

Fatima and Contemplative Religious

Religious, who have been chosen especially by God, have their life so ordered in their external circumstances so that they can pray better, meditate better and contemplate better. Similarly, they need to take the best means possible to come closer to God. That is the heavenly message of our time, the Message of Our Lady of Fatima.

In his address, given at the *Fatima: Your Last Chance* Conference, Father Cyprian, the Abbot of his monastery in Silver City, New Mexico, explains how religious life is at the very heart of the Church and how it is clear that the condition of the Church is reflected in the condition of her Religious Orders.

by Father Cyprian, O.S.B.

Excellencies, Reverend
Fathers and Religious,
Dear Friends,

I have been asked to come before you today, from the solitude of the monastic cloister.

I thank Fr. Gruner and the Fatima Center for the great honor to be here with you.

On behalf of all Religious of our Holy Church, on behalf of all those who live behind cloister walls, I speak to you as a witness from within, as a living witness of the crisis that has, and continues, to devastate our Church, not just since Vatican II, which has been the subject of the most heated controversy for the last 50 years, but that crisis which has been the consis-

tent fulfillment of the prophecies given to us at Fatima and elsewhere, such as La Salette, Lourdes and the other Marian apparitions approved by the Holy See.

As contemplative religious, we profess a way of life which encapsulates the entire life of the Church within the walls of a Benedictine monastery.

All contemplative Religious live the spirit of the Faith through the ascetical and mystical life of the Sacred Liturgy, which is the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass and the Divine Office. God Himself has given us this twofold means to worship Him.

He has also dictated our Religious Rule, he has established the Traditions of



Father Cyprian's inspiring speech on "Fatima and the Contemplative Life" was among the most popular of all the speeches given at our *Fatima: Your Last Chance* Conference.

the Religious Orders, which contain the purest principles of Catholic social order and the very foundations of Christendom.

This is why we say that Religious live at the very heart of the life of the Church, and why it is clear that the condition of the Church is reflected in her Religious Orders.

The critical Message of Fatima is upon us.

It is a prophecy of crisis.

We are all witnesses to the "diabolical disorientation" which are the words of Sr. Lucy.

The enemies of Our Lady have attacked from within. The crisis began with an attack on the very essence of the life of the Church, which is precisely the religious life we profess.

It will end with the restoration of the religious life, and this will be once again the

model for all Catholic life.

Monastic Traditions in State of Crisis

The monastic orders of the Church have indeed been shaken at the foundational level.

That is, the monastic traditions which date to the apostolic era, our ancient rules, the religious ideal lived and taught by Our Lord Jesus Christ, which inspires us to persevere, which inspires us to practice the demanding religious virtues, which inspires us to embrace the spirit of our founders: these vital signs are presently in the state of crisis.

The supernatural infrastructure of monasticism, our reason to exist, has been shaken at the foundational level, because it has been called into question, and as a result, religious have suffered a crisis of both conscience and identity,

which stands without precedent.

The universal removal of the traditional religious habit is a great image of the exposure of the sacredness of our Religious Orders, much like stripping the tabernacles of their veils.

We feel it is not unlike Our Lord being stripped before His crucifixion.

Other religious practices have been called outdated and not pertinent to the renewal.

If there is a crisis of marriage today, if there is infidelity to the vows of matrimony, it is because there is a breakdown of the model of Catholic life, which is the Religious Life.

Breakdown of Religious Vows

There is a breakdown of the vows of religion, an infidelity of religious who no longer see their life the way it was meant to be. The three vows of religion are the three nails of the Cross which fix us to Christ our Savior. When these fail, it comes as no surprise that all others fail as well.

Fatima is not the first place Our Lady spoke in solemn warnings.

At La Salette on September 19, 1846, She said, "Woe to the priests and *those consecrated to God*, who by their unfaithfulness and their wicked lives are crucifying My Son again!

"In the year 1864, Lucifer together with a large number of demons will be unloosed from hell; they will put an end to Faith little by little, *even in those consecrated to God.*

"Several religious institutions will lose all faith and will lose many souls."

