

# “Make EVERYTHING You Do a Sacrifice”

This is an edited transcript of a talk given by Michal Semin at our [Rome Conference in May 2012](#). Michal explains that a central theme of the Fatima Message – given by the Angel, as well as by Our Lady to the three Fatima children – is the usefulness and necessity of sacrifice. He explains that this message of sacrifice in the Fatima Message is being undermined by modernists, liberals and progressivists in the Church today. We need to remember this aspect of the Message now more than ever. Read and apply this article to yourself and it could spur you on to greater spiritual heights.

*by Michal Semin*

**T**he Fatima apparitions and their message are, besides their primary purpose, a great apologetic and catechetical tool. Last year at this conference I talked about the doctrinal and spiritual content of the Most Holy Rosary, with a special emphasis on the Fatima Decade Prayer, in which the reality of hell is pronounced.

Thanks to the Vision of Hell, we have been confirmed in what the Church has always taught; that is, hell is not empty, it is populated, that the presently popular idea of universal salvation is simply false.

In a sense, the Fatima apparitions affirm particularly those truths of the Faith which are under attack by the forces

of modernism and progressivism, unleashed long before Vatican II.

## **Fatima – The Call to Live a Life of Sacrifice**

One of the great themes of the Fatima Message is the call to live a life of sacrifice. As I will attempt to prove, it is the very concept of sacrifice – so central to the Catholic Faith and life – that is among those truths that are the main targets of modernism and progressivism.

**The Angel of Peace** appeared to the children in the Summer of 1916 with the following words:

“What are you doing? Pray, pray very much! The Holy Hearts of Jesus and Mary have designs of mercy on you.

The Angel of Peace appeared three times to the children before Our Lady appeared at Fatima. He taught the children to pray and sacrifice devoutly and, above all, a deep reverence before the Blessed Sacrament.



Offer prayers and sacrifices constantly to the Most High. Make of everything you can a sacrifice, and offer it to God as an act of reparation for the sins by which He is offended, and in supplication for the conversion of sinners. You will thus draw down peace upon your country. I am its Angel Guardian, the Angel of Portugal. Above all, accept and bear with submission the suffering which the Lord will send you."

**Our Lady of Fatima** Herself told the children: "Pray, pray very much, and make sacrifices for sinners; for many souls

go to hell because there are none to sacrifice themselves and pray for them."

**Sister Lucia** said to Fr. Fuentes in 1957: "Tell them also, Father, that my cousins Francisco and Jacinta sacrificed themselves because in all the apparitions of the Most Holy Virgin, they always saw Her very sad. She never smiled at us. This sadness, this anguish which we noted in Her penetrated our souls. This sadness is caused by the offenses against God and the punishments which menace sinners. And so we children did not know what to think except to

invent various means of praying and making sacrifices.”

### **The Example of the Fatima Children**

We see repeatedly the Fatima children offering sacrifices as acts of reparation for the sins of the world, so that sinners may convert and therefore save their souls.

Could they not have pleased God in a different way? Clearly, some of the sacrifices offered by little Francisco and Jacinta, through mortifications and physical pain, were rather extraordinary. There is no reason to believe, however, these intense measures are mandatory for all of us, and that we cannot attain Heaven unless we do exactly as they did.

Nevertheless, the example of the Fatima children points to a difficult reality of the Catholic Faith, that without voluntary sacrifices offered to God, we cannot expect eternal beatitude.

### **The Example of Jesus Christ**

Why is this true? To be saved, we must follow Our Lord, as He is the Way, the path we need to follow; and the Way, the path taken by Our Lord was the Way of the

Cross, the voluntary sacrifice of His human life for our salvation, exactly according to His words: “Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends.” At Golgotha, He offered up His life to His Father as a propitiation for our sins. He took our sins upon Himself and suffered in our place. We need to understand that the whole life of Our Lord, not just the Passion He endured in the last week of His earthly life, has a sacrificial nature. His entire life was oriented towards the final offering of Himself at Calvary.

