

a correspondence that appears subsequently in the dialogue that took place in the first Fatima Apparition: "Are you willing to offer yourselves to God to bear all the sufferings He wills to send you, as an act of reparation for the sins by which He is offended, and of supplication for the conversion of sinners?" "Yes, we are willing," was their reply. This dialogue, however, is repeated mysteriously in all of us, at various moments of our life. The Apparitions are an extraordinary phenomenon, but the call of God in simple form is a matter of everyday." (Homily 13 March 1970, Fatima)

The children of Fatima received a call to holiness. All three shared in this call to "offer themselves to God and bear all the sufferings He would send them..." in reparation for sins and for the conversion of sinners. This common call shaped their lives of prayer and penance. Along with this, Our Lady revealed more particularly the vocation of each of the Little Shepherds – a 'vocation within a vocation' one might say:

**Francisco:** "...he must pray many Rosaries...";

**Jacinta:** "...Our Lady asked me if I still wanted to **convert more sinners.** I said I did..."

**Lucia:** "...you must make known devotion to my Immaculate Heart..."

Pope Francis spoke of the small gestures that form the steps of holiness. The little Saints of Fatima practiced these small but heroic gestures too as we learn from Sr. Lucia's Memoirs quoted in these pages. Transformed by God's grace received through the hands of the Blessed Virgin Mary, they became living witnesses to the Message that Our Lady imparted to them. "They are a living Gospel, written with their lives" as one author has said. They became tiny giants of sanctity!

### Conclusion

Today, amidst the tangle of technology and the uncertainty of so many words Holy Father Francis speaks to us of the call to holiness – the call to make a difference in this world through the grace of Baptism, which opens up for each one the way of sainthood. He reminds us that it is a duty to walk on this way. *Gaudete et Exsultate* directs us to the Gospel on the Beatitudes (Mt5:3-12; Lk6:20-23). It is in the mirror of the Beatitudes taught by Christ that we learn how to be holy. "The Beatitudes are like a Christian's identity card...In the Beatitudes, we find a portrait of the Master, which we are called to reflect in our daily lives. The word "happy" or "blessed" thus becomes "holy". It expresses the fact that those faithful to God and His word by their self-giving, gain true happiness." N°63-64 True happiness now and for all eternity!

### Come Follow Me Thoughts from the Cloister

"When He saw the crowds, He had compassion on them because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then He said to His disciples: 'The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few; pray therefore to the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into His harvest.'" (Mt9:36; Lk10:2)



Today, Jesus looks upon the great cities of the world and elsewhere too and sees the crowds harassed and helpless. At this time when labourers are so needed monasteries and convents are closing. The Church is in great need of young vocations to the priesthood and religious life. We must humbly do as the Lord says: "Pray to the Lord of the harvest." Through the centuries the Church has known suffering and persecution and today too there are so many giving the ultimate witness to their faith. The Church bleeds through Her martyrs. Yet, united with Christ their offering will bring forth fruit, fruit that will last. (Jn15:16) St. John (6:48-69) wrote that many, after hearing Jesus' teaching on the Bread of Life, His Body and Blood turned away and no longer followed Him. He then asked His disciples, His most trusted ones: "Will you also go away?" And Peter replied: "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life and we believe and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God." Today many have turned away from the Church. Indeed, the harvest is great and the labourers are few.

At the time of the canonization of St. Thérèse, a holy Redemptorist priest formed a small group of persons to pray. He named the group the *Little Flower Mission Circle*. Each member was urged to take a deep abiding interest in promoting religious vocations and to this end **pray one decade of the Rosary each day for vocations and once a month receive Holy Communion for this intention.** The fruits were quite remarkable.

In these pages, we have spoken of the vocation of St. Francisco and St. Jacinta. Their lives were consumed with the desire for the eternal salvation of souls and the glory of God and having been so recently canonized, perhaps we could propose a *Little Shepherds Mission Circle* for the same purpose: **to pray for vocations to the religious life.** The Holy Spirit continues His work. It is He Who touches the hearts of young people that they may hear the Call of Christ to **Come Follow Me!** The harvest is great and the labourers few. **Prayer opens hearts!**



### On the Call to Holiness in Today's World

This year, on the feast of St. Joseph in this first year following the great centenary year of Fatima, Holy Father Francis published his Apostolic Exhortation, *Gaudete et Exsultate, On the Call to Holiness in Today's World*. In these times of unrest, confusion for many, disturbances and disorder in societies, loss of identity and fear all over the world this letter, addressed to all Catholics, comes as a light and an anchor for those who open their hearts to receive it. The letter begins:

"REJOICE AND BE GLAD" (Mt 5:12), Jesus tells those persecuted or humiliated for his sake. The Lord asks everything of us, and in return he offers us true life, the happiness for which we were created. He wants us to be saints and not to settle for a bland and mediocre existence. The call to holiness is present in various ways from the very first pages of the Bible. We see it expressed in the Lord's words to Abraham: "Walk before me, and be blameless" (Gen 17:1).

