

Franciscan University Presents
“Fatima and Hope”
With guest, Father Andrew Apostoli, CFR

Excerpt taken from
Fatima for Today: The Urgent Marian Message of Hope
by Father Andrew Apostoli, C.F.R.

“In The End, My Immaculate Heart Will Triumph!”
Pope Benedict and the Continuing Challenge of Fatima

Toward the end of World War II, a group of people survived the atom bomb dropped on Hiroshima, Japan, in a Catholic Church less than one mile from the epicenter of the blast. Everything around them was completely destroyed, and everyone in the area was killed. Yet, amazingly no harm was done to the church building or to the people inside, not even from the radioactive fallout from the explosion. When asked how he could account for this incredible situation, one of the priests who survived said: “I can only tell you that we have always tried to fulfill the message of Our Lady of Fatima!” Our Lady provides special protection to those who respond fully to her requests. She has given us this encouraging sign to remind us that she is always watching over us when we are trying to do what pleases Almighty God and to fulfill the requests she has made at Fatima for peace in the world through the salvation of souls.

We, too, must survive warfare, but it is most often the spiritual warfare brought on by the evils of our times, with its attacks on life, the family and our faith. No doubt our Lady is protecting us from many spiritual assaults that are not as obvious as an atomic bomb, but are nevertheless real. She is likewise preparing her spiritual sons and daughters for the struggles that will lead ultimately to the triumph of her Immaculate Heart.

In earthly warfare, the general of the army is in charge. In spiritual warfare, Jesus is in charge. But he has chosen to direct some of us through his mother. (Someone once told me that if we were to think of our Lady as a general, then according to the book of Revelation (12:1), our Lady would be a twelve-star general.) A military general has to provide and direct the plans for battle. The general decides what will work to accomplish a victory, and what will not. The general must also determine which weapons will be most effective.

Hasn't our Lady done something like this for us at Fatima? She has told us the evils that would come upon the world, especially with the rise of Communism. She told us how it could be defeated, not as a political or economic system, but as a spiritual evil intent on destroying God's order in the lives of men. She told us that to achieve a spiritual victory, we need to live holy lives of Christian virtue. We also need to pray and offer our sacrifices for the conversion of sinners. Finally, she told us that the most effective

weapon, after the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, is the Rosary. Saint Louis-Marie Grignion de Montfort and many other great Marian saints have stressed the point that our Lady prepares her faithful sons and daughters for battle.

Form Your Convictions

When I was a young novice over fifty years ago, my novice master repeatedly said: “Form your convictions now, because you will have to live the rest of your lives based on them.” That was good advice. One of the things we must be absolutely convinced of is that our Lady is calling each one of us to be involved in this struggle. Convictions produce doers. Someone once said: “One person with a belief is equal in force to ninety-nine people who merely have an interest.” Do we really believe in what our Lady is asking of us? Are we convinced of its importance, or are we merely interested in it?

Pope Benedict XVI Urges Us to Respond to Our Lady’s Message

Pope Benedict XVI, when he was prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, was closely involved with the proclamation and explanation of the Third Secret of Fatima. As the successor of Pope John Paul II, he has continued to be very active in promoting the Fatima message. He raised the World Apostolate of Fatima (commonly referred to as the Blue Army) to the level of a pontifical association of the faithful, so that it might have closer ties to the Holy See and greater prominence in spreading the messages of our Lady. As we have seen, the Pope made an important visit to Fatima in May 2010, in which he said,

We would be mistaken to think that Fatima’s prophetic mission is complete. Here there takes on new life the plan of God which asks humanity from the beginning: “Where is your brother Abel (...) Your brother’s blood is crying out to me from the ground!” (Gen 4:9). Mankind has succeeded in unleashing a cycle of death and terror, but failed in bringing it to an end. In sacred Scripture we often find that God seeks righteous men and women in order to save the city of man and he does the same here, in Fatima, when Our Lady asks: “Do you want to offer yourselves to God, to endure all the sufferings which he will send you, in an act of reparation for the sins by which he is offended and of supplication for the conversion of sinners?”

Perhaps the statement of Pope Benedict that best sums up his pastoral advice regarding Fatima is “Learn the message of Fatima! Live the message of Fatima! Spread the message of Fatima!”

We have hopefully learned more about the message of Fatima by reading this book and perhaps other literature on the subject, but how do we live the message?

1. Strive to live good Christian lives. We do this by obeying God's commandments and fulfilling the duties of our station in life. We also do this by growing in virtue, avoiding sin and being quick to confess our faults.
2. Pray daily, especially the Rosary. We are nothing without God, so we must pray if we are to have the strength we need to live as good Christians. In all of her apparitions, the request made most frequently by our Lady was to pray the Rosary every day.
3. Observe the Five First Saturdays. Our Lady asked for this devotion in order to bring about the complete conversion of Russia, peace in the world and the triumph of her Immaculate Heart. Our Lord asked that we observe five first Saturdays more than once. Because this devotion requires great commitment, it combines prayer with sacrifice into a powerful means of grace.
4. Make sacrifices for the conversion of sinners and accept suffering patiently in reparation for our sins and those of others. There is no better way to grow closer to Christ than to unite our sacrifices and sufferings with his. By his Passion and death he has brought man back to God. By uniting our sacrifices and sufferings with his, out of love for God and love for souls who are far from him, we can participate in God's salvation of the world. There is no greater power than the sacrificial love of God, and we are called to share in it.

