

Friends of FATIMA

N.º 105

Dear Friends of Fatima,



As we close this year, we assure you that we were very close to you in prayer through these months. Here, several events marked the year with joy and gratitude. In the first week of May two Sisters travelled to Poland to attend the First Assembly of our Association of St.

Hyacinth, with Dominican monasteries from across Europe. Then, on June 16th, with family and friends, we gave thanks to God for 70 years of Dominican life in Fatima. On July 31st, our dear Sr. Angela Marie of the Rosary, joyfully celebrated 60 years of Religious profession in our community. Family and friends from

near and far, including the Provincial of Ireland Fr John Harris, OP came to share the day. From May to October we received many pilgrims from various nations. Now it's Christmas – the Birth of our Saviour Jesus Christ. He comes in silence bringing Peace and Divine Light to a darkened world. May Our Lady help us to open wide our hearts, our entire lives to welcome Him and to visit Him in the Blessed Sacrament in the spirit of faith and humility, which animated the shepherds when they visited the Infant God at Bethlehem.

Where Christ reigns, there is Peace, there is Hope!

We Thank You for your generous support of our community.

To express our gratitude, a solemn Christmas Novena will be offered from *December 16 – 24 with Holy Mass, novena prayers and hourly Rosaries for all of your intentions.* Please join us in fervent prayer trusting completely in the Divine Child Jesus, His Holy Mother Mary and St. Joseph to hear and answer our prayers.

Wishing you a Most Blessed and Peaceful Christmas and New Year 2025!

Mother Prioress, OP and Sisters



We will sing forever of your Love, O Lord!
70 Years Celebration

70 years may seem very brief when we consider that some of our Dominican monasteries here in Europe are centuries old. But situated in this great Marian shrine, these few years have been filled to overflowing with prayer, praise, sacrificial labour and loving service to Christ and Our Lady of the Rosary.

In preparation for this anniversary we held a Triduum of prayer and preaching. A conference followed by the Rosary and Benediction was held each day led by Fr. Filipe Rodrigues, OP our Vicar and Fr. Lawrence Lew, OP General Promoter of the Rosary for the Dominican Order. (Videos of these days are posted on our website.) Then, on Sunday, June 16th, our Bishop José Ornelas, SC celebrated Holy Mass of thanksgiving in our chapel together with our Provincial, our Vicar, the General Promoter of the Rosary, the Prior of Fatima and several other Friars. A large group of friends and family joined us in this moment of prayerful gratitude for the countless graces and blessings of these years. We gave thanks for all who were associated with the foundation, the building and the consecration of this Monastery on that very warm June 16th 1954. Indeed, it was a special gift to have our Sr. Mary Diane – one of the Irish contingent - with us to renew her memories of that day and to give thanks

for all of our faithful Perpetual Rosary Sisters who have gone before us.

These archival notes record the arrival of our first four Sisters from USA:

“After long months of prayerful preparation and expectation on the part of four of our Sisters in Camden,...the Sisters set sail on the *S.S. Vulcania* on Friday, April 2, at 12:35 noon... As the *Vulcania* slowly pulled away from the pier amid the waving of handkerchiefs and cries of “good- bye” the four Sisters began the Rosary in thanksgiving for the great privilege which was theirs – that of being among the first group of Perpetual Rosary Sisters destined for Fatima... On Friday, April 9, when the ship radio announced that the *Vulcania* would dock in Lisbon between 4:00 and 5:00pm, excitement ran high, and bags, cappas, passports, etc were soon in readiness. As the ship sailed up the Tagus to the port of Lisbon the four Sisters hastened up on deck and very soon they spied the Dominican habit. Moments seemed hours until, at last, at 4:30 pm they disembarked and received a loving, maternal welcome from Mother Mary Louis Bertrand...” (*Customs procedures obliged a short stay in Lisbon.*) “At length, at 9:45 am on Tuesday, April 13, Our Lady’s day... we left Lisbon for Fatima. Our

hearts beat very fast and pulsed with joy and gratitude as we realized we would soon kneel in the hallowed spot forever sanctified by Our Blessed Mother. After leaving Batalha – as we neared Fatima, we began the Rosary and just as we finished the five decades we arrived in Fatima at 11:50 – and went to the hostel of the Dominican Sisters. After dinner we went to the Basilica. On the way we recited the Rosary, finishing it at the Capelinha, where the attendant touched our Rosaries to the statue. Since it was the 13th, the statue was moved out on the small platform in front of the altar – so we obtained a very clear and close view. As we knelt, just a few feet from the miraculous statue, we felt that Our Blessed Mother was giving her children a loving welcome. We next visited the tombs of Jacinta and Francisco and shortly after left for our first visit to our new monastery. Who could describe our feelings as we approached it! The white walls and the terra cotta roof stand out in sharp contrast to the deep blue cloudless sky of Fatima. As one approaches closer, the magnificent chapel, with its Romanesque arches, seems a truly fitting tribute to



From the beginning...

our Blessed Mother..."