In these times, that which is needed most is to be reminded of our call to personal holiness: "Be holy as I am holy" says the Lord. Pope Francis calls us all anew to the poverty and the spiritual riches of the Gospel. He writes: "My modest goal is to re-propose the call to holiness in a practical way for our own time, with all its risks, challenges and opportunities. For the Lord has chosen each one of us "to be holy and blameless before him in love" (Eph 1:4). N°1,2

This call to be holy, to be a saint begins at the moment of our Baptism. "Let the grace of your baptism bear fruit in a path of holiness. Let everything be open to God; turn to him in every situation. Do not be dismayed, for the power of the Holy Spirit enables you to do this, and holiness, in the end, is the fruit of the Holy Spirit in your life (cf. Gal 5:22-23)..." N° 15. And the Holy Father continues: "This holiness to which the Lord calls you

will grow through small gestures. Here is an example: a woman goes shopping, she meets a neighbour and they begin to speak, and the gossip starts. But she says in her heart: "No, I will not speak badly of anyone". This is a step forward in holiness... Later she experiences some anxiety, but recalling the love of the Virgin Mary, she takes her rosary and prays with faith. Yet another path of holiness..."

...When Cardinal François-Xavier Nguyễn van Thuân was imprisoned, he refused to waste time waiting for the day he would be set free. Instead, he chose "to live the present moment, filling it to the brim with love". He decided: "I will seize the occasions that present themselves every day; I will accomplish ordinary actions in an extraordinary way". N° 17

#### Fatima and the Call to Holiness

Was it not the same when the Mother of God came to Fatima? She spoke to three little, poor shepherds. Her Message is a call to holiness not only for them but for all who would listen and believe. The call to holiness is a call to discover and live the vocation God has planned for each one from the beginning. Fatima is a strong call to holiness for every Catholic and for all who listen to the Word of God through the voice of the Virgin Mary. Heaven is the goal on the journey of holiness.

The Portuguese Dominican Bishop Francisco Rendeiro, OP (1915-1971) preaching on this theme in 1970 said: "Our epoch needs much doctrinal instruction about sanctity, because God wants us to be saints: saintly adults and saintly children... Souls need to be reminded that sanctity is already germinating in the grace of Baptism and Confirmation. These two Sacraments give us the presence of God, the presence of the Holy Spirit with His sanctifying gifts.

What is essential is our correspondence to that grace, (continued on page 4)

**Christmas Novena of Masses and Prayers**  
**December 16 – 24, 2018**  
**For the Intentions of All of our Friends of Fátima**

*We wish to express our sincere gratitude for the material and spiritual help that you have offered towards our Community in this year. We appreciate the gift of our wonderful friends and benefactors and assure you that we remember you every day in prayer here, especially in our Holy Mass, Eucharistic Adoration, Rosary and daily prayers to St. Joseph. We wish you a most holy and peaceful Christmas! May the Holy Family watch over you throughout 2019!*

*The Vocation of St. Francisco of Fatima:  
To Pray Many Rosaries and Console the Hidden Jesus*

Francisco's soul, marked by the love of God, rose high so that not only was he concerned for the eternal salvation of souls, 'he was troubled by the repercussions that sin produces in the Heart of God'. From that height of love he sought to console 'God Who was so sad because of so many sins.' Francisco received the gift of contemplation to a very high degree.

**Francisco of Fatima – Called to Pray**

Lucia asked Our Lady if Francisco would also go to heaven and Her reply was: "He will go there too, but he must pray many Rosaries." Some have wondered at these words of Our Lady. Was She gently reprimanding him by placing a condition on his going to heaven? Or was this a call for Francisco to become a contemplative of the Rosary! Might we even say of the 'perpetual' Rosary? This was to be his special vocation. The Rosary is a prayer that leads us to ponder God – 'to think about God' as Francisco often said – in all the mysteries of our Redemption. In the rosary we discover and contemplate the awesomeness of God's Love for us, His very Being which filled Francisco's times of prayer. Like Christ Francisco too went apart to pray...

