

Our Lady of Fatima



100th Anniversary of Fatima

Promise and Prayers

Our Lady of Fatima

Promise and Prayers

By Marianne Lorraine Trouvé, FSP



Nihil Obstat: Reverend Thomas W. Buckley, S.T.D., S.S.L.

Imprimatur: ✠ Seán Cardinal O'Malley, O.F.M. Cap.

Archbishop of Boston

February 6, 2017

ISBN 10: 0-8198-5503-0

ISBN 13: 978-0-8198-5503-9

Unless otherwise noted, the Scripture quotations contained herein are from the *New Revised Standard Version Bible: Catholic Edition*, copyright © 1989, 1993, Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Cover design by Rosana Usselman

Cover art by Tracy L. Christianson

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher.

“P” and PAULINE are registered trademarks of the Daughters of St. Paul.

Copyright © 2017, Daughters of St. Paul

Published by Pauline Books & Media, 50 Saint Pauls Avenue, Boston, MA 02130-3491

Printed in the U.S.A.

www.pauline.org

Pauline Books & Media is the publishing house of the Daughters of St. Paul, an international congregation of women religious serving the Church with the communications media.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

21 20 19 18 17

Contents

The Great Promise of Our Lady of Fatima	1
Morning Prayer	15
Novena to Our Lady of Fatima	21
Other Prayers	31
Evening Prayer	37

The Great Promise of Our Lady of Fatima

May, 1917. Europe's deadly war had dragged on for almost three years, reaching a stalemate in prolonged trench warfare. Meanwhile, three shepherd children in the peaceful town of Fatima, Portugal kept watch on their flocks. Lucia dos Santos, the oldest, was ten years old. Her cousins, Francisco and Jacinta Marto, were nine and seven, respectively. These children had witnessed unusual events the preceding year, when a heavenly visitor who called himself the angel of peace had come to them on three separate occasions. The angel had taught them some prayers and had instructed them about God to prepare them for what would happen next.

On May 13, 1917, a beautiful lady from heaven appeared to the startled children. She had an important message and asked them to come back on the thirteenth day of the month for the next several

months. She promised that in October she would reveal who she was. She also invited the children to offer some sacrifices, especially by accepting whatever trials might come. “Do this,” she said, “for the conversion of sinners and also to amend for all blasphemies and offenses against the Immaculate Heart of Mary.”

At first the children promised each other they wouldn't say anything about the apparition. But that didn't last long, and word soon got around that something unusual was going on at the Cova da Iria (Cove of Peace), a field where the sheep grazed. In June, a crowd had gathered to see what would happen. The lady appeared again—visible only to the children—and urged them to pray the Rosary every day.

But many people did not believe the children. Lucia's own mother doubted her, which caused Lucia great suffering. Despite such lack of understanding, the children persevered and returned each month. In July, the lady again urged them to pray the Rosary so that the war would end. Then the children saw a frightening vision of hell. Lucia later confided that they would have died of fright if the lady had not previously assured them that they would go to heaven. After the vision the lady said: “You have seen hell, where the souls of poor sinners go. To save them God

wants to establish in the world devotion to my Immaculate Heart. If you do what I tell you, many souls will be saved, and there will be peace.”

In August secular authorities opposed to the Church brought Lucia, Francisco, and Jacinta in for interrogation. The children were frightened but never wavered in their testimony, despite being pressured to say it was all a lie. The police kept them in custody for a few days, so the apparition that month did not take place until the 19th. The lady repeated her request that people pray and make sacrifices for the conversion of sinners. In September she appeared again and promised the children that in the next month she would reveal who she was.

Word of this spread rapidly. On October 13, an immense throng of 70,000 persons gathered at the Cova da Iria. It had rained throughout the previous night and everyone was soaking wet, but that didn't seem to matter. People just wanted to be present for the great event. When the lady appeared Lucia asked her: “Who are you, and what do you want?” She replied, “I want to tell you that a chapel is to be built here in my honor. I am the Lady of the Rosary. Continue always to pray the Rosary every day. The war is going to end.”

