

# The Fatima Center's India Apostolate

## Apostolate to Priests · India Orphanage

India has always been a place where Father Gruner and *The Fatima Crusader* received a warm reception for Our Lady of Fatima and Her urgent message. This warm reception has helped him run an ever-growing apostolate in that nation for more than 26 years. Most important, however, is the reception and support by the many bishops of India. Most notably of these bishops is Archbishop Rayappa Arulappa, former Archbishop of Chennai.

In a letter sent to all priests and bishops in India, dated Holy Thursday, 1992, Archbishop R. Arulappa reminded his brothers in the priesthood that Our Lady of Fatima's requests have yet to be realized.

"For several years now," said the Archbishop, "I have been mystified and baffled by the fact that at least three Popes (Pius XII, Paul VI, and John Paul II) all partially

obeyed Our Lady by consecrating the world, yet each stopped short before fulfilling the most important point, namely the collegial consecration of Russia.

"Pope John Paul II himself has even said (after consecrating the world in 1984) that Our Lady was still waiting for the specific consecration of Russia that She asked for at Fatima.

"It would seem clear..." he continued, "that some kind of agreement between the Vatican and Moscow continues to stand in the way. Obviously the devil, the most cunning of all creatures, seems to have lured even the Popes into a disastrous situation."

Archbishop Arulappa concluded this letter with the pointed observation, "In the final analysis, the campaign against the Consecration is really the last great effort of satan to conquer because he knows that the triumph of the

Immaculate Heart means his final defeat.”

When we see the great love the Indian faithful show to Our Lady of Fatima, and when we read courageous episcopal statements such as those from Archbishop Arulappa, it is no surprise that Father Gruner’s apostolate would be able to establish a flourishing Fatima Center there.

### **A Procession for Our Lady**

On one of his many trips to India, Father Gruner conducted a statue visit to the Archdiocese of Hyderabad while the whole district was suffering from drought.

As the procession wound through the streets of one of the smaller villages of the Archdiocese, hundreds of people came out to greet Our Lady’s statue held aloft on men’s shoulders.

Even more remarkable was that, in the midst of drought, the Indian faithful there brought out water, perhaps their most precious commodity at the moment, and spread it on the roadway in front of Our Lady. It was their manner of “washing the way” for Mother Mary.

Heaven seemed to smile

on this generous act of devotion, for two days later, the Hyderabad area received a torrential downpour. The city of Hyderabad was blessed with rain, but the center of the downpour was that small village. The drought broke, to the great relief of the people. Father Gruner was told the deluge was even greater than what the district experiences during monsoons.

A week later, large puddles of water could still be seen in the fields. In fact, so much rain had fallen that even a week of the tremendous daytime heat could not evaporate all the water. This downpour of rain symbolizes the downpour of graces that Our Lady will send upon the world when the Consecration of Russia is done.

### **The Orphanage**

One of the Fatima Center’s most important works in India is the Immaculate Heart of Mary Orphanage in that same small village which had been blessed with rain.

The Fatima Center started the orphanage in 1994 with the blessing of Archbishop Semineni Arulappa, the cousin of Archbishop Rayappa Arulappa.

The orphanage was initially housed in an older building. Since then, the Fatima Center has built a new orphanage called The Home of the Immaculate Heart of Mary that is servicing the needs of the orphans through the good sisters who run it. The five sisters are in full habit and one of them takes care of about 100 children in the orphanage, ages 3 to 16. There is even room for further expansion of the orphanage if required. The present building is strong enough that another floor could be built on top of it.

One of the girls from the orphanage entered the convent while one of our young men, after graduating and leaving the orphanage, grew to become successful in business. When the orphanage needed a new septic system some years ago, the former orphan put up half the money, and the Fatima Center put up the other half.

With our readers' support, the Fatima Center also built the St. Joseph's medical dispensary which services the medical needs of three villages. A full-time nurse, who is also one of the sisters, is on-site and doctors come regu-

larly to help the people there.

After that, the Fatima Center built a convent called the Convent of the Sacred Heart for the sisters who not only care for the orphanage and the dispensary, but also serve as the principal and some of the teachers who teach at the local St. Paul's Catholic grade school and high school.

### **Apostolate to Priests**

Our Indian office oversees the mailing of *The Fatima Crusader* and other materials to the 15,000 priests throughout India.

If we mailed our *Crusader* from Canada or the United States to each of these priests, it would cost well over \$15,000 just for postage. It is much more cost effective for us to ship large quantities by sea to India and then let our office do the mailing.

In fact, Anthony Sebastian, who used to run the Indian office for 17 years prior to his retirement, even traveled to the Philippines to teach our office there how to do these mailings as well. By such means, *The Fatima Crusader* enjoys a wide circulation all around the globe.



(1) Father Gruner (back row) with some of the Immaculate Heart orphans, four of whom received First Holy Communion and Confirmation from Archbishop Arulappa that day. (2) Father officially opens the new orphanage building by breaking the ceremonial coconut, the equivalent to our custom of breaking a champagne bottle when launching a ship. Archbishop Arulappa (right) and Anthony Sebastian (left) look on. (3) Father with some of the orphans. YOU helped put the happy smiles on those faces. (4) Father beside the Jeep donated through our Fatima Apostolate. The new building displays a large sign written in English and Telegu, "Home of the Immaculate Heart of Mary."

In early 2008, the Fatima Center held a week-long international Fatima conference in Chennai, India attended by over 400 priests, 15 being bishops.

Here too the great love for Our Lady was evident. Priests at the conference would constantly kneel and pray before Our Lady's statue during the breaks. They would photograph each other in front of Our Lady's image.

During the conference, Father Gruner announced he would invest in the Brown Scapular anyone who wished to be enrolled. Many priests came forward, as they had never been formally invested in the Brown Scapular before.

As part of the conference, we also traveled three hours to the Shrine of Our Lady of Lourdes in Pondicherry and held an impressive outdoor procession. Many children took part, as well as Indian laity dressed in their traditional vibrant colors. Father Gruner spoke in the church while at the same time, his message was carried by loudspeaker throughout the shrine grounds outdoors.

After speaking at the Shrine in Pondicherry, Father Gruner was likewise invited to speak

in a number of parish churches about the Fatima Message. The churches were full to overflowing with Catholic pilgrims from all over the city.

It was also during this week-long India conference that we released a number of small Fatima pamphlets in some of the native languages of India, such as Tamil. These pamphlets included information not only about Fatima, but also about the Green Scapular and the Miraculous Medal.

The work in India continues and increases. There is much to do, many souls to be won for Our Lady in this vast land. We still supply to priests in India – and to countries elsewhere – not only *The Fatima Crusader*, but many religious materials to help those in parishes spread devotion to Our Lady of Fatima to the faithful. In fact, we supplied dozens and dozens of almost life-size statues of Our Lady of Fatima to priests of India as well as to priests from nearby countries who asked for them.

Our work in India, as our work everywhere, is to fulfill the central request of Our Lady of Fatima that

*"God wills to establish in the world devotion to My Immaculate Heart."* 