

Our Lady of Fatima

Third Day of the Novena

5-13-20

Yesterday I spoke about the apparition of our Blessed Mother at Lourdes in France. Today I would like to direct our attention to her apparition at Fatima in Portugal, a city 110 miles north of Lisbon. Between May 13 and October 13, 1917, she appeared to three Portuguese children, Lucia, Francisco and Jacinta. The first words that Mary spoke to the children were “Do not be afraid.” I am reminded of the story about a little girl who asked her father: “Daddy, are you afraid of the dark?” “No, honey,” he replied. “Are you afraid of snakes?” she asked. “No,” he answered. “Are you afraid of long, slimy worms?” “No,” was his response again. She thought for a moment and said: “You know, Daddy, I guess you're not afraid of anything but Mommy!” You know, folks, I think it is safe to say that each one of us is afraid of something, something that disturbs our peace of mind and heart. I think it is safe to say that we are living in a time of great fear. We are afraid that we or a loved one will contract the corona virus.

I think that our Blessed Mother is saying to us today what she said to the children at Fatima. “Do not be afraid.” However, I think that Mary knows that we WILL become afraid. I think that what she is saying to us, more precisely, is DO NOT BE AFRAID. I WILL BE WITH YOU. She tells us that, if we turn to her and her son in prayer, if we TRUST them, they will fill our heart with peace in the midst of our fears.

They tell the story of two children who were walking along a street when they encountered a large dog blocking the sidewalk. “Don’t be afraid,” one child said to the other. “Look at his tail. See how it’s wagging. When a dog wags his tail, that means he won’t bite you.” “Oh yeah,” responded the other child, “that may be, but his mouth is open and he’s showing us his big teeth. He looks like he wants to eat us. Which end are we going to believe?”

When we are afraid, the question is not “Which end are we going to believe,” but **whom** are we going to trust? Hopefully it will be Mary and her son Jesus who told us not to be afraid because they are with us, that they will take care of us.

During this novena, let us bring our fears to our Blessed Mother and say: “Mary, you told me not to be afraid. Well, I am. I am afraid of what the future holds for me and my loved ones, so please rid my heart and mind of fear and fill them with the peace you promised.”

We should remember something else that Mary said to the children at Fatima. She said: “Do you suffer a great deal? Don’t be discouraged. I will never forsake you. My Immaculate Heart will be your refuge.” Right now, we ARE suffering a great deal. Let us not be discouraged. Let us truly believe that Mary will never forsake us, that her Immaculate heart will be our refuge during these frightening times.

In an episode of the comic strip Peanuts, Charlie Brown says to Lucy, “The future frightens me.” Lucy said, “I don’t see why, Charlie Brown. You’re young and full of life. You’ll probably live another sixty years.” Charlie says, “That’s what frightens me.” I think it is safe to say that the future does frighten us. We just don’t know when the pandemic will end. We don’t know if things will ever go back to normal again. But it does us no good to worry about it all. I think that what we have to do is to bring our fears to Mary and believe that she will help us to face the future, whatever it will be.

O MARY CONCEIVED WITHOUT SIN, PRAY FOR US WHO HAVE RECOURSE TO THEE.