Then a series of visions began, which only the children could see. First Saint Joseph appeared holding the child Jesus, with Mary at his side. He blessed the world three times. Then the children saw Our Lord and Our Lady of Sorrows, and after that Lucia alone saw Mary appear as Our Lady of Mount Carmel. Finally, everyone saw the wondrous and terrifying miracle of the sun. The sun seemed to dance in the sky, moving around and zigzagging back and forth. The crowd was transfixed, for everybody could look directly at the sun and its light didn't hurt their eyes. At one point people screamed in fear, for it looked like the sun was speeding directly toward earth. But then everything stopped and went back to normal.

The miracle of the sun, witnessed by thousands of people, would become one of the great signs of Fatima. It can be considered in light of this text from Revelation, which the liturgy often applies to Mary: "A great portent appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars" (12:1).

That was the last vision for Francisco and Jacinta, who both died soon after (Francisco on April 4, 1919, age 10, and Jacinta on February 20, 1920, age 9).

Saint John Paul II declared them “Blessed” on May 13, 2000, and Pope Francis canonized them in 2017. Mary told Lucia that she would stay in the world longer, in order to establish devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. Lucia eventually became a Carmelite nun and later received more revelations. She lived to the age of 97, dying on February 13, 2005.

The Message of Fatima

Fatima’s importance lies in the message that Our Lady entrusted to the three children. This message can be summarized under three aspects:

- 1) prayer,
- 2) penance, and
- 3) devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

Ultimately, Mary’s purpose is to lead people to her son, Jesus. The Fatima message is a call to conversion, to amend our lives so as to renounce sin and live to the full our baptismal consecration.

Baptism is sometimes called “enlightenment” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 1216). This theme of light is like a key that unlocks the message of Fatima. Light held a prominent place in the

apparitions, culminating in the miracle of the sun. But even more, when Our Lady stretched out her hands, the children later said that they felt like they were seeing themselves in the light of God, taken up, as it were, into God's own light; "God is light" (1 Jn 1:5-7). The main aspects of the Fatima message exhort us to live our Baptism more faithfully and become more like Christ, who said: "I am the light of the world" (Jn 8:12). Then, with his help, we can share that light with others.

Prayer

In Baptism we receive the gift of God's grace, along with the gifts of faith, hope, and love. Faith is a special kind of light by which God purifies our hearts (see Acts 15:9). We can keep that light alive and growing through regular prayer. But without prayer, the light will flicker out.

In urging us to pray, Mary stressed the importance of the Rosary. She told the children, "I am the Lady of the Rosary," and asked them, and us, to pray it every day, especially for peace in the world. An important aspect of the Rosary is meditation on the mysteries. Just as "Mary treasured all these words and

pondered them in her heart,” (Lk 2:19), we too grow in faith by thinking about the events in the lives of Jesus and Mary. When we pray the Rosary, we ponder God’s word just as Mary did.

Our prayer also goes out to others, as Scripture tells us in many places. “I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for everyone” (1 Tim 2:1). Praying for others is a practical way to express our love for them. At Fatima, Our Lady asked us in particular to pray for those who have strayed from the faith.

Penance

Along with her requests for prayer at Fatima, Mary asked that people amend their lives by turning away from sin and toward God. She urged the children: “Pray, pray much and make sacrifices for sinners.” Moved by her words, the children began to do acts of penance and make sacrifices that they could offer for those intentions. Their example is quite moving in the love and devotion that they showed.

As baptized Christians, we too ought to take our Baptism seriously and strive to live a holy life. This means to root out sin first of all, especially

serious sins that grievously offend God. One way to root out sin in our lives is to receive the sacraments regularly, especially Reconciliation and the Holy Eucharist. Second, the prayers and penance we offer for others are powerful means to help draw them to God. As members of Christ's body, the Church, we are part of a great spiritual network of grace. What we do can benefit others and help them grow closer to God. Saint Paul wrote, "I am now rejoicing in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am completing what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the church" (Col 1:24). That is what we mean by saying we are offering something up to God, whether it is an ache or pain, a difficult person to deal with, or any of the trials that come into our lives.

