

“THE NEW EVANGELIZATION OF AFRICA AND THE MESSAGE OF FATIMA”

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“Repent and do penance! The Kingdom of God is at hand!” The evangelical call to conversion echoes more powerful than ever in the authentic Message of Fatima, the “evangelical message of prayer and penance” as Pope Paul VI called it.

The Message of Fatima has it all: The doctrinal richness of the Gospel of Jesus Christ; its freshness, images, gestures of the primitive Christian catechesis; the calls to penance from Saint John, the Baptist, preparing the way for the Redeemer; the strong eschatological accents of Christ before the ruins of Jerusalem; the didactic force of Jesus’ parables; the simple life of the villagers, their emotional gestures and learned prayers; the prophetic contents of the Book of Revelation with the confrontation between “the Woman dressed in sun... and the red dragon”; as well as God’s seal with the miracle of the sun and the profound spiritual peace found in that holy place where heaven and earth meet for the welfare of humanity.

Everything occurred in Europe: Three apparitions of the Angel, the messenger who prepared the way for the visitation of the Mother of God and seven apparitions of Our Lady of the Rosary at Fatima (including that special one to Lucia on her departure from Fatima) were located in Portugal. Then, two apparitions of great magnitude and transcendence occurred in the other half of Iberia, Spain, at Pontevedra and Tuy, all of them forming a unique and perfect message coming from heaven, having the objective of explaining the Gospel of the beloved Son of God for our times so that nobody could excuse himself or herself from not been capable of interpreting “the signs for our time”.

Our Lady came to Fatima to speak to the world, but firstly, to speak to Europe, her beloved “old continent”, whose history of wars and conflicts, ideologies and politics, geographical and scientific discoveries as well as technological developments, had the greater influence to the rest of the world. Through Europe, Christianity was spread to most nations in a constant pattern of light and darkness that produced many saints and heroes that portrayed some of the best of what human beings are capable of, as well as some of the bigger tragedies in history, armed conflicts, persecutions and slander. Then, at our modern times, through Europe, the philosophical trends of illustration, rationalism and dialectic materialism engendered a struggle against faith and morals, against the spiritual destiny of humanity, against God himself; not only denying His existence, but also persecuting in many ways those who believe in Him.

The Message of Fatima is heaven’s reply to human pride neglecting God and pretending to build “a civilization without God” because He is not needed any more.

Lourdes at France stands as heaven’s reply to illustration and rationalism, showing the great limitations of human knowledge and power when confronted with sickness, aging and death. The great advances of humanity are nothing when compared to the inexplicable intervention of God in the individual history of men and women completely cured from their infirmities when coming with faith to the waters of Our Lady’s well at Lourdes. Reason, technology, pride are mute and humiliated by God’s

acts. Then, suddenly, God is needed again in the European heart! The heavenly mother showed the way to recover faith in God!

Fatima stands as heaven's reply to the threats posed by substituting God with the idol of material progress and totalitarianism. The "paradise" promised on earth turns to be a real hell of hatred, struggles for power, violence, assassinations, jealousy and genocide. The twentieth century is the century of martyrs where millions of people were sacrificed to construct an elusive "paradise on earth without God" that never came! The Message of Fatima offers the best possible interpretation of the philosophy of history of that century whose developments come well into our present XXI century forcing our future generations to become protagonists in the drama of our times: We must choose between the "civilization of love" or that of hatred; we must choose between the "culture of life" or the "culture of death" as the great options that will define our own collective history!

Fatima provides an interpretation of God's intervention on the COLLECTIVE HISTORY of men and women of the XX and XXI centuries as Lourdes provided in the XIX century the historical interpretation of God's intervention in the INDIVIDUAL HISTORY of men and women longing for health and wellness in the midst of misery and suffering caused by sickness.