Crisis in the Family

If there is a crisis of the Catholic family today it is because the religious families have disappeared. Just as there is the doctrine of the Real Presence, we are now seeing the "real absence."

Traditionally speaking, one of every three children has a vocation. Sometimes it was more.

Where are these vocations today? Where is this blessing from God?

The blessing of God is expressed by increase and abundance.

The good tree bears not just good fruits, but countless fruits.

The numbers of vocations doubled and tripled during

the pontificate of Pius XII.

Now three monks walk through the streets of Rome and vehicles collide, every camera flashes in our direction, heads turn to see the spectacle.

It must be a rare sight.

People ask where do we come from?

Our answer is a surprise: we come from Rome!

It is no coincidence that this congress falls in the week of the Ascension of Our Lord.

The three days preceding are Rogation days when there was once a procession through the streets of Rome, with the Holy Father.

These penitential prayers ended the great plague, when it is said that St. Michael, from the top of the castle in front of the Vatican basilica, put his sword back into the sheath.

The crisis was over.

But his sword is back out again now, held high over Rome and the world, and we have no more Rogations, no more prayers to beg God so this crisis will come to an end.

The Critical Message of Fatima Is Upon Us.

It is a prophecy of crisis.

We are all witnesses to the “diabolical disorientation”

which are the words of Sr. Lucy.

Our Lady reminds us that the crisis is something essentially spiritual.

But since the soul leads the body, and the Church leads the world, the effects of the spiritual crisis affect every aspect of life.

Not a stone has been left unturned.

If the true nature of the present crisis is spiritual, the remedy must be the same.

This is the week of the Ascension of Our Lord.

When the Apostles asked Our Savior when the great restoration would take place, His answer was that we are not to know the time nor the moment.

We are the spiritual children of the Apostles. The two Angels dressed in white ask us the same question:

“Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up to Heaven?”

Galilee means revelation, vision, a dream. We are the children of this great vision of Heaven, when our eyes turn from the earth to follow Our Lord upwards, no longer considering His humanity but His divinity, away from the order of the temporal world,

to the divine order of Heaven.

The spiritual Message of Fatima is a call to live according to this divine order.

The Great Tryptique

The events of Fatima clearly seem to follow the divine plan for the great restoration.

It is like a great tryptique, with three frames, three scenes, three realities which are hinged to each other. And this follows the divine structure of all religious and consecrated life.

The Principle of Prayer

The first is the principle of prayer, more precisely the prayer of adoration and reparation. We repeat the mystically composed prayers taught to the three children, as they bowed to the ground in imitation of the great Angel who brought them Holy Communion. For adoration is the first effect of sacramental grace. We have absolute trust in the memories of these children who gave us the divine words of these prayers. These are prayers of adoration, directed to the true nature of God in the Most Holy Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Ghost. They are also our preparation, our purification, the removal of our unworthiness,

our penitence. They are our disposition to receive Holy Communion, but then also our preparation to behold our heavenly source of grace.

I was in Fatima for the 80th anniversary of the apparitions. I went there in search of Our Lady.

Fatima Shrine Full of Corruption but Our Lady Is There if You Seek Her

It is not easy. Fatima was once a shrine to the ruggedness and poverty and the hard life of country people. Today it is full of corruption. There are cartels of drugs and human trafficking, there is organized crime, luxury hotels and casinos, you enter a pilgrimage hostel to rock music and uncensored television. But Our Lady is there for those who truly seek Her.

However, this will be on Her terms.

A group of pilgrims saw me and asked if I would accompany them to the site of the Angel's apparition and lead them in the same prayers taught to the children. I said yes, it would be an honor. We arrived at the site, on the outskirts of the city, which is very rocky and primitive, mostly unchanged from the way it



Father Gruner handing out Fatima literature to the thousands at the March for Life.

was nearly 100 years ago. The Portuguese pilgrimage leader said, alright Father, we are now ready to pray.

I said kneel down and bow your heads until your foreheads touch the dirt. Then I recited the prayer taught by the Angel. The entire busload of pilgrims did likewise. I repeated it three times. At the end, the Portuguese guide, infuriated, wiping the dust off of her dress, said to me that never, ever, had she seen such a scandalous sight in all her years of guiding pilgrimages to Fatima. What right did I have to make the pilgrims pray in such a ridiculous position?