The notes conclude with: "There is a sense of timelessness here in Fatima – of deep quietude and peace. No one here is in a hurry, and almost unconsciously one develops the same attitude. We feel very far removed from the whirl and rush of American life. Our Lady's presence and influence are very strongly felt, especially at the Basilica. Nothing seems to matter but eternal verities. We feel especially privileged to be spending Holy week so close to Our Lady and in union with Her."

Having arrived on the 13th and in Holy Week, the Nuns spent their first Paschal Triduum in Fatima joining the Friars next door for all the sacred ceremonies. Truly a blessed way to begin their contemplative life at the Altar of the World!

As we give thanks to God for these precious years we are conscious of the urgent need that other young women may hear the Call of Christ to "Come follow Me" to our cloisters. We thank all who are praying for vocations.

JESUS we trust in You!

Reflection: Dominican Life in Fatima

On July 13, 1917, Our Lady said: "If what I say to you is done, many souls will be saved and there will be peace... but if people do not cease offending God, a worse one will break out during the Pontificate of Pius XI." Indeed this happened. Our Perpetual Rosary Sisters in their Rome Monastery (1930-1968) experienced firsthand the war with its occupation of the eternal city from September 1944 until the allied forces arrived in June 1945. During those very difficult years Mother Mary Louis Bertrand as Mother General of four of the Perpetual Rosary monasteries was unable to travel to Rome. But soon after the war she went to be with the Nuns there. Around the same time Fr. Pius-Marie Gaudrault, OP was called to Portugal from Canada to help restore the ancient Dominican Province there. In those immediate post war years, neither Fr. Pius-Marie nor Mother Louis Bertrand knew that soon their paths would cross so significantly in Fatima – the very place where Our Lady had warned of the horrible, fratricidal war that had just ended.

Thus, by the fraternal cooperation between the Dominican Friars and Nuns, Dominican contemplative life has been present here in the Land of Holy Mary since 1954. Monastery Pius XII was



founded 37 years after the Apparitions and just 24 years from the time of their approval (1930).

What has it been like to be a Dominican Nun in Fatima in these years? In a word: a singular grace! The grace of the Call of God to serve Christ totally, "to root our lives in His love" came first and then followed the grace to be sent to Fatima to fulfil that Call.

The cloistered contemplative life, as St Thérèse said, is 'to be love at the heart of the Church'. Fatima is at the Heart of the Church because "the Immaculate Heart of Mary is the Heart and noblest member of the Mystical Body of Christ." Fatima is a continual Pentecost. Daily and most especially on the 13th of each month above all in May and October, multitudes of believers arrive to unite in prayer with Mary, Mother of Jesus and Mother of us all.

Pope Benedict XVI, speaking of his visit to Fatima in May 2010 confirmed: "Thus there is no Church without Pentecost. And I would like to add that there is no Pentecost with

out the Virgin Mary. This is how it was at the beginning, in the Upper Room, where the disciples “with one accord devoted themselves to prayer, together with the women and Mary the Mother of Jesus, and with his brethren” (Acts 1:14). And this is how it always is, in every place and in every time. I witnessed it a short time ago at Fatima. What did that great multitude on the square in front of the Shrine experience, where we were truly all of one heart and one soul? It was a renewed Pentecost. In our midst was Mary, the Mother of Jesus...Wherever Christians gather in prayer with Mary, the Lord grants his Spirit.” (23 May 2010 Pentecost Sunday)

So what is it like to live the Dominican charism in Fatima? It is to be with Mary and the disciples always united in prayer awaiting the fire and the power of the Holy Spirit. Pentecost occurred in the infant Church. Living in Fatima the experience of Church is in the air we breathe: in the multitude of languages heard; in the great liturgies celebrated; in the lay faithful, religious, clergy, Bishops, Cardinals and even Popes who come regularly. Fatima

Come Holy Spirit, through the powerful intercession of the Immaculate Heart of Mary and guard us in Truth.

has seen seven Papal visits since 1967.

