



Dolorosa

TWELFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

AUGUST 2017



Of Our Lady's six apparitions at Fatima from May to October 1917, one of the more momentous was the third apparition, which occurred on July thirteenth. In the course of this apparition, the Blessed Virgin said many things to Lucia, Francisco, and Jacinta. She asked that they return to the Cova da Iria on August thirteenth. She told them to continue praying the Rosary every day to obtain peace for the world and the end of the war. Our Lady foretold that she would work a miracle in October so that all would believe that she really did appear, and she predicted the outbreak of the second World War. It was also during this apparition that the Blessed Virgin made her request for the Communion of Reparation on the First Saturdays and for the consecration of Russia to her Immaculate Heart. What made this apparition most momentous, however, was none of these revelations and requests of Our Lady. What made this apparition most memorable was the vision that the Mother of God showed Lucia, Francisco, and Jacinta.

Towards the end of Our Lady's message, she again asked the children to make sacrifices, to pray for sinners, and to make reparation for the sins committed against the Immaculate Heart of Mary. As she said this, the Blessed

Virgin slowly opened her hands, sending forth rays of dazzling light from her palms. What happened next is best described in Lucia's own words. This is what she wrote in her memoirs:

The rays of light seemed to penetrate the earth, and we saw as it were a sea of fire. Plunged in this fire were demons and souls in human form,

like transparent burning embers, all blackened and burnished bronze, floating about in the conflagration, now raised into the air by the flames that issued from within themselves together with great clouds of smoke, now falling back on every side like sparks in huge fires, without weight or equilibrium, amid

shrieks and groans of pain and despair, which horrified us and made us tremble with fear. . . . The demons could be distinguished by their terrifying and repellent likeness to frightful and unknown animals, black and transparent like burning coals. Terrified, we looked up at Our Lady, who said to us so kindly and [yet] so sadly: "You have seen hell where the souls of poor sinners go. To save them, God wishes to establish in the world devotion to

my Immaculate Heart. If what I say to you is done, many souls will be saved and there will be peace.”
(*Fatima in Lucia’s Own Words* 167)

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On that July day one hundred years ago, the Blessed Virgin Mary gave these three young children a true vision of hell. She showed them the hideous demons who prowl about that dungeon. She permitted them to catch a glimpse of the many, many souls who even now are there suffering the most excruciating torments without any prospect of relief. Some of these souls were condemned for many unrepented mortal sins; others for only one. They were in hell one hundred years ago on July thirteenth, and these very same souls are there today. Yet, their hell is only just beginning and will last forever.

From the very beginning, ever since the devil and his demons were driven out of heaven after rebelling against Almighty God, the fallen angels have wandered through the world, seeking to ruin as many souls as they can and to drag them to hell to be miserable for all eternity. Satan

knows well that his time is short. He knows that soon he will be cast into the fires of hell and will never again emerge to tempt another soul. And so, while he still has time, the devil does all in his power to drag us to hell with him. He is at war with God, and he is at war with the human race. However, he must contend with someone who is far more powerful than he—the Blessed Virgin Mary. She is at war with Satan, and her goal is directly opposed to his, for her goal is to lead as many souls to heaven as possible. So it was that she appeared one hundred years ago at Fatima to warn all her children about the danger of going to hell and to impress upon our minds the reality of how many souls go there. This she did not only to encourage us to pray and sacrifice for sinners, but also to move us to amend our lives and to live so as to avoid going there. Our Lady knows and understands that a holy fear of hell is a powerful means to keep one from committing mortal sin. Even the saints have testified that the fear of hell has saved numerous souls from going there. This holy fear, however, is not an anxious, nervous, or restless fear, nor is it a fear that inordinately preoccupies us with the thought of hell; rather it is a reasonable fear that moves us to do all in our power to avoid going to hell. Our Blessed Mother thus gave the children of Fatima this vision to relate it to us for our spiritual good.

However, Our Lady not only warned us with the vision of hell at Fatima in 1917. She also appeared in England in 1251 to fortify us against the assaults and snares of the devil. The Blessed Virgin of Mount Carmel appeared to Saint Simon Stock, the Superior General of the Carmelites. Surrounded by a host of angels, she appeared in the middle of the night on July fifteenth-sixteenth. Holding the Brown Scapular out to Saint Simon, she said: “Take this scapular. Whosoever dies wearing it shall not suffer eternal fire. It shall be a sign of salvation, a protection in danger, and a pledge of peace” (*Garment of Grace* 43). Having addressed these most consoling words to Saint Simon, Our Lady then vanished from his sight, leaving him holding the scapular.

The Brown Scapular of Our Lady of Mount Carmel is indeed, as the Blessed Virgin said, a sign of salvation, a protection in danger, and a pledge of peace. It is a sign of salvation because those who wear it with devotion and who die clothed in it, as Our Lady herself promised, shall never see the fires of hell. It is a protection in danger because it is our armor in the spiritual combat—the battle which each and every one of us must fight today and every day for the rest of our lives to save our souls from





hell. Finally, the Brown Scapular is a pledge of a peace; that is, it is a source of many graces and blessings for those who wear it.

In this age when so many are drowning in an ocean of sin and the most vile of vices, and in these days when we are subjected constantly to the waves of temptation, the Brown Scapular is something we need in our lives. The Blessed Virgin Mary has promised her protection, abundant blessings, and the grace of final perseverance—that is, assured salvation—to all who worthily wear her Brown Scapular and who die clothed in it. “But not for this reason, however,” writes Pope Pius XII in a letter to the Carmelite Order, “may they who wear the Scapular think that they can gain eternal salvation while remaining slothful and negligent of spirit, for the Apostle warns us: ‘In fear and trembling shall you work out your salvation’” (Letter on the Scapular. 11 Feb. 1950. Carmelite Website. 1 Sept. 2017. www.ocarm.org).

We must, therefore, be ever mindful that there is no guarantee that we will have the scapular on when our souls depart from our bodies. I personally know of several tragic cases in which the scapular was either removed from a dying person or accidentally torn off in an emergency. To obtain the guarantee—as far as we are

able—that we will die with our scapular on and die in Our Lady’s motherly care, we must not only wear it each day, but we must also lead good Catholic lives. This we do by striving to practice virtue more earnestly each day, by receiving the sacraments often and with devotion, and by being faithful to our daily prayers.

“Take this scapular. Whosoever dies wearing it shall not suffer eternal fire. It shall be a sign of salvation, a protection in danger, and a pledge of peace.”

Let us wear the scapular, then, as true children of Mary, especially if others should mock us for it or if it feels uncomfortable. Those who wear the Brown Scapular, said Pope Pius XII in so many words, profess to belong to Our Lady. Those who belong to Our Lady will be protected by her, and they will never belong to Satan nor will they ever be touched by the eternal fires of hell.

“May the most holy Virgin,” as we pray in the Roman Ritual, “obtain for us the grace to wear her scapular with no stain of sin, and may she protect us from all harm and bring us into everlasting life.”