**By nature he was disposed to contemplation:**

"I prefer praying by myself, so that I can think and console Our Lord, Who is so sad!"  
"Listen! You go to school, and I'll stay here in the church, close to the Hidden Jesus..."

"I loved seeing the Angel, but I loved still more seeing Our Lady. What I loved most of all was to see Our Lord in that light from Our Lady which penetrated our hearts. I love God so much! But He is very sad because of so many sins! We must never commit any sin again."

"We were on fire in that light which is God, and yet we were not burnt! What is God?... We could never put it into words. Yes, that is something indeed which we could never express! But what a pity it is that He is so sad! If only I could console Him!..."

"I would rather console Our Lord. Didn't you notice how sad Our Lady was that last month, when she said that people must not offend Our Lord any more, for He is already much offended? I would like to console Our Lord, and after that convert sinners so that they won't offend Him any more."

**Suffering and Desire to go to Heaven**

"Our Lady told us that we would have much to suffer, but I don't mind. I'll suffer all that she wishes! What I want is to go to Heaven!"



While they were imprisoned and "... during Jacinta's interrogation, he confided with boundless joy and peace: "If they kill us as they say, we'll soon be in Heaven! How wonderful! Nothing else matters!" Then after a moment's silence he added: "God grant that Jacinta won't be afraid. I'm going to say a Hail Mary for her!" He promptly removed his cap and prayed.

"Even if we never see our mother again, let's be patient! We can offer it for the conversion of sinners. The worst thing would be if Our Lady never came back again! That is what hurts me most. But I offer this as well for sinners."

**Humility of Francisco**

Francisco did not hear what Our Lady and the Angel said. But afterwards, Lucia and Jacinta told him all that Our Lady had said. He was overjoyed and expressed the happiness he felt when he heard of the promise that he would go to Heaven. Crossing his hands on his breast, he exclaimed, "Oh, my dear Our Lady! I'll say as many rosaries as you want!"

Some have written that perhaps Francisco did not hear due to a fault on his part or a lack of grace... but no, it was Heaven's choice and for a reason. Two things we might consider: First the humility of Francisco. He did not ask: Why me? Why did I not hear? Instead, he patiently waited until the girls related all they had heard and joyfully received the communication from his sister and cousin. Secondly: That Francisco didn't hear became the cause of Lucia and Jacinta having to relate immediately the words and requests and prayers of the Angel and of Our Lady. It was a reason to recall and verify what they had heard. Being small children this appears as such a delicate attentiveness on the part of Heaven.

**Francisco the reconciler**

A woman called Mariana, from Casa Velha, came one day into Francisco's room. She was most upset because her husband had driven their son out of the house, and she was asking for the grace that her son would be reconciled with his father. Francisco said to her in reply: "Don't worry. I'm going to Heaven very soon, and when I get there I will ask Our Lady for that grace."

I do not recall just how many days remained before he took his flight to Heaven, but what I do remember is that, on the very afternoon of Francisco's death, the son went for the very last time to ask pardon of his father, who had previously refused it because his son would not submit to the conditions imposed. The boy accepted everything that the father demanded, and peace reigned once again in that home.

*The vocation of St. Jacinta of Fatima:  
To Love the Immaculate Heart of Mary and to Suffer for Sinners*

**Blessed are the pure of heart**

"How is it that Jacinta, small as she was, let herself be possessed by such a spirit of mortification and penance, and understood it so well? I think the reason is this: firstly, God willed to bestow on her a special grace, through the Immaculate Heart of Mary; and secondly, it was because she had looked upon hell, and had seen the ruin of souls who fall therein." (Fatima in Lucia's Own Words) To love is to suffer; to love is to make reparation.

**Jacinta and the Immaculate Heart of Mary**

From time to time, Jacinta said to me: "The Lady said that her Immaculate Heart will be your refuge and the way that will lead you to God. Don't you love that? Her Heart is so good! How I love it!" Jacinta said: "I am so grieved to be unable to receive Communion in reparation for the sins committed against the Immaculate Heart of Mary!"

A favorite ejaculation of Jacinta was: "Sweet Heart of Mary, be my salvation!" "I so love the Immaculate Heart of Mary! It is the heart of our dear Mother in Heaven! Don't you love saying many times over: 'Sweet Heart of Mary, Immaculate Heart of Mary'? I love it so much, so very much... as she gathered wild flowers, she sang a little tune that she made up herself as she went along: "Sweet Heart of Mary, be my salvation! Immaculate Heart of Mary, convert sinners, save souls from hell!"