We cannot look at His earthly life as somehow being separated into two disconnected parts: one containing the events ranging from His birth to early manhood, and the other from the Agony in the Garden to His being beaten, scourged, and crucified. The life of Our Lord represents a moral unity where everything He does is somehow related to the sacrifice of the Cross, since for this act of atonement He was born. “For the Son of man also is not come to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a redemption for many.” (Mark 10:45)

## **We Need the Gospel Mentality**

This Gospel passage is another proof that Our Lord understood His mission in terms of sacrifice, selfless love, and self-giving. Thus we cannot call ourselves disciples of Christ if we do not imitate Him also in this respect.

There is such a thing as a sacrificial mentality – a readiness to give up something for the love of God. Every dimension of human existence can, and often does, require sacrifices. We as Catholics should get into the habit of making small sacrifices for God. Sacrifices come in thousands of different forms: fasting, penances of various kinds, controlling vain curiosity to see and hear everything, giving up smoking or drinking during Lent, denying oneself sweet desserts on occasion, and so on. If you are familiar with the life of any saint – male or female, young or old – you know what I am talking about. For there has never been a saint who did not practice some kind of sacrificial self-denial.

Our Lord said: If you want to be My followers you must take up your cross daily and follow Me. Those who try to

lead a Christian life cannot expect to avoid what Jesus Himself did not avoid – the Cross.

According to Archbishop Lefebvre: *“The notion of sacrifice is a profoundly Christian and a profoundly Catholic notion. Our life cannot be spent without sacrifice, since Our Lord Jesus Christ, God Himself, willed to take a body like our own and say to us: ‘Follow Me, take up thy cross and follow Me if thou wilt be saved.’”*

Archbishop Lefebvre continued: *“And He has given us the example of His death upon the Cross; He has shed His Blood. ... There is the entire mystery of Christian civilization. There is that which is the root of Christian civilization: the comprehension of sacrifice in one’s life, in daily life, the understanding of Christian suffering, no longer considering suffering as an evil, as an unbearable sorrow, but sharing one’s sufferings and one’s sickness with the sufferings of Our Lord Jesus Christ, in assisting at the Holy Mass, which is the continuation of the Passion of Our Lord upon Calvary.”*

### **The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass**

The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is the sacrifice of Christ Himself on Mount Calvary, made present whenever the

priest utters the words of consecration. From the Mass we learn Our Lord's example of giving Himself in the most profound way for the sake of sinners.

It is because of the Holy Mass that the children of Fatima had any notion of Our Lord's expiation for the sins of men. If the life of sacrifice is the surest way to eternal salvation, is not the best strategy for the devil to lessen our willingness to sacrifice ourselves, or even eradicate the very sense of sacrifice at all? Is not the Holy Mass the most precious target for him? He knows how much he can achieve if he is able to weaken our notion of the Holy Mass as the re-presentation of Our Lord's sacrifice on the Cross!

I quoted earlier from a sermon of Archbishop Lefebvre because he became the symbol of the battle for the preservation of the traditional rite in which the Holy Mass is offered. He and many others took issue with the liturgical reform not mainly because of the language change (from Latin to native tongues), or the introduction of three reading cycles, or any other single change, but because the changes *in toto* represent a clear

departure from the notion of the Holy Mass as a sacrifice towards the notion of a meal.

### **Anti-sacrifice Thinking of Bugnini and Luther**

This fact is not contested by the architects of the liturgical "reform". It was Archbishop Bugnini himself who, in March 1965, wrote in *L'Osservatore Romano*: "We must strip from our Catholic prayers and from the Catholic liturgy everything which can be the shadow of a stumbling block for our separated brethren, that is for the Protestants."

We all know that the greatest stumbling block for the Protestants is the notion of the Holy Mass as a sacrifice. In the 16th Century, Martin Luther and many other Protestant leaders denied that the Mass is a sacrifice; they stressed the meal aspect exclusively.

