaculate Heart of Mary as She pondered the mysteries of Christ in Her life. Mary's Heart became the Bethlehem of the Rosary! Therefore, devotion to Her Immaculate Heart and the Rosary are inseparable. This is revealed so clearly in Fátima. Our Lady said: "My Immaculate Heart will be your *refuge* and the *way* that will lead you to God." Our Rosary is our refuge and our way! It is said that when a child is afraid he runs to his mother but when the child is in danger, the mother runs to her child. In the Rosary we go to Jesus through

Mary and Mary our Mother runs to help us!

Dear Perpetual Rosary members, thank you again for keeping the light of Christ burning in your homes when you meet with Our Lady each month. Just as our sisters and brothers 200 years ago and more kept watch, today, all over the world there are members hidden and perhaps unknown who are keeping watch in their Hour of Guard with their Rosary in hand and heart. Our former Bishop Alberto Cosme



A Sister's Rosary for the Hour of Guard

do Amaral (1916-2005) once wrote: "*The wave of evil that we see today can only be turned back by an equal wave of holiness.*" You are part of this wave of holiness. May the Child Jesus increase your faith, hope and love at this Christmas and always so that this wave of holiness may overshadow the whole world!

***Blessed Christmas to all!  
Your grateful Rosary Sisters***

*Dominican Nuns of the Perpetual Rosary  
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## *St. Jacinta of Fátima and Her Love for the Holy Father*

Each of the children of Fátima received a vocation in the light of grace that poured through Our Lady's hands into their hearts and souls. Little Jacinta was so imbued with the beauty of Our Lady from heaven she wanted to go there too. Having seen the vision of hell (July 13) she desired with all her heart that no one should go there. This small child spent the remainder of her brief life offering prayers and every possible sacrifice for the conversion of poor sinners that they might go to Heaven to be with the 'beautiful Lady'.

In addition, this tiny child received a special grace to care for the Holy Father. One day, Lucia tells us: "Two priests, who had come to question us, recommended that we pray for the Holy Father. Jacinta asked who the Holy Father was. The good priests explained who he was and how much he needed prayers. This gave Jacinta such love for the Holy Father that, every time she offered her sacrifices to Jesus, she added: "and for the Holy Father." At the



end of the Rosary, she always said three Hail Marys for the Holy Father...

Another time: "Jacinta called out to me: «Didn't you see the Holy Father?» "No." "I don't know how it was, but I saw the Holy Father in a very big

house, kneeling by a table, with his head buried in his hands, and he was weeping. Outside the house, there were many people. Some of them were throwing stones, others were cursing him and using bad language Poor Holy Father, we must pray very much for him."

In these times, when we hear disparaging things and even ridicule of our Holy Father by some, including members of the Church, it is deeply saddening. Are these the 'stones' of which St. Jacinta spoke?

The Holy Father, Vicar of Christ on earth is "*Bishop of Rome and Peter's successor; he 'is the perpetual and visible source and foundation of the unity both of the Bishops and company of the faithful.'*" (L G. 23)

Yes, with St. Jacinta we must pray very much for the Holy Father today.

*To love is to give everything. It's to give oneself.*

The whole Church looks to the Carmelite St. Therese of the Child Jesus and the Holy Face, Doctor of the “science of love”, as a model and teacher in her spiritual “little way” of climbing to heaven. In honour of the 150th anniversary of the birth of the Saint – 2 January 1873, Pope Francis issued an Apostolic Exhortation the title of which is: **“It is confidence”**. Her life and message appeal to all Christians and in a special way to cloistered contemplative nuns, since it was in this way of life that she lived and perfected the “little way”. Yet, whatever may be our vocation in life or our stage of life, the “little way of spiritual childhood” is accessible to all. Here are just a few thoughts from “It is confidence”.

“Therese could define her mission in these words: “I shall desire in heaven the same thing as I do now on earth: to love Jesus and to make Him loved”.

She wrote that she entered Carmel *“to save souls”*. In a word, she did not view her consecration to God apart from the pursuit of the good of her brothers and sisters... She felt herself *a sister to atheists*, seated with them at table, like Jesus who sat with sinners (cf. *Mt 9:10-13*). She interceded for them, ever renewing her own act of faith, in constant loving communion with the Lord... Therese *practised charity in littleness*, in the simplest things of daily life, and she did so in the company of the Virgin Mary, from whom she learned



Our Sisters at prayer –  
It's all a work of trust and love!

that *“to love is to give everything. It's to give oneself.”* Mary was the first to experience the “little way” in pure faith and humility.

It is trust that brings us to love and thus

sets us free from fear. It is trust that helps us to stop looking to ourselves and enables us to put into God's hands what he alone can accomplish... And so, amid the suffering of her last days, Therese was able to say: *“I count only on love”*. In the end, only love counts. Trust makes roses blossom and pours them forth as an overflow of the superabundance of God's love. Let us ask, then, for such trust as a free and precious gift of grace, so that the paths of the Gospel may open up in our lives.”

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