

“Fatima: A Message for Our Century”

by Msgr. Luciano Guerra, Rector of the Shrine of Our Lady of Fatima
on the occasion of the dedication of the “Capelinha” replica in Washington, N.J.

“Capelinha” is a Portuguese name meaning “little chapel.” The “little chapel” at Fatima is the very heart of the Shrine. Perhaps you call the large building and tower of the Immaculate Heart of Mary in Washington, N.J. “the Shrine.” At Fatima, some people do the same, referring to the Basilica as “Shrine” or “Sanctuary.” But we constantly remind them that the true shrine at Fatima is not the Basilica but the “little chapel,” as that is the real heart of the entire sanctuary area for the simple and very important reason that *this chapel was built on the very spot Our Lady chose for Her apparitions, Her manifestations, Her message to be spread throughout the world, and even Her miracles.*

Why Did Our Lady Choose Fatima?

So I deeply hope that you will find the “little chapel” to be the very heart of your own beautiful sanctuary, (in Washington, N.J.) as it is so similar, *so identical to the “little chapel” at Fatima, in Portugal...* the heart of the whole Shrine there.

And why did Our Lady choose that spot?

We never know why God chooses some places and some persons instead of others. But the fact is He does so, and that at Fatima Our Lady chose that spot (marked by the little chapel) to tell us some very, very important things. And because of this we estimate that over 3,000,000 people every year are now coming to Fatima.

First: Prayer (the Rosary)

The first thing Our Lady tells us at Fatima is *that it is very important to pray*, even simple prayers. She recommended the Rosary every time She spoke to the children.

The Rosary could be rather monotonous, but if we love Our Lady, the Rosary becomes a very sweet prayer ... through which we speak (over and over again) to Her as “Our Mother.”

And as conversation to our earthly mothers is always a sweet conversation because of the love we have for them, so the Rosary is a sweet way to speak to Our Heavenly Mother.

Second: Penance (Daily Duty)

The second thing (very, very important for our days!) is Our Lady’s request for *penance*, and *not to offend God*. She said, *God is most offended already.*

So please, when you come to this Fatima Shrine, *try to hear these words of Our Blessed Mother*: prayer and penance.

Certainly you have your own intentions, your own petitions to present to Her. Certainly you have your personal and your family problems. And it is normal that we, children of God and children of Mary, present our problems, the problems that trouble our

minds and our hearts and our happiness, to Our Lady. Yes, from the beginning of the Fatima apparitions many sick people came to the Cova da Iria and asked Our Lady for cures, for miracles.

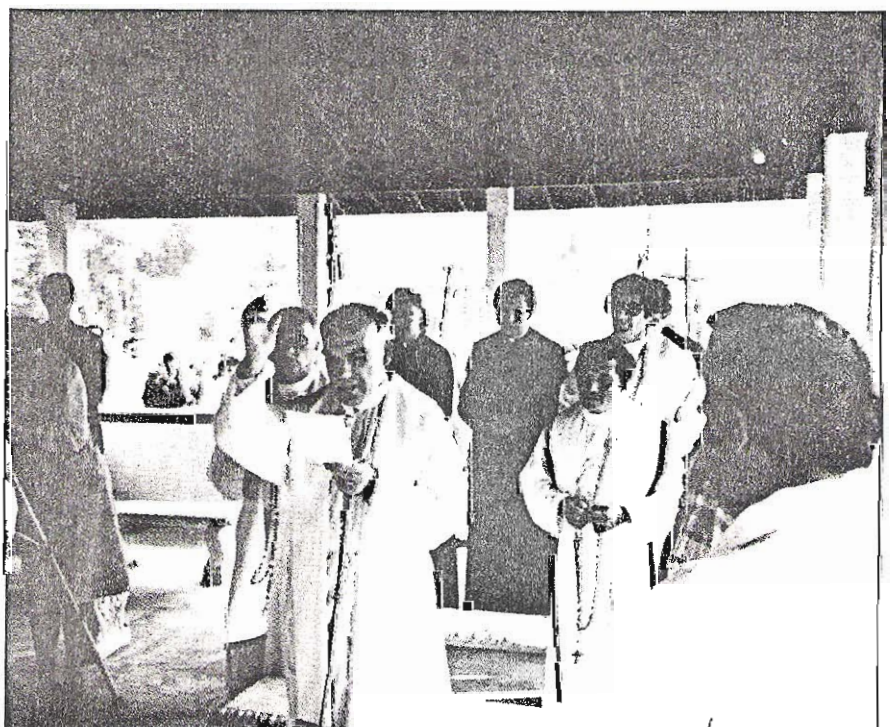
So when you have some distress in your life, you, too, quite naturally have recourse to this heavenly Mother, and ask from Her the healing of your distresses, your illnesses, the healing of your familiar problems.

But will you do the same as the children of Fatima?

At every apparition the children asked Our Lady: “What do you want from us?”