God is still needed! The fall of the Soviet Union, the collapse of the Iron Curtain in Eastern Europe and the reunification of Germany, are all great signs of the fulfillment of the Fatima prophecy: "At the end, my Immaculate Heart will triumph... Russia will be converted and a time of peace will be granted to the world." The great qualitative changes in the world at the end of the twentieth century constitute an authentic new Marian Lepanto, a great Marian triumph that occurred exactly on the same dates of liturgical Marian feasts, commemorating the spiritual victories of the Woman dressed in sun:

1. August 22, 1991: The attempt to overthrow Russian President Mikhail Gorbachov failed. The Soviet Communist Party has sealed its fate after three days of a military take over; three days of confusion and despair in which the forces of the hard core atheistic Communists confronted the forces of grandmothers and young citizens, ending in the collapse of their attempt. – Feast of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Queen!
2. December 8, 1991: It was announced publicly that the new Community of Independent States substituted the USSR, precisely when the Catholic world celebrates the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of Mary!
3. December 25, 1991: On this date, the Presidents of Russia, Ukraine and Byelorussia announced the formal dissolution of the Soviet Union. It was Christmas Day, the greatest joy in the life of the Blessed Mother, her giving birth to her only Son, the great Solemnity of Nativity Day!
4. January 1, 1992: Russia emerges as an independent state, open to religious freedom, public cult and religious practices. The new Community of Independent States recognizes the independence and sovereignty of the former Soviet republics. The Soviet Union of Marxist and atheistic republics passed away at the age of 74 years. This day the Catholic Church celebrates the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God, principal Marian feast in the liturgical

calendar. (The Soviet Union could not celebrate her Diamond Jubilee, that is, its 75th Anniversary. The Fatima Message could! Both began on October 1917 at the same time!)

The four major dates of the historical changes that ended an era are marked by the Marian presence, according to God's will, the Lord of History! The Servant of God, John Paul II, was a wonderful instrument in the hands of God to comply with the petitions of Our Lady of Fatima, including the entrustment of Russia and the world to the Immaculate Heart of Mary in union with all the bishops of the Catholic world and those of the Orthodox Church who united with them. By this collegial consecration of March 25, 1984, the Universal Church complied with the desires of Our Lady of Fatima, who prescribed this act of collegiality among the bishops of the world to convert Russia and many sinners and bring an era of peace to earth. Just six years later, the world would see the great qualitative changes in the political map of Europe without the shedding of blood!

The great efforts and contributions of Pope John Paul's crusade to fulfill the Fatima prophesy are most remarkable: The fall of atheistic communism in Eastern Europe, beginning with Poland, the Pope's Motherland; the collapse of the Soviet Union and its regime, without bloodshed; the openness of the old Communist countries to the Gospel of Jesus Christ and religious freedom; the prevention of a disastrous nuclear war that could have happened between 1985-1986, according to some disclosed documents of the intelligence agencies and the correspondence of Sister Lucia with the Holy Father; the fall of the Berlin Wall and the reunification of Germany; an end to the old Cold War and the opening of a new era of collaboration and better understanding between nations. The contributions of Pope John Paul II to these achievements are of the greatest magnitude. These changes in the world can be labeled as "the Great Miracle of the twentieth century". Such GRACE AND MERCY coming through Fatima should have produced in the hearts of people the most profound gratitude to the Lord of History who saved the the world from terrible threats of war and destruction! That gratitude should have moved the people hearts to the conversion of many sinners!

Although there were great improvements in removing the malignant structures that prevented whole societies to believe, love and serve God, it is also true that many more people have ignored the great GRACE AND MERCY granted from heaven.

But humanity is free to follow God or to walk away from His path. At present, the world is submerged into a spiritual and moral crisis. Pope John Paul II, illuminated by the Holy Spirit, foresaw the present crisis and launched precisely from the Shrine of Fatima the encyclical letter "Centesimus annus" commemorating the 100 years of the encyclical letter "Rerum Novarum" by Pope Leo XIII. The social doctrine of the Church and the New Evangelization are offered by Pope John Paul II as the needed instruments to build a new world after the collapse of the Iron Curtain. It is essential to substitute the oppressive structures of the materialistic and atheistic societies of with the "civilization of love" taught by the Gospel of Jesus Christ, acquiring the values and lifestyle of Christian life. The world must be re-evangelized. God must be at the center of cultures and civilization. God must be first! God has the primacy!

