

CELEBRATING 100 YEARS OF FATIMA: THE CHALLENGES FOR THE CHURCH IN OUR DAYS. HOW TO SPREAD THE FATIMA APOSTOLATE?

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Dear fellow delegates, observers and participants:

I am sharing with you these reflections that I wish will serve us to reflect and discuss the great challenges the Church faces in our times, as we approach to the Centennial of the Fatima Apparitions in the year 2017, and the ways we must use to spread the Fatima Apostolate all over the world in the midst of great difficulties.

The World Apostolate of Fatima has been just granted by the Holy See the highest juridical status in the Catholic Church: The permanent approval of the WAF as an international public association of the faithful of pontifical right.

1. THE FIRST CHALLENGE THE CHURCH FACES IS TO LIVE UP TO THE GREAT RESPONSIBILITY OF EXECUTING ITS MISSION: THE NEW EVANGELIZATION OF THE WORLD. AND THE WAF MUST COLLABORATE WITH THE CHURCH THROUGH THE AUTHENTIC MESSAGE OF FATIMA AS THE IDEAL INSTRUMENT FOR THE NEW EVANGELIZATION. WE MUST WITNESS OUR CATHOLIC FAITH IN OUR FAMILIES, "AT WORK, IN PARISHES AND COMMUNITIES" AND SERVE WITH EXCELLENCE THE CAUSE OF THE NEW EVANGELIZATION IN THE XXI CENTURY.

Our world is rapidly losing its Faith and Morals. This loss of Faith and Morals is part of the Fátima prophesy. Blessed Jacinta foretold this state of spiritual crisis of our days. The evil spirit, the worldly spirit, practical materialism, hedonism, totalitarian ideologies and rationalism are destroying the spiritual treasures of our civilization and substituting them with the concept that HUMAN BEINGS ARE FIRST, that human beings are the measure of all things.

2. THE SECOND CHALLENGE THE CHURCH FACES IS TO MAKE KNOWN AND LIVED THE AUTHENTIC MESSAGE OF FATIMA IN ITS PRISTINE SPLENDOR. AND THE WAF MUST DEMONSTRATE THE CHURCH THAT THIS IS HER OBLIGATION TOO, AS THE MESSAGE OF FATIMA IS NOT A MERE PRIVATE REVELATION, BUT MUCH MORE: IT IS THE BEST ECHO OF THE GOSPEL OF JESUS; IT IS A "CHARISMA", A UNIQUE

GIFT, CAME FROM HEAVEN FOR THE UNIVERSAL CHURCH. THE LOSS OF FAITH AND MORALS CAN BE OVERCOME WHEN THE CHURCH ANNOUNCES THE PRIMACY OF GOD: GOD IS FIRST, AS IT IS PROCLAIMED IN FATIMA. THE WAF MUST TRASMIT THE RENEWAL FORCE OF THE TRINITARIAN LOVE. WE MUST TRANSMIT THE RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE OF FATIMA BASED ON GOD'S LOVE AND THE LIVES OF OUR PEOPLES WILL BE TRANSFORMED AS THE LIVES OF THE THREE LITTLE SHEPHERDS OF FATIMA WERE TRANSFORMED WHEN SUBMERGED IN GOD'S LOVE. WE MUST USE TO THE MAXIMUM THE GREAT OPPORTUNITY OF THE YEAR OF MERCY PROCLAIMED BY THE HOLY FATHER POPE FRANCIS IN CONSONANCE WITH THE SYNOD OF BISHOPS ON THE FAMILY FOR THE TRANSMISSION OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH.

The present spiritual and moral global crisis is the product of the absence of prayer. Today's humanity prays too little. And most of the prayers are not well done. There is no time to pray. Human beings live in a permanent neurosis caused by the conviction of loneliness and impotence.

