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DON SHARKEY



THE CATHOLIC ACTION SERIES
OF TEXTBOOKS FOR
RELIGIOUS DISCUSSION CLUBS

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MARY'S MESSAGE

Our Lady's Call to
Prayer and Sacrifice

by

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With an Introduction by
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*To the Immaculate Heart of Mary,
in Gratitude*

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Nihil Obstat

PATRICK J. LEAHY

Censor Librorum

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INTRODUCTION

In Mary's Message, Don Sharkey, devoted client of Mary Immaculate, presents a review of apparitions of Our Lady in modern times, with special attention to the extraordinary events which took place at Fatima, Portugal, in the year 1917. Mr. Sharkey emphasizes Mary's call to prayer and penance, and brings out the urgent importance of our heeding her message.

The content of this booklet has been planned to meet the specific needs of members of religious discussion clubs who follow the simplified procedure recommended by the National Center of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine. The matter is divided into sixteen chapters, sufficient for an entire discussion-club season. Each chapter is implemented with discussion aids and suggestions for appropriate devotional practices.

Mary's Message is the tenth title in the Catholic Action Series of textbooks for religious discussion clubs. Widespread use of these textbooks throughout the United States and Canada during the past fifteen years indicates that they are proving to be of significant service to many thousands of our Catholic lay people who wish to become articulate and effective leaders in Catholic Action.

We are grateful to His Excellency, Most Reverend Mark K. Carroll, D.D., for the generous encouragement which he has given to the preparation of this booklet; to Mr. Sharkey, who devoted many precious hours to writing the manuscript in order that Our Lady's message might be more widely broadcasted and heeded; to Rev. Francis J. Connell, C.S.S.R., who read the copy and made many helpful suggestions; to Rev. Patrick J. Leahy, Censor Librorum of the Diocese of Wichita, and to all others who were of assistance in the development of this humble contribution to the rapidly increasing volume of Marian literature in our day.

May Our Lady of Mount Carmel, whose feast we celebrate today, obtain for all who read this booklet the grace to heed her urgent call to prayer and penance, in order that due reparation may be made to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and to her own Immaculate Heart and that peace may reign once more among her children.

RT. REV. MSGR. LEON A. MCNEILL, M.A.
Diocesan Director of Catholic Action

Wichita, Kansas
Feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel
July 16, 1949

C O N T E N T S

Introduction	3
The Religious Discussion Club	5
I. Our Lady's Concern for Us	7
II. The Message of Fatima—I	10
III. The Message of Fatima—II	13
IV. The Message of Fatima—III	16
V. Other Recent Apparitions—I	19
VI. Other Recent Apparitions—II	22
VII. The Revolt Against God	25
VIII. The Great Battle	28
IX. God's Mother Is Our Mother	31
X. Mediatrix of All Graces	34
XI. Queen of Heaven	37
XII. Consecrate Yourself to Mary	40
XIII. Queen of the Holy Rosary	43
XIV. "Sacrifice Yourself for Sinners"	46
XV. The Immaculate Heart of Mary	49
XVI. Mary's Message to Us	52
Index	55
Reference List	Inside back cover

The Religious Discussion Club

A religious discussion club may be described as a small group of people who meet regularly to discuss the teachings and practices of the Church in order "to clarify and correlate religious information, to develop the ability to explain accurately and convincingly the truths of our religion and above all to relate religious truths to daily living."¹

ORGANIZATION

1. A discussion club will ordinarily consist of from six to twelve members. If a greater number are interested, two or more groups may be formed.
2. Each discussion club should have a spiritual director, a leader, and a secretary.
3. A suitable Christian name should be selected for the club.

DUTIES OF OFFICERS

1. The spiritual director encourages the members in their study, shows his interest by attending meetings occasionally, and provides an answer to questions which may be referred to him by the club. He also directs the members in works of Catholic Action which develop out of the discussion.
2. The leader directs the members in turn to read the text aloud, and guides the discussion with the help of the aids given in the textbook. He limits the discussion to topics included in the lesson, and, at the close of each session, may summarize the points covered.
3. The secretary calls the roll, keeps brief minutes of each meeting, and records and refers to the spiritual director questions which cannot be decided by the members of the club.

MEETINGS

1. Individual members of the club are provided with textbooks and may be encouraged to read in advance the lesson assigned for each meeting.
2. Eight weekly meetings in the fall term and again in the spring term will be sufficient to cover the material of this textbook, which is divided into sixteen brief chapters.
3. Meetings are held wherever it is convenient for the members to assemble. They should continue not longer than an hour and a half.
4. Order of meeting: Prayer, roll call, secretary's report, reading and discussion of assigned text, assignment of lesson, announcement of time and place of next meeting, adjournment with prayer.
5. Constant emphasis should be placed on the application of religious truths to daily life, and members should be encouraged to adopt the religious practices suggested at the end of each chapter.

6. At the close of the season, all discussion groups of a parish or of several parishes may plan a joint meeting, at which pageants, plays, tableaux, illustrated lectures, travel talks, or other suitable entertainment may be presented.

1. *The Life of Christ*, Syllabus II, Part I, p. VIII, Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, 1941.

ADDITIONAL SUGGESTIONS

1. Occasional lectures or informal talks on topics suggested in the text may serve to stimulate interest, but they should not be promoted at the expense of the regular discussion program.
2. Books, magazine and newspaper articles, pictures and other illustrative materials which pertain to the subject of discussion should be brought to the attention of the club. Pictures and clippings may be preserved in a club scrapbook.
3. The books and pamphlets included in the reference list are recommended to those who wish to do more extensive reading about Our Lady and her message to the modern world.

ORDER OF MEETING

Prayer to the Holy Spirit.

Roll call.

Secretary's report.

Reading and discussion of assigned text.

Assignment of lesson for following week.

Announcement of time and place of next meeting.

Adjournment with prayer.



PRAYER TO THE HOLY SPIRIT

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of Thy faithful
and enkindle in them the fire of Thy love.

V. Send forth Thy Spirit and they shall be created.

R. And Thou shalt renew the face of the earth.

Let us pray

O God, who didst instruct the hearts of the faithful by the light of the Holy Spirit, grant us in the same Spirit to be truly wise, and ever to rejoice in His consolation. Through Christ Our Lord. Amen.

(Indulgence of five years. Plenary indulgence, under the usual conditions, if the prayer has been recited daily for a month.)

I. Our Lady's Concern for Us

† MORE than 70,000 persons stood in the mud and rain, waiting for a miracle. This was near the town of Fatima, Portugal, on October 13, 1917.

A ten-year-old shepherd girl, Lucia dos Santos, had said that a beautiful Lady had appeared to her and her two young cousins on five separate occasions. The Lady had promised a miracle on her sixth visit, Lucia said, so that all would believe in her. The word had spread rapidly, and people had come from every part of Portugal to see the promised miracle. They were not disappointed.

How many people were waiting for a miracle? Where was this? When was it? Why were the people expecting a miracle?

THE MIRACLE OF THE SUN. Lucia cried, "Look at the sun!" The rain stopped and the clouds suddenly parted. The vast majority of the crowd beheld not the blinding sun of every day, but a great luminous disk which they could look at without blinking. They stood spellbound as the sun spun around in the sky like a giant pinwheel. The people, the trees, the grass, the entire landscape assumed in succession the various colors of the rainbow. Suddenly the sun seemed to detach itself from the sky and to come plunging toward the earth.

The people were terrified. They were sure it was the end of the world. They dropped to their knees in the churning sea of mud and cried to Jesus and Mary to save them. Many made an act of contrition.

Just when it seemed certain that the world would be destroyed, the sun stopped its downward plunge and climbed back to its accustomed place in the sky. It was again the brilliant sun of every day. The miracle was over.

What did the sun do? What was the effect on the crowd?

THE MIRACLE REALLY TOOK PLACE. There was still one remarkable thing to be observed. The people who had been standing in the rain for hours and who had been kneeling in the mud found that their clothes were perfectly dry.

There can be no doubt that the miracle took place. Thousands of people testified to it. It was not a case of mass hypnosis, because it was seen by people as far as twenty miles away. Perhaps the best proof of its authenticity can be found in the accounts in the Portuguese newspapers. Most of these papers were run by irreligious men who would have been delighted to prove the miracle a fake. But they were unable to do so. The reporters could not doubt what they had seen with their own eyes. The papers devoted page after page to the wondrous occurrence.

What remarkable fact was noted when the solar display was over? What are some of the proofs that the miracle actually took place?

PURPOSE OF THE MIRACLE. Why had this great miracle been performed? The answer can be found in the words which the Lady had spoken to Lucia on the thirteenth of July: "In October I will tell you who I am and what I desire, and I shall perform a miracle so that everyone will have to believe you."

The purpose of the miracle, then, was to prove who she was and to emphasize her message to the world. This shows the importance of her message.

How did the heavenly visitor identify herself on this occasion? She said, "I am the Lady of the Rosary." Of all the titles by which the Blessed Virgin could have called herself, this was the one that she chose. In each one of her apparitions she had asked the children to say the Rosary. The Rosary is an integral part of the Fatima devotion.

A few moments after she had said this, Our Lady assumed a very sad air and said, "Men must offend Our Lord no more and they must ask pardon for their sins, for He is already much offended."

The three children said they could never forget the sad look on her face as she gave them this her last message.

Why had Our Lady promised a miracle on October 13? How did Our Lady identify herself? What was her farewell message to the children?

PURPOSE OF THE APPARITIONS. Just before she entered the Carmelites, Lucia was asked what she considered the general motivation of the apparitions at Fatima. "The conversion of sinners and the return of souls to God," she said. "This idea was repeated in all the apparitions."

When asked for a quotation which expressed this motivation she gave Our Lady's farewell message: "Men must offend Our Lord no more and they must ask pardon for their sins, for He is already much offended."

Mary is our loving Mother, and she wishes to help us save our souls. Sometimes this fact is obscured, and other parts of the Fatima story are played up out of proportion to their importance. The prophecy of World War II, the secret that is to be revealed in 1960; yes, and the Miracle of the Sun, are all incidental to Our Lady's principal purpose — saving souls.

What does Lucia say was the general motivation of the apparitions at Fatima? What quotation of Our Lady's expressed this motivation? Would you say that this is Mary's principal purpose at all times? Why or why not?

THE WORLD IN 1917. In May, 1917, when Our Lady first appeared at Fatima, World War I had been going on for almost three years. Nearly every country in the world had become involved. Portugal had entered in 1916. The United States had declared war in April of 1917, but by May it had not yet made its force felt.

In March, 1917, a revolution had broken out in Russia and that country had withdrawn from the war. This left thousands of German soldiers free for duty on other fronts. It looked as if the war would go on endlessly. Casualty lists were mounting every day.

On the fifth day of the month of Our Lady, Pope Benedict XV addressed a letter to his Cardinal Secretary of State in which he recounted his unsuccessful efforts to bring about peace. Then he said: "Because all graces . . . are dispensed by the hands of the most holy Virgin, we wish the petitions of her most afflicted children to be directed with lively confidence, more than ever in this awful hour, to the great Mother of God."

Eight days later Our Lady appeared to the three children of Fatima and told them to say the Rosary every day for peace and for the end of the war.

How long had World War I been going on when Our Lady first appeared at Fatima? When had Portugal entered the war? What event of early 1917 had been a great blow to the Allies? Why did Pope Benedict XV ask that petitions for peace be directed to the Mother of God? What interval elapsed between Pope Benedict's plea and Our Lady's first appearance at Fatima?

RUSSIA IN 1917. After the fall of the Czar a provisional democratic government was set up in Russia. This did not last very long. On April 16, 1917, Nicolai Lenin and Leon Trotsky arrived in Petrograd to lay plans for their Communist Revolution. On November 7 the Communists took over the government of Russia. This did not satisfy them, however. "First Russia and then the world" was the motto of the godless, religion-hating Communists.

Between April 16 and November 7 Our Lady made her six appearances at Fatima. At one end of Europe the forces of evil were winning a great victory. At the other end the Blessed Virgin — archenemy of Satan — was rallying the forces of good to the standard of her Immaculate Heart.

When did Nicolai Lenin and Leon Trotsky arrive in Petrograd? When did the Communists take over control of Russia? When were the Fatima apparitions in relation to these dates?

THE SITUATION TODAY. Today the battle is more fiercely joined than ever before. Since the beginning of World War II, the Communists have seized one country after another. Each new seizure has been followed by a concerted campaign to stamp out all religion. Churches have been closed. Priests and Sisters have been put to death. The faithful have been forced to live in constant fear of reprisals. Archbishop Stepinac of Yugoslavia has been sentenced to six-

teen years at hard labor. Cardinal Mindszenty of Hungary, after one of the most diabolically conducted trials in history, has been sentenced to life imprisonment.

No wonder that Bishop Ambrose Moriarty of England said recently, "Without any doubt we are living in the greatest persecution of the Church that has ever been known."

At Fatima Our Lady said that if her requests were not granted, Russia would "scatter her errors throughout the world, provoking wars and persecutions of the Church. Many will be martyred, the Holy Father will have much to suffer, several nations will be destroyed."

Pope Pius XII wept when he heard of Cardinal Mindszenty's sentence. "The Holy Father will have much to suffer . . ."

What did Mary foretell about Russia? Tell how this prophecy is being borne out. What did Bishop Moriarty say about the persecution in our time? Do you think God is allowing Communism to be used as a scourge on a sinful world? Do you think a sufficient number of people are carrying out Mary's requests? Give reasons for your answers to the last two questions.

IT IS UP TO US. In any battle between Our Lady and Satan the result is written in advance. God has given His Mother special power over the devil. She will crush the serpent with her heel. The victory over Communism might be long delayed, however, because of the sins of the world.

"If my requests are granted," said Our Lady at Fatima, "Russia will be converted and there will be peace."

No words could be clearer than those. War or peace, it is up to us. The thought is at once a terrifying and a consoling one. The fate of the world is in our hands. Our day-to-day actions are more important than all the deliberations of the United Nations.

We must see that Our Lady's requests are granted. First, it is necessary to know what they are. The next three chapters will be devoted to Mary's requests at Fatima.

What can we do to stop the spread of Communism? How do we know in advance the result of any battle between Our Lady and Satan? Explain why the fate of the world is in our hands. Before we can carry out Our Lady's requests, what is necessary?

OUR LADY IN THE MODERN WORLD. Important as Fatima is, it is not the entire story of Mary in the modern world. After Fatima, we shall consider briefly other recent manifestations of Our Lady's love and solicitude for us, her children. Then we shall consider her unique role as Mother of God, Mother of All Christians, Queen of Heaven, and Mediatrix of All Graces. We shall conclude with a study of special devotions to Mary and of methods by which we can serve her.

No subject could be more important. "God wishes," said St. Louis Marie de Montfort, "that His holy Mother should be at present more known, more loved, more honored than she has ever been."

Note that "more known" comes first. Mary cannot be loved and honored unless she is known. By her frequent appearances on earth in the last century or so, she has tried to carry out God's wish of making herself more known. It is up to us to do our part.

Why is it said that the story of Fatima is not the entire story of Mary in the modern world? Give four of Mary's titles. What does St. Louis Marie de Montfort say of Mary in our day? Explain how this offers a possible explanation of her frequent appearances in recent times.

SUGGESTED PRACTICES

1. Ask the Blessed Virgin to make this study of her message to the modern world a fruitful one for you and your group.
2. Say the Rosary every day.

II. The Message of Fatima — I

† A YEAR before Our Lady appeared to them, the children of Fatima had three visits from an angel who identified himself as the Angel of Peace and also as the Guardian Angel of Portugal. Lucia was nine years old at the time. Her cousins, Francisco and Jacinta Marto, were eight and six respectively. The girls saw and heard the angel; Francisco saw him but did not hear him. This was also to be the case in Our Lady's appearances later on. Lucia was the only one who carried on conversations with the heavenly visitors.

In what year did the angel appear to the three children? By what titles did he call himself? In what respect were the apparitions different for Francisco than for the girls? Who carried on the conversations with the angel and with Our Lady?

FIRST VISIT OF THE ANGEL. During his first visit the angel knelt and, bowing his forehead to the ground, repeated three times: "My God, I believe, I adore, I hope, and I love You. I ask Your pardon for those who do not believe, do not adore, do not hope, and do not love You."

The children prostrated themselves and prayed as the angel had done. Then he said, "Pray like that. The Most Holy Hearts of Jesus and Mary will be touched by your prayers."

What prayer did the angel teach the children? What position did he assume when he said the prayer? Can you think of other occasions when angels have been used as messengers to mankind?

SECOND VISIT OF THE ANGEL. Two months later the angel said to them: "Pray, pray much! The Holy Hearts of Jesus and Mary have merciful designs for you. Offer prayers and sacrifices constantly to the Most High."

"How shall we make sacrifices?" Lucia asked.

"You can make sacrifices of all things. Offer them in reparation for the sins that offend God, and beg of him the conversion of sinners. In this way, try to draw down peace on your country. . . . Above all, accept and bear humbly the suffering the Lord will send you."

What two things did the angel request? For what purpose were the sacrifices to be offered? Was the angel's message essentially the same as Our Lady's? (Ch. I) From the angel's words what do we learn about suffering? What connection did he imply between sin and war?

THIRD VISIT OF THE ANGEL. On his third visit the angel held a chalice above which was a Host, dripping drops of blood. He left the chalice and Host suspended in the air and prostrated himself on the ground. Then he prayed: "Most Holy Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, I adore You profoundly, and I offer You the most precious body, blood, soul, and divinity of Jesus Christ present in all the tabernacles of the world in reparation for the outrages, sacrileges, and indifferences with which He is offended, and by the infinite merits of His Most Sacred Heart and of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, I ask you for the conversion of poor sinners."

After he had said this prayer three times, he rose, took the chalice and Host, and said: "Take the body and blood of Jesus Christ horribly outraged by ungrateful men. Make reparation for their crimes and console your God."

He placed the Host on Lucia's tongue. To Francisco and Jacinta, who had not made their First Communion, he presented the chalice. They drank from it. The angel prostrated himself once more and three more times he prayed: "Most Holy Trinity . . ." The children said the prayer also.

When the prayer was concluded, the angel disappeared for the last time. The children remained on their knees. They were unable to think of anything but the Communion they had received.

What did the angel have with him? What prayer did he say? How can we tell from the words of the angel that the world of 1916 was in a very sinful state? Do you think the world has improved since then? Explain your answer. What great privilege was given to the children? What does this teach us about the importance of receiving Holy Communion?

FIRST APPARITION OF OUR LADY. On Sunday, May 13, 1917, Lucia and her two cousins were watching their flocks as usual. They were in a natural depression among the hills which was called the Cova da Iria. They said the Rosary, as was their custom, and then they began to build a stone house.

Suddenly a brilliant shaft of light filled the air. Frightened, the children looked about them. The sun was shining brightly, and there was not a cloud in the sky. How could there have been lightning on such a clear day? Just the same, they decided that they had better go home. They gathered the sheep and started down the hill.

When they were half way down, another shaft of light pierced the air. Panicky, they turned toward the right, and there, standing above a small evergreen called the azinheira, they saw a most beautiful Lady.

"It was a Lady dressed all in white," Lucia says, "more brilliant than the sun; shedding rays of light clearer and stronger than a crystal glass filled with the most sparkling water, pierced by the burning rays of the sun."