SOCIAL DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH

Many Catholics, including those with a cultural formation and knowledge of the theology and spirituality of the Church, despise the Social Doctrine as a mere assistance activity to help the poor and the disabled. They forget that the principal role of the Church is the practice of CHARITY. Precisely, there is no spirituality without charity. God himself is charity, according to the First Epistle of St. John: 4:8.

Charity is the basis for Divine Liturgy. The Eucharistic Sacrifice is pure charity. The Holy Communion is absolute charity. Divine Office, the official prayer of the Church is charity in its maximum expression. Thus, charity is the core of authentic spirituality! Spirituality without charity is an empty devotional practice not acceptable to God! It is a mere exercise of egocentric individualism.

Then, charity projects to all members of human societies, inspiring justice and fair distribution of goods according to the needs of our brothers and sisters.

Human ideologies with atheistic background and totalitarianism can not forge the New World. Their oppressive structures were the cause of great suffering and lack of authentic democracy and personal freedom for millions of people throughout the world.

On the other hand, an ideology, expressed in its version of savage ambition for profits and luxuries, can not serve as model. It would be like replacing one monster's head with another, but still the same dragon. Materialism is not only dialectic, it can also be pragmatic, that of consumerism. Pope John Paul II understood from the beginning that this should not be a political competition between systems. The savage ambition of a system could not serve to rebuild the world since it will plunge people to a spiritual and moral crisis, substituting God's primacy with greed, goods consumption and unfair

distribution of riches. At the end, such system will end in pragmatic atheism, a different head of the same monster of Materialism.

MODERN CULTURE FORGETS ITS CHRISTIAN HERITAGE

On May 21, 2010, Pope Benedict XVI attended a concert in honor of his birthday and the anniversary of his election as Pope, offered by the Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia, Kirill I. In his address at that occasion, the Holy Father said how deep in these musical works is the soul of the Russian people and therewith the Christian faith. The musical heritage of Russian tradition in some way creates encounter, dialogue and synergy between East and West, between tradition and modernity. The Pope said:

"It was of just such a unified and harmonious vision of Europe that the Venerable John Paul II was thinking when, referring to the image of the 'two lungs' suggested by Vjaceslav Ivanovic Ivanov, he expressed his hope in a renewed awareness of the continent's profound and shared cultural and religious roots, without which today's Europe would be deprived of a soul or, at least, victim of a reduced and partial vision."

The Holy Father added: "Modern culture, particularly in Europe, runs the risk of amnesia, of forgetting and thus abandoning the extraordinary heritage aroused and

inspired by Christian faith, which is the essential framework of the culture of Europe... Today too these roots are alive and fruitful in East and West, and can inspire a new humanism...to respond to the numerous and sometimes crucial challenges that our Christian communities and societies have to face: first among them, that of secularism, which not only impels us to ignore God and His designs, but ends up by denying the very dignity of human beings, in view of a society regulated only by selfish interests”

Pope Benedict XVI concluded: “Let us again let Europe breathe with both lungs, restore a soul not only to believers, but to all peoples of the continent, promote trust and hope, rooting them in the millennial experience of the Christian faith. THE COHERENT, GENEROUS AND COURAGEOUS WITNESS OF BELIEVERS MUST NOT NOW BE LACKING, so that together we may look to our shared future, a future in which the freedom and dignity of all men and women are recognized as a fundamental value, in which openness to the Transcendent, the experience of faith, is recognized as an essential element of the human being.”

To secularism we must oppose the witnessing of believers of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to all, proclaiming that God is first, speaking about the rights of God as Creator and Redeemer to humanity. This is the great call of the Message of Fatima, capable of providing a religious experience that can transform the human heart as it transformed the hearts of Blessed Jacinta and Francisco and Venerable Sister Lucia. We should focus on the formation of leaders that will guide our communities and societies to construct the Kingdom of God on earth, a new civilization of love so much needed to attain peace and happiness.