Jacinta said to Lucia: "Tell everybody that God grants us graces through the Immaculate Heart of Mary; that people are to ask her for them; and that the Heart of Jesus wants the Immaculate Heart of Mary to be venerated at His side. Tell them also to pray to the Immaculate Heart of Mary for peace since God has entrusted it to her. If I could only put into the hearts of all, the fire that is burning within my own heart, and that makes me love the Hearts of Jesus and Mary so very much!"

**Vision of hell and thoughts of war**

The vision of hell filled her with horror to such a degree, that every penance and mortification was as nothing in her eyes, if it could only prevent souls from going there. Jacinta often sat thoughtfully on the ground or on a rock, and exclaimed: "Oh, Hell! Hell! How sorry I am for the souls who go to hell! And the people down there, burning alive, like wood in the fire!" Then, shuddering, she knelt down with her hands joined, and recited the prayer that Our Lady had taught us: "O my Jesus! Forgive us, save us from the fire of hell. Lead all souls to Heaven, especially those who are most in need."

"I'm going to Heaven, but you are staying here. If Our Lady lets you, tell everybody what hell is like, so that they won't commit any more sins and not go to hell."  
At other times, after thinking for a while, she said: "So many people falling into hell! So many people in hell!" To quieten her, I said: "Don't be afraid! You're going to Heaven." "Yes, I am," she said serenely, "but I want all those people to go there too!" Her words echoed those of St. Peter: "...the Lord does not want anyone to perish, but that all may come to conversion." 2 Pt 3:9

"Jacinta, what are you thinking about?" she frequently replied: "About the war which is coming, and all the people who are going to die and go to hell! How dreadful! If they would only



stop offending God, then there wouldn't be any war and they wouldn't go to hell!"

**Visions of the Holy Father**

«Didn't you see the Holy Father? I don't know how it was, but I saw the Holy Father in a very big house, kneeling by a table, with his head buried in his hands, and he was weeping. Outside the house, there were many people. Some of them were throwing stones; others were cursing him and using bad language. Poor Holy Father, we must pray very much for him.»

At another time, we went to the cave called Lapa do Cabeço. After some time in prayer Jacinta stood up and called to me: "Can't you see all those highways and roads and fields full of people, who are crying with hunger and have nothing to eat? And the Holy Father in a church praying before the Immaculate Heart of Mary? And so many people praying with him?"

**Penance and the salvation of Souls**

Giving away their lunch to the poor children and denying themselves sweet fruits like grapes and figs were common acts of penance that Jacinta made over and over. At another time: "I've a terrible headache and I'm so thirsty! But I won't take a drink, because I want to suffer for sinners."

"I've such pains in my chest! But I don't say anything. I'm suffering for the conversion of sinners." Asked her if she was suffering a lot she replied. "Yes, I am. But I offer everything for sinners, and in reparation to the Immaculate Heart of Mary." Then, filled with enthusiasm, she spoke of Our Lord and Our Lady: "Oh, how much I love to suffer for love of Them, just to give Them pleasure! They greatly love those who suffer for the conversion of sinners."

"Our Lady came to see us," Jacinta said. "She told us she would come to take Francisco to heaven very soon, and she asked me if I still wanted to convert more sinners. I said I did. She told me I would be going to a hospital where I would suffer a great deal; and that I am to suffer for the conversion of sinners, in reparation for the sins committed against the Immaculate Heart of Mary, and for love of Jesus... She said my mother would take me, and then I would have to stay there all alone!"

Jacinta showed the greatest compassion, especially when it concerned some sinner, saying: "We must pray and offer sacrifices to Our Lord, so that he will be converted and not go to hell, poor man!"

When she was ill, and yet went to Mass on a week day, I urged her: "Jacinta, don't come! You can't, you're not able. Besides, today is not a Sunday!" "That doesn't matter! I'm going for sinners who don't go on a Sunday."

**Graces through Jacinta while she lived**

In her memoirs Lucia recounts many graces received through the intercession of Jacinta. There was a soldier begging to obtain a cure for his wife or a release from an assignment to the war. Jacinta invited him to say the Rosary with her, and then said to him: "Don't cry. Our Lady is so good! She will certainly grant you the grace you are asking." Indeed he received both favours!