### **The Truth of Catholic Dogma**

The Council of Trent responded to the Protestant "Reformation" by emphasizing what was under attack; namely, that the Mass is a sacrifice:

*"CANON I. – If anyone saith, that in the Mass a true and proper sacrifice is not offered to God; or, that to be offered is nothing else*

*but that Christ is given us to eat; let him be anathema.*

**CANON III.** – *If anyone saith, that the sacrifice of the Mass is only a sacrifice of praise and of thanksgiving; or, that it is a bare commemoration of the sacrifice consummated on the cross, but not a propitiatory sacrifice; or, that it profits him only who receives; and that it ought not to be offered for the living and the dead for sins, pains, satisfactions, and other necessities; let him be anathema."*

The ancient millennial Mass, Latin and Roman, expresses most clearly the complete profundity of this doctrine, without detracting in the slightest from the mystery. The Mass is therefore a sacrifice. It is also a communion, but a communion resulting from the sacrifice previously celebrated. It is a meal where the immolated Victim of the sacrifice is eaten. The Mass is first and foremost, then, a sacrifice, and secondly a communion or meal. But the whole structure of the New Mass is geared to the meal aspect of the celebration, to the detriment of the sacrifice.

### ***Mediator Dei***

To counter the continual attempts of the liberal, progressive clergy before the Second

Vatican Council, Pius XII issued what might be called the "Magna Carta" of Catholic teaching on the liturgy, the encyclical *Mediator Dei*. On this particular matter the Pope writes in Paragraph 114:

*They, therefore, err from the path of truth who do not want to have Masses celebrated unless the faithful communicate; and those are still more in error who, in holding that it is altogether necessary for the faithful to receive Holy Communion as well as the priest, put forward the captious argument that here there is question not of a sacrifice merely, but of a sacrifice and a supper of brotherly union, and consider the general Communion of all present as the culminating point of the whole celebration."*

This understanding, warns Pope Pius XII, is a false doctrine which the Council of Trent, "supported by the doctrine which the uninterrupted tradition of the Church has preserved," thus condemns: "If anyone shall say that Masses in which the priest only receives Communion, are unlawful, and therefore should be abolished, let him be anathema" (Paragraph 113 of *Mediator Dei*; with reference to The Council of Trent, Session XXII, Canon 8).

If we follow the fundamental liturgical principle reiterated in the Encyclical *Mediator Dei*, "*Legem credendi lex statuat supplicandi*" – "Let the law of belief determine the rule of prayer", we should expect from a Catholic liturgy that its content, the prayers and gestures, not only corresponds with the truths of the Faith, but, in fact, strengthens them, and makes us more receptive to them.

But if we compare the traditional Roman rite with the new rite of Paul VI, can we say in good conscience that they both convey the same attitude

towards the meaning of sacrifice? Do they express identically the Catholic teaching defined at the Council of Trent and reiterated by Pius XII in *Mediator Dei*? Cardinal Ottaviani did not think so when he stated in 1969 (i.e., long before the various experimental deviations, criticized even by the past and present Popes, occurred in the daily life of the Church): "*the Novus Ordo represents, both as a whole and in its details, a striking departure from the Catholic theology of the Mass as it was ... definitively fixed*" by the Council of Trent.

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### **Boiling in Oil**

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parents turn me over with the greatest indifference, that they may do with me what they will. But patience!" She argued with herself. "I expect to have to suffer more for Thy love, O my God, and it is for the conversion of sinners!"

On the morning of Saturday, August 11, her father set her on the back of a burro, and they started up the hill. Stopping on the way, they found Ti Marto getting himself a bit to eat, as unconcerned as ever; and he repeated with emphasis that he had no intention of

taking his young children before a court, for it was all nonsense. However, he would go and speak for them, and if Antonio was in a hurry, let him go ahead and he would meet him in Ourem. Lucia meanwhile had slipped off the burro and had gone to look for Jacinta, whom she told, weeping, what had happened. "Never mind," said the little girl, though she was evidently frightened. "If they kill you, you just tell them that I am like you, and Francisco even more so and that we want to die too. And now I will go with Francisco to the well to pray very hard for you."

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