THE NEED TO HAVE AUTHENTIC CHRISTIAN POLITICIANS

When the Holy Father, Benedict XVI received participants to the twenty-fourth plenary assembly of the Pontifical Council for the Laity on May 21, 2010, he invited them to reflect on the theme: “Witnesses to Christ in the political community”.

The Pope told them that, although the “technical formation of politicians” is not part of the Church’s mission, she reserves the right to “pass moral judgment in those matters which regard public order when the fundamental rights of the person or the salvation of souls require it”.

Christ’s disciples in our days must accomplish the great threefold mission, to defeat “the spread of a confused relativism, and of a utilitarian and hedonistic individualism (that) weakens democracy and favors the dominance of strong powers”:

1. “It is up to the lay faithful to show –in their personal and family life, in social cultural and political life- that the faith enables them to read reality in a new and profound way, and to transform it”, said the Pope.
2. “It is also the duty of the laity to participate actively in the political life, in a manner coherent with the teaching of the Church, bringing their well-founded reasoning and great ideals into the democratic debate, and into the search for a broad consensus among everyone who cares about the defense of life and freedom, the protection of truth and the good of the family, solidarity with the needy and the vital search for the common good”.
3. The Holy Father went on: “There is the need for authentically Christian politicians but, even more so, for lay faithful who bear witness to Christ and

the Gospel in the civil and political community. This need must be reflected in the educational prospectus of the ecclesial community and requires new forms of presence and support from pastors, Christian membership of associations, ecclesial movements and new communities can be a good school for such disciples and witnesses, supported by the charismatic, community, educational and missionary resources of those groups”.

OUR SOCIAL COMMUNITIES AND THE MESSAGE OF FATIMA

Pope Benedict XVI in his recent visitation to the Shrine of Fatima, on May 13th, 2010, insisted that all communities must live the Message of Fatima since all communities are called by this message to repent and do penance, to convert to Jesus Christ and abandon the evil spirit and his worldly deeds as was promised in our baptism. The World Apostolate of Fatima, an international public association of the faithful has as its charisma the formation of lay people in the New Evangelization using as instrument

the authentic Message of Fatima. This is the educational prospectus of our association, to carry on this mission enriching the ecclesial community with a new vision for our families in the present times of confusion and uncertainty. As Pope Benedict XVI said at Fatima: “DO NOT BE AFRAID TO TALK OF GOD!” The great challenge of our times is “the separation and the opposition between secularism and the culture of faith...something anomalous...must be transcended. The present moment is for the two to come together, and in this way to discover its true identity.”

The world must renew its spiritual and apostolic zeal, accepting the Gospel of Christ in its entirety and witnessing with passion the experience of charity, the religious experience of God’s mystery, that light shed from the Immaculate Heart of Mary at Fatima, which was God himself, transforming the hearts of the three little shepherds of Fatima. The experience of God’s love to humanity will transform also the hearts of the African continent with the ever new, everlasting power of Jesus Christ Risen from the dead! Suffering, anguish and death are all overcome by the power of the Risen One! This is the great existential lesson of the Fatima Message for all!

THE WORLD WE LIVE IN HAS A GREAT NEED OF GOD

As the traditional procession marking the end of the month of May 2010, month devoted to Our Blessed Mother, took place in the Vatican Gardens, the Holy Father Benedict XVI remarked: “By its nature, the Church is called to proclaim the Gospel everywhere and at all times, to spread the faith to every man and woman and to every culture.”

He continued: “Mary remained with Elizabeth for three months to offer her loving nearness, concrete assistance and all the everyday services that were needed... and Mary, -who called herself ‘the handmaid of the Lord’- made herself the servant of mankind. More specifically, she served the Lord whom she encountered in her brothers and sisters.

It should be noted that ‘Mary’s charity’ is not limited to concrete assistance but achieves its highest form in bestowing Jesus himself, in ‘making him present’”, the Pope said.