The actual rhythm of our monastic life is set by our Constitutions and Rule. Here, there is also the rhythm set by pilgrim hospitality, primarily from May to October. Pilgrims come and pilgrims bid “*Adeus*” to Our Lady and to us. But they do not leave Fatima behind. They leave as ‘helpers of Our Lady’ leading others to Christ Her Son and our Saviour.

We could add so much more but we shall conclude with St Dominic and his place in Fatima. It was August 15, 1217 when he sent out his first friars two by two from southern France to go forth and preach the Gospel – the Good News - for the eternal salvation of souls. And it was just 700 years later – the summer of 1917 - that the Queen of Heaven came to three little children in an unknown place called Fatima, to call us to continue to preach the Good News – the Gospel of salvation in a moment of history deeply in need of hearing this Good News. The Message from Fatima is all about the Gospel, all about how to save our immortal souls and to help others to do the same. This is our Dominican vocation.



Pilgrims of Hope - Living the Jubilee Year 2025

In Prayer with Mary, Mother of Hope!

“The Jubilee has always been an event of great spiritual, ecclesial, and social significance in the life of the Church. Ever since 1300, when Boniface VIII instituted the first Holy Year – initially celebrated every hundred years, then, following its biblical precedent, every fifty years, and finally every twenty-five years...”

On December 24th the Holy Door of St. Peter’s Basilica in the Vatican will be opened by the Holy Father commencing the Jubilee Year. The closing of the Holy Year will take place on Jan 6 2025. May the door of our hearts like the Holy Door open wide to Christ everyday of 2025 and remain open until we meet Him face to face.

From the great Jubilee of the millennium 2000 we have passed another 25 years and Holy Father Francis recognizes the thirst for hope and peace by all the world so he has given the theme of: *Pilgrims of Hope*. Pilgrims journey... and in this case he wants us all to journey with Hope and to spread that hope along the



way of our lives to all whom we meet.

The Jubilee is an invitation to everyone in the life of the Church to deepen our living and personal relationship with Jesus Christ, the “door” of salvation. It is a time of grace for the Church for

each member and thereby the whole world. “...We must fan the flame of hope that has been given us, and help everyone to gain new strength and certainty by looking to the future with an open spirit, a trusting heart and far-sighted vision. The forthcoming Jubilee can contribute greatly to restoring a climate of hope and trust as a prelude to the renewal and rebirth that we so urgently desire...”

“Prayer is the first strength of hope. You pray and hope grows, it moves forward. I would say that prayer opens the door to hope. There is hope but I open the door with my prayer” (Pope Francis May 20, 2020)

“Hope finds its supreme witness in the Mother of God. In the Blessed Virgin, we see that hope is not

naive optimism but a gift of grace amid the realities of life. Like every mother, whenever Mary looked at her Son, she thought of his future. Surely she kept pondering in her heart the words spoken to her in the Temple by the elderly Simeon: “This child is destined for the falling and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed, so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed – and a sword will pierce your own soul too” (Lk 2:34-35). At the foot of the cross, she witnessed the passion and death of Jesus, her innocent Son. Overwhelmed with grief, she nonetheless renewed her “fiat”, never abandoning her hope and trust in God. In this way, Mary cooperated for our sake in the fulfilment of all that her Son had foretold in announcing that he would have to “undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again” (Mk 8:31). In the travail of that sorrow, offered in love, Mary became our Mother, the Mother of Hope. It

is not by chance that popular piety continues to invoke the Blessed Virgin as *Stella Maris*, a title that bespeaks the sure hope that, amid the tempests of this life, the Mother of God comes to our aid, sustains us and encourages us to persevere in hope and trust.” (Bull of Jubilee Year 2025 No 24)

Bishop José Ornelas, of the Diocese of Leiria-Fatima reminded the pilgrims present in the square on July 13th: “We are *pilgrims of hope* for the upcoming jubilee year of 2025, so let’s take this message that we have received here [in Fatima] everywhere,” as the disciples did with Jesus’ words.

To help us along this Jubilee journey remember that: “Prayer is the royal road to holiness, which enables us to be contemplative even in the midst of activity.” To be contemplative is to ponder in our hearts, in company with the Holy Spirit as Mary did, the things we don’t yet understand (Lk2:19, Lk 2:51); it is to make use of the gift of silence to give space to pondering the mysteries in our lives.