I said, "Maybe you should re-read the story of Fatima.

"Maybe you should refresh

your memory, as to how we are prepared by angels to see Our Lady and to see God. We are prepared in the spirit of adoration.

"Such is the way the Angel taught the children, because such is the way angels approach God, especially in the Most Blessed Sacrament. The children were so excited about this method of prayer that they were seen frequently bowing to the ground exactly as the Angel had shown them. And like St. Bernadette they were given the Rosary to pray, with Our Lady leading them, teaching them how to properly say the Hail Mary. Slowly."

No one prays like those who have learned directly from Our Lady!

Conversions took place just by watching St. Bernadette make the sign of the Cross.

She who began by throwing holy water at Our Lady ended up being Her most intrepid defender. The children of Fatima were not too young to learn how to pray well, nor was the contemplation of divine mysteries beyond their level of understanding.

Religious are most frequently called at a very young age, usually around the time of First Holy Communion.

Again, the angelic life, prayer and adoration, attention to Heaven, the Blessed Sacrament, these are the principal doctrines of this first image of Fatima and the highest doctrines of our Catholic Faith.

The Immaculate Heart of Mary

Now we look at the center. Our Lady is the central image of the tryptique.

After Our Saviour, She is the first religious, the first consecrated soul, vowed to the "Laus Perennis" upon the earth, that which is the life of the angels in Heaven, the unceasing praise of God. This was Her consecration in the temple and Her entire life

upon the earth.

Fatima is the crown of Her messages, Her enlightenment, Her warnings and instructions, Her secrets ... it is also the revelation of Her vocation lived upon the earth and in Heaven.

But if She appeared to us as She says, to bring devotion to Her Immaculate Heart, She is not talking about the surface problems which are only the outer shell of the errors of Russia. She would not talk about the heart unless She was wanting to talk about the spiritual life.

In this picture is the great mystery, the great miracle, a foreshadowing of what is still to come, perhaps in our lifetime. She wants to save us, to remind us that She is established by God as our permanent and definitive Co-Redemptress. For, indeed, She echoed the words of Our Lord, "Without Me you can do nothing ..."

She appeared to the world as Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, presenting the Brown Scapular, the garment of grace, our protection. She is the foundress of this great contemplative Religious Order, to which Sister Lucy would give the rest of her

long life. It is no coincidence, for Our Lady's words are not Her opinion; they are teaching, they are dogma, they are supernatural doctrine. Her words are the very essence of ascetical and mystical theology which holds the great mystic saints and doctors paralyzed in ecstatic contemplation. Her words are the dictations of God the Holy Ghost Who overshadowed Her in the beginning of Her earthly mission to be the key to the mystery of the Incarnation, the mystery of eternal salvation. "Without Me you cannot be saved."

The crowds gathered to witness the apparitions, but instead of seeing Our Lady, they could only look upon the children.

But far from being disappointed in this human aspect of the apparitions, while observing the children they saw the purest of prayer, the purest of heavenly contemplation reflected on the faces and in the bodily attitude of the children.

This example of public prayer is exactly the same as the Religious Life.

Our Lady Speaks of Reparation

Our Lady speaks of one

more of the foundational principles of Religious Life, which is reparation. It is the daily bread of religious. It is now proposed to the whole world as a means to persevere. Reparation for the offense of blasphemy. The blasphemy of error, the error in particular of Marian doctrine.

If Our Lady is truly God's greatest creation, then the precise knowledge of that wonder is equally important to us.

Our Lady calls the ignorance of Her nature, which is the Immaculate Conception, the ignorance of Her mission, which is to be our Co-Redemptress and Mediatrix of All Graces; this ignorance She calls blasphemy. The devotion of the First Saturdays, which correspond to the Sabbatine privilege attached to the Brown Scapular, are henceforth our means of perseverance, because this devotion involves meditation, it involves the consideration of the 15 mysteries of our Faith.

Marian doctrine is central to each one of them.

Saint Joseph Model of Consecrated Life

Now we look at the third picture.