3. THE THIRD CHALLENGE THE CHURCH FACES IS TO TEACH OUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS HOW TO PRAY. WE MUST PORTRAY HOW OUR BLESSED LORD AND OUR BLESSED MOTHER PRAYED. FATIMA IS A SCHOOL OF PRAYER. WE MUST CONTEMPLATE THE MYSTERY OF GOD. BY MEDITATING THE MYSTERIES OF THE HOLY ROSARY, GOD COMES TO DWELL IN THE HUMAN SOUL. THIS IS WHY OUR LADY OF FATIMA PROMISED PEACE ON EARTH ATTACHED TO THE DAILY MEDITATION OF THE HOLY ROSARY. GOD'S PRESENCE BRINGS PEACE TO OUR SURROUNDINGS. PEACE, TRANQUILITY IN ORDER, IS A GIFT FROM HEAVEN THAT REQUIRES OUR CORRESPONDENCE WITH GOD'S GRACE. BUT, WE MUST BE AT PEACE FIRST, IN ORDER TO SHARE THAT PEACE WITH OUR NEIGHBORS. WE MUST LIVE A PEACEFUL LIFESTYLE TO BE ABLE TO PORTRAY HEAVEN'S PEACE TO OTHERS. AND TO HAVE PEACE WE MUST BE MERCIFUL, WE MUST LIVE A MERCIFUL LIFESTYLE.

The spiritual life of the Church deteriorates as many of the faithful do not practice the reception of the Holy Sacraments, especially Sacramental Confession and Holy Communion. The sense of sin is lost. Conscience is not well formed. Evil is not identified. Conversion is much needed.

4. THE FOURTH CHALLENGE THE CHURCH FACES IS TO INSERT THE FAITHFUL INTO THE LIFE OF THE SACRAMENTS. BY PROMOTING THE DEVOTION OF THE FIVE FIRST SATURDAYS OF THE MONTH, "THE FORGOTTEN PART OF THE MESSAGE OF FATIMA", THE WAF CONTRIBUTES TO EUCHARISTIC AND CORDIMARIAN

REPARATION IN THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH. MONTHLY CONFESSION AND FREQUENT COMMUNION ARE FOCUSED IN THIS REPARATORY PRACTICE. DEVOTION TO THE IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY IS THE GREAT ANTIDOTE AGAINST DISSENTION TO PETER'S MAGISTERIUM. THE PROMISE OF OUR LADY OF FINAL PERSEVERANCE AND UNITY AND STRENGTH IN THE UNIVERSAL CHURCH, BY THE PRACTICE OF THE FIRST SATURDAYS DEVOTION, IS A GREAT SIGN THAT OUR APOSTOLATE HAS A BLESSED MISSION COMING FROM HEAVEN! IT IS TIME NOW, THAT THE CHURCH SEES THE FIRST SATURDAY'S DEVOTION WITH NEW EYES, NOT AS A MERE MARIAN DEVOTION, BUT AS A WAY DEvised AT HEAVEN TO SAVE SOULS IN OUR DAYS AND SECURE UNITY AND STRENGTH WITHIN THE CHURCH AGAINST INNER DISSENTION TO THE MAGISTERIUM, THUS MAKING POSSIBLE MANY SINNERS TO CONVERT AND DO PENANCE. THIS IS THE GREAT PROMISE OF THE IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY!

Evil is present in our modern societies and world with great force and negativity. Our best efforts sometimes seem meaningless and weak. Some people are deaf to the calls of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Many more are ignorant. Some people are instruments of evil, as they fight willingly God's Kingdom on earth. What can be done in this negative scenario?

