



Dolorosa

EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

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Fatima: A Message of Hope

Second Apparition
June 13, 1917

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The year was 1789. France was in a state of civil turmoil. Riots were erupting throughout the country. To put an end to this unrest, King Louis XVI yielded to the wishes of his advisors and called a meeting of the Estates General. The Estates General was an assembly of men who represented the people. The purpose of this assembly was to advise the king in the important affairs of France. Louis XVI convoked this meeting with reluctance, for he knew that the many of the men who made up the Estates General were godless and ambitious. Yet, he thought it in the best interest of France to call the meeting in the hope of ending the rioting.

The Estates General met on May 4, 1789. About a month of this meeting, they changed their name and their mission. They renamed themselves the National Assembly, and they changed their purpose from assisting and advising the king to the establishment of a liberal government. Several weeks later, the infamous storming of Bastille was carried out. Thus did the godless French Revolution begin.

In 1790, the National Assembly drew up a decree called *The Civil Constitution of the Clergy*. This decree practically seized control of the Catholic Church in France. All religious orders were suppressed. The existing bishoprics were abolished and replaced with new ones which operated under the immediate control of the State. The personal property of the clergy was confiscated, and the State was empowered to appoint all bishops.

By 1792, King Louis XVI had virtually lost all his authority and was powerless to stop the revolutionaries. With the help of the civilian mobs, the liberals had successfully taken over every part of the French government. An influential and sinister man named Maximilien Robespierre was chosen to lead the revolution. Robespierre wasted no time in disposing of the king, for soon after coming to power in 1793, he ordered that Louis XVI and his wife Marie Antoinette be executed several months apart for so-called crimes against the State.

In September 1793, what history calls the Reign of Terror began. In the name of liberty, equality, and fraternity, thousands upon thousands of people were murdered by Robespierre and the revolutionaries. Churches were plundered and sacred vessels were taken. Statues were desecrated and smashed to pieces. Altars, sacred books, relics of the saints, crucifixes, and holy pictures were publicly burned in the streets while the mobs danced around them, blaspheming Almighty God. Numerous Catholic priests and religious died martyrs; many others were exiled from the country. The worship of God was forbidden. Instead, the revolutionaries enthroned the goddess of reason on the high altar of the Cathedral of Notre Dame in Paris for the mobs to worship. Such was the horrific destruction and diabolical havoc caused by the French Revolution.



Apparition of the Sacred Heart to Saint Margaret Mary at the convent of the Visitation Order at Paray-le-Monial, France.

What many people do not know, however, is that all this bloodshed, blasphemy, and sacrilege could have been avoided. They could have been prevented if King Louis XIV, who reigned from 1661-1715, had heeded a message from heaven.

Between the years 1673 and 1675, the Sacred Heart made a series of revelations to Saint Margaret Mary, a nun of the Visitation Order. These have come to be known as the Great Revelations of the Sacred Heart. In addition to these apparitions, Our Divine Savior also appeared to the Saint several other times with messages from heaven. Among these messages was a personal one from the Sacred Heart to King Louis XIV. Saint Margaret Mary relates the message to Mother de Saumaise, her superior, in a letter dated June 1689. Very simply, the message was this:

Make known to the eldest son of My Sacred Heart [that is, King Louis XIV] that, as his temporal birth was obtained by devotion to my Holy Infancy, so will he obtain his birth into grace and eternal glory by consecrating himself to My adorable Heart. It wants to triumph over his and, through him, over the hearts of the great ones of the earth. It wants to reign in his palace, be painted on his standards, and be engraved on his arms [that is, the weapons of his army], so that they may be victorious over all his enemies. It wants to bring low these proud and stubborn heads and make him triumphant over all the enemies of holy Church. (*The Letters of Saint Margaret Mary Alacoque* 147)

This message was given to King Louis XIV in 1689—one hundred years before the outbreak of the French Revolution. There was, however, no response. For

whatever reason, the King of France did not accede to the request of the King of Heaven. Along with certain Catholic historians, I believe that if Louis XIV, who is praised as one of the greatest kings in history, had placed the image of the Sacred Heart in his own heart and on the standards of France as Our Lord had requested, the French Revolution would not have happened one century later. I believe this to be so because the Eternal Son of God, in His goodness and mercy, would not have permitted a country in which His Sacred Heart reigned to be overthrown and conquered by the godless liberals of the time. Louis XIV, however, did not do as he was asked. Thus, one hundred years later, Catholic France was devastated.