Our sacrifices for others are not a substitute for the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross but rather a participation in it. Jesus' sacrifice is what frees us from sin: "The blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin" (1 Jn 1:5). Yet Baptism also makes us members of his body, the Church. As such, we are united to him in his sufferings as well as in his resurrection. Saint Paul says that we are "always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be made

visible in our bodies” (2 Cor 4:10). Sufferings of all types come into everyone’s life. But if we accept these in faith, they can not only help us grow in holiness but also help others. Saint Paul adds: “I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship” (Rom 12:1). By asking us to offer reparation and penances for others, Mary gives us a practical way to participate in the spiritual worship of God that Saint Paul speaks about.

Devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary

Mary told the children that God wanted to establish devotion to her Immaculate Heart. This devotion then comes from the gracious and loving will of God. But what does it mean? The prayer for the Mass of the Immaculate Heart of Mary states that God made a dwelling place for the Holy Spirit in Mary’s heart. This happened first of all at Mary’s Immaculate Conception. Then, at the Annunciation, the Holy Spirit came upon Mary with power so that Jesus was conceived in her womb. Her Immaculate

Heart is a heart free from sin, filled with grace, and a place where God himself dwells.

Doesn't that describe what we too are called to through our Baptism? Through the gift of sanctifying grace, the Holy Spirit comes to dwell in our hearts also. The divine indwelling is a wonderful effect of grace. Wherever the Holy Spirit dwells, Jesus is there too, and so is his Father. The holy Trinity dwells in us through grace.

Since Mary received this gift in a very special way, we can learn from her how to grow in this divine gift and live in closer union with the holy Trinity. In his homily for the beatification of Francisco and Jacinta, Pope John Paul II said that they in effect enrolled in the school of Mary. That's how they became holy though they died so young. Like them, we too will become holy if we enroll in Mary's school and learn from her the ways of the Holy Spirit. Our hearts will become a fit dwelling place for the Spirit.

What Is the Great Promise of Fatima?

The best way to practice this devotion to Mary's Immaculate Heart is to take our faith seriously, live as Jesus taught us in the Gospel, and pray and receive

the sacraments. However, at Fatima Mary mentioned a few specific steps we can take, and she gave a unique promise to those who fulfill these conditions. This great promise of Our Lady of Fatima has to do with the practice of the five first Saturdays. It was given in an apparition to Lucia on December 10, 1925, when she was in the convent in Spain. Mary showed her a heart encircled with thorns and said: “Look, my daughter, at my heart, surrounded with thorns with which ungrateful men pierce me every moment by their blasphemies and ingratitude.” She asked Lucia to console her by offering reparation, then said: “I promise to assist at the hour of death, with the graces necessary for salvation, all those who, on the first Saturday of five consecutive months, shall confess [their sins], 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.”

Our eternal salvation is the ultimate goal of our lives, and the most important grace to pray for. Mary’s wonderful promise assures us of her special help and intercession at the hour of our death. The conditions to receive this help are as follows:

On the First Saturday of five consecutive months

1. To receive Holy Communion and go to confession (confession can be made within eight days before or after).
2. To pray the Rosary (i.e., five decades).
3. To spend fifteen minutes meditating on the mysteries of the Rosary (one can meditate on one mystery or several of them. This meditation is in addition to praying the Rosary).
4. To do all this with the intention of offering reparation to Mary's Immaculate Heart.

Once a person finishes the five Saturdays, it is a good idea to continue keeping each first Saturday holy in this manner, if possible. By this practice we fulfill Our Lady's request to offer prayers and sacrifices for the conversion of sinners.

Another way of practicing devotion to Mary's Immaculate Heart is to consecrate oneself to her. There are various ways of doing this, such as the total consecration taught by Saint Louis de Montfort.*

* An excellent guide to this is the book *33 Days to Morning Glory* by Fr. Michael Gaitley, MIC (Stockbridge, MA: Marian Press, 2011).

What Does It Mean to Make Reparation?

As then-Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger noted in his theological explanation of Fatima,^{*} the best way to live this devotion is to have a heart like Mary's; one totally focused on the Lord and on carrying out his will as Mary did: "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word" (Lk 1:38). Then we too will become part of Jesus' family of faith, as he said: "Whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother" (Mk 3:35).

^{*}The whole document can be found here: http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_20000626_message-fatima_en.html.