This third part concerns the secret to all Marian doctrines.

If we really want to know the truth, if we really want to understand Our Lady, we should ask the one man who knew Her better than anyone else besides Jesus. And if we want to love Our Lady as She deserves, and to know Her Immaculate Heart, ask the man who knows this heart and who is the greatest admirer of Our Lady. St. Joseph is the key to this knowledge and to this love. We cannot love what we do not know. He knows Our Lady, and he will guide us without any danger of error.

St. Joseph, with his manly strength and calloused hands, is indeed the patron of all work unto the glory of God, not exactly what we frequently see in many pious pictures. He holds the lily, which is not just the symbol of purity but also the symbol of justice.

The kings of Christendom held the lily in their court in place of the scepter, showing by the symbolism of the lily, the primacy of unity between power and justice in a Catholic kingdom. St. Joseph holds this same lily.

His example also reminds us that Fatima is a focus on

the man: the converted man, the spiritual man, the man of prayer, the man who is close to Jesus and Mary – he is the central player in the great restoration. The woman makes the house a home, she is the heart of the family, but the man is the head, he makes the family.

Make no mistake about it: St. Joseph is an essential part of the Message of Fatima.

The Urgent Necessity of Consecration Is at the Heart of the Message of Fatima.

Consecration is the separation of things from ordinary use so they can be used exclusively by God. Religious Life is also called the consecrated life for the same reason.

Souls are consecrated to God for His service, for His honor and glory, and to carry out the mission of His divine will.

There is a model of this consecrated life.

It is St. Joseph.

Consecration can be made by the faithful to only three persons: Our Lord, Our Lady, St. Joseph.

St. Joseph is the third part of the tryptique.

Holding Our Saviour in his

arms, the two would make the sign of the Cross together, thus blessing the entire world, Our Lord united to St. Joseph.

St. Joseph is the protector and patron of Contemplative Religious, the helper of all that is built unto the glory of God, the patron of all who labor for the kingdom of Heaven.

Pius XI chose him as our Patron, our Protector and our leader in the fight against Communism, and especially the remedy against the spreading of the "errors of Russia."

There is a little known detail concerning the last moments of the life of Pope John XXIII.

He who prayed a 15-decade Rosary daily, was given the fateful news of his pending death, due to the advanced stage of his illness. He is quoted to have said not one but two things:

**"Stop the Council!" and
"Place the name of
St. Joseph in the
Canon of the Mass."**

It was November 13, 1962, feast of All Saints of Religious Orders. This would be in favorable response to seven pre-

vious petitions, made by various Religious congregations. If we back up to the third petition, we see a prominent signature: Cardinal Giuseppe Sarto, Patriarch of Venice, the future St. Pius X. The seventh and final request was made by the Holy Cross Fathers of the Oratory of St. Joseph in Quebec. Their prayers were answered.

Let us have recourse to our foster father, the head of the Holy Family, terror of demons, protector of virgins, Immaculate Spouse and Guardian of the Immaculate Conception, glorious patron of the Universal Church. As wondrous and radiant as we imagine to be Our Lady's spotless purity of soul and body, sinless and infallibly strong in every virtue and gift of the Holy Ghost, we can only likewise, by the same criteria, imagine what must be the man, who must be this extraordinary man handpicked by Almighty God to protect the Virgin of Virgins, and to guard Her with his life.

**St. Joseph shows
the world how to
carry out a mission:**

He understood his duty through a vision, a dream

where he received the instructions of an Angel. This is the symbol of contemplation and the state of intense prayer; after this mystical communication of orders, his action was decisive: flee to safety where God sends us.

If only we had the same sense of heavenly mission and duty, things would be different today. If he has had to once again “flee to Egypt”, if we can borrow this analogy, if the Message of Fatima has been forced into exile, in the context of the present crisis, St. Joseph, just as in the original flight into Egypt, will also be the way back; he will be the guardian of our return, of our conversion. He will be the instrumental cause of the bringing back of Our Lord and Our Lady in the Message of Fatima.