5. THE FIFTH CHALLENGE THE CHURCH FACES IS "TO USE THE EUCHARIST, THE ROSARY, THE CONSECRATION TO THE IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY, THE DEVOTION OF THE FIVE FIRST SATURDAYS OF THE MONTH AS PATHS FOR PEOPLE FAR FROM GOD TO ENCOUNTER CHRIST AND THE CHURCH AND FOR AWAKENING A SPIRIT OF CONVERSION, PRAYER, PENANCE AND REPARATION AMONG OUR MEMBERS IN THE LIGHT OF THE NEEDS OF THE NEW EVANGELIZATION", AS CARDINAL RYLKO STATES IN HIS MESSAGE TO THE WAF. THE PETITIONS OR OUR LADY OF FATIMA ARE CALLS TO DIRECT OUR APOSTOLIC WORK IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION. THE LIVES OF BLESSED JACINTA, FRANCISCO AND THE VENERABLE SISTER LUCIA ARE MODELS OF HOLINESS THAT WE ALL MUST KNOW FIRST TO BE ABLE TO TRANSMIT TO OTHERS. THE SEERS OF FATIMA ARE TRUE MODELS OF SPIRITUALITY, PORTRAYING BOTH VOCATIONS IN THE CHURCH: CONTEMPLATIVE AND APOSTOLIC LIFE.

The disruption of family life and values is undermining the foundations of our present societies. The culture of death, divorce, abortion, euthanasia, gay marriage and so many other threats protected by "modern legislation" are serious obstacles to the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

6. THE SIXTH CHALLENGE THE CHURCH FACES IS TO PROVIDE THE SPIRITUALITY OF FATIMA TO THE PRO-LIFE APOSTOLATES AND APOSTOLIC MOVEMENTS

STRUGGLING TO ESTABLISH THE CULTURE OF LIFE ON OUR SOCIETIES. THE PRO-LIFE APOSTOLATES MUST HAVE A SPIRITUAL INNER LIFE THAT WILL DIFFERENTIATE THEM FROM MERE POLITICAL OR CONFRONTATIONAL ASSOCIATIONS FACING THE PRO-CHOICE FORCES. NO VIOLENCE IS USED WHEN THE CHALLENGE IS SEEN MORE AS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR DIALOGUE AND EDUCATION IN CHRISTIAN VALUES. GOD'S GRACE AND MERCY MUST COME TO THE HEART TO FORM CONSCIENCES IN MORAL JUDGEMENT THROUGH THE LIGHT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

Contradictions and challenges tend to create a sense of pessimism among the Apostles of our times. Fear to criticism and persecution may stop our best initiatives. Globalization, secularization, lack of material resources and difficulties of all sorts may paralyze our apostolic agenda.

7. THE SEVENTH CHALLENGE THE CHURCH FACES IS TO OVERCOME FEAR, SPEAKING ABOUT GOD AND WITNESSING JESUS CHRIST TO ALL. THE SENSE OF PESSIMISM MUST BE OVERCOME. THE THREATS AND CHALLENGES MUST BE SEEN AS OPPORTUNITIES FOR EVANGELIZATION. "THIS IS NOT A QUESTION OF FINDING NEW STRATEGIES AS IF THE GOSPEL WAS TO BE SPREAD LIKE A MARKET PRODUCT, BUT REDISCOVERING THE WAYS IN WHICH INDIVIDUALS COME CLOSE TO JESUS" (POPE BENEDICT XVI). MATERIAL POVERTY IS MORE A BLESSING THAN A DIFFICULTY. TO SPREAD THE KINGDOM OF GOD, WE MUST EMBRACE SISTER POVERTY, AS ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI, AS POPE FRANCIS IN OUR DAYS, AS IT IS ONLY THROUGH SPIRITUAL POVERTY THAT WE COME CLOSER TO OUR MASTER AND SAVIOUR, JESUS CHRIST.

The lack of material resources to spread the Message of Fatima seems to jeopardize our efforts in that direction. Financial difficulties and the global economic crisis is a threat to the operations of the Apostolate, payment of salaries and fringe benefits, celebration of activities, apostolic endeavors, publications, and the promotion of the Message, as well.