The Lady seemed to be no more than eighteen years old. Her hands were joined in an attitude of prayer. From her right arm hung a string of pearly white beads ending in a cross of burnished silver. Her feet were bare and rested on a cloud that just touched the little evergreen.

When did the first apparition of the Blessed Virgin take place? What was the name of the place where she appeared? Describe the appearance of Our Lady during the apparition.

CONVERSATION WITH LUCIA. "Do not be afraid," the Lady said in a beautiful voice. "I will not harm you."

Reassured, Lucia summoned the courage to ask, "Where are you from, Madame?"

"I am from heaven."

"What do you wish of me?"

"I come to ask you to meet me here six months in succession at this same hour on the thirteenth of each month. In October I will tell you who I am and what I want."

"And I, am I, too, going to heaven?" Lucia asked.

"Yes, you shall."

"And Jacinta?"

"She, too."

"And Francisco?"

"He too, but he must say many Rosaries."

What request did Our Lady make of the children? What did she say she would do in October? What did she tell the children about their eternal reward? What did she say Francisco must do?

FINAL WORDS OF FIRST APPARITION. Lucia asked about two girls who used to come to her house to learn sewing from her sisters but who had since died. One was already in heaven, the Lady said. The other was in purgatory and would remain there until the end of the world.

Then she said to the children: "Do you wish to offer yourselves to God to endure all the sufferings that He may choose to send you, as an act of reparation for the sins by which He is offended, and to ask for the conversion of sinners?"

"Yes, we do!" Lucia answered eagerly.

"Then you will have much to suffer, but the grace of God will assist you and will always bear you up."

The Lady opened her hands. From each palm came a stream of light which shone on the children and seemed to penetrate to the depths of their souls. Moved by an inward impulse the children fell to their knees and prayed: "Most Holy Trinity, I adore You! My God, my God, I love You in the Most Blessed Sacrament."

When they had finished the prayer, the Lady said, "Say the Rosary every day to obtain peace for the world and the end of the war."

"She began to elevate herself serenely," Lucia says, "going in the direction of the east until she disappeared in the immensity of space."

What question did Our Lady ask the children? What did she tell them about the immediate future? What should we remember when suffering comes our way? What did Our Lady ask the children to do in order to obtain peace?

AFTER THE APPARITION. For a long time the children remained quiet. They did not feel heavy and tired as they had after the visit of the angel. Instead, they had a feeling of lightness, peace, and joy.

They spent the remainder of the afternoon in the fields, talking about the wonderful visit from Our Lady. Francisco, who had not heard anything, wanted to know everything the Lady had said. When told that he would go to heaven but that he must say many Rosaries, he almost burst with happiness.

"Oh, my Lady," he exclaimed, "I will say all the Rosaries you want!"

They all agreed that Our Lady had seemed unhappy about something. This was the only thing that marred their own happiness. They could not at that time comprehend fully that the only thing that can make Our Lady unhappy is sin. Before the apparitions were over, they were to realize this.

How did the children feel after the apparition? What was the only thing that marred their happiness? What is the only thing that can make Our Lady sad?

"MUCH TO SUFFER." During the months that followed, the three children had many occasions to remember Our Lady's words, "You will have much to suffer." Lucia's mother thought the girl was lying and tried to make her retract the story that she had seen a heavenly vision. The pastor of their church suggested that the apparition might be the devil, and this thought caused Lucia great anxiety for a while. The civil administrator of the district kidnapped the children and kept them in jail so that they missed the apparition scheduled for August 13th. (In that month Our Lady appeared on the 19th.) The civil administrator threatened to boil them in oil if they did not tell the secrets that the Lady had confided to them. Though badly frightened, they steadfastly refused to do so. They also suffered greatly from the taunts of scoffers and from the curiosity of the devout.

But these sufferings were not enough for the children. They delighted in thinking up new sacrifices to offer Our Lady. They gave their lunches to poor children, and they ate bitter acorns and unripe olives. Under their clothes each wore a shaggy rope which itched and chafed. They wished to do everything possible to make reparation for sins and for the conversion of sinners.

How was Our Lady's prophecy "You will have much to suffer" fulfilled? In addition to these sufferings what voluntary sacrifices did the children make?

SUGGESTED PRACTICES

1. Memorize the two prayers of the angel. Say them frequently.
2. Resolve to receive Holy Communion frequently and devoutly.

III. The Message of Fatima — II

† THE Blessed Virgin came back every month, as she had promised. On June 13 she said: "I want you to come here on the thirteenth of next month. Say the Rosary, inserting between the mysteries the following ejaculation: 'O my Jesus, forgive us. Save us from the fire of hell. Bring all souls to heaven, especially those in most need.'" To Lucia she said: "I want you to learn to read and write, and later I will tell you what else I want."

What ejaculation did Our Lady teach the children? When is this ejaculation to be said? What did Our Lady wish Lucia to do?

SECOND APPARITION OF OUR LADY. Lucia asked that the three of them be taken to heaven.

Our Lady said, "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 myself to adorn His throne."

"Then I am to stay here alone!" Lucia said, sad at the thought of being left behind.

"No, my child. You are suffering very much, but do not be discouraged. 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 tells us, "the Blessed Virgin opened her hands and communicated to us for the second time the reflex of the immense light that enveloped her." Francisco and Jacinta were in a stream that went toward heaven, and Lucia was in a stream that spread over the ground. A heart surrounded by thorns was in front of the right palm. "We understood that this was the Immaculate Heart of Mary, so offended by the sins of mankind, desiring reparation."

What did Mary say she would do to Francisco and Jacinta? What was Lucia's mission to be? What did Our Lady promise those who embrace the devotion to her Immaculate Heart? What consoling promise did she make to Lucia? What symbolism do you see in the light that enveloped the children? What was the significance of the heart surrounded by thorns?

THIRD APPARITION OF OUR LADY. It was during the apparition of July 13 that Our Lady mentioned Russia and also foretold that there would be another war if men did not change their ways.

She began by telling the children to continue saying the Rosary. "Say it with the intention of obtaining the end of the war. The intercession of the Blessed Virgin alone can obtain this grace for men."

"Will you please tell us who you are and perform a miracle so that everyone will believe that you really appear to us?" Lucia asked. She wished to convince the scoffers, among whom was her own mother.

"Continue to come here every month. In October I will tell you who I am and what I desire, and I shall perform a miracle so that everyone will have to believe you."

Lucia asked that some sick people be cured. She was told that some would be cured and others not.

"Sacrifice yourself for sinners," the Lady said, "and say many times, especially when you make sacrifices:

"O Jesus, it is for Your love, for the conversion of sinners, and in reparation for sins committed against the Immaculate Heart of Mary!"

What was the only way in which World War I could be brought to an end? What did Our Lady promise for October? For whom were the children to make sacrifices? What prayer were the children told to say, especially when they made sacrifices?

THE VISION OF HELL. The Lady parted her hands as she had done on her other visits. The light from her palms seemed to penetrate the earth. A great sea of fire was revealed.

"In this sea," says Lucia, "were plunged, black and burning, demons and souls in human forms, resembling live and transparent coals. Lifted up into the air by the flames, they fell back on all sides like sparks in a conflagration, with neither weight nor balance, amid loud screams and cries of pain and despair which made one tremble and shudder with terror.

"The devils were distinguished from the human beings by their horrible, disgusting animal forms, unknown to us but transparent as live coals."

Pale with terror, the children raised their eyes to Our Lady for help.

"You have seen hell," said the Virgin, "where the souls of poor sinners go. To save them God wants to establish throughout the world devotion to my Immaculate Heart."

What sight terrified the children? Describe the vision. Why does God wish to establish devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary?

A SOLEMN WARNING. "If people will do what I tell you," Our Lady continued, "many souls will be saved, and there will be peace. The war is coming to an end, but if the offenses against God do not stop, another and worse one will begin in the reign of Pius XI.

"When you see a night illumined by an unknown light, know that it is the great sign that God gives you that He is going to punish the world for its crimes by means of war, hunger, persecution of the Church and of the Holy Father.

"To prevent this, I shall come back to ask the consecration of Russia to my Immaculate Heart and the Communion of Reparation on the First Saturdays.

"If my requests are granted Russia will be converted, and there will be peace. If not, she shall spread her errors throughout the world, promoting wars and persecutions of the Church. Many will be martyred, the Holy Father will have much to suffer, several nations will be destroyed.

"In the end my Immaculate Heart will triumph. The Holy Father will consecrate Russia to me, Russia will be converted, and there will be a certain period of peace."

The children were told that these words were not yet to be revealed to the world. Francisco could be told, but no one else. They were told another secret which has not yet been made known. Lucia has written it down, and it will be revealed in 1960.

What did Our Lady say would happen if men did not stop offending God? How do we know that people did not amend their lives after Mary's appearances at Fatima? What two things did Our Lady say she was coming back to request? What did she foretell about Russia? Name parts of Our Lady's prophecy about Russia which have come true. Name a part that has not yet come true. On what consoling note did the prophecy end? When will the remainder of Our Lady's July message be made known?

FOURTH APPARITION OF OUR LADY. The children were in jail in Ourem on August 13. Our Lady appeared to them on the 19th while they were tending sheep in a hollow called Valinhos.

"I want you to continue to come to the Cova da Iria on the thirteenth and to continue to say the Rosary every day," the Lady said.

"In October I shall perform a miracle so that all may believe in my apparitions. If they had not taken you to the village, the miracle would have been greater. Saint Joseph will come with the Baby Jesus to give peace to the world. Our Lord will come to bless the people. Besides, Our Lady of the Rosary and Our Lady of Sorrows will come."

Lucia asked for the cure of some sick people and was told that some of them would be cured within the year. She made it plain, however, that her principal concern is for souls.

“Pray, pray a great deal and make sacrifices for sinners,” she said gravely, “for many souls go to hell because they have no one to pray for them.”

Why did this apparition take place on the 19th of August instead of the 13th? What effect did the kidnapping have on the miracle promised for October? Who would come in October? What would the Baby Jesus do? How can we help to save the souls of sinners?

FIFTH APPARITION OF OUR LADY. On September 13 many of the people who were present saw a luminous globe cross the sky at the beginning of the apparition and re-cross it when the apparition was over. They also saw white flowers which seemed to shower from the sky but disappear before they touched the ground.

“Continue to say the Rosary,” Our Lady said, “to bring about the end of the war.”

She repeated her promise of a miracle the following month.

“God is content with your sacrifices,” she said, “but does not wish you to sleep with the rope. Wear it only during the day.”

For what purpose were the children to say the Rosary? What did Our Lady say about the sacrifices the children were making?

SIXTH APPARITION OF OUR LADY. On October 13 the Lady said, “I am the Lady of the Rosary, and I desire a chapel built in my honor in this place.”

“People must continue to say the Rosary every day,” she said. “The war will end soon, and the soldiers will return to their homes.”

Next came her farewell message: “Men must offend Our Lord no more and they must ask pardon for their sins, for He is already much offended.”

She stretched forth her hands, and the light again shone from the palms. She pointed toward the sun, which seemed dim in comparison with the light from her hands. It was probably then that Lucia cried, “Look at the sun,” but she cannot remember saying it. Our Lady then seemed to disappear in her own radiance.

By what title did Our Lady call herself? What request did she make? What was her farewell message?

THE THREE TABLEAUS. While the crowd of 70,000 was witnessing the Miracle of the Sun (Ch. I), the children saw, high up in the sky, a representation of the Holy Family. St. Joseph held the Child Jesus in his left arm. To the right was the Blessed Virgin dressed in the blue and white robes of Our Lady of the Rosary. St. Joseph and the Child Jesus made the Sign of the Cross over the world three times.

Lucia alone beheld the next vision: Our Lord dressed in red as the Divine Redeemer with Mary beside Him dressed in the purple robes of Our Lady of Sorrows. Our Lord blessed the world.

In the third and last of these visions, Lucia saw the Blessed Virgin clothed in the brown robes of Our Lady of Carmel.

That ended the series of apparitions at the Cova, but it did not end the Message of Fatima. Our Lady had said that she would come back to ask for the consecration of Russia to her Immaculate Heart and for the Communion of Reparation.

What three tableaux did Lucia behold? Explain why this appearance did not end the Message of Fatima.

SUGGESTED PRACTICES

1. Memorize the two prayers that Our Lady taught the children. Recite the one after every decade of the Rosary. Recite the other many times during the day, especially when you make sacrifices.
2. Pray to the Immaculate Heart of Mary for the conversion of Russia.

IV. The Message of Fatima — III

Our Lady had promised that she would take Francisco and Jacinta to heaven soon, and she kept that promise. Both were stricken in the influenza epidemic that swept the world in 1918.

One day when Lucia came to visit her sick cousins, Jacinta said to her: "Lucia, Our Lady came to see us and said that she was coming soon for Francisco. She asked me whether I wanted to convert more sinners. I said yes. Our Lady wants me to go to two hospitals, but it is not to cure me. It is to suffer more for the love of God, the conversion of sinners, and in reparation for offenses committed against the Immaculate Heart of Mary."

Francisco died April 4, 1918. He was not yet eleven years old.

When did Jacinta's and Francisco's last illnesses begin? For what three purposes did the Blessed Virgin wish Jacinta to suffer? When did Francisco die?

JACINTA'S LAST DAYS. Jacinta's suffering grew worse, and an abscess formed on her chest. She was taken to a hospital at Ourem for a while and then returned home. Despite her illness she tried to go to Mass every day.

"Don't try to come to Mass," Lucia said one day. "It's too much for you. Besides, it isn't Sunday."

"That doesn't matter. I want to go in place of the sinners who don't even go on Sunday."

"Look, Lucia," Jacinta continued, "Our Lord is so sad, and Our Lady told us that He must be offended no more. He is already offended very much, and no one pays any attention to it. They keep committing the same sins."

Another time Jacinta said to Lucia: "Soon I shall go to heaven. You are to stay here to reveal that the Lord wants to establish throughout the world devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. When you start to reveal this, don't hesitate. Tell everyone that Our Lord grants us all graces through the Immaculate Heart of Mary; that all must make their petitions to her; that the Sacred Heart of Jesus desires that the Immaculate Heart of Mary be venerated at the same time. Tell them that they should all ask for peace from the Immaculate Heart of Mary, as God has placed it in her hands. Oh, if I could only put in the heart of everyone in the world the fire that is burning in me and makes me love so much the Heart of Jesus and the Heart of Mary."

Why did Jacinta try to go to Mass every day? What did Jacinta wish Lucia to tell the world about the Immaculate Heart?

STATEMENTS BY JACINTA. The Blessed Virgin appeared to Jacinta again and told her that she was to die alone in a hospital in Lisbon. Soon after that she was taken to Lisbon, but the hospital had no room for her. She stayed for a while at a Franciscan convent. The superior of the convent kept a record of the statements she made while she was there.

"Wars are only punishments for the sins of the world," she said one time. "Our Lady cannot stay the arm of her beloved Son upon the world any more. It is necessary to do penance."

"If men do not amend their lives," she said at another time, "Almighty God will send the world, beginning with Spain, a punishment such as never has been seen." She spoke of "great world events" that were to take place around 1940.

"My dear Mother," she said on another occasion, "the sins that bring most souls to hell are sins of the flesh. Certain fashions are going to be introduced that will offend Our Lord very much. Those who serve God should not follow these fashions. . . . People lose their souls because they do not think about the death of Our Lord and do not do penance."

"Pray a great deal for governments. Pity those governments which persecute the religion of Our Lord. If the governments left the Church in peace and gave liberty to the Holy Religion, they would be blessed by God."

What did Jacinta say about the following subjects: wars, the sins that bring most souls to hell, fashions, governments? Do these statements apply to the present day as much as they did to 1920? Explain your answer.

DEATH OF JACINTA. On February 2, 1920, Jacinta was admitted to the hospital. On February 10, two of her ribs were removed. Because of her weakness she could not be given a general anaesthetic. Her pain was great. "It is for love of you, my Jesus," she murmured. "Now you can convert many sinners, for I suffer much."

For six days the pain lasted. Then on February 16, Our Lady appeared to her and told her that her suffering was at an end. The pain stopped. At 10:30 on the night of February 20 the nurse stepped out of the room for a few moments. She returned just in time to see the girl breathe her last.

What did Jacinta say about her pain? When did she die?

THE FIRST SATURDAY DEVOTION. On June 18, 1921, Lucia entered a school conducted by the Sisters of St. Dorothy. In 1925 she entered a convent of the same community. She took her first vows in 1928, her final vows in 1934.

Our Lady appeared to Lucia in her cell on December 10, 1925. The Child Jesus was at her side, elevated on a cloud of light. Our Lady put one hand on Lucia's shoulder. In the other she held a heart surrounded by sharp thorns. She said:

"My daughter, look at my Heart encircled with the thorns with which ungrateful men pierce it at every moment by their blasphemies and ingratitude. Do you at least try to console me and announce in my name that 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, go to Confession and receive Holy Communion, recite the Rosary, and keep me company for a quarter of an hour while meditating on the mysteries of the Rosary with the intention of making reparation to me."

Of what does the First Saturday devotion consist? What promise did Our Lady make to those who kept the First Saturdays for five consecutive months?

OTHER APPEARANCES TO LUCIA. While Lucia was praying in the convent chapel in 1927, Our Lord spoke to her from the tabernacle. He gave her permission to reveal the first two parts of the July message. The third part was to be written down and revealed to the world in 1960.

In 1929 Our Lady came to ask the consecration of Russia, as she had said she would. She asked that the consecration be made by the Holy Father in conjunction with all the bishops of the world.

What did Our Lord tell Lucia in 1927? How did Our Lady ask that the consecration of Russia be made?

"ANOTHER AND WORSE WAR." The "unknown light" mentioned in the July apparition came on the night of January 25, 1938. It was seen all over Europe and in many other parts of the world. Astronomers called it an especially brilliant display of the Aurora Borealis. Lucia, looking at it from her convent window, knew it as the sign that "another and worse" war was about to begin. The war could have been avoided if men had stopped offending God. Now the world was to reap the terrible reward for its sins.

Our Lady had said that the war would begin in the reign of Pius XI. The German seizure of Austria occurred in his reign, and Lucia regards this as the real beginning of the war. The Japanese-Chinese War also began during his reign, and the Spanish Civil War was fought then.

How did Lucia know in 1938 that World War II was coming? How could this war have been avoided?

In 1942 Pope Pius XII consecrated the world to the Immaculate Heart, and he made a special mention of Russia. Lucia regarded this as an important step in the right direction, but she said that the consecration had not been made in the form requested by Our Lady.

In 1947 she was asked, "Do you think that Our Lady's request has been complied with?"

"As Our Lady made it, no," Lucia answered. Then she added, "Whether Our Lady accepted the consecration made in 1942 as fulfilling her wish, I don't know."¹

This was one of the last interviews she ever gave. In April, 1948, she entered the Carmelites, and she now leads a cloistered life. Her name as a Carmelite is Sister Mary of the Immaculate Heart.

When did Pope Pius XII consecrate the world to the Immaculate Heart? What did Lucia answer when asked whether she thought that Our Lady's request in regard to Russia had been fulfilled? To what Order does Lucia now belong?