The Holy Father continued: "THIS IS THE HEART AND THE HEIGHT OF THE EVANGELICAL MISSION. THIS IS THE TRUE MEANING AND THE MOST GENUINE PURPOSE OF EVERY MISSIONARY PATH: TO OFFER HUMAN BEINGS THE LIVING AND PERSONAL GOSPEL, WHICH IS THE LORD JESUS HIMSELF. Jesus is the true and only treasure that we have to give humanity. Today's men and women have a profound longing for Him, including when it seems they are ignoring or rejecting Him. The society we live in, Africa the entire world has a great need of Him."

The World Apostolate of Fatima, Region of Africa, has been entrusted with this extraordinary responsibility: To live with joy and devotion the experience of the mystery of God, Jesus Himself, shared with us by the Immaculate Heart of Mary in Fatima. Through meditative prayer, daily sanctification of our duties, Eucharistic Reparation and the entrustment to God through the Immaculate Heart of Mary, the members of the World Apostolate of Fatima use the Plan designed by Our Lady to bring humanity closer to her Divine Son by softening the human heart with Grace and Mercy!

The World Apostolate of Fatima must contribute to reinforce the bond between the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the African cultural identity. As Christians, this is our duty!

Pope Benedict XVI declared during the commemoration of Saints Cyril and Methodius on the month of May, 2010: "In moments of trial and joy they felt that God accompanied them daily experiencing His love and that of their brethren. We too understand that when we feel loved by the Lord, and know that we return this love, we are enveloped and guided by His grace in everything we do. Thanks to the effusion of the multiple gifts of the Holy Spirit, the more we know we are loved and give ourselves to others, the more that Spirit will come in our succor of our weaknesses, opening new roads for our activities."

It is this experience of God's love that can transform the routine of apostolic endeavors into something new and exciting. We feel that we are contributing to Christ's efforts to salvation of

men and women, we feel united with the Holy Spirit, fulfilling Christ's mission on earth through the Immaculate Heart of Mary. Then, what was not possible according to human standards is now possible and accessible since love transforms all things, bringing joy and happiness in the midst of trials and sufferings.

GREAT LESSONS OF THE ENCYCLICAL LETTER "CENTESIMUS ANNUS"

On May 22, 2010, the Holy Father Benedict XVI pronounced a speech to the "Centessimus Annus Pro Pontifice Foundation" stating: "Today, more than ever, the human family can grow as a free society of free peoples so long as globalization is guided by solidarity and the common good and by social justice, all of which find a precious wellspring in the message of Christ and of the Church. The common good is the goal that gives meaning to progress and development, which otherwise would be limited only to the production of material goods. These goods are necessary, but without the orientation to the common good, consumerism, waste, poverty and inequality come to prevail, which are negative factors for progress and development."

Today's moment in history presents the terrible financial crisis of the more developed countries, specifically more profound in the United States of America and Europe, due to the wrong decisions made to embrace a war in Iraq and not limiting the greed and avarice of the finance stock and mortgage markets that threatens whole nations to bankruptcy. The irresponsible speculation of so many should have been restricted by politics that must have primacy over finance and by ethics that must be the guiding force for them all.

After all, this is what happens when humanity turns to the old ways of the Babel Tower, pretending to have access to heaven without God; that is, pretending to obtain happiness and glory eradicating God from human public life. But this is not possible. When human beings pretend to act as if God does not exist, they are abandoned to their own luck ending in humiliation and despair. Should America and Europe learn the lesson from history, from its two great wars of the twentieth century, from its Cold War, from the collapse of the Western economies?