8. THE EIGHTH CHALLENGE THE CHURCH FACES IN A GENERAL WAY, AND THE WAF FACES TOO, IN A PARTICULAR WAY, IS TO PROVIDE FOR ITS FINANCIAL NEEDS IN A DEPRESSED ENVIRONMENT. IT IS IMPORTANT TO NOTICE THAT SINCE THE BEGINNING OF THE CHURCH AND SINCE THE BEGINNING IN THE HISTORY OF FATIMA, THIS WAS A PROBLEM PRESENT: THE APOSTLES AS WELL AS THE FAMILIES OF THE SEERS WERE IN BANKRUPTCY. THE APOSTLES HAD THE TRAITOR, JUDAS, THEIR TREASURER, STEALING MONEY FROM THEM. THE VATICAN'S BANK WAS A SOURCE OF PAST SCANDAL BEFORE POPE FRANCIS TOOK MEASURES TO CLEAN THE HOUSE. THE FAMILIES OF THE SEERS OF

FATIMA, BECAUSE OF THE MANY PEOPLE VISITING THEIR FARMS AND CAUSING DAMAGE TO THEIR PROPERTY. OUR LADY OF FATIMA HAD TO INSTRUCT THE CHILDREN ON HOW TO COLLECT DONATIONS TO PROVIDE FOR THE SMALL CHAPEL TO BE BUILT FOR HER CULT OF VENERATION. THEN, THE CHURCH AND THE WAF AS WELL, MUST USE THE LEGAL, TRANSPARENT WAYS TO RAISE FUNDS TO PROVIDE FOR ITS NEEDS, ENRICHED BY NEW METHODS OF FUNDRAISING ETHICALLY CORRECT IN USE BY THE CHURCH AND APOSTOLIC MOVEMENTS IN TODAY'S WORLD, ALWAYS HAVING IN MIND ITS ECCLESIAL NATURE AND PREVENTING ALL SORTS OF MARKETING PRACTICES IMPROPER FOR AN ECCLESIAL APOSTOLATE PROMOTING THE NEW EVANGELIZATION.

The lack of support to the WAF by some Diocesan Bishops and/or priests that seem to reject the role of Private Revelation in the salvation of souls refrain the Fatima Apostolate from growing. But they refrain the Catholic Church from growing too. Some of them disdain the WAF as a mere Marian association promoting a particular devotion coming from Portugal and not pertinent to their particular country. Some believe that to center into Christ's role in the Church, Marian devotion must not be promoted and should be left to an individual practice. Others think that Fatima has a political component that is not healthy for the Church. Moreover, some think that the Fatima prophecy is something of the past, of the twentieth century, with no future in the Church.

9. THE NINTH CHALLENGE THE WAF FACES IS TO INFORM OUR DIOCESAN BISHOPS AND PRIESTS OF OUR ECLESIAL NATURE, AS AN INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC ASSOCIATION OF THE FAITHFUL OF PONTIFICAL RIGHT, WE SPEAK IN THE NAME OF THE CHURCH WHEN ANNOUNCING THE AUTHENTIC MESSAGE OF FATIMA. THE MESSAGE OF FATIMA IS A UNIVERSAL "CHARISMA" FOR THE CHURCH, A DIVINE GIFT THAT HAS BEEN RECOGNIZED BY THE PETRINE MAGISTERIUM OF THE CHURCH, THE HIGHEST LEVEL OF APPROVAL IN THE HIERARCHY. FIVE PAPAL VISITATIONS TO THE SHRINE OF FATIMA AND VERY PROFOUND HOMILIES PRONOUNCED IN EVERY OCCASION WITNESS THE PARTICULAR ROLE OF FATIMA AND ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH THE SUCCESSOR OF PETER. THE DECREE OF PERMANENT APPROVAL OF THE WAF BY THE PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR THE LAITY EXPRESSES OUR MISSION AND ROLE IN THE CHURCH. DIOCESAN BISHOPS AND PRIESTS MUST RECEIVE THIS DOCUMENT FOR THEM TO DISCOVER THE ROLE OF THE WAF IN THE CHURCH. THE NEW MISSION OF THE WAF, THE NEW EVANGELIZATION OF THE WORLD IS THE MOST IMPORTANT TASK IN THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH IN THE THIRD MILLENIUM OF CHRISTIANITY. IT IS UNFAIR TO THINK THAT THE WAF DEALS ONLY WITH A PARTICULAR MARIAN DEVOTION. POPE BENEDICT XVI HAS STATED VERY CLEARLY THAT THOSE THAT BELIEVE THAT THE