OUR PART. We should not worry too much as to whether Russia has been consecrated properly. If this has not been done, it no doubt will be, when we have done our part. That is the important thing. On this point Lucia is in no doubt whatsoever. She says the people of the world have not carried out Our Lady's wishes.

We must say the Rosary daily, pray for sinners, perform sacrifices in reparation for sin, dedicate ourselves to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, practice the devotion of the First Saturdays. If we do that, "Russia will be converted and there will be peace." We have Mary's word for it. More important than that, we shall be saving our souls and helping to save the souls of others.

That, then, is the Message of Fatima: prayer, sacrifice, devotion to the Immaculate Heart. There is nothing very new in this. We should have been following this program without a special message from heaven. But we were not following it then, and we still are not following it.

Does Lucia think the people of the world have carried out Our Lady's wishes? What must we do to carry out the Message of Fatima? If we follow Our Lady's wishes, what will be the result in this world? In the next?

SUGGESTED PRACTICES

1. If you have not begun to make the five First Saturdays, do so next month.
2. For a more detailed report of Fatima than it is possible to give here, read either *Our Lady of Fatima* by William Thomas Walsh or *The Crusade of Fatima* by John de Marchi. Then for supplementary details read *Vision of Fatima* by Thomas McGlynn, O. P.

1. McGlynn, O.P., *Vision of Fatima*, page 80.

V. Other Recent Apparitions — I

† OUR LADY'S apparitions at Fatima were probably the most spectacular in all history. But they are not her only appearances in recent times. Some of her more notable ones will be considered in this chapter and the next.

For the purposes of our study, the year 1830 is, somewhat arbitrarily, being selected as the beginning of modern times. The world was beginning to be influenced by the forces emerging from the French Revolution and from the Industrial Revolution, the same forces that have had so much to do with shaping the world of today. What Mary had to say in that year and in the years since is addressed directly to us who are living today.

For the purpose of this booklet what date has been selected as the beginning of modern times? What two revolutions had a profound effect on the world of 1830? Are we still feeling these effects?

PARIS, 1830. Three times in 1830 Our Lady appeared to Zoe Catherine Labouré, 24-year-old novice of the Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul. This happened at the mother house of the community in Paris.

The first appearance took place on the night of July 18 in the chapel. Our Lady foretold sad days for France: "Blood will flow in the streets." She told Catherine that she would have much to suffer but that she need not be afraid. She also told the novice some things that concerned her alone.

The second apparition took place November 20. The Blessed Virgin appeared over the high altar in the convent chapel. Her head was covered with a soft white veil. She was standing on a globe. In her hands she held a smaller globe with a tiny cross at the top. She held it out as if offering it to God. Rays of light streamed down to the larger globe from some of the gems in her fingers.

"This ball you see is the world," Our Lady said. "I am praying for it and for everyone in the world. The rays are graces which I give to those who ask for them. But there are no rays from some of these stones, for many people do not receive graces because they do not ask for them."

Where and to whom did Our Lady appear in 1830? What did she foretell for France? What did she tell Catherine about herself? Describe Mary as she first appeared on November 20. What did Our Lady say about the world? What must we do if we wish to obtain graces?

THE MIRACULOUS MEDAL. An oval frame formed around the vision. The small globe disappeared, and Our Lady dropped her hands to her sides. She became brighter and more lovely. Around the oval frame appeared in gold the words: "O Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee."

This was twenty-four years before the Immaculate Conception was defined as a dogma of the Church.

Catherine heard a voice saying: "Have a medal made according to this picture. All those who wear it when it is blessed will receive many graces, especially if they wear it suspended from their necks."

The entire picture seemed to turn. The letter "M" was on the reverse side, surmounted by a cross with a cross-bar beneath it. Below were two hearts. Our Lord's Heart was encircled by a crown of thorns; Our Lady's was pierced by a sword. Twelve stars within a golden frame encircled the picture.

At her third appearance, in December, Our Lady repeated her request for the medal. The medal was struck and distributed in 1832. So many miracles of grace have come to its wearers that it soon became known as the Miraculous Medal, its name to this day. Until her death in 1876 only two or three persons knew that humble little Sister Catherine was the one to whom Our Lady had appeared.

Describe the two sides of the Miraculous Medal. How are the Hearts of Jesus and Mary pictured? What promise did Our Lady make to those who wear the medal when blessed? When was the medal struck and distributed? Why is it called the Miraculous Medal?

OUR LADY OF LA SALETTE, 1846. On September 19, 1846, Our Lady appeared to 11-year-old Maximin Giraud and 15-year-old Melanie Mathieu near the village of La Salette in southeastern France. The two children were tending their cows on the slope of Mount Gargas. They found Our Lady seated on some stones, weeping bitterly. She rose and spoke to them.

"If my people will not submit," she said, "I shall be forced to let go the hand of my Son. It is so strong, so heavy, that I can no longer withhold it.

"How long a time do I suffer for you!" she continued. "If I would not have my Son abandon you, I am compelled to pray to Him without ceasing. And, as to you, you take no heed of it.

"However much you pray, however much you do, you will never recompense the pains I have taken for you."

What was the striking feature of the Blessed Virgin when she appeared at La Salette? What did Mary say would happen if the people would not submit to God's will? What must Our Lady do in order to keep her Son from abandoning us?

THE SINS OF THE WORLD. Our Lady complained of the sins of the world. She named the desecration of the Sabbath and the taking of her Son's name in vain as two of the sins that made the hand of her Son so heavy. She predicted dire things that would befall France if her people did not reform, but she said that divine mercy would be shown if the people amended their lives.

A number of miraculous cures have taken place at La Salette. In 1946 Pope Pius XII noted the centenary "of that blessed afternoon, the 19th of September, 1846, when the Madonna in Tears came to adjure her children to enter resolutely the path of conversion to her Divine Son, and of reparation for so many sins that offend the august and eternal Majesty."

Of what sins did Our Lady of La Salette complain in particular? Find a statement that indicates that the calamities which befall the world are often the result of sin. In what way is the Message of La Salette similar to the Message of Fatima?

OUR LADY OF LOURDES, 1858. In Paris, in 1830, Our Lady had called herself "Mary conceived without sin." On December 8, 1854, Pope Pius IX proclaimed the dogma of Mary's Immaculate Conception. Just a little more than three years later, on March 25, 1858, Our Lady said to Bernadette Soubirous, a peasant girl of Lourdes, France: "I am the Immaculate Conception." Thus she seemed to put her seal of approval on the Pontiff's action.

This was one of nineteen appearances which Our Lady made to Bernadette. During each visit the girl said the Rosary while Our Lady looked on in approval, allowing her own rosary to glide through her fingers.

During her third visit Our Lady said, "I do not promise to make you happy in this world but in the next." Bernadette later had many occasions to recall these words, because she suffered greatly before she died. She was canonized on December 8, 1933.

"Pray for sinners," Mary said on one of her visits. Another time she said to the girl, "Bend low and kiss the ground for the sake of sinners." Once, Bernadette turned to the crowd and cried, "Penitence! Penitence!"

When was the Immaculate Conception proclaimed a dogma of the Church? By what title did Our Lady call herself at Lourdes? What form of prayer was emphasized at Lourdes? What promise did Our Lady make to Bernadette? What did Mary say about sinners?

THE MIRACLES OF LOURDES. In one of her appearances Our Lady revealed a spring. The early pilgrims drank the water or applied it to afflicted

parts of their bodies, and many marvelous cures resulted. Bathhouses were erected so that pilgrims could immerse themselves completely in the water. The cures continued. Since 1905, when Pope Pius X advocated the practice of frequent Communion, more cures have taken place during the Procession of the Blessed Sacrament than during the baths.

The miracles of Lourdes cannot be explained on a natural basis. They remain a constant challenge to the "intellectuals" who say there is no such thing as the supernatural and that miracles are impossible.

Lourdes is the greatest shrine in the world. It is visited by a million and a half people each year. So great is the devotion that observers say that the air seems to be charged with prayer. More important than the physical cures are the miracles of grace, and great numbers of these have taken place at Lourdes.

Tell of the cures that have taken place at Lourdes. What proof do we have that the miracles of Lourdes cannot be explained on a natural basis? Besides the physical cures, what other miracles take place at Lourdes?

FRANCE IN 1871. At Paris and at La Salette Our Lady had warned that France would suffer for her sins. Many calamities did befall the country, and they were climaxed by the disastrous Franco-Prussian War, which began in 1870. Paris was surrounded on September 18, 1870. Its daily bombardment began on December 27. The French armies were helpless before the Prussians.

In their hour of trial millions of French people prayed fervently to Our Lady for help. She answered their prayers in a most dramatic fashion. On January 17, 1871, two boys, Eugene and Joseph Barbadette, saw the Blessed Virgin over the roof of a neighbor's house. The boys were standing by the door of their barn. This was near the little village of Pontmain, between Normandy and Brittany.

When did Our Lady foretell troubles for France? Why were these misfortunes visited upon France? What did the French do in their hour of distress?

OUR LADY OF HOPE OF PONTMAIN. Soon the entire population of the village had assembled at the barn. Six children saw the vision, which lasted more than three hours. The people recited the Rosary, sang hymns, and said many prayers while the Blessed Virgin smiled approvingly.

At length the children saw a white band unroll beneath Our Lady's feet. On it appeared the words, "Pray, my children."

The next message was, "God will hear you in a little while." This was followed by, "My Son permits Himself to be moved."

This was Mary's message of hope and consolation to her afflicted children of France. The villagers were beside themselves with joy.

A red crucifix appeared and above it the words "Jesus Christ." Soon after that a white veil slowly drew over the vision and hid it from the sight of the children.

While the apparition was going on, a man had rushed in with the news that the Prussians were at Laval, a few miles away. But they never reached Pontmain. For some unexplained reason, they turned back before they got there. Just ten days after the apparition, January 27, 1871, the armistice was signed and the war was over.

A large basilica has been erected on the spot where the Virgin appeared. There she has continued to give hope to the pilgrims in their trials.

What does the apparition at Pontmain teach us about the power of prayer? What message is there in this story for our day?

SUGGESTED PRACTICES

1. Obtain a Miraculous Medal if you do not already have one. Have it blessed and wear it always.
2. Pray to Mary that real peace may come to the world.

VI. Other Recent Apparitions — II

† “MOTHER OF GOD, how often in the last centuries have you not come down to us, speaking to us in our mountains and groves and hills, and telling us what was to come upon us, and we have not heard you. How long shall we continue to be dead to your voice, and run our heads into the jaws of the hell that abhors us?”¹

OUR MOTHER ALL MERCIFUL OF PELLEVOISIN, 1876. Estelle Faguette of Pellevoisin, France, was dying of consumption, the doctors said. They agreed that there was no hope for her. On Monday, February 14, 1876, the Blessed Virgin appeared at the foot of her bed and said: “Have courage; be patient; my Son will allow Himself to be prevailed upon. You will suffer five days longer in honor of the five wounds of my Son. On Saturday you will be either dead or cured. If my Son restores you to life, I wish you to publish my glory.”

The next night Our Lady told Estelle that she was to be cured on Saturday. “If my Son has allowed Himself to be prevailed upon, it is because of your resignation and patience.”

At the fifth visit, Friday night, Estelle asked whether she should change her state in life. “One can be saved in every state,” was the answer. “Where you are you can do a great deal of good, and you can publish my glory. What afflicts me most is the want of respect shown by some people to my Divine Son in Holy Communion and the attitude taken for prayer when at the same time the mind continues occupied with other things. I say this for people who pretend to be pious.”

Why was Estelle to suffer five days longer? Why did Our Lord decide to cure Estelle? What did Our Lady say about states of life? What afflicted Our Lady the most?

“FRANCE WILL SUFFER.” After she was cured, Estelle was visited ten more times by Our Lady — a total of fifteen appearances.

On July 2, the Blessed Virgin said that the Heart of her Son bears so much love for her “that He cannot refuse me any requests.” Then she said, “I have come especially for the conversion of sinners.”

“For a long time,” she said on September 9, “the treasures of my Son have been open. Let them pray.”

She raised a small piece of woolen cloth which she wore on her breast. Estelle saw a red heart on it, and she knew it to be the Scapular of the Sacred Heart. Holding it up, Our Lady said, “I love this devotion.” She paused and added, “It is here I will be honored.”

“In the Church there is not the calm I desire,” Our Lady said on September 15. Estelle understood that there was some discord.

The Virgin looked sad as she added, “And France, what have I not done for her! How many warnings, and yet she has refused to listen! I can no longer restrain my Son.” She appeared deeply moved as she added, “France will suffer.”

Just five years after Our Lady had announced at Pontmain that her Son had taken pity on France, she had to warn that country again. This time the punishment was to be even more terrible: a World War.

How do we know that the best way to reach Our Lord is through His Mother? What was the principal purpose of the appearances at Pellevoisin? Was this also the purpose of the appearances at Fatima? Explain your answer. What devotion did Our Lady encourage at Pellevoisin? What did she say about France?

THE FINAL APPARITION OF PELLEVOISIN. “I choose the little ones and the weak for my glory,” Our Lady said to Estelle on November 5.

1. Merton, *The Seven Storey Mountain*, page 129.

The fifteenth and last apparition took place on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, 1876. Our Lady held out the Scapular of the Sacred Heart. She asked Estelle to go to the bishop and tell him "that nothing will be more acceptable to me than to see this livery on each of my children, and that they all endeavor to repair the outrages received by my Divine Son in the sacrament of His love. See the graces I will bestow on those who will wear it with confidence and who will assist in propagating it."

"While speaking," said Estelle, "the Blessed Virgin stretched out her hands and from them fell drops of rain. In each drop, I seemed to read such graces as piety, salvation, confidence, conversion, health."

Our Lady said, "These graces are from my Divine Son; I take them from His Heart; He can refuse me nothing."

Pope Leo XIII approved the Archconfraternity of Our Mother All Merciful of Pellevoisin on May 8, 1894. On April 4, 1900, the Sacred Congregation of Rites approved the Scapular of the Sacred Heart.

Cite examples to show that Our Lady does choose the little ones and the weak for her glory. Why do you think that Mary, the most humble of persons, wishes her glory published? (For one answer, see St. Louis de Montfort's statement, Ch. I.) How were graces portrayed at Pellevoisin? How had they been represented at Paris? Where does Our Lady obtain these graces?

QUEEN OF THE HOLY ROSARY, 1884. Fortuna Agrelli of Naples, Italy, lay desperately ill. On February 16, 1884, she and some of her relatives began a novena of Rosaries. On March 3, the Queen of the Rosary appeared to her, seated on a throne, the Infant Jesus in her lap, and a rosary in her hand.

"Child," said the Blessed Virgin, "you have invoked me by many titles and have always obtained favors from me. Now, since you have called me by the title that is so pleasing to me, 'Queen of the Holy Rosary,' I can no longer refuse the favor you ask, for this name is most precious and dear to me. Make three novenas and you will obtain all."

Fortuna made the three novenas and was cured. Our Lady returned to the girl after her cure and said, "Whoever desires to obtain favors from me should make three novenas of the prayers of the Rosary in petition and three novenas in thanksgiving."

When Our Lady appeared in Naples in 1884, what title did she say is especially pleasing to her? How are we to pray if we wish to obtain favors from the Blessed Virgin? Why is this devotion sometimes called the Irresistible Novena?

OUR LADY OF FATIMA, 1917. This story was related in the first four chapters. It would be well to review it now in order to get it in its proper chronological sequence.

In what ways was the Message of Fatima a logical sequel of Our Lady's previous appearances? Compare Our Lady's statements at Fatima with previous statements on the following subjects: conversion of sinners, punishment for sin, prayer, sacrifice, the Rosary. Beginning in 1830, Our Lady warned France several times that it would suffer for its sins. Whom did she warn at Fatima?

OUR LADY OF BEAURAING, 1932-33. Between November 29, 1932, and January 3, 1933, the Blessed Virgin appeared thirty-three times to four girls and a boy in Beauraing, Belgium. "I am the Immaculate Conception," she said on one occasion. Another time she said, "Pray, pray much."

Fernande, the eldest of the children, beheld her Heart as a Heart of Gold.

During her last appearance, Our Lady said to one of the children, "I am the Mother of God, Queen of Heaven. Pray always and be good." To another she said, "I will convert sinners." To still another she said, "Do you love my Son? Do you love me?" When the child answered "Yes," she said, "Then sacrifice yourself for me."

A shrine has been built at Beauraing, and many conversions have resulted. They are called "Beauraing's Greatest Invisible Treasure."

By what titles did Our Lady call herself at Beauraing? How did she show her Heart? What did she say about prayer? About sinners? About sacrifice?

THE VIRGIN OF THE POOR, 1933. Just twelve days after her last appearance at Beauraing, Our Lady appeared at Banneux, Belgium, less than 100 miles away. She appeared eight times to 11-year-old Mariette Beco. In the course of her visions she said, "I am the Virgin of the Poor." She also said, "I have come to bring relief to the sick. . . . Believe in me and I will believe in you. Pray much!"

Our Lady pointed out a spring which was to be dedicated to the sick of all nations. Many cures have been wrought at this spring.

Banneux is becoming a center of charity with homes for the aged, orphan-ages, and hospitals for the poor. The International Union of Prayer, intimately connected with the devotion to the Virgin of the Poor, has 700,000 members.

By what title did Our Lady call herself at Banneux? What changes have her appearances made in the village?

REPUTED APPARITIONS OF RECENT YEARS. From Italy, Germany, Lithuania, Yugoslavia, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, the Philippine Islands, and many other places have come reports of apparitions of the Blessed Virgin. All of them are reported to have taken place since 1940. Most of them are too recent to have received ecclesiastical approval, and so will not be taken up here. Just a few quotations will have to suffice for now. On April 25, 1946, at Pfaffenhofen, Germany, Our Lady is reported to have said, "The world was consecrated to my Immaculate Heart, but this consecration has become a terrible responsibility for many. I demand that the world *live* that consecration!"

She is quoted as saying a few months later at Pfaffenhofen, "Where a small group begins to do my will I shall perform miracles in the souls such as never before, but only my children will see the miracles."

In late 1948, a young Carmelite postulant reported a series of apparitions in Lipa, Philippine Islands. A shower of rose petals of a variety unknown in the Islands accompanied the apparitions and were seen by a great number of people.

"I am Mary, Mediatrix of All Graces," Our Lady is reported to have said. "Pray much because of persecution. Pray for priests. What I ask here is exactly what I have asked at Fatima. . . ."

The Message of Fatima seems to be coming to us through many channels with ever-increasing urgency.

What is Our Lady reported to have said about the consecration of the world to her Immaculate Heart? What is she reported to have said at Lipa in the Philippines?

THE TIMES ARE SERIOUS. If all—or a large proportion—of the reported apparitions of our times prove to be authentic, Our Lady is appearing more often now than ever before in history. Authorities take this as a sign that the times are becoming more and more serious. Our Blessed Mother is trying to warn us to repent before it is too late. If we will just wake up and do what she requests, we can truly change the world.

How do authorities explain the seemingly large number of apparitions of Our Lady in our day? What is Our Lady trying to do? How can we change the world?

SUGGESTED PRACTICES

1. Become an apostle of Our Lady. Do not be content with following her wishes yourself. Make these wishes known to others.
2. Wear the Scapular of the Sacred Heart.

