

# Pope Benedict XV &

## OUR LADY OF FATIMA ~ QUEEN OF PEACE

*P*ope Benedict XV, the Pope of Peace, understood that the innocence, the open simplicity of the child's soul was irresistible to God. In the summer of 1916, the Great War was raging across Europe.

*P*ope Benedict XV having exhausted every diplomatic means to intervene and avert the war and later to try to end the horrible conflict, turned to ask the prayers of the children and to have them unite around the Eucharistic Banquet. From Rome, Pope Benedict XV through his Bishops, called for the children of the world and especially of the warring nations to unite in prayer and to receive Holy Communion on the 30th of July in reparation for the crimes of men and in supplication for peace.

*T*hat date marked the second anniversary of the declaration of war, the 'suicide of civil Europe' as he called it. Thousands of children responded under the direction of their Bishops and Parish Priests. The Pope addressed the children assembled in Rome. He explained the power of the children's prayers in this way: "Omnipotence, in the first place, is the daughter of your innocence, because in the presence of God, the prayer of a heart which has always been pure has greater effect than those of a heart made pure through penance.

Omnipotence, in the second place, is the companion of your weakness, since The Author of All has chosen to confound the powerful of the world, by "the weak ones of the world."

The Pope continued: "Be before God Our Messengers of Peace...Do your parents, your brothers and sisters, and all the adults of your family respond to your humble demands?"

Yes, they do what you ask because it is irresistible, and for God, the way that you speak to him and ask, is also irresistible..."Pope Benedict XV

*D*uring that same summer, on the western shore of Europe in the remote hamlet of Fatima, there came from heaven an Angel of God who spoke to three little shepherd children.

*A*t the first visit he told them: “Pray, with me!” And he taught them this prayer: “My God I believe, I adore, I hope and I love You. I beg pardon for those who do not believe, do not adore, do not hope and do not love You.”

*T*hen praying this prayer he bowed to the ground. He told them: “Pray like this. The Hearts of Jesus and Mary are attentive to the voice of your supplications.”

Like the story of Hagar (Gen 21: 17-18) here too an Angel assures the children that their prayers are heard.

In the autumn, on the third and final visit, the Angel appeared holding a chalice in his hands, with a Host above it from which drops of blood were falling into the sacred vessel.

*L*eaving the chalice and Host suspended in the air the Angel bowed to the ground in adoration and taught the children a second prayer in honor of the Most Holy Trinity. Then rising He gave the Host to Lucia and to Jacinta and Francisco, the two youngest, he gave the contents of the Chalice. This heavenly intervention has marvelous significance in light of the appeal made by Pope Benedict XV to the children to unite around the Eucharistic Banquet.

*P*erhaps we can say that in this way the Angel of God included these three children in that communion of Holy Communion requested by the Holy Father from Rome and helped prepare their hearts for the great Apparitions of the Mother of God that would soon follow. A child receives Holy Communion from Pope Benedict XVI Such was the summer of 1916... The following year in a letter dated May 5, 1917, Pope Benedict XV filled with anguish at the continuing slaughter of millions made yet another appeal to Heaven for peace. His desire was that everyone would have recourse to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Throne of Grace and that all would go to this Throne through Mary.

In his letter he ordered the invocation: Queen of Peace, pray for us! to be inserted universally into the Litany of Loreto and concluded with these words:

“*To* Mary, then, who is the Mother of Mercy and omnipotent by grace, let loving and devout appeal go up from every corner of the earth from noble temples and tiniest chapels, from royal palaces and mansions of the rich as from the poorest hut, in every place where there is a faithful soul — from blood-drenched plains and seas. Let it bear to Her the anguished cry of mothers and wives, the wailing of innocent little ones, the sighs of every generous heart: that Her most tender and benign solicitude may be moved and the long awaited peace we ask for be obtained for our world turned upside down. And, afterwards, remind future centuries of the efficacy of Her intercession and the greatness of the good She has given us.”

*Just* eight days later the Most Holy Virgin, Queen of Peace, appeared to the three shepherd children in Fatima. From the Vicar of Christ in the Eternal City the appeal for peace went up to Heaven and to the tiny and unknown Fatima, in the ‘Land of Holy Mary’ Heaven sent down its reply!

*Our* Lady came to offer God’s Supernatural Plan for Peace. This Plan, given to help save the world from terrible wars and persecutions wrought by mankind’s sinfulness, was revealed to three little children, utterly powerless in the sight of men.

*Truly*, the prayers of the children and all child-like souls united to those of the Vicar of Christ are heard! Today, we need very much the true prayer of the little ones. In 1994, Pope John Paul II echoed Pope Benedict XV’s words:

“What enormous power the prayer of children has!

This becomes a model for grown-ups themselves: praying with simple and complete trust means praying as children pray.”

(Letter to the Children) May our prayer become more humble, frequent and trusting so that it too may be ‘irresistible to God’.



*Your very grateful, Rosary Perpetual Sisters*