PROPHECY OF FATIMA IS SOMETHING OF THE PAST ARE WRONG! THE MESSAGE OF FATIMA IS DEVELOPING AND THE POPE HAS LAUNCHED A CALL TO THE UNIVERSAL CHURCH TO LIVE IN EVERY COMMUNITY THIS MESSAGE IN PREPARATION FOR THE CELEBRATION OF THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FATIMA APPARITIONS IN 2017 AS A WAY TO HASTEN AND ENHANCE THE TRIUMPH OF THE IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY PROMISED AT FATIMA. THE GREAT CHANGES IN THE WORLD WITHOUT BLOODSHED AFTER THE COLLAPSE OF THE SOVIET UNION, THE ATHEISTIC COMMUNIST'S REGIMES OF EASTERN EUROPE AND THE FALL OF THE BERLIN WALL, ARE GREAT SIGNS OF THE UNIQUE ROLE OF FATIMA IN THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH AS A GREAT SIGN FROM HEAVEN TO SAVE MANY SOULS FOR JESUS CHRIST. JESUS CHRIST IS THE LORD OF HISTORY AND A GREAT INTERVENTION FROM THE BLESSED MOTHER ANNOUNCED IN FATIMA PREVENTED A NUCLEAR WAR AND ITS TERRIBLE CONSEQUENCES TO HUMANITY IN THE YEAR 1985, ACCORDING TO HISTORICAL FACTS REVEALED BY THE INTELLIGENCE AGENCIES OF WEST AND EAST. IF THE CLERGY IS GIVEN THIS INFORMATION, HOW COULD THEY NOT SUPPORT THE WAF AS THE INSTRUMENT TO SPREAD THE FATIMA MESSAGE, A PERFECT INSTRUMENT FOR THE NEW EVANGELIZATION AND AN IDEAL TOOL IN THEIR PASTORAL PLANS? DO NOT FORGET THE TRIUMPH OF THE IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY PROMISED AT FATIMA IS ALSO THE TRIUMPH OF THE UNIVERSAL CHURCH AGAINST ITS ENEMIES!!! DO NOT FORGET!!!

Some deviations of the authentic Message of Fatima have caused commotion and despair between the faithful, announcing false prophecies, degrading the prestige of the Message of Fatima and causing embarrassment to the Vatican and the Holy Father as they question the truth of the actions taken toward the secret of Fatima and the consecration of Russia and the world to the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

10. THE TENTH CHALLENGE THE CHURCH FACES IS THE CONFUSION AND DESPAIR CAUSED BY THE DEVIATIONS OF THE MESSAGE OF FATIMA AS MANY PEOPLE ASSOCIATE THE WAF WITH THESE ERRORS BECAUSE THE WAF IS SEEN AS THE INSTRUMENT TO SPREAD THE MESSAGE OF FATIMA. THE DEVIATIONS ARE CAUSED BY PEOPLE OUTSIDE THE CHURCH, WITH IRREGULAR STATUS AS MEMBERS OF THE CLERGY, SOME OF THEM "SUSPENDED 'A DIVINIS'" FROM THE PRACTICE OF THEIR PRIESTHOOD BECAUSE OF DISOBEDIENCE. THE DEVIATIONS ARE USED BY THE EVIL ONE TO IMPEDE THE GROWTH OF THE AUTHENTIC APOSTOLATE AND ITS MESSAGE. THE FAITHFUL MUST LEARN TO DISCRIMINATE: THE WAF IS PERMANENTLY APPROVED BY THE HOLY SEE, HAVING THE MISSION TO SPREAD THE AUTHENTIC MESSAGE OF FATIMA. THE FAITHFUL MUST LEARN

