



SANTUÁRIO DE FÁTIMA
SHRINE OF FATIMA

The event of Fatima



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«Through the tender mercy of our God, when the day shall dawn upon us from on high»
/ Lk 1,78

Fatima takes place as an eruption of God's light amid the shadows of human History. At the dawn of the Twentieth century, the promise of mercy echoed in the dryness of Cova da Iria, recalling to a world entrenched in conflict and avid for a word of hope the good news of an encounter promised in hope, as grace and mercy.

«Do not be afraid. I am the Angel of Peace. Pray with me.»

The event of Fatima is inaugurated with an invitation to confidence. As the forerunner of the presence of God's light that dissipates fear, the Angel presents himself for three times to the seers, in 1916, with a call to adoration, the fundamental attitude that shall predispose them to receive the Most High's plans of mercy. It is this invitation to silence inhabited by the overflowing presence of the Living God that is mirrored in the prayer taught by the Angel to the three children: *My God, I believe, I adore, I hope and I love you.*

Prostrated on earth, in adoration, the little shepherds understand that a life made new is inaugurated there. From the humbleness of the prostration of their whole existence in adoration shall sprout the confident gift of faith of the one that becomes disciple, the

hope of the one that is certain of being accompanied in the intimacy of friendship with God, and the love as a response to the inaugural love of God, which fructifies in care for the others, namely for those who distance themselves from love, «for those who do not believe, do not adore, do not hope and do not love».

By receiving the Eucharist from the Angel, the little shepherds' vocation to a Eucharistic life is confirmed: a vocation to a life made gift to God for the others. By welcoming, through adoration, the grace of friendship with God, they become committed, through the Eucharistic sacrifice, to the complete offering of their lives.



«Are you willing to offer yourselves to God?»

In May 1917, the Lady full of grace presents herself overflowing with God's light, in which the little shepherds see themselves «more clearly than we see ourselves in the best of mirrors». In the mystagogic experience of the light that flows from the hands of Our Lady, the little shepherds are filled by a presence that is engraved indelibly in their intimacy and consecrates them as prophetic witnesses of God's mercy, which, since the beginning of History, illumines the plot of the human drama.

The secret offered in Fatima is precisely a revelation of the human mystery under God's light. In the images that flow before the eyes of Jacinta, Francisco and Lucia, a synthesis of the difficult drama of human freedom is offered. The vision of hell becomes memorial of the fact that history unfolds over other horizons, more definitive than the present, and that God yearns so much for that eschatological encounter in which the person is recovered for love, as he values human freedom. The same for the vision of the Church that, headed by the bishop dressed in white, walks through the ruins of the great city, carrying its suffering and its prayer, to prostrate, at the end, before the Cross: this vision evokes the human history suffocated in the ruins of its confrontations and its egoisms, and a Church that carries those ruins, as a *via cruce*, to ultimately offer herself to God completely, before the Cross - symbol of the ultimate and definitive gift of God himself. This Church is the seed of a different way of life full of grace, at the image of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. The heart of the one who consecrates himself to God is immaculated by his mercy and, in this way, anointed for a mission. The secret

offered in Fatima is the revelation of faith that, at the end, this Immaculate Heart full of grace shall triumph.