Pope Benedict XVI stated: "The fundamental priority for the development of the entire family of peoples, however, is to strive to recognize the true scale of goods and values. The notion of integral human development presupposes such things as subsidiarity and solidarity, and interdependence between State, society and the market. In a global society

made up of many different peoples and religions, the common good and integral development must be achieved with everyone's contribution. Religions have a crucial role to play in this, especially when they teach fraternity and peace. THE EXCLUSION OF RELIGION FROM PUBLIC LIFE –AND AT THE OTHER EXTREME, RELIGIOUS FUNDAMENTALISM – HINDERS AND ENCOUNTER BETWEEN PERSONS AND THEIR COLLABORATION FOR THE PROGRESS OF HUMANITY. PUBLIC LIFE IS SAPPED OF ITS MOTIVATION AND POLITICS BECOMES DOMINEERING AND AGGRESSIVE".

The Message of Fatima insists on three main teachings in the same direction as the papal teachings of the encyclical letter:

1. God is first! He must be at the center of human life. All things orbit around His laws and commandments. This is the primacy of God!
2. The fate of nations, the fate of the world, has been entrusted to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. We must pray to her Immaculate Heart to obtain world peace. This is God's will.
3. The collapse of the Soviet Union, the openness of Eastern Europe to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the reunification of Germany and the fall of the Berlin Wall, signs of the beginning of the triumph of the Immaculate Heart of Mary promised at Fatima, are a great grace from Heaven that must be completed by the European efforts to build new societies based on the "civilization of love" principles, the "globalization of solidarity" in a world full of greed and exploitation, as the papal doctrine teaches.

A CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHICAL TREND IS NEEDED BASED ON HUMAN EXPERIENCE AND INTERIOR LIFE

We must strive to put God again at the center of public life by building a civilization of love and peace, a culture of life, the Christian values portrayed by the great philosopher

Saint Augustine, an African, Father of the Church, Father of Europe and of the Western Civilization. It is Saint Augustine who focused on the role of religious experience and its significance in providing the human heart with peace and happiness. It is precisely Saint Augustine the object of Joseph Ratzinger's doctoral thesis, whose symbol appears in the papal coat of arms, for he considers himself a disciple of the Bishop of Hippo. And by Divine Providence, it is Saint Augustine the patron saint of the Diocese of Leiria-Fatima.

I must confide you that the great Saint Augustine, the most prolific writer in history and the most quoted author of them all, must recover his role in thought as provider of the great experience of God in the human heart, the awesome psychological traits of interior life and his role in the interpretation of history.

In the "City of God", Saint Augustine begins the philosophy of history with the great drama of the century, the confrontation between the forces of the Redeemer and the force of the Antichrist, competing to govern the human heart. But charity, true and perfect love, triumphs over. The African Doctor of the Church teaches it all.

In the Message of Fatima, "the Woman dressed in sun" confronts the red dragon and defeats it by the power of her Divine Son. The spiritual Mother of humanity promises a great triumph of her Immaculate Heart to bring an era of peace to all. And as St. Augustine is the master of Conversion and the great teacher of the most sacred mystery of Christianity, the mystery of the Most Holy Trinity, we see that the key and central topic of the Message of Fatima is the mystery of the Most Holy Trinity revealed to the three little children while the great call of the Message is that of Conversion: Conversion to God, "metanoia", a transformation of the 'old creature' to the 'new one' dressed in Christ's grace and mercy.

AFRICA MUST ALLOW HERSELF TO BE TOUCHED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT

At the Solemnity of Pentecost on May 23rd, 2010, Pope Benedict stated: "At Pentecost, the Holy Spirit appeared as fire. How different this fire was from that of wars and bombs...from the fires ignited by dictators of all ages, even last century, which left behind them only scorched earth. The flame of the Holy Spirit burns but does not injure, and yet it achieves a transformation...However, this effect of the divine fire scares us, we are afraid of being 'scalded' and would prefer to remain as we are. This depends on the fact that our lives often follow a logic of having, of possession and not of giving... On the one hand we want to be with Jesus to follow Him closely, on the other we are afraid of the consequences this brings".

The Holy Father said: "We must be able to recognize that losing something, losing ourselves for the true God, the God of love and life is in fact a gain, it means rediscovering oneself more fully. Those who entrust themselves to Jesus experience peace and joy of heart, already in this life, things the world cannot give, and cannot take away once God has given them to us.