“What do you want from us?” It’s so childlike, so deep, so religious. They were saying to their dear Mother from Heaven: “You who know my own heart, our hearts, at the very depth

Msgr. Luciano Guerra, Rector of the Sanctuary at Fatima, blesses Capelinha replica at the Blue Army Shrine on September 22, 1985.



of ourselves; you who know that we are in a profound distress because of the war (the First World War was occurring at that time), what do you want from us?"

This question must also be the question of all who come to this Shrine (of the Blue Army) . . . all coming to that Little Chapel:

"Mother, you are the Mother of God. You know me. You know my problems. But you also know I have to do the Will of God at every moment in my life. Tell me the Will of God for me now. *What do you want us to do?*"

Sometimes Our Lady will give a specific answer. She will always tell you what she told the little children at Fatima: "*Accept your daily sacrifices for the conversion of sinners; accept your daily sacrifices!*"

It's not necessary to search for other sacrifices. It is enough when you take from the Hands of God the sacrifices necessary to live in love, to keep the First Commandment in your life, in your work, in your families. Offer to God these sacrifices and you will be saved. This is the Will of God.

Third: Consecration (Love)

The third message of Our Lady, the final word of Our Lord, was a request for consecration.

We have all been consecrated. We priests, we religious—nuns, we are especially consecrated. We who make our consecration to the Immaculate Heart of Mary with the formula used here at the Blue Army Shrine *are all consecrated.*

But let us pray to Our Lady that *She make us understand what consecration is*, especially when we are invited to consecrate others to Her own Heart, such as Russia.

The consecration of Russia of which Our Lady spoke at Fatima is not a sort of benediction to our enemy that he be converted. The consecration of Russia must be the same Our Lord makes for us, the same Our Lady makes for us:

When I am consecrated to Our Lady, *I have the same Heart* as She has towards Her Son, towards God; so *I love God*. And if I love God with all my heart, I can but also love *all people, even my enemies*. Thus, *in my*

love to God I consecrate myself and I consecrate all others, *even my enemies*, and so did the Lord Jesus Christ who, according to His own words in St. John's Gospel, says: "Father, I consecrate myself for the world, the entire world."

Thus you see how important it is to be consecrated to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, and the meaning of consecrating Russia.

If we consecrate Russia to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, *we love Russia with the same love of Our Lord and Our Lady*. I offer myself, my life, as the Lord Jesus offers His for me who was an enemy to Him. I offer my life in the act of consecration of these countries which are "enemies."

The meaning is very profound, very deep, and really very serious.

These three elements of the Message of Fatima you can and must

On March 1 the Blue Army received the glad news from Msgr. Guerra that the Sanctuary of Fatima is giving a pillar from the original Chapel of the Apparitions at Fatima for the replica "little chapel" at the Blue Army Shrine in Washington, N.J.

"absorb" here at this U.S. Shrine of Our Lady of Fatima, and especially at the "little chapel," which we are about to bless.

Message For Our Century

I give thanks to all those in the United States who have worked for the building of this Shrine (in Washington, N.J.). I would not know them, but God knows them and their hearts. We who are working at Fatima and who have the first (and greatest!) responsibility of spreading the message throughout the world—Pope John Paul II said at Fatima that Fatima is the message for our century—*are very thankful to all of you.*

Yes, the Pope told us *Fatima is the*

Message for our century. He knows better than we because he has with him the third part of the famous secret of Fatima.

It must be something important, this third part of the secret (which is unknown also to me). When the Pope said at Fatima that the Fatima Message is the *message for our century*, I think he could have been thinking of the secret. And we must be grateful to all those who work for the spreading and for the living of this message by a great number of faithful Christians.

Such an important message also carries an important responsibility that comes from a place like this (Blue Army) Shrine.

We cannot, we may not, give people a false Message of Fatima. We must be faithful to the true Message of Fatima. We Christians, all we creatures of God, are always in danger of deviating from the very thought of God. "How far are your minds from my mind" . . . said the Lord through His prophet.

Let Us Be Faithful!

That was in the Old Testament, but also in our times, even at the Shrine at Fatima, we always have this danger in mind . . . of straying from the actual intentions of Our Lady. So I would state positively with all my heart that those who are in charge of this Center which is the National Center of the World Apostolate of Fatima, Blue Army, U.S.A. to pray daily that Our Lady make them faithful to the message. I think this will be the best blessing for this Shrine, for its Message, and for the world, because we are always concerned with the peace of the world.

Let us pray to Our Lord and to Our Lady that from this (Blue Army) Shrine a message of faith, a message of peace be spread. God wants and gives us peace through the Immaculate Heart of His Mother . . . that peace which only the Lord can give because we believe He is the ultimate fountain of all good.

As we now understand the importance of the "Little Chapel," we pray that whole area of this Shrine be impregnated by the Fatima Message of prayer, of penance, of consecration and of peace.