VII. The Revolt Against God

† AFTER MARY'S ASSUMPTION into heaven, devotion to her as the Mother of God grew with each succeeding century. It reached a peak in the late Middle Ages when soaring cathedrals were erected in her honor, when her shrines appeared all over Europe, when the ordinary man or woman invoked Mary's aid before venturing upon the simplest undertaking. But when the Blessed Virgin appeared to Catherine Labouré in Paris in 1830, she came into a world that had all but forgotten her.

When did devotion to the Blessed Virgin reach a peak? What are some of the forms the devotion took? How about Marian devotion in the early part of the nineteenth century?

THE PROTESTANT REVOLT. In the sixteenth century came the Protestant Revolt. The leaders of this revolt, in their hatred for everything Catholic, struck especially at Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament and at devotion to the Blessed Virgin. The reason they gave for not honoring Our Lady was that this took away from honor due to Christ.

Their reasoning could not have been more false. No son worthy of the name wishes to see his mother ignored, and Christ is the perfect Son because He is perfect God and perfect man. He selected His Mother from all eternity and preserved her, alone of all mankind, from the stain of original sin. He gave her a very important part to play in the Incarnation and also in the Redemption. He made her our Mother as well as His, and He decreed that all His graces would be distributed through her. Certainly He intended her to be honored by mankind.

What reason did the leaders of the Protestant Revolt give for not honoring Mary? Show that this reasoning was false.

RESULTS OF THE PROTESTANT REVOLT. After the sixteenth century millions of people were raised with little or no knowledge of the Mother of God. She was neglected even by large numbers of Catholics. It is Mary's function to lead us ever closer to God, so when she was forgotten the next step could have been foretold. Thousands of persons turned against God Himself.

The revolt against God was led largely by the so-called intellectuals of France, particularly of Paris. These men beheld the advances that had been made in science and in other fields, and they took all the credit to themselves. Man had done this by his reason alone, they said. A great new era was dawning for mankind. There was no longer a need for God.

What next step was inevitable after men had turned away from the Mother of God? What would you say is necessary before the world turns back to God?

THE FRENCH REVOLUTION. These ideas triumphed in the French Revolution of 1789. This was a revolt against religion as much as against the government. Priests and Sisters were driven from the country or put to death. The great Cathedral of Our Lady in Paris was converted into a temple to the goddess of reason. Man had elevated himself to the place of a god.

The Revolution went from excess to excess and finally degenerated into the Reign of Terror, when heads by the hundreds came rolling from the guillotine. Such conditions could not be endured forever, and the revolution eventually collapsed.

As a political force the French Revolution was temporarily stilled. Its anti-religious spirit lived on, however, and continued to grow. It spread throughout the world like a great insidious cancer. In France, "eldest daughter of the Church," thousands of people became freethinkers, agnostics, and even atheists. Such supposedly Catholic countries as Italy, Spain, and Portugal were very much affected. So were the nations of South America. Predominantly Protestant countries, such as England, Germany, and the United States, came under its influence.

It became unfashionable to speak of God, and people scoffed at the possibility of miracles. The nineteenth century was the century of materialism. No wonder Our Lady wept when she appeared at La Salette. No wonder she said she could scarcely withhold the hand of her Son.

Who led the revolt against God? Name some of the countries affected by this revolt. What word was the keynote of the nineteenth century?

THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION. Three revolutions did much to shape the world of 1830: the Protestant Revolt, the French Revolution, and the Industrial Revolution. All three are affecting the world in which we live today.

It was the invention of the steam engine which brought about the Industrial Revolution. Formerly men had worked at their trades in their own homes or in small shops. They had sufficient to eat, and they had time to worship God and to take part in innocent amusements. They were close to their families and friends. They took great pride in their work.

The steam engine changed all that. Factories suddenly began poisoning the air with their ugly black smoke. The small craftsman was put out of business. He and his family were forced to move to the city and to do hard disagreeable work for an employer they did not know. Men, women, and children were forced to work twelve to fifteen hours a day for wages averaging less than a dollar a day. They worked, went home and slept, and went to work again. They lived like animals in disease-infested slums. There was little time for them to go to church or to think about God.

What three revolutions did much to shape the world of 1830? What invention brought about the Industrial Revolution? What were some of the effects of the Industrial Revolution?

A MATERIALISTIC AGE. The majority of the factory owners were intent upon making as much money as possible. The best way to do that, they reasoned, was to work their employees as long as possible and to pay them as little as possible.

If the Industrial Revolution had come in a more spiritual age, the factory owners would have recognized their workers as being made in the image and likeness of God. But it came in the age of materialism, when the only concern of many was acquiring power and wealth. This made its effects many times as bad as they otherwise would have been.

Many of the workers, in their great distress — and it must be remembered that they were also influenced by the materialism of the times — were ready to follow such false prophets as Karl Marx. Marx rejected God completely. His solution was an uprising of the workers — class warfare. Today the world is reaping the terrible results of Marx's teachings, for the Communist Party looks to him as its founder.

"The tragedy of the nineteenth century," said Pope Pius XI, "was that the Church lost the working classes."

Do you think the Industrial Revolution was a bad thing in itself? Why or why not? What made its effects worse than they otherwise would have been? Were the factory owners the only ones who were materialistic? What did Karl Marx advocate? What did Pope Pius XI say about the nineteenth century?

MARY'S GREAT LOVE FOR US. That was the world of 1830, a world which had turned its back on God. There were exceptions, of course. But religion was everywhere on the defensive. Thousands of people who considered themselves good Catholics were affected by this spirit of irreligion. They attended Mass on Sunday and received the sacraments on rare occasions, but they scarcely thought of God as they went about their daily work.

The Blessed Virgin in 1830 found herself in the position of a Mother whose children had insulted her, rejected her, and all but forgotten her. Why did she not leave them to the fate they so richly deserved? Why did she not ignore the

children who had ignored her for three centuries? The only answer is that Mary's love for us passes all understanding. She wishes to save us even when we seem determined to destroy ourselves.

If Mary's appearance of 1830 can be considered as the beginning of a counterattack on the forces of irreligion, it is interesting to note that she began it in the heart of the enemy's territory — in Paris.

Name some groups of people who did not turn away from God in the nineteenth century. How were many Catholics affected by the revolt against God? Why do you think Mary did not leave the world to the fate it deserved? Why is it interesting to note that Mary's appearance of 1830 took place in Paris?

THE WORLD SINCE 1830. We have already studied Our Lady's principal apparitions since 1830. The finding of St. Louis Marie de Montfort's treatise *True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary*, in 1842, also added great impetus to devotion to Our Lady. So did the defining of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception in 1854. The latter is an especially appropriate devotion for our times. It serves to remind us that Mary was the only person upon whom was conferred the great privilege of being conceived without original sin. All the rest of us are inclined toward evil because of the effects of this sin. We cannot get along without God's help. The great error of the nineteenth century and also of our own century is the idea that man can get along without God.

While devotion to the Mother of God was increasing, the forces of irreligion also continued to make progress. The famous *Syllabus of Errors*, issued by Pope Pius IX on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception in 1864, listed eighty false philosophies of the times. Most of these could be boiled down to the one word *materialism* — an overpowering concern for the things of this world.

Name two events, in addition to the apparitions, that have helped increase devotion to Mary in the last century. Give one reason why the Immaculate Conception is a particularly appropriate devotion for our times. What is one of the effects that original sin has on us? In what one word can we sum up the false philosophies of the nineteenth century?

AN AGE OF PERSECUTION. Today in the United States this materialism has taken the form of secularism — a complete divorcing of God from everyday affairs. God is banished even from the classrooms of public schools. The bishops of the United States have warned that secularism is eating away at the very vitals of our nation. A country that rejects God cannot long endure.

Active persecution of the Church has increased constantly during the past century. Napoleon Bonaparte imprisoned Pope Pius VII. An insurrection forced Pope Pius IX to flee from Rome. Later King Victor Emmanuel took the Holy Father's temporal power from him. Anticlerical laws were put into effect in most of the countries of Europe. In Mexico in the 1920's the churches were closed, and priests fell before firing squads. Hundreds of priests and religious and thousands of lay people were massacred in Spain in the 1930's. There was a great persecution in Hitler's Germany.

Today, with half the world under the control of militantly atheistic Communists, "we are living in the greatest persecution of the Church that has ever been known." To the three revolutions mentioned earlier in this chapter can be added the Communist Revolution of 1917. This has had a profound effect upon our world.

What is the great evil threatening the United States today? Give some examples of persecutions the Church has suffered in the past century. Why is the world in such a bad condition today? Is the situation hopeless?

SUGGESTED PRACTICES

1. Read the two statements on secularism that have been issued by the Bishops of the United States (1947-1948).
2. Pray to Mary Immaculate, the Patroness of the United States, and ask her to lead the people of this great country back to God.

VIII. The Great Battle

† THE REIGN OF PIUS XII, says the *Michigan Catholic*, "seems destined to go down in history as one of the most malignant chapters in the Church's 2,000-year history. It has seen the most terrible of world wars—a war that has brought material destruction, spiritual destitution, and enslavement to countless millions. . . . We have seen atheistic Communism, the creed of Antichrist, explode over half the world and spatter even into our own land, debilitated by the creeping paralysis of secularism. . . . And worse—maybe even the worst—may still be to come. . . . *No Place to Hide* is the uneasy title of a book which marshalls the menaces of atomic warfare into an appalling, terrifying tomorrow."

How does the Michigan Catholic describe the reign of Pius XII? Why? What is the significance of the title No Place to Hide?

OPPOSING FORCES. Contrast that statement with this one: "Without doubt in our times more is done for the great Mother of God in ten years than was done formerly in a hundred years, perhaps in three hundred years. Last century more books and writings were published on Our Lady than in the other eighteen centuries of our Christian era. Never in all history have the problems of Mariology, such as the Assumption, Our Lady's Universal Mediation, Mary as co-Redeemer, found such interest as now. And how many other points could be made to show the Marian nature of this age!"¹

If we had come across these two statements a short time ago, we probably should have said that they contradicted each other. It is impossible, we should have said, for our age to be at the one time so degraded and so spiritual. But now we have progressed far enough in our study of Mary in our modern world to know that both statements are perfectly true. We know that two opposing forces are at work in the world and that both are constantly gaining in strength. One force is trying to induce the people of the world to turn away from God; the other is trying to draw everyone to Him. Both forces are meeting with a certain amount of success. This explains the paradox of our living in an age of great persecution and also in an age of spiritual reawakening.

What does Rev. Clem M. Henze say about our age? Does his statement contradict that which appeared in the Michigan Catholic? Explain your answer.

PROPHET OF OUR AGE. Sainly men and mystics of the past have foretold the conditions which prevail today. Outstanding among these is St. Louis Marie de Montfort. St. Louis was ordained in 1700 and he died in 1716. Sometime in those sixteen years he wrote *True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary*. While writing it he recorded this prophecy: "I clearly foresee that raging brutes will come in fury to tear with their diabolical teeth this little writing and him whom the Holy Ghost has made use of to write it, or at least to envelop it in the silence of a coffer, in order that it may not appear." He prophesied that eventually it would make its appearance and that it would be successful.

All of this was fulfilled. The manuscript disappeared and was not found till 1842, 126 years after the author's death. It has been very successful. It has appeared in many editions and in many languages and has led innumerable souls into closer union with Our Lady.

Louis Marie de Montfort was canonized on July 20, 1947, within a few weeks of the canonization of that other Marian saint, Catherine Lebouré.

When did St. Louis Marie de Montfort write True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary? What did he prophesy concerning the work? How was his prophecy fulfilled? What two Marian saints were canonized in the summer of 1947?

MARY IN OUR TIMES. What does St. Louis de Montfort say about our times? His words deserve close study.

1. Rev. Clem M. Henze, C.S.S.R., "A Test of the Apocalypse," *Maria Legionis*, March, 1948, page 1.

"God wishes," he says, "that His Holy Mother should be at present more known, more loved, more honored than she has ever been."

"It was through Mary," says St. Louis, "that the salvation of the world was begun, and it is through Mary that it must be consummated. Mary hardly appeared at all in the first coming of Jesus Christ . . . but in the second coming . . . Mary has to be made known and revealed by the Holy Ghost, in order that through her, Jesus Christ may be known, loved, and served. . . ."

According to St. Louis Marie de Montfort, what are God's wishes concerning His Mother in the world of today? Explain the statement that the salvation of the world was begun through Mary. What is to be Mary's role in the second coming of Our Lord?

"THESE LATTER TIMES." "God then," continues St. Louis Marie, "wishes to reveal and make known Mary, the masterpiece of His hands, in these latter times:

"1. Because she hid herself in this world, and put herself lower than the dust by her profound humility, having obtained from God and from His apostles and evangelists that she should not be made manifest.

"2. Because, as she is the masterpiece of the hands of God, as well here below by grace as in heaven by glory, He wishes to be glorified and praised in her by those who are living upon the earth.

"3. As she is the dawn which precedes and reveals the Sun of Justice, who is Jesus Christ, she must be seen and recognized in order that Jesus Christ may also be.

"4. Being the way by which Jesus came to us the first time, she will also be the way by which He will come the second time, though not in the same manner."

What are some of the reasons that God wishes His Mother to be better known "in these latter times"?

MARY MUST SHINE FORTH. St. Louis Marie continues:

"5. Being the sure means and the straight and immaculate way to go to Jesus Christ, and to find Him perfectly, it is by her that the souls who are to shine forth especially in sanctity have to find Our Lord. He who shall find Mary shall find life, that is Jesus Christ, who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. But no one can find Mary who does not seek her; and no one can seek her who does not know her; for we cannot seek or desire an unknown object. It is necessary, then, for the greater knowledge and glory of the Most Holy Trinity, that Mary should be more than ever known.

"6. Mary must shine forth more than ever in mercy, in might, and in grace in these latter times. In mercy, to bring back and lovingly receive the poor strayed sinners who shall be converted and shall return to the Catholic Church; in might, against the enemies of God, idolaters, schismatics, Mohammedans, Jews, and souls hardened in impiety, who shall rise in terrible revolt against God to seduce all those who shall oppose them, and to make them fall by promises and threats. And finally, she must shine forth in grace in order to animate and sustain the valiant soldiers and faithful servants of Jesus Christ, who shall battle for His interests."

What does St. Louis Marie say about those who find Mary? Can we find Mary without seeking her? What is necessary before we can seek her? Why is our present study of the Blessed Virgin very important? Why must Mary shine forth in "the latter times" in mercy? In might? In grace?

MARY MUST BE TERRIBLE TO THE DEVIL. The above do not quite complete St. Louis Marie's reasons why God wishes His Mother to shine forth in our day. There is one more, and it is an important one.

"7. And lastly, Mary must be terrible to the devil and his crew, as an army ranged in battle, principally in these latter times, because the devil, knowing that

he has but little time, and now less than ever, to destroy souls, will every day redouble his efforts and his combats. He will presently raise up cruel persecutions, and will put terrible snares before the faithful servants and true children of Mary, whom it gives him more trouble to conquer than it does to conquer others."

Does this explain the persecutions of our day which keep increasing in intensity? It would seem so. According to St. Louis Marie, the devil, knowing he has little time left, is constantly increasing his efforts. We must admit that he seems to be working overtime these days. St. Louis Marie adds that these last and cruel persecutions of the devil "shall go on increasing daily till the reign of Antichrist." He then refers to the words which God spoke to the devil after the fall of our first parents: "I will put enmities between thee and the woman and thy seed and her seed; she shall crush thy head, and thou shalt lie in wait for her heel."

Why, according to St. Louis Marie, is the devil every day redoubling his efforts? What does St. Louis Marie predict about the persecutions of our time?

THE ONE GREAT ENMITY. "God has formed but one enmity, but it is an irreconcilable one, which shall endure and grow even to the end. It is between Mary, His worthy Mother, and the devil — between the children and servants of the Blessed Virgin, and the children and tools of Lucifer."

God has given His Mother such power over the devil, St. Louis Marie tells us, that Satan "fears her not only more than all angels and men, but in a sense more than God Himself. Not that the anger, the hatred, and the power of God are not infinitely greater than those of the Blessed Virgin, for the perfections of Mary are limited, but Satan, being proud, suffers infinitely more from being beaten and punished by a little handmaid of God, and her humility humbles him more than the divine power."

The devils, our saintly author tells us, fear one of Mary's sighs for a soul "more than the prayers of all the saints, and one of her threats against them more than all other torments."

When we behold the opposing forces at work in the world, we are witnessing the greatest battle of all time, the battle between Satan and his cohorts on one side and the Blessed Virgin and her followers on the other. The devil will stop at nothing in his attempts to lure us into the lowest depths of hell. Mary is equally determined to help us get to heaven. The battle seems to be approaching a great climax in our day.

St. Louis Marie's words about Mary's power over the devil are consoling ones to keep in mind during these trying times. Satan may rage and roar at us, but he cannot harm us so long as we stay by Mary's side.

What is the one enmity that God has made? Why does the devil, in a sense, fear Mary more than he does God Himself? How can we make ourselves secure against the attacks of the devil?

SUGGESTED PRACTICES

1. Read *True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary* by St. Louis Marie de Montfort.
2. Ask the Blessed Virgin to keep you close by her side and to protect you against the attacks of the devil.

IX. God's Mother Is Our Mother

Mary is our Mother. All Catholics realize this in at least a vague sort of way. We have heard it since we were old enough to remember. We have been accustomed to referring to Mary as Our Blessed Mother. Yet, do we *really* believe it? Do we realize the tremendous meaning in those four simple words: "Mary is our Mother"?

If we should stop to analyze our feelings on the subject, many of us would find that we think the word Mother is applied to Mary in a figurative sense or that she is our adoptive Mother. We know that she is the Mother of God because she bore Christ in her womb, but she didn't bear us. We have a mother who brought us into the world. Perhaps she is still living. If not, we probably have vivid memories of her. That is the woman who is our real mother. And we can't have two mothers, can we?

That is the way many of us would express ourselves if we should think about the subject or discuss it. This attitude is not correct, however. Mary is *really and truly* our Mother.

How do we know that Mary is the Mother of God? Why do we sometimes have trouble realizing that Mary is our Mother? Before reading any farther in this chapter, how would you explain the fact that Mary is your Mother?

MARY IS REALLY OUR MOTHER. When Jesus was dying on the Cross He said to Mary, "Woman, behold thy son." To John, who represented all of us, He said, "Behold thy Mother." These words did not make Mary our Mother. Our Lord was confirming, at this solemn hour, a most important fact.

A mother is one who gives life. Our earthly mother gave us our life in this world, our natural life. She is our mother in the natural order. Mary has given us the only life that really matters, our supernatural life. She is our Mother in the supernatural order. Mary gave us this supernatural life at Nazareth, on Calvary, and at our Baptism.

What is a mother? How many mothers have we? What kind of life did Mary give us? When did she do this?

HOW MARY GAVE US LIFE. When the Angel Gabriel appeared to Mary with the astounding news that she was chosen to be the Mother of God, her consent was needed before the Incarnation could take place. She thought of all of us at that moment. She knew that by answering either "Yes" or "No" she could give us life or she could leave us in death. By her consent, Mary gave us life. She made our Redemption possible.