IT IS WORTHWHILE THEN TO ALLOW OURSELVES TO BE TOUCHED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT. THE PAIN THIS BRINGS IS NECESSARY FOR OUR TRANSFORMATION."

The continent of Africa must use her spiritual reserves to transform the great collective pain and suffering caused by many wars, conflicts and the great inequalities and injustices in the past and present crisis. I must say that of these

crisis the worst is the crisis of identity, where many have lost a great amount of their cultural, spiritual and moral values. Africa needs the fire of the Holy Spirit, a fire which is Perfect Love, Charity, the only force capable of redeeming.

The mystery of Pentecost is essential to the Church. There is no Church without Pentecost. The Holy Spirit descended over the Apostles praying at the Cenacle with the Blessed Mother Mary. The Church was "baptized" that day. The Holy Father said: "The Church lives constantly in the effusion of the Holy Spirit without which she would exhaust her energies like a sailing ship without wind. Pentecost is renewed especially in certain particularly intense moments, both at the local and universal level, in small assemblies and in great gatherings. Yet, the Church experiences countless 'Pentecosts' which enliven local communities: the liturgies, especially those experienced at special moments in community life, in which the power of God is perceived particularly clearly, infusing souls with joy and enthusiasm. Thus, there is no Church without Pentecost. And I would like to add, there is no Pentecost without the Virgin Mary. So, it was at the beginning, in the Cenacle... So it is always, in all places and times. I myself witnessed as much a few days ago in Fatima, Portugal. What did that immense multitude experience on the esplanade of the shrine, if not a renewed Pentecost? This is the experience typical of the great Marian shrines and of the smaller ones. WHEREVER CHRISTIANS COME TOGETHER IN PRAYER WITH MARY, THE LORD GIVES HIS SPIRIT."

Fatima, we may say, is the Marian Pentecost in our times. Through Fatima, the Holy Spirit has given a Message to the world. The sins of the world have terrible consequences; War, crimes, hunger, destruction of nations, persecutions against the Church and the Holy Father, damnation of poor sinners... Precisely during his recent pilgrimage on May 2010 to the Fatima Shrine, the Holy Father, entrusted to Our Lady of Fatima the solution of the terrible moral and spiritual problem of the sexual abuses of children by members of the clergy in some countries, an abomination that has much to do with the prophesies by Blessed Jacinta Marto about the sins against purity and the many souls condemned to hell because of them.

The triumph of the Immaculate Heart of Mary promised at Fatima had begun already. It is a difficult process that can be hastened or delayed, enhanced or diminished accordingly with our correspondence with grace and mercy. As the miracle of the sun was diminished because God was so much offended by the kidnapping of the three little shepherds of Fatima by the local authorities of the government of Vila Nova de Ourem; the triumph of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, begun with collapse of the Soviet Union, can also be affected by our correspondence with grace. But we must have faith and hope. I believe in a new springtime for the world. As the great Saint John Bosco, Marian prophet and precursor of the Fatima Message prophesied, there will be a new Marian Pentecost in the first third of the XXI century bringing a new springtime to the Church and the triumph of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

In Africa, the Bishops of the Catholic Church have celebrated several synods on the Evangelization of the continent, guided by the Holy Spirit and the Successor of Peter, the Holy Father. The Servant of God, John Paul II and his successor, Pope Benedict XVI had launched the great challenge of the New Evangelization of our cultures and civilizations as the only way to establish God's Kingdom on earth. The diocesan bishops have the charisma to judge the charismas, that is, to discern what is good and what is bad for their flock, as the Holy Spirit governs the Church. Let us follow

their indications in communion with the Holy Father. Let us discover the tremendous role of the Message of Fatima for the success of this unique mission of evangelization. Let us put our trust in He who has triumphed over suffering, anguish and death. Let us entrust ourselves and our families to the Prince of Peace, Lord of History, who lives and reigns forever and ever. Amen.