In this light, that is, the side of Fatima which is an encouragement and a confirmation of those who will take and understand, and put Our Lady’s admonitions into practice, we have this to add:

**Tradition is to hand
forward – not reach back**

Religious communities are flourishing and even overflowing where there is a true

return to tradition. Tradition, from the Latin “*traditio*,” is a handing forward, not a reaching back. It has nothing to do with nostalgia for the past. It has very little to do with convention and custom. It is fidelity to the immutability of God, to the stability of Revelation. “*Ego sum Deus, non mutor*. I am God and I do not change,” we read in the book of Deuteronomy. The source of tradition is God Himself, Who does not develop or evolve. As the cause is, so are its effects:

Where the traditional liturgy is exclusive, where there is an integrity of externals and interior life, where the religious formation is based on the original Rule of the founders of the various Religious Orders, where Thomism is the basis of all philosophical and theological formation according to the encyclical *Aeterni Patris* of Leo XIII, where the writings of Pope St Pius X warn us of the present crisis, along with Pius IX, Pius XI, Pius XII and all the Popes who have written in prophetic terms to warn the Church of the what is happening today.

The communities that are

presently turning towards a true restoration according to these elements of Tradition are clearly the future of the Church and the anticipation of the Reign of the Immaculate Heart.

Fatima Is Upon Us Now.

For this generation have we been born!

Despite the questions we all have, despite the confusion and the diabolical disorientation of today, Almighty God wants us to be His Apostles in these difficult times.

Our present generation is the one to whom the torch of Tradition has been passed.

It is the one light shining in

the darkness of the modern world, and in our hands, even though they be unworthy, may it be guarded inviolably.

Our Lady has spoken Her heavenly doctrine in many privileged places upon the earth. At Quito, Ecuador, She stated that Religious will be part of the great restoration. Our founders echoed the same: you will build upon ruins, but in the end, from the monastic congregations will come great confessors and martyrs who will come to the aid of many souls.

You must therefore be saints!

The Sacred Heart of Jesus granted locutions and appa-

"I will send down a shower of Rose Petals from Heaven."

... St. Thérèse

You too can send roses from Heaven

You can help spread Our Lady of Fatima's Urgent Message of Hope and Peace throughout the world, even after God calls you to your eternal reward.

Millions of souls will be lost if Our Blessed Mother's requests are not heeded and the Consecration of Russia is not done as She requested. For the sake of those souls, as well as your own, we beg you to remember Our Lady's Apostolate in your will.

Making a Bequest is easy

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or write us at the address on the **inside back cover**.

There is absolutely no obligation!



ritions to our own founders during the pontificate of Pope Pius IX, saying: You must not just be saints, "You must be *great saints*," and repeated this three times with more insistence. "My Heart shall be the proof of My promise."

I conclude with Our Lady's words spoken at La Salette, which was the great prelude and preparation for Fatima:

"God will take care of His faithful servants and men of good will. The Gospel will be preached everywhere, and all the peoples of nations will come to know the truth.

"I make an urgent appeal to the world. I call upon the true disciples of the living God who reigns in Heaven; I call upon the true followers of Christ made man, the only true Saviour of men; I call upon My children, the true faithful, who have given themselves to Me so that I carry in My arms, so-to-speak, those who have lived in My spirit.

"Finally, I call upon the Apostles of the Last Days, the faithful disciples of Jesus Christ, who have lived in scorn for the world and for themselves, in poverty,

and in humility, in scorn and in silence, in prayer and in mortification, in chastity and in union with God, in suffering and unknown to the world. It is time they came out and filled the world with light. Go and reveal yourselves to be My cherished children. I am at your side and within you, provided that your faith is the light which shines upon you in these unhappy days. May your zeal make you famished for the glory and honor of Jesus Christ.

"Fight children of light, you, the few who can see.

"For now is the time of all times, the end of all ends ..."

I leave you with these thoughts of those whose life is hidden with Christ, in the monasteries that remain throughout the world, the Religious whose vocation it is to pray and sacrifice their lives for you. We are growing by the grace of God, by our fidelity to Tradition, by our devotion to Our Lady, by our role to be played in the drama of Fatima.

We recommend our communities to your prayers. Thank you. **FC**