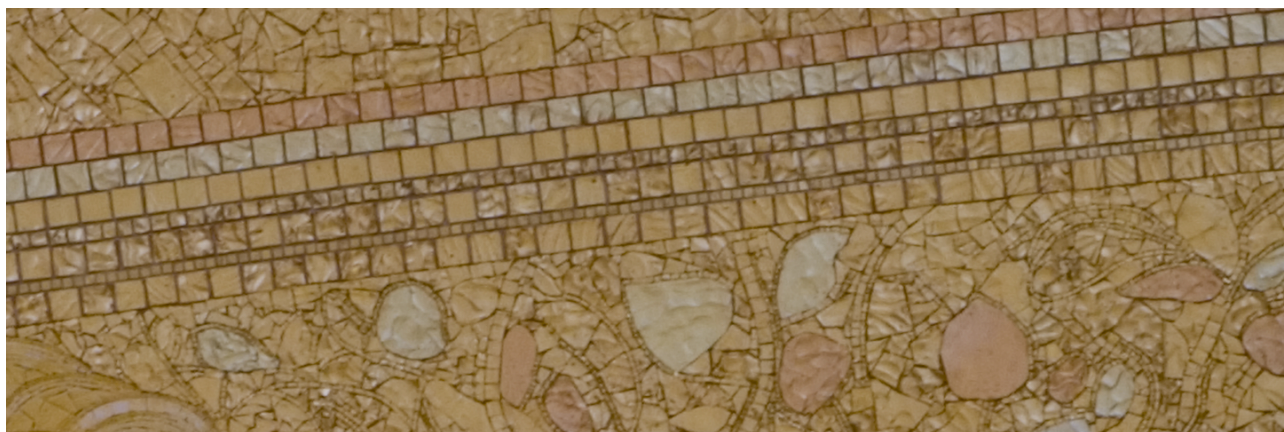
The believing style of the Immaculate Heart is offered as prayer and as sacrifice.

The Lady of the Rosary insistently convokes the seers to prayer, that place of encounter in which their intimacy with God will grow. The concrete traits of the prayer asked in Fatima are the ones of the rosary, which is remembered by Our Lady in each of the six apparitions, with the tone of urgency. In this humble pedagogy of the prayerful faith, the believer is convoked to welcome the mysteries of the higher gift of Christ in his/her heart, and to let him/herself be questioned by God's love, which redeems all wounds of human freedom. That the rosary being indicated as a way to peace is just a sign that the welcoming of the Word fills with grace the human heart, captive of egoism and violence, and pacifies history with the courage of those who are humble.

The intimacy with God transforms life into a sacrifice for the brethren, particularly those under God's compassionate gaze. Self-gift: here is the meaning of sacrifice. Loved as a child, the human heart is made new at the image of the Father and takes on the Father's passion for humanity. Before the world dramas, a freedom centred in God commits to his plans of mercy that include every woman, every man, in the Son's reconciliatory mission of gathering all in one sheep-fold (Jo 10,16). In the difficult grammar of sacrifice, life is courageously taken in its truth and freedom is polished for self-gift.

As if in the transparency of this self-gift for others, an invitation to console the God of all consolation sprouts (2 Cor 1,3). True friendship with God is manifested in the puzzlement of this invitation. The gaze of the one who is intimate with God finds his sadness for the voids of love in the dramas of human history and human freedoms; the one who is intimate with God allows himself to be touched and henceforth desires to console God himself.

In the last encounter with the Lady of the Rosary, in October, the hope in the promise of the triumph of the Heart full of grace is sealed with the blessing of Christ.



«Grace and Mercy.»

The event of Fatima overflows the boundaries of Cova da Iria. The concluding word of this event is offered in Pontevedra and Tuy to the seer Lucia, from 1925 to 1929. The Immaculate Heart of Mary, who had presented itself as «refuge and the way that leads to God», presents itself, once again, as the maternal shelter willing to welcome the dramas of human history and of each man and woman that consecrate to her with the purpose of entrusting them to the merciful Heart of God. The Heart of the Immaculate portrays the vocation of every woman, every man, who were dreamed for grace since the beginning. The consecration to this Heart full of grace affirms the certainty that man's vocation is the abundant life in God. For this horizon points also the core of the request for the communion of reparation on the first Saturdays. These *sabath*, days consecrated to the encounter with God, are image of a whole life consecrated to him.

At the end, all is «Grace and Mercy». The mystery of Trinitarian communion, light that permeates the whole event of Fatima, reveals once again to remind us that the compassionate Heart of God is made a gift. That the testimony of three children of a remote village in Serra d'Aire may promote the encounter with that light of the merciful heart of God until the ends of earth, is just a sign, also confirmed in Cova da Iria, that the ultimate history is built with the strength of God operating in the willingness of the humble.

www.fatima.pt/en/pages/the-event-of-fatima