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Fast-forward to June 13, 1917. The Mother of God had already appeared once to Lucia, Francisco, and Jacinta in May of that year. During this second apparition, Our Lady gave the Fatima children essentially the same message as Our Lord had given Saint Margaret Mary for King Louis XIV. However, instead of asking for devotion to the Sacred Heart to be promoted in France, Our Lady requested that devotion to her Immaculate Heart be established in the world.

In his book *The Message of Fatima*, Father John de Marchi relates what happened during this apparition. After asking the children to return again on the thirteenth of July, Our Lady requested that the children continue to say the Rosary every day. This time, however, she asked them to insert the following prayer between each decade of the Rosary: “O my Jesus, forgive us our sins. Save us from the fires of hell. Lead all souls to heaven, especially those most in need of Thy mercy.”

Then, after telling Lucia that Jacinta and Francisco would go to heaven soon, Our Lady said to her, “Jesus wants to use you to make me known and loved. He wants to establish the Devotion to my Immaculate Heart in the world. I promise salvation to those who embrace it and their souls will be loved by God as flowers placed by myself to adorn His throne.”

Hearing that Jacinta and Francisco would leave her, Lucia grew sad. “Am I going to stay here alone?” she asked.

“No, my daughter,” Our Lady reassured her. “I will never leave you, my Immaculate Heart will be your refuge and the way that will lead you to God.”

“As she said these last words,” Lucia relates, “the Blessed Virgin opened her hands and communicated to us for the second time the reflex of the immense light that enveloped her. We saw ourselves in it, as if submerged in God. . . . There was a heart before the palm of the right hand of Our Lady, with thorns piercing it. We understood that this was the Immaculate Heart of Mary, so offended by the sins of mankind, desiring reparation” (56-57).

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In the 17th-18th century, it was devotion to the Sacred Heart that would have surely saved France from the horrors of the French Revolution. Today, alongside devotion to the Sacred Heart, it is devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary that will save the world from horrors far worse than those perpetrated both in the French and Russian revolutions. Our Lady herself gave us this message: “My Son wants to establish the Devotion to my Immaculate Heart in the world. I promise salvation to those who embrace it.” She then took pains to add these words of consolation: “My Immaculate Heart will be your refuge and the way that will lead you to God.”

Today, devotion to the Immaculate Heart is essential for the world as a whole and for our own personal lives. It is essential because, as Saint Louis de Montfort wrote in his glorious work *True Devotion to Mary*, “the salvation of the world began through Mary and through her it must be accomplished” (20). The Saint continues:

In these latter times Mary must shine forth more than ever in mercy, power and grace: *in mercy*, to bring back and welcome lovingly the poor sinners and wanderers who are to be converted and return to the Catholic Church; *in power*, to combat the enemies of God who will rise up menacingly to seduce and crush by promises and threats all those who oppose them; finally, she must shine forth *in grace* to inspire and support the valiant soldiers and loyal servants of Jesus Christ who are fighting for His cause. (21-22)

Saint Louis de Montfort goes on to explain Satan’s role in modern times. The Saint says, in so many words, that since the devil knows his time is short, he will intensify his efforts and his onslaughts every day. He will stir up persecutions and set treacherous snares for the faithful



servants of Mary. Continuing, Saint Louis writes:

But the humble Mary will always triumph over Satan, the proud one, and so great will be her victory that she will crush his head, the very seat of his pride. She will always unmask his serpent’s cunning and expose his wicked plots. She will scatter to the winds his devilish plans and to the end of time keep her faithful servants from his cruel claws.