TO DIFFERENTIATE THE AUTHENTIC MESSAGE FROM THE DEVIATED ONE. NO PRIVATE REVELATION COMING FROM HEAVEN CAN OPPOSE THE CHURCH, THE POPE, ON THE CONTRARY. ALL AUTHENTIC PRIVATE REVELATIONS COME TO SUPPORT AND ENRICH IN DETAILS ADAPTED TO OUR TIMES, THE PUBLIC REVELATION GIVEN TO THE CHURCH TO GUARD AS CUSTODIAN. IF THE POPE SAYS THAT THE THIRD PART OF THE SECRET OF FATIMA WAS REVEALED, WE MUST ACCEPT. IF THE POPE ENTRUSTED AND CONSECRATED THE WORLD TO THE IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY, WITH A SPECIAL MENTION OF RUSSIA, FOR ITS CONVERSION, WE MUST ACCEPT. IF THE SEER OF FATIMA, SISTER LUCIA, SAID THAT BOTH PAPAL ACTS WERE ACCEPTED BY GOD AND FULFILLED THE PETITIONS OF OUR LADY OF FATIMA, WE MUST ACCEPT. DISOBEDIENCE COMES FROM THE EVIL ONE, NEVER FROM GOD! IF WE HAVE EYES TO SEE, HOW CAN WE DENY THE INTERVENTION FROM HEAVEN IN THE COLLAPSE OF THE SOVIET UNION, THE IRON CURTAIN AND THE BERLIN WALL, WITHOUT SHEDDING BLOOD? THESE GREAT CHANGES IN THE GEOPOLITICAL MAP OF THE WORLD OCCURRED AFTER THE COLLEGIAL CONSECRATION OF RUSSIA AND THE WORLD TO THE IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY PERFORMED BY SAINT JOHN PAUL II, AS WAS PROMISED IN THE MESSAGE OF FATIMA!!!

Many other challenges are faced by the WAF: Cooperation between nations pertaining to a particular region; pilgrimages to Fatima, ways to provide for cost of lodging and meals at Domus Pacis; preparations for the coming Centennial of the Fátima Apparitions on May 13th, 2017; letters addressed to the Holy Father requesting a public exhortation for the First Saturdays Devotion; promotion of the Children of the Eucharist Program; adequate materials in some languages; increase in youth membership; attraction of families to the Apostolate; formation seminaries and workshops for leaders; traveling to other countries to start the Apostolate; WAF basics for new members; WAF organization in a particular country; more usage of electronic means and media, comprehension of our new mission as we realize the WAF is a new foundation and we complete the transition from the Old Blue Army to the New Apostolate of Fátima, as the Vatican has directed us to do!

These great challenges will be discussed in our coming workshops as per the input received by our regional structures in Europe. The Regional Coordinators will offer us a panel on this respect.

TO SPREAD THE FATIMA APOSTOLATE WE MUST REFLECT AND DISCUSS FROM WITHIN THE 10 MAJOR CHALLENGES OFFERED HERE AS A GUIDE AND THE WAYS TO FACE THEM.

OUR ATTITUDE IS ESSENTIAL IN THIS RESPECT: THE CHALLENGES ARE WAYS TO GROW, OPPORTUNITIES TO MAKE US BETTER APOSTLES FOR OUR TIMES! THEY ARE NOT AN

UNBEARABLE CROSS; THEY ARE NOT UNBEATABLE OBSTACLES. WITH GOD'S GRACE AND MERCY THE CHALLENGES CAN BE OVERCOME.

SOMETIMES, THE CHALLENGES ARE OUR CROSS TO SANCTIFY OUR DAILY DUTIES AS PER GOD'S WILL. AND THIS IS PART OF THE MYSTERY OF CHRIST IN OUR LIVES. SUFFERING IS NECESARRY TO BECOME LIKE CHIRST, TO BECOME CLOSER TO GOD!

LET US ENTRUST THE IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY WITH ALL OUR PARTICULAR CHALLENGES AS WE HUMBLY ASK THE HOLY SPIRIT TO GIVE US WISDOM, JOY, STRENGTH AND PERFECT LOVE TO SEEK THE CAUSE OF OUR LADY OF FATIMA AND BE EXTREMELY SUCCESFUL IN ALL OUR APOSTOLIC ENDEAVORS.