Jesus delivered us from sin and death when He died on the cross. It was in union with Mary that He did this. At the supreme moment when her Son was giving up His life, she did not give way to uncontrollable grief. She was thinking of us, her children. She bravely and generously offered her Son to the Father for our salvation. Never did a creature suffer as Mary did when she stood beneath the cross, for never did a creature make such a sacrifice. Mary, ever Virgin, experienced only joy when she brought Jesus into the world. When she gave us our spiritual birth, she underwent the most agonizing sorrow.

Again at our Baptism, Mary gave us spiritual life in the sense that she obtained for us the grace to receive the sacrament. We came from our Mother's womb in the state of original sin; our soul had no supernatural life. We came to life only when sanctifying grace was infused into our soul at Baptism. This sanctifying grace came to us indirectly through Mary, because it was by her intercession that we had the opportunity to receive the sacrament of Baptism fruitfully.

What was the significance of Mary's consenting to be the Mother of the Redeemer? Do you think the Annunciation was one of the great moments of

history? Give reasons for your answer. How did Mary give us life at Nazareth? When did Jesus deliver us from sin and death? What part did Mary play in our Redemption? What were Mary's sentiments in giving birth to Jesus? What were her sentiments in giving spiritual birth to us? How did Mary give us life at Baptism?

NATURE OF THE LIFE MARY HAS GIVEN US. So, we see that if it were not for Mary our souls would still be in the state of spiritual death in which they were left by the sin of Adam and Eve. But because of Mary we can hope to enjoy the eternal happiness of heaven. She has given us our life in the next world. She is truly our spiritual Mother.

What about this life that Mary has given us? "It is not a passing life like your terrestrial one," says Father Emil Neubert, S. M., "but a life without end; not a life full of imperfections and anguish like your present existence, but a life incomparably happy; not a created life, human or angelical, but — and understand it well — a participation in uncreated life, in the very life of God, in the life of the Most Blessed Trinity. And that is why this life will be endless and incomparably happy, because it is a sharing in the eternity and in the beatitude of God."¹

So the life that Mary has given us is much, much greater than the life we are now living. But this spiritual life would not be possible if we did not first live in this world. Our two mothers have cooperated to give us the opportunity of achieving eternal happiness. They are partners in God's great plan for us.

Contrast the life Mary has given us with the life we are now living. Which is the greater? Why? Explain how our two mothers have cooperated to give us the opportunity of achieving eternal happiness.

WHAT MARY'S MOTHERHOOD MEANS TO US. What does it mean to us to have Mary for our Mother? It means far more than can be put into words. Mary's love for us, her children, surpasses all comprehension. She loves us more than we can possibly love ourselves.

Knowing that Mary is our Mother, we can turn to her with full confidence. We know that she can obtain for us any grace that will be profitable for our soul. We can go to her with all our troubles and we can confide in her all our plans. We can ask her to help us overcome our faults. As a true Mother, she will listen with love and sympathy. And she is in a position to help us, for, besides being our Mother, she is also the Mother of God, the Queen of Heaven, the Mediatrix of All Graces. No wonder the Church calls her "Virgin Most Powerful."

Earthly mothers ordinarily take care of us only while we are children. If we should die, they would grieve deeply. Mary watches over us always; we are always children to her. If we should lose our supernatural life by falling into mortal sin, she can obtain for us the grace to recover it. She is always able to help us.

We see examples of Mary's motherly love for us in her frequent apparitions of recent years. She keeps returning to get us to repent and to save ourselves from the effects of our offenses against God.

Tell in your own words what it means to you to have Mary as your Mother. Explain why Mary is in a position to help us. What can Mary do in regard to our supernatural life that our earthly mother can't do in regard to our natural life? How are the apparitions of recent years a sign of Mary's motherly love for us? Cite examples from previous chapters that bear out this point.

GOD'S MOTHER. We love and honor Mary, then, because she is our Mother, because she is so kind and good to us. But there is an even better reason. We love and honor her, because Christ loved and honored her. As true Christians, we should take Christ as our model in all things.

1. Neubert, S.M. *My Ideal — Jesus Son of Mary*, page 22.

Jesus in His human nature is the Son of Mary because with His divine will He chose from all eternity to be her Son. He could have come into the world in any number of ways. But He chose to come through Mary. He wanted to be carried in her womb for nine months, to be nursed by her, to be brought up and cared for by her, to be subject to her. When He created the angels, He thought of her. When He created the world, He thought of her. When our first parents lost heaven for us, He knew that He would redeem us through her.

Mary had to be the perfect creature because she, alone of all creatures, was to be the Mother of God. She was the only human person to be conceived without the stain of original sin. She was also to be preserved from all actual sin. Hers was the most beautiful soul God ever created. She is the only woman to be both a Virgin and a Mother. Her body was taken to heaven and glorified soon after her death. She has been made Queen of Heaven, and God has willed that all graces be distributed through her.

These are but a few of the signs of God's great love for His Mother. They are all reasons why we should love and honor her also.

How do we know that Jesus could have come into the world in some other way than through Mary? When was Jesus absolutely dependent upon her? When was He subject to her? When did He first think of her and love her? Why did Mary have to be the perfect creature? Name some of Mary's unique privileges. How has Jesus honored His Mother in heaven? How will we act toward Mary if we imitate Christ?

GOD'S MOTHER IS OUR MOTHER. St. Stanislaus Kotska used to repeat with great happiness, "*Mater Dei, Mater mei*" — God's Mother is my Mother." Each of us can say the same thing. What a tremendous truth that is!

God will refuse His Mother nothing, and Mary will refuse her children nothing when they kneel at her feet and beg her to show a Mother's love.

Mary's Immaculate Heart was fashioned by her Creator so that God made Man could receive the perfect love of the perfect Mother. She loves us with that same Immaculate Heart. Next to the love of the Sacred Heart of Jesus there can be no love so pure or so deep.

"God's Mother is my Mother." What a world of meaning in those words! What a depth of consolation and hope! Why should we ever have any fear or uncertainty when we have such a powerful, kind, and loving Mother watching over us at all times? We have only to ask her for her help.

What expression did St. Stanislaus Kotska repeat to himself? Why is this such a wonderful truth? If the Mother of Jesus is our Mother, how are we related to Jesus? For what purpose was Mary's Immaculate Heart fashioned? What else does she do with this Heart? Explain why there is never any real reason for fear or uncertainty. Why should a devout Catholic be the happiest of all persons?

SUGGESTED PRACTICES

1. Say to yourself several times a day, "God's Mother is my Mother." Think about the words. The more you think about them the more they will mean to you.
2. Read *My Ideal — Jesus Son of Mary* by Rev. Emil Neubert, S.M.

X. Mediatrix of All Graces

† THE WORLD was in a bad way in May, 1917. World War I had been going on for almost three years, and no end seemed to be in sight. It was then, you will recall from Chapter I, that Pope Benedict XV said: "Because all graces . . . are dispensed by the hands of the most holy Virgin, we wish the petitions of her most afflicted children to be directed with lively confidence, more than ever in this awful hour, to the great Mother of God."

"Because all graces . . . are dispensed by the hands of the most holy Virgin . . ." The words are clear and unmistakable—no "and's"; no "if's"; no "but's." Pope Benedict XV clearly believed that Mary is the Mediatrix of All Graces.

What statement regarding the Blessed Virgin did Pope Benedict XV make in May, 1917? What title of Mary's was implicit in this statement? What happened eight days after the Pope made his appeal? (See Chapter I.)

THE MIND OF THE CHURCH. It is not yet an article of faith that Mary is the Mediatrix of All Graces. The belief, however, has gained almost universal acceptance. Other beliefs have also gained wide acceptance before being solemnly defined. The Assumption of Our Lady is not yet an article of faith, but it is one of the Glorious Mysteries of the Rosary, and the Feast of the Assumption is a holyday of obligation. The Immaculate Conception was not solemnly defined as an article of faith until 1854, but most Catholics had accepted it for centuries before that.

In writing of Mary's Universal Mediation, Father James, O.F.M. Cap., says, "No one can attentively watch the mind of the Church, as it finds expression in the Church teaching and in the Church taught, without entertaining the hope that the day is not far distant when this prerogative of Our Lady will receive solemn affirmation on the part of the Church. . . . The fact that a special Mass and Office for May 31 in honor of Mary Mediatrix was granted, at the request of the Belgian Hierarchy, to the dioceses of Belgium and to all other dioceses which should ask for it, is significant."¹

What two commonly accepted beliefs about Mary have not yet been declared doctrines of the Church? Does this mean that the beliefs are not true? Explain your answer. What hope does Father James entertain regarding Mary's Universal Mediation? What fact does he regard as significant? When is the Feast of Mary Mediatrix?

QUOTATIONS ON MARY MEDIATRIX. We have to go no further than this very booklet to find many quotations which seem to bear out the fact that Mary is the Mediatrix of All Graces.

"Tell everyone that Our Lord grants us all graces through the Immaculate Heart of Mary; that all must make their petitions to her," Jacinta of Fatima said to Lucia.

Catherine Labouré saw rays of light streaming from gems in Our Lady's fingers. The Blessed Virgin explained: "The rays are graces which I give to those who ask for them. But there are no rays from some of the stones, for many people do not receive graces because they do not ask for them."

Our Lady All Merciful of Pellevoisin said that the Heart of her Son bears so much love for her "that He cannot refuse me any requests."

In the same series of apparitions Estelle saw drops of rain falling from Our Lady's hands. She understood these to be graces. "These graces," said the Blessed Virgin, "are from my Divine Son; I take them from His Heart. He can refuse me nothing."

In the reputed apparitions at Lipa, Philippine Islands, Our Lady is reported to have said, "I am Mary, Mediatrix of All Graces."

1. James, O.F.M., *The Mother of Jesus*, page 132.

Many other quotations could be given. Pope Pius IX, for example, in speaking to the bishops of the world, made use of the words of St. Bernard: "God wills that every grace should come to us through her." Pope Leo XIII said: "In a true and natural sense may we say that from the great treasury of graces that the Lord has merited for us, nothing comes to us, by the will of God, except through Mary."

What did Jacinta say about the Blessed Virgin? What did Our Lady say to Catherine Labouré about graces? What two statements did Mary make at Pellevoisin which seem to confirm the fact that she is our Mediatrix? How were graces represented in Our Lady's appearance in Paris? At Pellevoisin? By what title is Our Lady reported to have called herself in the Philippines? Name at least three Popes who have said that all graces come to us through Mary.

THE NEW EVE. Our Lord, as we read in the last chapter, could have redeemed us without the help of Mary, but he preferred to work in cooperation with her. It was most fitting. A man and a woman had caused our fall; a man and a woman should therefore cooperate in the work of our Redemption.

"The parallel between Mary and Eve has a certain illuminating value; the angel tempting and the angel announcing, the consent of Eve to one, of Mary to the other; the tree of the forbidden fruit and the tree of the Cross, one bringing forth death and the other life, one whose fruit is eaten by us to unite us with Himself. But as Christ is immeasurably greater than Adam, so Mary is superior to Eve. Her role is more momentous, for the order of restored grace surpasses that of lost innocence."²

Explain how both a man and a woman participated in our fall. Explain how both a man and a woman participated in our Redemption. In what ways can you compare Mary to Eve?

GOD'S PLAN. Mary shared in the work of the Redemption to such an extent that she is called the co-Redemptrix. It is only fitting, therefore, that she should share in distributing the graces of that Redemption.

"As Mary cooperated by her charity . . . in the spiritual birth of the faithful, so also God wills that she should cooperate by her intercession in obtaining for them the life of grace in this world, and the life of glory in eternity. For this reason the Church makes us call her, without any limitation, Our Life and Our Hope."³

God does not *have* to distribute His graces through Mary any more than He had to come into the world through her. But the fact is, He wishes to distribute them in that way.

"It is one thing," says St. Alphonsus, "to say that God cannot give graces except by the intercession of Mary. It is a totally different thing to say He does not *wish* to do so. . . . We proclaim that Jesus Christ is the unique Mediator so far as strict justice is concerned, the only One who obtains grace and salvation for us by His merits; but we say that Mary is Mediatrix by the favor of her Son. While recognizing that she obtains nothing except by the merits of Jesus Christ and by prayers made in the name of Jesus Christ, we yet maintain that all the graces we ask for are given to us at her intercession."

Why is it fitting that Mary should have a part in distributing the graces of the Redemption? Why is Mary called Our Life and Our Hope? Could God give graces in any other way than through Mary if He wished to do so? How do we know this? How does Mary obtain the graces which she distributes?

FOR OUR TIMES. The belief that all graces come to us through Mary is not a new one. It is receiving more attention in our day, however, than it ever has before. This is most encouraging. This prerogative of Mary's is an appro-

2. O'Carroll, C.S.Sp., *This Age and Mary*, page 64.

3. Ligouri, *The Glories of Mary*, page 686.

priate one to be emphasized in our day, just as the Immaculate Conception was a very appropriate one to come to the fore in the last century.

The world has always needed Mary, but never has it been so desperately in need of her as now. The people, sinking beneath the weight of their sins, can be saved only by a return to God. But God, in His august majesty, seems very far removed from people who have never known Him. Besides, the thought of an all-just God is a frightening one. Today we need mercy rather than justice.

How consoling it is to know that we can turn to Mary, our all-merciful Mother, and ask her to intercede for us. She who is our Mother is also the Mother of God, and He can refuse her nothing. She takes the graces from His Heart and distributes them to all who ask for them.

"Why should human frailty fear to approach Mary?" asks St. Bernard. "In her there is nothing severe, nothing terrible; she is all sweetness, offering milk and wool to all. Thank Him, then, who has provided you with such a Mediatrix."

If everyone in the world could be brought to grasp the tremendous fact that Mary is our Mediatrix with God and if everyone would then act accordingly, the world would be transformed overnight.

Why is Mary's title Mediatrix of All Graces a particularly appropriate one for our day? What is the best way for the world to return to God? Why does St. Bernard say no one should be afraid to approach Mary?

PEACE THROUGH MARY. In writing of the world today Father Edward Leen, C.S.Sp., says: "We cannot have peace without the cause of peace. Until the world assents to depend on its Mother Mary . . . there can be no peace. . . . The world fell by Eve and only when Mary's rightful place, as Mother of Men, is fully accepted will the world be able to rise. The recent apparitions of Our Lady at Fatima show us the truth of this. . . . Mary is the Mediatrix of All Graces, and it is through Mary alone, the grace of true peace among nations can come to the world. Justly then, in these days of turmoil . . . does the Church salute Our Blessed Mother with the glorious title — *Mediatrix Potentissima* (Most Powerful Mediatrix)."⁴

"O Lord Jesus Christ, Our Mediator with the Father, who hast been pleased to appoint the Most Blessed Virgin, Thy Mother, to be our Mother and also our Mediatrix with Thee, mercifully grant that whosoever comes to Thee seeking Thy favors, may rejoice to receive all of them through her. Amen."⁵

What is the only way by which we can bring peace to the world? How do the apparitions at Fatima confirm this? Who is our Mediator with the Father? Who is our Mediatrix with Christ?

SUGGESTED PRACTICES

1. Mary Mediatrix can save the world. Do everything possible to make this prerogative of Mary's more widely known.
2. Memorize the prayer taken from the Office for the Feast of Mary Mediatrix.

4. Leen, C.S.Sp., *Our Blessed Mother*, page 98.

5. Office of the Feast of Mary, Mediatrix of All Graces.

XI. Queen of Heaven

† "LONG LIVE CHRIST THE KING!"

Thus cried Father Pro as he fell before the firing squad in 1927. The Mexican government, which had ordered his execution, had declared war on Christ's Church. It had rejected the kingship of Christ. Father Pro's last words were a pledge of loyalty to the eternal God in whose cause he was dying. They were also a warning and a solemn rebuke to the godless government.

Mexico was not the only country to turn its back on Christ. Both nations and individuals had done so. Their rejection of Him had gone so far that in 1925 Pope Pius XI had established the new Feast of Christ the King. It comes on the last Sunday of October.

The Gospel for that day tells of Christ's trial before Pilate. The latter had asked Our Lord if it was true that He had called Himself the King of the Jews. Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world."

Pilate was still curious enough to ask, "Thou art then a king?"

Jesus answered, "Thou sayest it; I am a king."

Christ is the King of Kings, the ruler of all men. His law is based on justice and charity. No man can escape its authority. Neither can any nation. This thought should be remembered in this day of dictators and tyrants.

What were Father Pro's last words? Why were these words very appropriate at the time? Name other nations besides Mexico that turned their back on Christ. When was the Feast of Christ the King established? When do we celebrate this feast? What answer did Christ give when Pilate asked Him if he was a king? Why is this thought a very timely one?

MARY, OUR QUEEN. Christ always prefers to work in cooperation with His Mother. He is the Redeemer; she is the co-Redemptrix. He is the new Adam; she is the new Eve. We honor His Sacred Heart; we honor her Immaculate Heart. He is our King; she is our Queen.

"As the glorious Virgin Mary," says St. Alphonsus Liguori, "has been raised to the dignity of Mother of the King of Kings, it is not without reason that the Church honors her, and wishes her to be honored by all, with the glorious title of Queen."

The moment Mary consented to become the Mother of God she became our Queen, just as she became our Mother. After Mary's death and her Assumption into Heaven, Christ crowned her Queen of Heaven. She did not become Queen because Christ crowned her; He crowned her because she was Queen.

List several parallels between Jesus and Mary. Why is Mary a Queen? When did she become a Queen? What mystery of the Rosary commemorates Mary as Queen of Heaven?

QUEEN OF THE ANGELS. The angels are vastly superior to men. They are pure spirits and are not fettered by the material, as we are. They are not hindered by delay, doubt, and ignorance. Angels see at a glance what we have to learn little by little. The angels, who see God face to face, choose what is right and good without hesitation and adhere to it without weakness. They have no human frailties. They are the highest form of creatures.

Ruling over these wonderful creatures is a human being, humble Mary of Nazareth. Christ is the King of the angels; associated with Him in His rule is His Blessed Mother. The angels bow to her every gesture.

In the order of nature, Mary is lower in the scale of being than the angels. In the order of grace, she is higher than they. They cannot approach her greatness, her perfection, her closeness to God. She is the exception to the whole order of creation. She is above, outside, superior to all. For that reason the angels revere her and call her Blessed. They delight to do her bidding.

In what ways are angels superior to men? In what way is Mary lower than the angels? In what way is she higher? Which of these is more important? Why are the angels happy to honor Mary as their Queen?

QUEEN OF THE SAINTS. No one else ever achieved the degree of sanctity that Mary did. No one else ever conformed so completely to the will of God. No one else ever practiced all the virtues to their ultimate degree. Never was anyone else so close to God. Mary was the greatest saint who ever lived or who ever will live. It is only proper that she should be the Queen of Saints.

"In vain," says St. Bernard, "would a person ask other saints for a favor if Mary did not interpose to obtain it."

Father Suarez says that "we beg the saints to be our intercessors with Mary, because she is the Queen and sovereign Lady."

When Mary prays for a soul, we are told, the whole heavenly court prays with her. "Nay, more," says St. Bonaventure, "whenever the most sacred Virgin goes to God to intercede for us, she, as Queen, commands all the angels and saints to accompany her and unite their prayers with hers."

Prove that Mary was the greatest saint who ever lived or who ever will live. When we pray to other saints, do they intercede directly with God for us? If you pray to St. Theresa, for example, through what channels does your prayer travel before it reaches God the Father?¹ How does Mary use her office as Queen to help us obtain favors?