When adopting new devotions, or even when renewing our commitment to the ones we have already embraced, it is good to keep in mind these words of Pope Benedict XVI. The substance of the Fatima message, he said, "is not directed to particular devotions, but precisely to the fundamental response, that is to ongoing conversion, penance, prayer, and the three theological virtues: faith, hope and charity." As we respond to the messages of Our Lady of Fatima, we will grow in our love for God and in our zeal for souls, and we will want to spread the word that the mother of our Lord helped us to become better disciples. We will be like the Samaritan woman who, after she spoke with Jesus at the well, could not help but tell her friends and neighbors about him.

Spread the Message

By Baptism every Catholic is called to the mission of evangelization. The word is derived from the ancient Greek words meaning "to proclaim good news". For Christians, the "good news" is primarily the Gospels, which contain what Jesus did and taught for our salvation. It was so important to Jesus that people receive the gospel message that he sent out his apostles to the very ends of the earth to proclaim it. Our Lady's message at Fatima likewise contains a message urgently needed for our time, and she is depending on us to spread it far and wide.

There are many ways we can do this. One is by the good example of living the message in our own lives, especially by the daily recitation of the Rosary and by the devotion to Five First Saturdays. You may even want to invite people to share in these prayers with you. Another way is simply to tell people about the events and message of

Fatima. If you do this enthusiastically because it means a great deal to you, it will begin to mean something to others. Finally, provide literature and other media to inform and inspire others about practicing the message of Fatima in their own daily lives. Our Lady is calling us to be her apostles and evangelists.

Pope Benedict and the Mission of Fatima

In May 2010, Pope Benedict XVI became the third pope to visit Fatima, after Paul VI and John Paul II. He went to the Cova da Iria to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the beatification of Francisco and Jacinta Marto on May 13. At the same time, he was deeply concerned that progressive secularism and growing religious indifference were challenging Portugal's Catholic identity. During a mass in Lisbon on May 11, the Pope said:

This local church has rightly concluded that today's pastoral priority is to make each Christian man and woman a radiant presence of the Gospel perspective in the midst of the world, the family, in culture, in the economy, in politics.

He urged Portuguese Catholics (and all Catholics):

Bear witness to all of the joy that [Jesus'] strong yet gentle presence evokes, starting with your contemporaries. Tell them that it is beautiful to be a friend of Jesus and that it is well worth following him.

On May 12, the Holy Father entrusted the world's priests to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, praying for "holy priests, transfigured by grace". He implored our Lady to keep priests from the temptations of evil, to let them focus on Christ as their model of holiness and to "restore calm after the tempest", especially the storm of the recent clerical sex abuse scandals.

At the end of the Mass on May 13, before an estimated five hundred thousand people in the Cova da Iria, Pope Benedict said the prophetic mission of Fatima is incomplete because: first, our Lady's message at Fatima, which contains fundamental truths of our faith, is still guiding and encouraging the Church in her present struggles; and second, we have not yet seen the glorious triumph of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, which the Pope prayed would occur by the year 2017, the one-hundredth anniversary of our Lady's appearances at Fatima. She has promised us it will come, the victory of the woman over the dragon portrayed in the book of Revelation. If we heed our Lady's call to personal holiness, prayer and reparation for sin, we will see the blessings promised at Fatima poured out abundantly on us!

Fatima Prayers

Pardon Prayer

My God, I believe, I adore, I hope and I love You! I beg pardon for those who do not believe, do not adore, do not hope and do not love You.

Angel of Peace, Spring 1916

Angel's Prayer

O Most holy Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, I adore You profoundly. 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 indifference by which He is offended. By the infinite merits of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary, I beg the conversion of poor sinners.

Angel of Peace, Fall 1916

Eucharistic Prayer

Most Holy Trinity, I adore You! My God, my God, I love You in the Most Blessed Sacrament.

Our Lady of Fatima, May 13, 1917

Sacrifice Prayer

O Jesus, this is for love of You, for the conversion of poor sinners and in reparation for the offenses committed against the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

Our Lady of Fatima, July 13, 1917

Decade Prayer

(Say at the end of each decade of the Rosary.)

O my Jesus, forgive us our sins, save us from the fires of hell. Lead all souls to heaven, especially those most in need of Your mercy.

Our Lady of Fatima, July 13, 1917

**Titles Mentioned on *Franciscan University Presents*
“Fatima and Hope”
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***Fatima for Today: The Urgent Marian Message of Hope* by Father Andrew Apostoli, CFR. Ignatius Press.**

***Politicizing the Bible: The Roots of Historical Criticism and the Secularization of Scripture 1300-1700* by Dr. Scott Hahn. Crossroad Publishing Company.**

***Still Point: Loss, Longing and Our Search for God* by Dr. Regis Martin. Ave Maria Press.**

***The Truth About Trouble* by Father Michael Scanlan, TOR. St. Anthony Messenger Press.**

***Let the Fire Fall* by Father Michael Scanlan, TOR. Franciscan University Press.**

All of the above books are available through the Franciscan University Bookstore, 1235 University Blvd., Steubenville, OH 43952, 1-888-333-0381, www.franciscan.edu/bookstore.

For the free handout mentioned during the show, visit www.faithandreason.com, or contact us at presents@franciscan.edu or 1-888-333-0381.

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