“Do I ask God, in prayer, for the gift of a holy life? Do I let myself be guided by the good impulses that his Spirit inspires in me? And do I commit myself personally to practicing the Beatitudes of the Gospel, in the environments in which I live?”
Pope Francis Nov.1 2024

Prayer for the Jubilee Year



Father in heaven, may the *faith* you have given us in your Son, Jesus Christ, our brother, and the flame of *charity* enkindled in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, reawaken in us the blessed *hope* for the coming of your Kingdom. May your grace transform us into tireless cultivators of the seeds of the Gospel. May those seeds transform from within both humanity and the whole cosmos in the sure expectation of a new heaven and a new earth, when, with the powers of Evil vanquished, your glory will shine eternally. May the grace of the Jubilee reawaken in us, *Pilgrims of Hope*, a yearning for the treasures of heaven. May that same grace spread the joy and peace of our Redeemer throughout the earth. To you our God, eternally blessed, be glory and praise for ever. *Amen.*

1925

"Look at my Heart..."

2025

One hundred years ago, on December 10, 1925, the most holy Virgin appeared to Sr. Lucia with the Child Jesus. The Child spoke: "Have compassion on the Heart of your most holy Mother, covered with thorns, with which ungrateful men pierce it at every moment, and there is no one to make an act of reparation to remove them." Then the most holy Virgin said: "Look, my daughter, at my Heart, surrounded with thorns with which ungrateful men pierce me every moment by their blasphemies and ingratitude. You at least try to console me and say that I promise to assist at the hour of death, with the graces necessary for salvation, all those who, on the first Satur-



day of five consecutive months, shall confess, receive Holy Communion, recite five decades of the Rosary, and keep me company for fifteen minutes while meditating on the fifteen mysteries of the Rosary, with the intention of making reparation to me." Two months later on 15 February 1926 the Child Jesus returned and said to Lucia: "...have you spread through the world what our heavenly Mother requested of you?" In this appeal and in this timing we can sense the urgency to offer reparation to the Heart of Jesus' Mother and ours in the devotion of the Five First Saturdays. Let us continue -or begin- this devotion so as to say Yes to the Child Jesus!

Dear Members of the Perpetual Rosary, Christmas peace and joy to all of you!

In this Christmas message we would like first, to express our gratitude for your fidelity to Our Lady's Guard of Honour each month. This is precious because it assures that somewhere in the world – where you are – the Holy Rosary is being prayed at every hour and not just one but many! We urge you, in view of the great trials through which the human family is now passing, to continue to pray the Rosary everyday and to do all you can to invite others to join the Perpetual Rosary Association. Yes, even those who may no longer practice the faith can be invited to participate in this Association or simply to pray the Rosary. We will gladly send the Perpetual Rosary pamphlet explaining the Association to anyone who is interested.

Secondly, the Rosary is proven to be an excellent instrument of evangelization *and* re-evangelization. As

members of the Perpetual Rosary we are 'Our Lady's helpers' in evangelization especially for our brothers and sisters who have interrupted the practice of the Faith. For them – family, friends or others - we have prepared a small leaflet to invite them to return through Our Blessed Mother's Rosary. For those who wish we can send a copy to you. These may be of interest to your Parish priest also.

A little Rosary news...

As part of the Year of Prayer preparing for the Jubilee Year 2025, the Rector of the Sanctuary of Fatima invited some contemplative communities of Nuns in Portugal to compose meditations for the Sorrowful mysteries of the Rosary. It was a privilege for our community



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)

to be asked to participate in this. Our meditations were used at the evening radio Rosary from the Capelinha on Friday July 26th.

and a little more Rosary news...

Together with two of our Dominican Friars from Warsaw, Poland, Fr. Michal and Fr. Maciej we were blessed to help organize a Dominican *Rosary of Jericho* from October 6-13. These were seven days of continual prayer of the Holy Rosary for the intention of *Peace in Ukraine*. Each Monastery, priory or convent, with the laity took their turn from 12 noon to 12 noon the next day. This time of fervent and intense prayer passed from Dominican Nuns, Friars, Sisters, and Laity from Fatima to Poland, to Ukraine and to Russia. From the International Promoter of the Rosary Teams we learned that in the Ivory Coast (West Africa), at the great Basilica of Our Lady of Peace, the Friars there were to lead an all night Rosary Vigil during the night of Oct.

5-6. Fr. Elvis, OP at the Basilica graciously agreed to unite with our *Rosary of Jericho*. That night nearly 6000 persons prayed the Rosary at Our Lady of Peace Basilica! This experience was a beautiful witness to the loving cooperation among the OP Family. The Rosary brings life and unity! Now, we continue to pray and await Our Lady's miracle for peace in Ukraine. It will happen. The Mother of God will see to it!