QUEEN OF THE APOSTLES. All the apostles were present when Our Lord ascended into heaven. They had heard Him promise that He would watch over His Church till the end of time. He had also promised that He would send the Holy Ghost to strengthen them. Nevertheless, they were timid, afraid. They could no longer see Jesus and talk with Him. They were just a handful of mere men, and the world seemed vast and unfriendly.

While they were waiting for the Holy Ghost, the Scripture tells us, they "with one mind continued steadfastly in prayer with the women and Mary, the Mother of Jesus."

In Mary, they found their main strength. Because she had never been tainted by original sin she had no human weaknesses. She was a great consolation to the apostles when she counseled them to have perfect faith in her Divine Son.

Her role as Queen of the Apostles did not end with the coming of the Holy Ghost. Pope Benedict XV said, "It is not an empty flattery to bestow on Mary the title Queen of the Apostles. Just as she assisted the apostles, the teachers of the infant Church, with the support and advice of a Mother, so we must affirm that at all times and in all ways she accords her assistance to all those who inherit the office of the apostles."

Why were the apostles timid and afraid after Our Lord ascended into heaven? In whom did they find their principal source of strength? What did Pope Benedict XV say about Mary's role as Queen of the Apostles?

QUEEN OF MILITANTS. Pope Benedict XV says that Mary, as Queen of the Apostles, accords her assistance to the successors of the apostles. In the strict sense, these are the bishops. They have received their episcopal powers, in an unbroken line, from the apostles. That Mary, as Queen of the Apostles, watches over the bishops of the world, no Catholic would deny.

In a broader sense — but in a very true sense — we are all successors of the apostles. We are members of the Church of which they were the first members. We share their obligation to spread the Christian faith. Benedict XV called the apostles "the teachers of the infant Church." We should all be teachers of the modern Church. Christ expects this of us. When he said, "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations," He was speaking to all of us, not merely to the

1. See prayer from Office of Mary Mediatrix at end of Chapter I.

twelve apostles. And when we engage in apostolic work we are serving Mary, the Queen of the Apostles.

In the strict sense, who are the successors of the apostles? In a broader sense, who are the successors of the apostles? Does Mary's title Queen of the Apostles have any significance for us?

THE LAY APOSTOLATE. For a time the idea that we should all be apostles was largely forgotten. A person tried to lead a good life and to save his own soul. That was all. Aiding the spiritual welfare of others was the work of priests, Brothers, and Sisters.

The idea was false and extremely harmful. "Countries that sent out no missionaries to heathen lands saw their own faith decline," says Rev. Michael O'Carroll in *This Age and Mary*. "Catholic communities which made no attempt to convert their Protestant or Jewish minorities were puzzled to see defections from their own body. With individuals it is strangely similar." The man who shrinks from his duty as a member of an organic body and who does nothing to help others to be better, ends up in a state of dissatisfaction, diffidence, and frustration.

Pope Pius XI did much to revive the apostolic tradition. "The apostolate is one of the duties inherent in Christian life," he said. In other words, we lay people must not hug the faith to ourselves. We must do all we can to share it with others.

Is it enough to lead a good life and try to save our own soul? What does Father O'Carroll say about individuals or groups who forget that they are apostles? What Pope did much to revive the apostolic tradition?

MARY, OUR COMMANDER. Since the urgent appeals of Popes Pius XI and XII, the number of persons taking part in the lay apostolate has increased greatly. Sodalists, members of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, the Legion of Mary, the Holy Name Society, the St. Vincent De Paul Society, the Catholic Youth Organization, and many others are doing very effective apostolic work.

Only yesterday the Church grieved over the loss of the working classes in the last century. Today there is reason to hope that many of these workers will return because of the diligence of the modern lay apostles. These apostles are doing Mary's work. It is Mary who must be "an army ranged in battle" against the devil in these latter times.

When we succeed in revealing Christ to a soul, we have simply helped Mary in her mission of giving Christ to the world. It is not we who bring the grace of conversion to a neighbor or a fellow worker. It is Mary working through us.

Mary, Our Queen! Mary, Queen of Militants! If we help her, she will help us.

There will be temporary defeats and disappointments—many of them—because things are not supposed to be easy for us in this world. In the end, however, the combination will be irresistible. Working under Mary, our Queen, our Commander-in-chief, we can bring Christ back to the world!

Name some groups that are doing apostolic work. Name some others not listed here. Explain the statement that modern apostles are doing Mary's work. Who is really responsible for any conversions which we are instrumental in making? What should be our reaction to temporary defeats and disappointments?

SUGGESTED PRACTICES

1. Tell Mary you are glad that she is your Queen. Tell her that you will always serve her as a faithful soldier.
2. Enroll in one of the groups mentioned in this chapter or in some other group that is doing apostolic work. Be sure the group is an apostolic one and not one gathered together merely for social purposes.

XII. Consecrate Yourself to Mary

† TODAY THE DEVIL is going all out to destroy the Kingdom of Christ in this world. The Communists who rule half the world will stop at nothing to stamp out religion in their domains. Our country is weakened by "the creeping paralysis of secularism." Immorality is rampant. Never was the devil so active. He knows that "he has little time left, and now less than ever."

Our hope is the Blessed Virgin, the eternal enemy of Satan. She has special power over the devil and will crush him with her heel. It is total war. We must tell Mary that we are on her side, completely and without reservation.

From earlier chapters in this booklet, cite examples to show that both the devil and the Blessed Virgin are more active than ever before. What position must we take in this war?

TOTAL CONSECRATION. Knowing what we do, from the study of the first eleven chapters of this booklet, we could predict the next step. In this total war, we must be totally on one side or totally on the other. We cannot be lukewarm, and we cannot be neutral. This means that we must place ourselves unreservedly at Mary's disposal. The best way to do this is by consecrating ourselves entirely to her.

This was the *True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary* taught by St. Louis Marie de Montfort in his book of that title. It was also taught by Father Chaminade, founder of the Society of Mary, who lived in France in the latter part of the eighteenth century. Both men seem to have been inspired from above.

In the recent reputed apparitions of the Blessed Virgin in the Philippines, she is reported to have asked for this consecration.

What is the best way to place ourselves on Mary's side completely and unreservedly? What two saintly men advocated this practice?

MARY'S TRIPLE ROLE. St. Louis Marie based his True Devotion on Mary's triple role as MOTHER, MEDIATRIX, and QUEEN.

If Mary is our Mother in the fullest sense, then we must be her children in the truest sense of the word. She has a right to mother our souls.

If she is our Mediatrix, we receive all graces through her. We depend upon her for our spiritual life. She has a right to receive our prayers.

If she is our Queen, then we must be absolutely subject to her. We must be her soldiers, her servants. She has a right to reign over our hearts.

For St. Louis Marie the perfect way to acknowledge Mary's triple role in respect to our souls is to put ourselves completely under her domination. This means a total consecration of oneself to Jesus through the hands of Mary, as a token of our complete dependence on them both.

What is Mary's triple role in relation to our souls? What does each of these three titles mean to us? For St. Louis Marie what is the perfect way to acknowledge this triple role?

THE CONSECRATION. St. Louis Marie calls the consecration "a perfect renewal of the vows of Holy Baptism." At Baptism we renounced Satan and all his works and gave ourselves to Christ. By our consecration to Jesus through Mary we renew this pledge through the "most perfect of all means, namely, the Blessed Virgin."

1. We give Mary our body. Our eyes, our tongue — all parts of the body — must serve to glorify the Heavenly Mistress. This is done by offering her our ordinary everyday actions as well as heroic acts.

2. We give her our soul with all its faculties, such as intelligence and free will. We promise to employ them in her service.

3. We give her our worldly goods. This means that we look upon them as belonging to her rather than to us. We simply act as "administrators" of her goods.

What does St. Louis Marie call the consecration? Why does he call it this? What does it mean to give Mary our body? Our soul? Our worldly goods?

THE FINAL CONDITION. There is yet one more condition to this consecration, and it is perhaps the most important of all:

4. We give Mary our interior and spiritual goods. These are our merits, our virtues, and our good works, past, present, and future.

This means that we sacrifice to Jesus, through Mary, the right to dispose of our prayers and alms, of our mortifications and atonements. We leave everything to be disposed of by Mary. She may apply them as she sees fit, to the greater glory of God, which she alone knows perfectly. We are no longer master of the good works we do. Mary may apply them for the relief or deliverance of a soul in purgatory, the conversion of a sinner, or for whatever purpose she chooses.

This is a sacrifice which not even a religious community requires of its members. Religious take vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience. They do not, however, promise to renounce the value of their own prayers and good works.

In the final part of this consecration what do we give up? Explain what this means. In what way does Mary make use of our good works?

COMPLETE DEPENDENCE ON MARY. "This devotion," says St. Louis Marie, "makes us give to Jesus and Mary, without reserve, all our thoughts, words, actions, and sufferings all the times of our life, in such sort that whether we wake or sleep, whether we eat or drink, whether we do great actions or little ones, it is always true to say that whatever we do, even without thinking of it, is, by virtue of our offerings at least, if it has not been expressly retracted, done for Jesus and Mary."

The consecration places a soul in a state of complete dependence upon Mary. We no longer think, "I shall do this." Instead we think, "If Mary wills it so, I shall do this." We acquire the habit of speaking, acting, and thinking as one who belongs to and depends on Mary, his Queen and Mother.

"We must do all our actions," St. Louis Marie tells us, "by Mary, with Mary, in Mary, and for Mary."

These are the echo of the words of St. Paul which the priest recites at Mass every day, "Through Him, with Him, and in Him." These are the very essence of Christian life.

What does this consecration do to us? What words recited in the Mass every day are the very essence of Christian life? To what words of St. Louis Marie's are they similar?

NOTHING NEW. There is nothing very new in this consecration. It is not a radical departure from the Christian way of living. As St. Louis Marie says, it is a perfect renewal of our baptismal vows. At Baptism we gave ourselves completely to Christ. If we are leading Christian lives, we are already offering all our thoughts, words, and deeds to Christ.

By the act of Total Consecration, we are still offering them to Christ, but we are doing it through Mary. This is the perfect way, for Christ appointed His Mother as our Mediatrix with Him.

The only part of the consecration that might be considered new is the renouncing of certain fruits of our prayers and good works. Upon reflection, however, we can see that this is a very logical thing to do. How can we, with our little minds and our limited vision, tell how our prayers should be applied? We may, with perfect confidence, leave this to Our Blessed Mother. She will apply them much more efficiently than we could ever hope to do.

It seems most fitting that in these days when God wishes His Mother more known, more loved, and more honored than ever before that we accede to His wishes by consecrating ourselves entirely to her.

Explain how there is nothing very new in the first three parts of the consecration. Why can Mary apply our prayers and good works to better advantage than we can?

LIVING OUR CONSECRATION. It is one thing to make the act of Total Consecration to Our Lady. It is another thing to live it.

"To live it is to act at each moment of your life as one belonging no longer to yourself but to Our Blessed Mother; to employ all that you are, all that you have, and all that you do, no longer for yourself, but for her. . . .

"It means employing your will to wish only what Mary wishes and all that she wishes. This includes constant fidelity to monotonous duties of state, entire devotedness, and generous acceptance of all sacrifices. . . .

"It means that in all your activity you must not seek your own interests and satisfaction, but the accomplishment of all the tasks which Our Blessed Mother confides to you.

"And all this you must do even when sentiment no longer upholds you, when you feel tired, when you are prey to temptation, when you see others about you abandoning everything to think of their selfish interests."¹

In addition to making the act of Total Consecration, what must we do? What things are involved in living the consecration? Will it be easy to live the consecration? Explain your answer.

WE ARE NOT ALONE. The above does not sound easy, and indeed the Christian way of life is not intended to be easy. We know, however, that we have the support of Mary, our loving Mother. If we are sincere about working in her cause, she will give us the strength to persevere. All we need do is ask her for that strength. She will not refuse us.

In order that we do not forget our consecration, we should form the habit of renewing it. We should renew it when we rise in the morning, when we begin our work, after lunch, before we go to bed. We should renew it especially in time of trial or temptation.

When it becomes difficult for us to live our Total Consecration, what should we remember? What should we do in order to keep from forgetting our consecration?

THE AGE OF MARY. "My dear brother," says St. Louis Marie, "when will that happy time, that Age of Mary, come, when souls losing themselves in the abyss of her interior, shall become living copies of Mary, to love and glorify Jesus? That will not come until men shall know and practice this devotion which I am teaching."

What will be the characteristics of the Age of Mary, according to St. Louis Marie de Montfort? When does the saint say that age will come?

SUGGESTED PRACTICES

1. Make an act of Total Consecration to Jesus through Mary. One such act is in St. Louis Marie de Montfort's book, *True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary*. Another is in Father Neubert's booklet, *My Ideal — Jesus, Son of Mary*. You can use your own words if you prefer. It isn't the wording that counts; it is the *spirit* behind your consecration. Both authors recommend certain spiritual exercises before making the act. These are very commendable but are not essential. Make the act in private, not with a group. This is an individual act.
2. Live your consecration.

1. Neubert, S.M., *Queen of Militants*, pages 47-48.

XIII. Queen of the Holy Rosary

† "SAY THE ROSARY EVERY DAY," Our Lady said to the three children of Fatima.

This is a very important part of Mary's message to the modern world. When she identified herself at the end of the sixth and final apparition, she said, "I am the Lady of the Rosary." Of all the titles by which she might have called herself that was the one she chose. She mentioned the Rosary in each of the six apparitions.

"If my requests are granted, Russia will be converted and there will be peace," Our Lady said at Fatima. One of her most frequent requests was for the recitation of the Rosary. It is evident that the Rosary plays a big part in her plans for the world.

How often does Our Lady wish us to say the Rosary? By what title did the Blessed Mother call herself at Fatima? What will happen if Our Lady's requests are granted? What was one of her most frequent requests at Fatima?

THE BATTLE THAT SAVED THE WORLD. The Rosary has changed the course of history many times. The most famous Rosary victory was the battle of Lepanto, October 7, 1571. Then, as now, the Christian world was in danger of destruction. Then it was not the Russians but the Turks who threatened to overrun all Europe. Don Juan of Austria gathered together a Christian fleet and sailed off to meet the Moslems.

Pope St. Pius V asked Christians throughout the world to say the Rosary for a Christian victory. The Confraternities of the Rosary were holding their devotions in Rome, and they added their prayers to those of millions of others throughout Christendom.

The two fleets met near Lepanto in the Gulf of Corinth. Just before the battle the wind, which had been favoring the Turks, changed suddenly. The battle raged all day. It ended in a resounding defeat for the Turks. Christian Europe had been saved.

Pius V firmly believed that it was through Our Lady that the victory had been obtained. To commemorate the event, he ordered that every year the anniversary of the battle should be celebrated as the Feast of Our Lady of Victory. This was later changed to the Feast of the Most Holy Rosary. October, the month in which the feast falls, is the Month of the Rosary.

Who threatened to overrun Europe in 1571? Where and when was the crucial battle fought? Tell the story of the battle and its outcome. To whom did Pope Pius V ascribe the victory? When is the Feast of the Most Holy Rosary? When is the Month of the Rosary? Compare the world situation in 1571 with the present one. Do you think Our Lady of the Rosary can save us again?

THE ROSARY WILL HELP US SAVE OUR SOULS. Our Lady is not principally concerned with winning wars. What she primarily wishes is to help us save our souls. When she urges us to say the Rosary, she does so because she knows that this will lead us closer to her Divine Son. She never asks us to do anything unless it is for our own good. When she asks us to say the Rosary, we should lose no time in carrying out her request.

The Collect for the Feast of the Most Holy Rosary begs God to grant "that meditating on these mysteries in the Most Holy Rosary of the Blessed Virgin Mary, we may both imitate what they contain, and obtain what they promise."

The best way to say the Rosary is to join to the vocal prayers meditation on the mysteries. The mysteries are the principal events in the lives of Jesus and Mary. If we meditate upon them in the proper manner, we cannot help making spiritual progress.

What is Our Lady's principal concern? What do we ask of God in the Collect for the Feast of the Most Holy Rosary? What is the best way to say the Rosary? Of what do the mysteries consist?

THE JOYFUL MYSTERIES take us from the time the Angel Gabriel announced to the Virgin Mary that she was to be the Mother of God to the time when the Boy Jesus, who had been lost for three days, was found by Mary and Joseph in the Temple. We are reminded of Mary's great privilege in being chosen as the Mother of the Redeemer, and this in turn reminds us that she also became our Mother. We think of God's great love for us, so great that He became a helpless Babe in His Mother's womb and then was born in the wretched stable in Bethlehem. How sad Mary must have been when she lost Jesus for three days, and how happy when she found Him again! If we should ever be so unfortunate as to lose Jesus through mortal sin, we can find Him again through a sincere confession.

The home in Nazareth should be the model of all homes everywhere, and the Joyful Mysteries remind us of this. During the years that Jesus lived in the little home at Nazareth He was subject to Mary and Joseph. He — God — subject to two mortals! What love reigned in that home!

Humility, charity, detachment from the world, obedience to authority — these are a few of the virtues the Joyful Mysteries inspire us to imitate. If we imitate these mysteries, we shall find joy even while we are still on this earth.

What period in the life of Our Lady is covered by the Joyful Mysteries? What are some of the thoughts that should occur to us as we meditate on the Joyful Mysteries? Name similar thoughts not given here. Of which two titles of Mary do the Joyful Mysteries remind us? What are some of the virtues found in the Joyful Mysteries? Do we have to wait till we get to heaven to experience the joys of the Joyful Mysteries? Explain your answer.

THE SORROWFUL MYSTERIES deal with Christ's suffering and death. Mary was not actually present at the agony in the Garden, the scourging, or the crowning with thorns. We may be sure that she was present in spirit, however, and that she suffered along with Jesus. She did see Him carry His cross and fall beneath its weight. She stood at the foot of the cross as He breathed His last.

While meditating on these sufferings of Christ, we are almost overwhelmed by the thought that He did all this for us. He did it so that the gates of heaven would be reopened to us. And we are reminded that Mary, too, suffered for our sake, and that consequently she can rightly be called our co-Redemptrix.

Humility, charity, patience, resignation to the will of God, and love of our enemies are some of the virtues we are inspired to practice by the Sorrowful Mysteries.

With what period in the lives of Our Lord and Our Lady do the Sorrowful Mysteries deal? Name the five Sorrowful Mysteries. Why did Christ suffer and die? Of which title of Mary do the Sorrowful Mysteries remind us? Which are some of the virtues the Sorrowful Mysteries inspire us to practice?

THE GLORIOUS MYSTERIES cover the period following the crucifixion. We were sad with Jesus crucified; now we rejoice with the Risen Christ. By His Resurrection Christ proved the truth of His claim that He is really God. Just before His Ascension into heaven He gave us the consoling promise that He would always watch over His Church. He sent the Holy Ghost to strengthen the apostles, and the Holy Ghost still dwells in the Church. We rejoice that Mary, Our Mother, is Queen of Heaven.

Someday we shall die. The thought should not be a frightening one. If we lead a good life in this world, we shall be happy with Jesus and Mary in heaven. At the end of the world our bodies will rise from the dust of the earth and be reunited with our souls, as Mary's has already been. If our souls are in heaven, our bodies will be glorified.