. . . Mary’s power over the evil spirits will especially shine forth in the latter times, when Satan will lie in wait for her heel, that is, for her humble servants and her poor children whom she will rouse to fight against him. In the eyes of the world they will be little and poor and, like the heel, lowly in the eyes of all, downtrodden and crushed, as is the heel by the other parts of the body. But in compensation for this they will be rich in God’s graces, which will be abundantly bestowed on them by Mary. They will be superior to all creatures by their great zeal and so strongly will they be supported by divine assistance that, in union with Mary, they will crush the head of Satan with their heel that is, their humility, and bring victory to Jesus Christ. (23-24)

In light of Saint Louis de Montfort’s repeated references to the latter times, one might ask: “Are these the latter days? Are we living in the end times?” Of course, no one knows the answer to this question—save God. Pope

Saint Pius X, however, believed the latter days were upon us in 1903. That is how wicked the world was then. What would he say of today? What would he say seeing today's unbelief and immorality spreading like wildfire across the world, burning countless souls in their path? There is no question about it—the world today is far worse than it was in 1903. In fact, the world has grown so wicked and men have become so depraved that these may very well be the latter days. Whether they are or not, devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary and her Immaculate Heart are necessary in these days if we will save our souls.

As devout children of the Blessed Virgin Mary, then, we must strive to have a true devotion to her. True devotion to Mary, according to Saint Louis de Montfort, has five necessary qualities. It is 1) interior, 2) trustful, 3) holy, 4) constant, and 5) disinterested.

Interior

Our devotion to Mary should come from within, that is, from the mind and heart. In other words, true devotion to Mary does not consist in many exterior practices. For example, just because someone carries a rosary on his person, hangs it from his rearview mirror, or even prays it does not necessarily mean that he has a true devotion to Our Lady. He may be mouthing the words, but his heart may be far from Our Lady. True devotion to Mary comes from the heart.

Trustful

We should have the greatest confidence in Our Lady—the confidence a child has for his mother. We must form the virtuous habit of rushing to her with the greatest confidence in all of our trials, sorrows, and difficulties. Trust is an act of the will; it is not a feeling. Make a trustful act of the will during difficult times. Say to Our Lady, for example: “Although I am worried about this, I know you will take care of it for me.” Then, hand the problem, the worry, the concern over to her, and leave it with her. For some people, this can be difficult. Their confidence in Mary may be weak. Like virtue, however, confidence can be strengthened by practicing it over and over again. Persevere in striving to acquire this trust.

Holy

Our devotion should lead us to imitate Our Blessed Mother. In other words, one who is truly devoted to the Immaculate Heart must be generally determined to practice virtue, to avoid sin, and to practice self-denial. To help with this, think about Mary's virtues—

her charity, patience, meekness, and purity. Ask yourself in certain situations: “What would Our Lady do?”

Constant

A devotion that is constant is one that does not fall away. In joy or sorrow, in comfort or pain, in prosperity or poverty, our devotion to Mary should not change. No matter how we feel, it should remain the same. Our devotion should not come and go as feelings of discouragement, sadness, depression, and fear come and go. In fact, when we are sad or discouraged, that is the very time we should reach out to Our Lady and grab her hand, knowing she will be there to help us.

Disinterested

The final quality of true devotion to Mary is that it is disinterested. By this is meant that we should love her for her own sake, not because she is good to us. Some self-interested people go to Our Lady only when they need something, but they never think of her at any other time. True children of Mary turn to her not only in times of need but also because she—as the Mother of God and their Mother—is deserving of their love.

“My Immaculate Heart will be your refuge and the way that will lead you to God.”

If we heed Our Lady's message of hope that she delivered at Fatima, that is, if we strive each day to acquire a true devotion to the Immaculate Heart and to spread this devotion by our word and example, we will not suffer the same terrible fate that France suffered as a result of King Louis XIV's refusal to heed the message of the Sacred Heart. Rather, we will be blessed with many graces and protected from many dangers by the Immaculate Heart of Mary. Our Lady has promised salvation to those who embrace the devotion to her Immaculate Heart, and she has assured us that they will be much loved by God.

When the trials and temptations, the discouragement and sadness of this life beset you, turn to the Immaculate Heart. Turn to her—ever mindful of her consoling promise: “I will never leave you, my Immaculate Heart will be your refuge and the way that will lead you to God.”



“... she shall crush thy head, and thou shalt lie in wait for her heel” (Gen. 3:15).