*Your very grateful
Perpetual Rosary Sisters*



*“If the fervent devotion of our
ancestors to the Holy Rosary
was revived,
all those hatreds and divisions
which rend contemporary
society would disappear.”*

From: *The Rosary Meditated*, 1866, p. 124

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Thoughts from the new Encyclical Letter “He Loved Us” on the Sacred Heart of Jesus by Pope Francis

“The symbol of the heart has often been used to express the love of Jesus Christ. Some have questioned whether this symbol is still meaningful today. Yet living as we do in an age of superficiality, rushing frenetically from one thing to another without really knowing why, and ending up as insatiable consumers and slaves to the mechanisms of a market unconcerned about the deeper meaning of our lives, all of us need to rediscover the importance of the heart.

...If we find it hard to trust others because we have been hurt by lies, injuries and disappointments, the Lord whispers in our ear: “Take heart, son!” (Mt 9:2), “Take heart, daughter!” (Mt 9:22). He encourages us to overcome our fear and to realize that, with him at our side, we have nothing to lose. To Peter, in his fright, “Jesus immediately reached out his hand and caught him”, saying, “You of little faith, why did you doubt?” (Mt 14:31). Nor should you be afraid. Let him draw near and sit at your side. There may be many people we distrust, but not him. Do not hesitate because of your sins. Keep in mind that many sinners “came and sat with him” (Mt 9:10), yet Jesus was scandalized by none of them. It was the religious elite that complained and treated him as “a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners” (Mt 11:19). When the Pharisees criticized him for his closeness to people deemed



base or sinful, Jesus replied, “I desire mercy, not sacrifice” (Mt 9:13).

...That same Jesus is now waiting for you to give him the chance to bring light to your life, to raise you up and to fill you with his strength. Before his death, he assured his disciples, “I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you. In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me” (Jn 14:18-19). Jesus always finds a way to be present in your life, so that you can encounter him...

“...we are called to build a new civilization of love. That is what it means to make reparation as the heart of Christ would have us do. Amid the devastation wrought by evil, the heart of Christ desires that we cooperate with him in restoring goodness and beauty to our world...

...Jesus is calling you and sending you forth to spread goodness in our world. His call is one of service, a summons to do good... It is not important whether you see immediate results; leave that to the Lord who works in the secret of our hearts. Keep experiencing the joy born of our efforts to share the love of Christ with others.”

(Quotes taken from *Dilexit Nos - He Loved Us*, 24 October 2024, No. 1,37,38,182,215)

*From the Pastoral Letter of the Bishop of Fátima
Approving the Apparitions - 13 October 1930
with a plan to follow the Message of Our Lady*

“...It remains for us, beloved brethren in Our Lord, to warn you that, if, for us, it is a great reason for joy and consolation, this grace that the Most Holy Virgin has granted us, greater is the obligation on us to correspond with Her goodness.

The experience of years shows that “the eyes of God are open and His ears attentive to prayers in this place” (2 Chron 7:15). But it is necessary that we show ourselves as authentic Catholics, through the purity of our lives, the practice of the Commandments of God, the observance of the precepts of the Church, respect and submission to the directions of the Apostolic See; for not everyone who says, “Lord, Lord will enter the kingdom of Heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in Heaven, he will enter the Kingdom of Heaven” (Mt7:21). Holy Church, referring to the Mystery of the Incarnation of the Divine Word, exclaims: “Oh Blessing worthy of eternal gratitude! God made Himself known to us in a visible manner so that seeing Him we would be inflamed by the love of the invisible grandeurs!” (Preface for Christmas)



We recommend to you, dearest brethren, in a special manner, affection for Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament, devotion to the Most Holy Virgin, to St. Joseph, to the holy souls in purgatory, to the daily recitation of at least five decades of the Rosary, avoidance of sins of the flesh, of

immodest attire and immoral readings; the practice of penance, which Jesus so much insisted on, and the Virgin, Our Lady recalled so much to mind; charity towards all our brethren and principally towards the sick and the poor.

If we do this, we will be able to apply to our Country the word of the Prophet Jeremiah, “If you amend your behaviour and your actions, I will stay with you, in the land that long ago I gave to your fathers forever (Jer7:5-6).

This Pastoral letter of ours is to be sent to the Reverend Parish Priests to be read and explained to the faithful in the customary manner.”

Leiria, October 13, 1930

+ Joseph Bishop of Leiria