Faith, hope, and perseverance are three of the virtues which the Glorious Mysteries inspire us to imitate. These mysteries should inspire us to practice all virtues so that we may share in God's glory.

What period of the Gospel story is covered by the Glorious Mysteries? What did Christ prove by His Resurrection? Explain. What promise did Christ make concerning His Church? Of which of Mary's titles do the Glorious Mysteries remind us? In what way are the Glorious Mysteries an inspiration to us? What will happen to our bodies at the end of the world? What virtues do the Glorious Mysteries inspire us to imitate?

NEW ROSARY PRACTICES. The Rosary is vocal and mental prayer. We say prayers with our lips while we meditate in our mind and heart. At Fatima Our Lady asked for fifteen minutes of meditation on the mysteries of the Rosary as a part of the First Saturday devotion. This means that for fifteen minutes each month we are to meditate on the mysteries without saying the prayers.

Our Lady of Fatima also made another request in regard to the Rosary. This has too often been overlooked. She asked us to say after each decade this prayer: "O my Jesus, forgive us. Save us from the fire of hell. Bring all souls to heaven, especially those most in need." This prayer should be said immediately after the "Glory Be to the Father."

Anyone who wishes to carry out the requests of Our Lady of Fatima will say this prayer after each decade and will make the five First Saturdays, including the fifteen minutes' meditation.

The fifteen minutes of meditation on the mysteries of the Rosary are part of what devotion? What prayer does Our Lady wish us to say after each mystery?

THE FAMILY ROSARY. Father Patrick Peyton, C.S.C., is widely known as the Apostle of the Family Rosary. By means of radio and of billboard advertising he has made all Americans familiar with the slogan, "The Family that Prays Together Stays Together." Because of his efforts many families which had not previously been saying the Family Rosary are saying it now. Father Peyton did not originate the Family Rosary. The idea is as old as the Rosary itself. Father Peyton is reviving a custom which had once been widespread but which has been neglected in recent years.

Many Popes have urged the Family Rosary. Pope Pius IX, for example, said: "If you desire peace in your hearts, in your homes, in your country, assemble every evening to recite the Rosary." The late Pope Pius XI called it "a beautiful and salutary custom." In speaking to newly married couples about the recitation of the Rosary Pope Pius XII said: "You may be sure that in so doing you are insuring the success of your future family life." Each evening Pope Pius XII kneels with the papal household for a group recitation of the Rosary.

"If families will but listen to my message," says Father Peyton, "and give Our Lady ten minutes of their twenty-four hours by reciting the daily Family Rosary, I can assure them that their homes will become, by God's grace, peaceful, prayerful places—little heavens, which God the Author of home life has intended they should be!"

What has Father Patrick Peyton done to revive interest in the Family Rosary? What did Pope Pius IX say about the Family Rosary? What did Pope Pius XI say about it? What did Pope Pius XII say to newly married couples? How does Pope Pius XII set us an example in regard to the Family Rosary? Explain how a universal practice of the Family Rosary could change the world.

SUGGESTED PRACTICES

1. If your family is not already saying the Rosary together, try to inaugurate the custom immediately.
2. Read Chapter IV of the Catholic Action discussion-club booklet *The Sacramentals*. This tells how to say the Rosary, tells what mysteries to meditate upon each day, explains what indulgences may be gained by reciting the Rosary, etc.

XIV. "Sacrifice Yourself for Sinners"

† BEFORE OUR LADY appeared to the children of Fatima, we recall, they were visited three times by an angel. On one of his visits he said, "Offer prayers and sacrifices constantly to the Most High."

Nine-year-old Lucia asked the question which has since troubled many persons who are trying to carry out the message of Fatima: "How are we to make sacrifices?"

"You can make sacrifices of all things," the angel replied. "Offer them in reparation for the sins that offend God, and beg of Him the conversion of sinners. In this way, try to draw down peace on your country. . . . Above all, accept and bear humbly the sufferings the Lord will send you."

What did the angel request of the children of Fatima? For what purpose were the sacrifices to be offered? What did he say about peace in connection with sacrifices? What did he say about suffering?

OUR LADY DESIRES SACRIFICE. The words of the angel were a fore-runner of Mary's message of the following year. The request for sacrifices is an essential part of the message of Fatima.

"Do you wish to offer yourselves to God to endure all the sufferings that He may choose to send you, as an act of reparation for the sins by which He is offended, and to ask for the conversion of sinners?" Our Lady asked during her first visit. When Lucia answered that they did, Our Lady said, "Then you will have much to suffer, but the grace of God will assist you and always bear you up."

"Sacrifice yourself for sinners," Our Lady said on another occasion, "and say many times, especially when you make sacrifices: 'O Jesus, it is for your love, for the conversion of sinners, and in reparation for sins committed against the Immaculate Heart of Mary.'"

The following words of Our Lady of Fatima put a great responsibility on all of us: "Pray, pray a great deal and make sacrifices for sinners, for many souls go to hell because they have no one to pray for them."

Show that the request for sacrifices is an essential part of the message of Fatima. What prayer does Our Lady wish us to say, especially when we make sacrifices? What words of Our Lady put a great responsibility on all of us?

THE CHILDREN SET THE EXAMPLE. The three children heeded the request of the angel and made sacrifices of all things. Their everyday actions were offered to God through the Immaculate Heart of Mary. They bore their sufferings with joy. When the civil administrator put them in jail with the hardened criminals, they offered their suffering in reparation for the sins of the world. When Jacinta was undergoing great agony on her death bed, she murmured through her pain: "It is for love of you, my Jesus. Now you can convert many sinners, for I suffer much."

But offering their everyday actions and their sufferings to Jesus was not enough for Lucia, Francisco, and Jacinta. They were constantly thinking up voluntary sacrifices to offer in reparation. When they went out to tend the sheep, they gave their lunches to children poorer than themselves, and they ate unripe olives. Under their clothes they wore shaggy ropes which chafed their skins. Our Lady said to them: "God is content with your sacrifices but does not wish you to sleep with the rope. Wear it only during the day."

The children of Fatima set the example for all of us to follow. Each one of us should ask himself: "Am I making as many sacrifices as God wishes me to make?"

How did the children of Fatima obey the angel's injunction to make sacrifices of all things? Why did they bear their sufferings with joy? In addition to their everyday actions and their sufferings, what did the children do to offer sacrifices?

THE SPIRIT OF REPARATION. Jacinta was especially zealous in offering all the sufferings of her long and painful illness in reparation to the Immaculate Heart of Mary for the conversion of sinners. If we study her life, we find that her reparations were not made up of many detached and unrelated sacrifices. She had the *spirit* of reparation, a spirit deeply rooted in the love of God.

When we say that someone has the spirit of reparation, we mean that he offers all his sacrifices with the intention of making compensation for the sins of himself and others. It is the intention that makes the difference. The person with the true spirit of reparation has this intention always in mind. Sacrifices which seem small in themselves are true acts of reparation because of the intention for which they are offered. And the more fervent our intention, the more value our acts have as works of reparation.

What do we mean by the spirit of reparation? How do sacrifices become true acts of reparation? Why is it that some pious acts are not acts of reparation?

REPARATION TO THE HEARTS OF JESUS AND MARY. When Our Lord appeared to St. Margaret Mary Alacoque in the seventeenth century, He said: “Behold the Heart that has so loved men. . . . Instead of gratitude I receive from the greater part (of mankind) only ingratitude.” The devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus is essentially a devotion of reparation. At Fatima in 1917 Our Lady requested reparation to her Immaculate Heart.

The Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary are cruelly outraged by the offenses and infidelity of sinners. We see this all around us — in our factories, in our offices, in the streets, perhaps even in our own homes. We cannot stand idly by without offering some prayers and sacrifices in reparation. To love and honor the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary is the vocation of all Christians. As members of the Mystical Body of Christ we are all called upon to cultivate the spirit of reparation.

What did Our Lord say He receives from most of mankind? The devotion to the Sacred Heart is essentially what kind of devotion? What is the vocation of all Christians? As members of the Mystical Body of Christ, what are we called upon to do?

HOW WE CAN MAKE REPARATION. Like Lucia of Fatima we may ask, “How are we to make acts of reparation?” The answer is the same as that given by the angel: “We can make acts of reparation of all things.”

When we arise in the morning, we can offer Jesus as acts of reparation all our thoughts, words, and deeds for that day. We should offer them through the Immaculate Heart of Mary. If we are in the state of grace, the Morning Offering turns all our good actions for the day into meritorious acts. We should repeat it from time to time in the course of the day. In this way we obtain greater merit from our works and make them more efficacious as deeds of reparation.

We should offer especially all the little trials of the day — the extra tasks we have to perform, the slights we receive, the plans that go wrong, the severity of the weather — with the intention of consoling the Sacred Heart for all He suffers from the ingratitude of sinners.

All of us undergo a certain amount of suffering — the loss of a loved one, a severe illness, a financial reverse. Like Jacinta we should offer these sufferings in reparation for sins and for the conversion of sinners.

And all of us can make *voluntary* sacrifices. These sacrifices can be relatively large, like giving up our pleasure in order to work among the hopelessly ill or insane. Or they can be relatively small, like passing up a second piece of cherry pie. All will please Our Lord and Our Lady if done with the proper *intention*. A man who gives up cigarettes and proceeds to boast to his friends about his great will power probably does not have the right intention.

How can we make acts of reparation of all things? What should we do about the little trials of everyday life? What should we do about our sufferings? Name a number of little voluntary sacrifices that you could make in the course of an ordinary day.

THE PERFECT SACRIFICE. Jesus offered the Perfect Sacrifice when He gave up His life on the cross in reparation for the sins of mankind. Every day, in the Mass, the sacrifice of the cross is repeated in an unbloody manner. Participating in the Mass, then, is one of the best methods of making reparation for sins. One of the ends for which it is offered is the propitiation of God's wrath. In order to derive the full satisfactory benefits of the Mass, we should — if at all possible — receive Our Lord in Holy Communion when we attend Mass.

Participating in Christ's Perfect Sacrifice may often be combined with a voluntary sacrifice on our part; as, for example, when we give up an extra hour's sleep on a cold winter morning in order to attend Mass. Then, too, we should keep in mind that when we make the Morning Offering, we offer to Jesus "all my prayers, works, and sacrifices of this day, in union with the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass throughout the world."

When did Our Lord offer the Perfect Sacrifice? When is this sacrifice repeated? What is one of the ends for which the Mass is offered? In order to derive the full satisfactory benefits of the Mass, what should we do? How can participation in Christ's Perfect Sacrifice often be combined with a voluntary sacrifice on our part? In the Morning Offering how do we offer up our good works of the day?

REPARATION AND PENANCE. "But," we may ask, "how can I make reparation for the sins of others, when I should be doing penance for my own sins?"

There is no conflict between penance and reparation. It is true that we are obliged to overcome our shortcomings through works of penance. But the best way to do penance for our own sins is to join the penance to our sacrifice for the sins of others. We can make acts of reparation for all sins, including our own; we can pray for the conversion of all sinners, including ourselves. Reparation is sometimes called the "penance of charity," and charity is the greatest of all virtues.

Penance, Sacrifice, Reparation. All three words are associated with Fatima. People sometimes become confused by them. But there is no need for confusion. They are linked so closely that they can scarcely be distinguished from one another. A person who has the true spirit of reparation will do penance, and he will also perform sacrifices. Our Lady of Fatima wishes us to develop the spirit of reparation. As true children of Mary, we will carry out her wish.

Explain why there is no conflict between penance and reparation. Explain why reparation is sometimes called the "penance of charity." What three words linked with Fatima sometimes cause confusion in people's minds? Explain why there should be no confusion about these words. What does Our Lady of Fatima wish us to do?

SUGGESTED PRACTICES

1. Every morning offer to Jesus, through the Immaculate Heart of Mary, all your thoughts, words, and deeds for that day in reparation for sins and for the conversion of sinners. Renew this offering frequently throughout the day.
2. Develop the true spirit of reparation.

XV. The Immaculate Heart of Mary

† IN THE SECOND apparition at Fatima, Our Lady said that she would soon take Jacinta and Francisco. To Lucia she said: "You, however, are to stay here a longer time. Jesus wishes to use you to make me known and loved. He wants to establish the devotion to my Immaculate Heart in the world."

Devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, then, is a very important part of the message of Fatima. When we practice this devotion, we are carrying out the wishes of Our Lord Himself.

What did Our Lady say she would do to Jacinta and Francisco? Why was Lucia to stay here a longer time? What devotion does Jesus wish to establish in the world?

MEANING OF THE WORD "HEART." Our heart works day and night, sending life-giving blood to every part of our body. If it should stop, we would die. It is, in many respects, the most important organ in our body.

The heart is influenced by our thoughts, by the acts of our will, by our emotions. Its beat never stops, but it becomes faster or slower, stronger or weaker, as it reacts to our feelings. "My heart was just pounding away," we say in describing a great emotional experience. Or, "My heart nearly stopped beating."

In our conversations we use the word "heart" as if it were the seat of the movements, acts, and dispositions of the soul. We use it to describe the combination of qualities that make up a person. If he is mean and selfish he has a hard heart, a cold heart, or a cruel heart. Another person may be described as having a kind heart, a good heart, a generous heart, a loving heart, a tender heart. A brave man is stout-hearted, a sad man broken-hearted.

The word "heart" is used then, to symbolize the interior life of the soul. It also stands for all the characteristics that make up a person, all his virtues and all his vices.

Explain why the heart is one of the most important organs of our body. How is the heart affected by the acts of our will, our thoughts, and our emotions? Show how we use the word "heart" in ordinary conversation as if it governed all our actions. Name some other examples of this that are not given here. Why do you think it was the custom in certain Indian tribes to eat the hearts of captives who had been considered very brave? Of what is the heart the symbol?

THE BEAUTIES OF MARY'S HEART. When we contemplate Mary's heart, we think of the interior life of the most beautiful soul God ever created, next to that of the God-Man, Jesus Christ. We think of her great joys and sorrows. These emotions were made holy and beautiful by the fact that her soul was "full of grace" from the first moment of its immaculate existence.

Mary had perfections beyond number, but above all was her capacity to love. She had the greatest love for God, to whom she had vowed her virginity and for whom she had remained free from all stain of sin. She had a mother's love for her Divine Son. She guarded and protected Him in their home in Nazareth. Finally, she had a great love for us, her children here on earth, for whom she made the agonizing Stations of the Cross with her Divine Son. Through her sorrowful and submissive heart, she became our Mediatrix.

When we practice devotion to the Immaculate Heart, we venerate not only the physical heart of Mary but everything the heart symbolizes, especially its perfect love for God and men. In short, veneration of the Immaculate Heart is veneration of the whole person of Mary.

Name some of the joys of Mary. See whether you can name the seven sorrows of Our Blessed Mother. How were Mary's emotions made holy and beautiful? What was Mary's greatest perfection? What three forms did Mary's love take? Sum up in a few words the meaning of veneration of the Immaculate Heart.

DEVOTION FOR OUR TIMES. There is nothing new or startling in the above. We know that Mary is Our Lady of the Seven Sorrows, the Immaculate Conception, Mother of God, Mother of All Men, Mediatrix of All Graces. In the devotion to the Immaculate Heart, however, all these titles, and others, are combined. This all-embracing devotion has been saved for widespread attention in our own day.

St. Bernardine of Siena, in the fifteenth century, and St. Francis de Sales, in the seventeenth, preached devotion to the Heart of Mary. St. John Eudes, who lived from 1600 to 1680, is called the Apostle of the Immaculate Heart. St. John labored in the northwest part of France. He preached the devotion and, with ecclesiastical approbation, established feasts in honor of the Heart of Mary. He wrote many works, great and small, on the subject. He associated the Holy Heart of Mary with the Sacred Heart of Jesus—knowing that grace had made her Heart so very much like His. The French Revolution kept the devotion from spreading widely, but it was kept alive by the Eudists, an Order which St. John had founded.

In 1830 Our Lady gave a great impetus to the devotion when she appeared to St. Catherine Labouré. As we know, one side of the Miraculous Medal represents the Heart of Jesus and the Heart of Mary side by side. St. Catherine was ordered by her director to ask Our Lady what words should be inscribed with the Hearts. Mary replied that no words were needed. The union of the two hearts told the whole story.

The greatest impetus to the devotion was reserved for our own times—for Mary's appearances at Fatima in 1917.

Explain why devotion to Mary's Immaculate Heart is an all-embracing one. Name three saints of former times who preached devotion to the Heart of Mary. Who is called the Apostle of the Immaculate Heart? How was devotion to the Immaculate Heart kept alive during the French Revolution? How did Our Lady give an impetus to the devotion in 1830? When was the greatest impetus given to it?

FATIMA AND THE IMMACULATE HEART. As we read at the beginning of this chapter, Our Lady told Lucia that she was to remain on this earth to help establish devotion to the Immaculate Heart. A few moments later, the children saw in front of Our Lady a heart surrounded by thorns. They understood this to be the Immaculate Heart of Mary desiring reparation. After Lucia was in the convent, Our Lady appeared to her and asked for the devotion of the Five First Saturdays in reparation to her Immaculate Heart. Those who should practice the devotion were promised Mary's assistance "at the hour of death with the graces necessary for salvation."

When she asked for this devotion, Our Lady used words strikingly similar to those Our Lord had used to St. Mary Margaret Alacoque when He requested devotion to His Sacred Heart. This is another example of the close union between the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

Our Lady appeared to Lucia again in the convent and asked that Russia be consecrated to her Immaculate Heart.

What did the children see in front of Our Lady during the second apparition at Fatima? What did they understand this to be? What devotion did Our Lady request after Lucia was in the convent? What promise did Mary make to those who practiced the devotion? Her words on this occasion resembled the words of Our Lord on what occasion? What further request did Our Lady make after Lucia was in the convent?

CONSECRATION OF THE WORLD. The twenty-fifth anniversary of the Fatima apparitions was observed in 1942. World War II was in its fourth year. On the last day of October in that year a vast throng gathered at the shrine. All of the Bishops of Portugal were present. The voice of His Holiness Pius XII,

speaking in Portuguese, was heard by radio as he addressed these words to Our Lady: "To thee, to thy Immaculate Heart, in this tragic hour of human history, we confide, we deliver, we consecrate not only the Holy Church, Mystic Body of our Jesus, who suffers and bleeds in so many parts and is so full of troubles, but also the whole world, lacerated by so many misunderstandings, alight with hate and the victim of its own iniquities."

He made a special mention of Russia: "Give peace to the peoples separated from us by error or by schism and especially to the one who professes such singular devotion to thee and in whose homes an honored place was ever accorded thy venerable icon (today perhaps often kept hidden to await better days); bring them back to the one true shepherd. . . ."

This consecration was a momentous event in history. Some authorities go so far as to call it the beginning of the Age of Mary, that great age which St. Louis Marie de Montfort had prophesied.

What important anniversary was observed in 1942? What momentous action did the Holy Father take during that year? What country was singled out for special attention?

