

On Fr. Gruner IV

Jacinta's), a deep love for the Hearts of Jesus and Mary.

Shortly before Jacinta went to the hospital where she was to die (brave little child!), she said to Lucia: "In a short time now I am going to heaven. You are to stay here and say that God wishes to establish in the world the devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. . . . Tell everybody that God grants graces through the Immaculate Heart of Mary, and that they must ask them from her. Tell them that the Heart of Jesus wishes that by His side should be venerated the Immaculate Heart of Mary. Tell them to ask peace through the Immaculate Heart of Mary; God has placed it in her hands. Oh that I could put into the heart of everybody the flame that I feel burning within my breast and which makes me love so much the Heart of Jesus and the Heart of Mary."

On June 13, 1917, Lucia asked Our Lady if she would take them to heaven. Our Lady answered: "Yes, I will take Jacinta and Francisco soon. You, however, are to stay here a longer time. 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 me before His throne." When Lucia asked if she were going to be left alone, Our Lady responded: "No, my daughter. Does this cause you to suffer a great deal? I will never leave you, my Immaculate Heart will be your refuge and the way that will lead you to God."

As the Blessed Mother uttered these words she extended her hands and in the rays of light that shone from them, the children saw themselves as if submerged in the Divine presence. Jacinta and Francisco were on the side of the light that was ascending to Heaven, while Lucia was in the light that seemed diffused over all the earth. In the palm of

her right hand was a Heart pierced with thorns; and the children understood that it was the Immaculate Heart of Mary, so offended by the sins of mankind and pleading for reparation.

She also said to the children, "Sacrifice yourselves for sinners; and say often when you make some sacrifice, 'My Jesus, it is for love of You, for the conversion of sinners, and in reparation for sins committed against the Immaculate Heart of Mary.'" What a superb little consecration this is! What a difference this would make in the world if Catholics would do just this small consecration for each sacrifice.

HELL AND CHASTISEMENT

Most clergy have scrupulously avoided this subject for many decades now...there are priests and theologians who are convinced that there might be a hell, but that no one is in it. But this is not what Our Lady of Fatima said. After showing the children a vision of hell, Our Lady said to them: "You have seen hell where the souls of poor sinners go. To save them, God wishes to establish throughout the world devotion to my Immaculate Heart. If people do as I shall ask, many souls will be saved, and there will be peace.... But if people do not cease offending God... another and more terrible war will begin. When you see a night illumined by an unknown light, know that this is the great sign that God gives, that the chastisement of the world for its many transgressions is at hand through war, famine, persecution of the Church, and of the Holy Father."

PRAYER

The Rosary is essential to the message of Fatima. There, Our Lady chose to identify herself as "The Lady of the Rosary." In each of the apparitions to the three children (there were six in all) she asked for the daily Rosary, and especially as an instrument of world peace. As she revealed in the third apparition: "You must recite the rosary every day in honor of Our Lady of the Rosary to obtain peace for the world and the end of the war, for only she can obtain this." When asked about the importance of the rosary, Sr. Lucia responded: "My impression is that the rosary is of greatest value not only according to the words of Our Lady at Fatima, but according to the effects of the rosary one sees throughout history. My impression is that Our Lady wanted to give ordinary people, who might not know how to pray, this simple method of getting closer to God."

To pray the Rosary properly, each decade should be accompanied by reflection on some aspect of the Joyful, Sorrowful or Glorious mysteries (I say these three since this was the Rosary known to Sr. Lucia and the other children, and which was proposed by Our Lady). Without the reflection, the Rosary can easily become a monotonous repetition. As Bl. Paul VI wrote *Marialis Cultus*: "Without this (reflection or contemplation) the Rosary is a body without a soul, and its recitation is in danger of becoming a mechanical repetition of formulas." In praying the Rosary we can well take Our Lady as a model, for as the Scriptures tell us, "Mary kept all these words, pondering them in her Heart."

After repeatedly asking for the daily Rosary, and identifying herself as "The Lady of the Rosary," the Blessed Mother terminated the final apparition by showing the

children three separate tableaux symbolizing the entire message of the Rosary. The first was a vision of the Holy Family - representing the Joyful mysteries; the second a vision of Our Lady of Sorrows representing the Sorrowful mysteries; and the third a vision of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel representing the Glorious mysteries.

I should say here that this does not denigrate from the initiative of St. John Paul II to add to the devotion of the Rosary, by meditating on what he called the Luminous mysteries. No Catholic should have a problem with adding devotions or prayers to the Rosary as a private or even public prayer. The Rosary may seem like such a little weapon to fight the onslaught of the horrors we daily read about in this old world, but remember, Our Lady of Fatima is simply asking for our cooperation, and she will see to it that the rest is done. We may liken the Rosary to the slingshot held by David, and the rock guided by the hand of God like a missile to the head of Goliath.

DEVOTION TO THE IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY

In 1916, a year before the apparitions of Our Lady, the Angel of Peace appeared to the three children to prepare them for things to come. "The Hearts of Jesus and Mary have designs of mercy for you," he said. "Offer unceasingly to the Most High, prayer and sacrifices."

And in the second apparition the following year (June 13, 1917), Our Lady let the children know that "Jesus wishes to establish throughout the world, devotion to my Immaculate Heart." Several times in the June and July apparitions Our Lady spoke of this devotion, as we shall see; and soon there began to burn in their hearts (especially