THE HOLY FATHER LEADS THE WAY. On the Feast of the Immaculate Conception of the same year, the Holy Father stood on the balcony of St. Peter's and repeated the formula of consecration. A crowd of 40,000 was on hand. This time the Pope consecrated his own Diocese of Rome. Other bishops of the world were quick to follow his example. On April 18, 1943, the Pope made a special plea that all Catholics be consecrated to the Immaculate Heart. He has named August 22 as the annual Feast of the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

If we are to carry out Mary's wishes, we must consecrate all things to her Immaculate Heart. We must consecrate ourselves and our dear ones so that we will all be united more closely in the Mystical Body of Christ. We must consecrate our country. And we must unite in the Holy Father's consecration of the whole world, because Mary is our Queen.

What actions of Pope Pius XII have earned for him the title "Pope of the Immaculate Heart"? What must we do if we are to carry out Mary's wishes?

PEACE IS IN MARY'S HANDS. Today, when the world needs Mary as never before, it is well to recall Jacinta's words to Lucia: "Tell everyone that Our Lord grants us all graces through the Immaculate Heart of Mary; that all must make their petitions to her; that the Sacred Heart of Jesus desires that the Immaculate Heart of Mary be venerated at the same time. Tell them that they should all ask for peace from the Immaculate Heart of Mary, as God has placed it in her hands. O, if I could only put in the hearts of everyone in the world the fire that is burning in me and makes me love so much the Heart of Jesus and the Heart of Mary."

What does the Sacred Heart of Jesus desire, according to Jacinta? How did Jacinta say we are to ask for peace?

SUGGESTED PRACTICES

1. Read an account of Our Lord's appearance to St. Margaret Mary Alacoque.
2. Consecrate yourself to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. Urge your family and any Catholic groups to which you belong to do likewise.

XVI. Mary's Message to Us

† WE ARE APPROACHING the end of our study of Mary in the modern world. We know that the study has been an extremely important one. Nothing is more important than the return of the world to God. It is through Mary that this will be accomplished. It was through her that Christ came into the world, and it is through her that the world will return to Him.

By persevering in our study of Mary's message to the modern world, we have shown that we are trying to be her true children, her true subjects. Through her we are hoping to get closer to God, and we are hoping to bring the entire world closer to Him.

Before bringing our study to a close it would be well to review the subject briefly, so that the essential points will be fresh in our minds.

Why is the study of Mary's message to the modern world an extremely important one? What have we demonstrated by persevering in our study? Why is it a good idea to review the subject briefly before concluding our study?

WHEN THE WORLD TURNED FROM MARY. The Middle Ages, as we have seen, were a time when Mary had her proper place in the scheme of things. The world echoed with the songs of St. Francis and the troubadors and with the adventurous laughter of the Crusaders. But the Protestant Revolt deprived millions of the knowledge of Our Lady. Instead of being a joyous thing, religion became gloomy, foreboding. Without Mary's motherly influence men became calculating, self-seeking. They thought only of themselves and devoted their lives to seeking material gains.

"Some Catholic historians have conceded to the adverse critics of the Middle Ages that the people of those times were more brutal than the modern man. I think that is conceding too much. . . . At least in the Middle Ages great caution was taken to safeguard the non-combatant women and children. Ours is the brutality of Hiroshima, where a comparatively well-dressed man, deliberately, and with little need for courage, pressed a button which brought screaming death about the ears of grandmothers and babes in arms."¹

When did Mary have her proper place in the scheme of things? Why do you think this was a relatively happy time? When did a large part of the world turn against Mary?

WE ARE REAPING THE RESULTS. The results of turning away from Our Lady were inevitable. Without Mary to keep them close to God, large numbers of people gradually drifted away from all religion. Some became openly hostile to it. The situation grew worse with the years. His Holiness Pope Pius XII said recently that mankind is facing one of the greatest crises since the beginning of Christianity. The causes that brought about the crisis are at work within and without the Church.

The Communists are working day and night to make atheists of everyone in the world. In non-Communist countries millions live with no thought of the hereafter. This is something strange and new in the world, something very sinister.

Within the Church conditions are not so good as the statistics would indicate. We number three hundred and fifty million. That is a large fraction of the human race, we tell ourselves complacently. Surely, we have nothing to fear.

But the figure is an illusion. Many Catholics, too, are affected by secularism. A large number of Catholics keep religion away from their work, their friendships, their recreation. They follow the fashions about them. They are afraid to stand up in assemblies and councils and proclaim the eternal standards of Christ's Church.

1. Willock, "Men, Mary, and Manliness," *Integrity*, Nov., 1948, page 44.

What were the results of turning away from Mary? What did Pope Pius XII say about our present world? What are the Communists doing? What kind of lives are lived by millions in the non-Communist countries? Why is the statistical membership of the Catholic Church an illusion?

A NEW IMPULSE. The situation looks hopeless. According to human standards, it is. But we have Christ's promise that He will remain with His Church till the end of time and that the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

Today a new impulse is needed within the Church to invigorate it and to spur it on to final victory. That impulse can be supplied by the Blessed Virgin Mary, and indeed it is being supplied. Today, there is every indication that Our Lady, who was rejected four hundred years ago, is coming back into her own. We have studied the story of her appearances at Paris, La Salette, Lourdes, Pontmain, Fatima, and other places. The solemn declaration of the Immaculate Conception in 1854 also brought about greatly increased devotion to Our Lady. Pope Pius XII has sought the opinion of the bishops on the suitability of defining her Assumption.

The discovery of St. Louis Marie's *True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary* in 1842 left a profound mark on Catholic life. The practices outlined in this book are bringing about great changes in the interior lives of many persons. These interior changes will have a great effect upon the world as a whole.

How do we know that the Church will last till the end of time? What are some of the signs that the Blessed Virgin is supplying a new impulse to the Church?

A FURTHER SIGN. Another sign that Our Lady is supplying a new impetus to Catholic life is the flowering of societies, associations, and religious communities devoted to her cause. Particularly noteworthy in this regard is the Legion of Mary. This organization began very inauspiciously in 1921 in Dublin, Ireland. From there it has spread rapidly throughout the world. It has had phenomenal success in everything it has undertaken.

Characteristic of the Legion's courage and its belief that the word of God must be carried to *all* is the fact that one of its first projects was to sponsor a retreat for prostitutes. The Legion has had a unique record in winning converts from paganism and Protestantism. All of this is due not to the personalities of the members—they are ordinary people from all walks of life—but to their complete childlike trust in the Blessed Virgin.

The Legion of Mary is singled out here because its growth has been so dramatic. There has also been in our times a renewal of interest in the Sodality of Our Lady. Many other organizations under Mary's protection are bringing new vigor into Catholic life.

Give a further sign that Our Lady is supplying a new impetus to Catholic life. When was the Legion of Mary founded? In what respect does the Legion of Mary have a unique record? What other organization under Mary's protection is also bringing new vigor into Catholic life?

APOSTLES OF THE LATTER TIMES. This brings us once more to St. Louis Marie de Montfort, the prophet of the Age of Mary. In the early 1700's he looked into the future and saw a day when there would be a great army of apostles, poor and lowly in the world's esteem, accomplishing great things in the name of Mary.

"We know that they shall be true disciples of Jesus Christ, walking in the footsteps of His poverty, humility, contempt of the world, charity; teaching the narrow word of God in pure truth, according to the Holy Gospel, and not according to the maxims of the world; troubling themselves about nothing; not accepting persons; sparing, fearing, and listening to no mortal, however influential he may be. They shall have in their mouths the two-edged sword of the word of

God. They shall carry on their shoulders the bloody standard of the cross, the crucifix in their right hand and the rosary in their left, the sacred Names of Jesus and Mary in their hearts, and the modesty and mortification of Jesus Christ in their own behavior.

"These are the great men who are to come; but Mary is the one who, by order of the Most High, shall fashion them for the purpose of extending His empire over the impious, the idolaters, and the Mahometans. But when and how shall this be? God alone knows."²

In the eyes of the world what will be the standing of the apostles of the latter times? What will their standard be? What will they have in their hands? What names will be in their hearts? Who will guide these apostles?

HOW WE CAN BE APOSTLES. What can we do to show that we are true apostles of Mary? We can, first of all, carry out Our Lady's wishes as expressed at Fatima and in other recent apparitions. *Prayer, sacrifice, devotion to the Immaculate Heart* must be our keywords.

Under prayer comes the Rosary, which we should say every day. An apostle of Mary will also practice the devotion of the First Saturdays and will say the prayers requested by Our Lady of Fatima.

We can wear the Miraculous Medal which Our Lady gave us in 1830 and the Scapular of the Sacred Heart of which she said in 1876, "I love this devotion." The Brown Scapular of Mount Carmel has not been mentioned in this booklet, but it surely deserves recommendation, for its wearers show themselves to have a special attachment to the Blessed Virgin. According to a pious tradition, Our Lady has promised that anyone who dies clothed in this scapular shall not suffer eternal fire.

What are the keywords we should remember? What devotions will the apostle of Mary be sure to practice? What are three of the badges of Our Lady that we can wear? According to a pious tradition, what promise did Our Lady make to those who are wearing the Brown Scapular of Mount Carmel when they die?

THE AGE OF MARY. If we are to be true apostles of Mary, we shall not be content with trying to save our own souls. The duty of carrying the word to others is implicit in the word "apostle." If at all possible, we will carry on apostolic work through the Legion of Mary, the Sodality of Our Lady, the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, or some other such organization. If circumstances make it impossible for us to become active members, we can support the organizations with our prayers.

We shall dedicate our lives to the Blessed Virgin so that all our actions will be done, as St. Louis Marie de Montfort tells us, "By Mary, with Mary, in Mary, and for Mary."

By doing these things we are preparing for the great manifestation of Our Lady's power in that happy age which is to come, the Age of Mary.

What duty is implicit in the word "apostle"? By carrying out Mary's wishes we are preparing for what age?

SUGGESTED PRACTICES

1. You were probably enrolled in the Brown Scapular of Mount Carmel when you made your First Communion. If not, become enrolled at once. Then wear the scapular as a sign of your devotion to Our Lady. You can wear the Scapular Medal if you prefer. It carries the same indulgences.
2. Read all the *Suggested Practices* at the end of each chapter. See how many you have carried out or are carrying out.

² De Montfort, *True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary*, page 40.

Index

- Action, Catholic—39.
Adam—32, 35, 37.
Age, Materialistic—26.
Ages, Middle—52.
Agrelli, Fortuna—23.
Alacoque, St. Margaret Mary—47, 50.
Allies—8.
Alphonsus, St.—35.
America, South—25.
Angel—at Fatima 10; his position at Fatima 10; his prayer at Fatima 10, 11; his titles at Fatima 10; his requests 10; of Peace 10.
Angels, Queen of—37.
Annunciation—31.
Apostles—44; Queen of 38, 39; how to be 54.
Apostolate, Lay—39.
Apparition, first at Fatima—11.
Apparitions—8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 17, 19, 21, 22, 24, 27, 32, 34; of Fatima in relation to Russia 8; of Pellevoisin 22; other recent 22.
Archeonfraternity of Our Mother All Merciful of Pellevoisin—23.
Ascension—44.
Assumption, Mary's—25, 34, 37.
Aurora Borealis—17.
Azinheira—11.
- Badges of Our Lady—54.
Banneux—24.
Baptism—31.
Barbadette, Eugene—21.
Barbadette, Joseph—21.
Beauraing—23.
Becco, Mariette—24.
Benedict XV, Pope—34, 38.
Bernadette—20.
Bernard, St.—35, 36, 38.
Bernardine, St.—50.
Bethlehem—44.
Bonaparte, Napoleon—27.
Bonaventure, St.—38.
- Calvary—31.
Carmelite—18.
Catholic, Michigan—28.
Catholic Youth Organization—39.
Chaminade, Father—40.
Child Jesus—15.
Christ, Mystical Body of—47, 51.
Christ the King, Feast of—37.
Communism—9, 27, 28; how to stop it 9.
Communist control of Russia—8.
Communists—8, 40, 52.
Conception, Immaculate—23, 27, 34, 36.
Condition, Final—40.
Confraternity of Christian Doctrine—39, 54.
Consecration—41; total 40; living our 42; of Russia 50; of the world 50.
Corinth, Gulf of—43.
Cova da Iria—11, 14.
Cross, Stations of—49.
Czechoslovakia—24.
- DeSales, St. Francis—50.
Devil—29, 30, 39, 40.
Don Juan—43.
Dublin—53.
- Ejaculation of Fatima—13.
Engine, Steam—26.
England—25.
Errors, Syllabus of—27.
Eudes, St. John—50.
Eudists—50.
Eve—32, 35, 36, 37.
- Faguet, Estelle—22.
Farewell Message at Fatima—15.
Fashions—16, 17.
Fatima—7, 8, 9, 10, 18, 23, 36, 43, 45, 46, 47, 49, 50.
Fernande—23.
First Saturday Devotion—17, 18.
- France—22.
Francisco—see also Marto—46, 49.
Freemasonry—27.
French Revolution—19.
- Gabriel, Angel—31, 44.
Gargas, Mount—20.
Germany—24, 25.
Giraud, Maximin—20.
Governments—16.
- Heart—beauties of Mary's 49; Immaculate 50; its meaning 49.
Hell—16, 17; vision of 14, 16.
Henze, Rev. Clem M.—28.
Hierarchy, Belgian—34.
Hungary—24.
- Identity, by Our Lady of Fatima—7.
Immaculate Conception—19, 20; dogma of 20.
Immaculate Heart—Pope of 51; of Mary, Feast of 51.
Incarnation—31.
Indifferentism—27.
Industrial Revolution—19.
Ireland—26.
Islands, Philippine—24.
Italy—24, 25.
- Jacinta—see also Marto—34, 35, 46, 47, 49, 51.
John, St.—31.
James, Father—34.
- Kidnapping—14, 15.
Kotska, Stanislaus—33.
- Laboure, Zoe Catherine—19, 25, 28, 34, 35, 50.
La Salette—26.
Laval—21.
Leen, Father Edward—36.
Lenin, arrival in Petrograd—8.
Leo XIII, Pope—23, 35.
Lepanto, Battle of—43.
Liberalism—27.
Ligouri, St. Alphonsus—37.
Lipa—24, 34.
Lisbon—16.
Lithuania—24.
Louis Marie, St.—see also Montfort—41, 42, 53.
Lourdes—26; Medical Bureau 21; miracles of 20.
Lucia dos Santos—7, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 34, 46, 49, 50, 51; her mission 13.
Lucifer—30.
- Madonna in Tears—20.
Mahometans—54.
Mariology—28.
Marto, Jacinta—10, 11, 13, 16, 17.
Marto, Francisco—10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 16.
Marx, Karl—26.
Mary, her prophecy about Russia—9.
Mary Mediatrix, Feast of—34.
Mary—Legion of 39; Society of 40; dependence on 41; Age of 51, 54; Legion of 53, 54.
Mathieu, Melanie—20.
Medal, Miraculous—19, 50, 54.
Mediatrix of All Graces—24, 34, 35, 36, 40, 49.
Message—farewell at Fatima 7; Mary's 52.
Mexico—37.
Militants, Queen of—38.
Mindszenty, Cardinal—9.
Miracle—remarkable fact after display at Fatima 7; purpose of 7; of the Sun 7, 8, 15; miracles 26.
Montfort, St. Louis Marie de—9, 27, 28, 29, 40, 51, 53; on Mary's appearances 9; his dedication 54.
Moriarty, Bishop—9.
Moslems—43.
Motivation at Fatima—8.
Motto of Russia—8.

- Mysteries of the Rosary 43, 44; Joyful 44; Sorrowful 44; Glorious 44.
- Naples—23, 43.
- Naturalism—27.
- Nazareth—31, 37, 44, 49.
- Neubert, Father Emil—32.
- Novena, Irresistible—23.
- O'Carroll, Rev. Michael—39.
- October 13—7.
- Offering, Morning—47.
- Ourem—14, 16.
- Our Lady—her request at Fatima 11; of the Rosary 15; of Sorrows 15; of Carmel 15; her appearance in 1830 19; of Lourdes 20; of La Salette 20; of Hope 21; of Beauraing 23; of Victory, Feast of 43.
- Pantheism—27.
- Paris—19, 27, 35.
- Party, Communist—26.
- Paul, St.—41.
- Peace—36.
- Pellevoisin—22, 34, 35.
- Penance—48.
- Persons—effect of Fatima miracle on 7; witnessing Fatima miracle 7.
- Peyton, Father Patrick—45.
- Pfaffenhofen—24.
- Philosophies, False—27.
- Pilate—37.
- Pius V, Pope—43.
- Pius VII, Pope—27.
- Pius IX, Pope—20, 27, 35, 45.
- Pius X, Pope—21.
- Pius XI, Pope—17, 26, 37, 39, 45.
- Pius XII, Pope—9, 18, 20, 28, 39, 45, 50, 52, 53.
- Plea, Pope Benedict's—8.
- Pontmain—21.
- Portugal—7, 25; Guardian Angel of 10.
- Prayers of the Angel at Fatima—10.
- Prayer, International Union of—24.
- Privileges, Mary's—33.
- Pro, Father—37.
- Promise—at Fatima 7; for October 13.
- Proofs of Fatima—7.
- Prophecy—of World War II 8; Mary's about Russia 9; date of next revelation 14.
- Purpose, Mary's—8.
- Question of Our Lady of Fatima—12.
- Quotation expressing motivation of Our Lady at Fatima—8.
- Rationalism—27.
- Redemption—31.
- Reparation—11, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 20, 46; how to make 47; spirit of 47.
- Resurrection—44.
- Revolt, Protestant—25, 26, 52; results of 25.
- Revolution—Communist 27; French 25, 26, 50; Industrial 26.
- Reward, Eternal—11.
- Rome, Consecration of—51.
- Rosary—12, 15, 17, 18, 20, 21, 37, 43, 54; Lady of 7, 15, 43; Queen of the Holy 23; Feast of Most Holy 43; Month of 43; new practices 45; Family 45.
- Russia—8, 9, 13, 14, 15, 17, 18, 43, 50, 51; its consecration 17; prophecy about 14.
- Russians—43.
- Sacrifice—10, 15, 18, 23, 54; Perfect 48.
- Sacrifices—13, 46, 47; voluntary 47.
- Saints—Marian 28; Queen of 38.
- Satan—9, 40.
- Saturdays, First—45, 50, 54.
- Scapular—22, 23, 24; of Mt. Carmel 54; of the Sacred Heart 54.
- Secularism—27.
- Socialism—27.
- Society, St. Vincent de Paul—39.
- Sodality—53; of Our Lady 54.
- Sorrows, Our Lady of Seven—50.
- Soubirous, Bernadette—20.
- Spain—25.
- States, United—25.
- Stepinac, Archbishop—8.
- St. Dorothy, Sisters of—17.
- St. Joseph—15.
- Suarez, Father—38.
- Sun, Miracle of—7.
- Terror, Reign of—25.
- Theresa, St.—38.
- Titles, Mary's—9.
- Tradition, Apostolic—39.
- Triple Role, Mary's—40.
- Trtsky, arrival in Petrograd—8.
- Turks—43.
- Valinhos—14.
- Victor Emmanuel, King—27.
- Virgin of the Poor—24.
- War—16, 17, 21, 22, 40; its connection with sin 10; Franco-Prussian 21; World I 8, 13, 34; World II 8, 17, 50.
- Warning of Fatima—14.
- World, its fate—9.
- Yugoslavia—24.

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