

NOW – Father Gruner’s Fight Is OUR Fight

The following was a warm, welcoming address and tribute to Father Gruner given by Miriam Gruner, his niece, at our recent *Our Lady’s Army of Advocates* Conference in Boston, Massachusetts.

by Miriam Gruner

This is a very special conference for all of us at the Fatima Center, as it is the last conference that Father Gruner planned. Almost a year ago, on Wednesday, April 29, 2015, Father was working into the evening at the Fatima Center offices in Fort Erie, Ontario, preparing for a conference that was scheduled to begin here in Boston two days later on Friday, May 1st. But God had other plans.

My husband and I, together with our children who were home that evening, had just gathered after cleaning up the dinner dishes to pray our family Rosary when the phone rang. My husband took the call. It was Father’s assistant, Darlene. She was so distraught she could barely get the words out: Father had collapsed from a heart attack and the efforts of the paramedics who had been called were unsuccessful. Father was gone. My husband relayed

the news to me and soon after we were in our car on the highway to Fort Erie. Still in shock and with sadness beginning to make itself felt, I remember asking my husband as we drove, “What are we going to do without Father?”

I was asking that question for myself and my family as Father had come to play a big role in our lives, but I could have easily been asking that question for the Fatima Center and all who supported Father: What were we going to do without him?

Father is largely responsible for the continued relevance of Fatima today. Shortly after becoming a priest in the mid-1970s, he dedicated his priesthood to spreading the Fatima message. His was often a lonely voice crying in the wilderness but it was consistent and it was everywhere – in *The Fatima Crusader*, in letters, on television, on radio, at conferences, on the Internet.

If you had heard about Fatima, you almost certainly had heard of Father Gruner. When the Vatican began to insist that the Consecration of Russia had been done and the full Third Secret released, he stood up for the truth. Today, as the crisis in the Church and the world deepens, more and more faithful Catholics are coming to the conclusion that only compliance with Our Lady's request for the Consecration of Russia can save us now.

Father Touched Thousands of Souls All over the World.

We at the Fatima Center have heard from many of them during this past year. They told us how much he meant to them and how he had brought them back to the Faith or deepened their Faith. Many recounted how surprised they were when they first met him – they expected the “Fatima Priest” to be a militant fanatic. Instead, they met a kind-hearted man – the “soft-spoken warrior” as John Vennari called him. While undeniably passionate about the Fatima message and the Faith, Father had a calm, almost shy, demeanor and was charitable towards all, even those with whom he disagreed.

For me personally, while the passage of a year has erased the shock and lessened the sadness

I feel about not having Father in my life, the hole in my heart remains.

But while I still miss Father dearly, I know that nothing happens without God permitting it. Increasingly, I have come to believe that God had his reasons for taking Father when He did.

At Father's gravesite just after Father was buried, an African bishop, who had flown to Fort Erie just to be present for the funeral, approached my husband to say: “**Now Father's fight is our fight.**” His words have been on my mind of late. While Father was alive, all of us relied on him to carry the fight forward. While we certainly supported him, it was easy not to go all-in and fully commit ourselves to the fight, because we had such a valiant general leading the charge.

Father Gruner always knew that he couldn't win the battle alone, that the cause of Fatima was bigger than himself and that to prevail the Fatima message had to capture the hearts of hundreds of thousands of other souls. Father often noted that, while Our Lady first appeared at Fatima to only the three children, on Her second appearance there were 50 people at the Cova da Iria, by Her third appearance 5,000 were there, Her fourth



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brought out more than 10,000, Her fifth approximately 30,000 and on October 13, 1917, 70,000 witnessed the Miracle of Sun. Those who believed spread the message of Our Lady of Fatima to their family and friends. While Father Gruner was alive, it was easy to rely on him to spread that message. Perhaps we needed to lose him to realize that his fight is our fight.

Father Prepared Us For This Fight

I believe by his last two major projects before he died, Father was preparing us to take up his fight.

In 2014, Father published *Crucial Truths to Save Your Soul*, the first book he had written in over 20 years. The thesis of the book is simple. As human beings, we have an obligation to know, love and fight for the truth. The truth concerning the big questions of life is to be found in the infallible dogmas of the Catholic Church. The Message of Fatima is a truth of particular importance to our times and was confirmed by the greatest public miracle since the Resurrection.

Things are not good in our Catholic Church. As you will hear this weekend, even basic truths like those pertaining to marriage and the family are under assault

from the top. In his book, Father made it clear that we must reject all false teachings. As Saint Paul stated, “But though we, or an angel from Heaven, preach a gospel to you besides that which we have preached to you, let him be anathema.” But how can we reject false teachings if we don’t know the Faith? If we don’t know the truths of our Faith, we will be taken in by lies; if we don’t teach the truths of our Faith to our family members and friends, they will be taken in by lies.

This weekend, we will have a catechism session, which I encourage you to attend. We are blessed to have very knowledgeable and holy priests here, so take advantage of the opportunity by approaching them with any questions you may have.

But more importantly, beyond this weekend, let’s all get back to basics and study our faith. Let’s dust off or purchase a Baltimore Catechism and reacquaint ourselves with the truths of the Faith we may have forgotten or learn the ones we never knew. And let’s reacquaint ourselves with the story of Fatima and the message of hope it contains for the world.

The other way in which Father attempted to prepare us

to take up his fight was through this very conference – *Our Lady’s Army of Advocates*. Over more than 35 years devoted to the cause of Fatima, my uncle was always trying to figure out a way to achieve a breakthrough, something that would cause the Pope to release the full Third Secret and, in union with the bishops of the world, consecrate Russia to Our Lady’s Immaculate Heart.

Father tried everything. To try to sway the Pope, he purchased a cable TV station in Rome to broadcast into the Vatican. Perhaps the bishops could exert influence on the Pope, so he held bishops’ conferences. Perhaps priests could influence their bishops, so he arranged for thousands of priests to attend conferences and receive Fatima literature.

The media and those in academia needed to be convinced, so he held conferences tailored to them. Perhaps the politicians could be convinced that the Message of Fatima was the answer to the world’s ills, so he lobbied politicians at the European parliament and invited Ron Paul and other leaders to speak at a conference in Niagara Falls.

While all of these efforts yielded some fruit, they did not achieve the big breakthrough Father earnestly hoped, worked and prayed for. In the final years of his life, he came to an epiphany: The only ones who could accomplish the breakthrough he wanted were the Catholic faithful – you and me. After all, as Father noted, when Our Lady appeared in 1917, She didn’t appear to the Pope, the bishops, priests, politicians, newspaper reporters, or university professors. She appeared to three peasant children.

What Can We Do?

Father’s last push was a series of local, regional weekend conferences to connect directly with the faithful with the hopes of inspiring and training us to make his fight our fight. And what could we faithful bring to the table? We can know our Faith better, sanctify ourselves through prayer and sacrifice, and spread the Faith and the Message of Fatima to those in our circle of influence – our family members, friends, work colleagues, fellow parishioners.

In the end, Father knew, this fight is a spiritual battle and it can only be won by spiritual means. The only way the Pope

will release the full Third Secret or consecrate Russia to the Immaculate Heart of Mary in union with the bishops will be if the Catholic faithful of the world earn enough actual graces for him to do so. We can earn those graces through the Masses we attend, the morning and evening prayers and Rosaries we say, the First Saturday devotions we carry out, the Brown Scapulars we wear, the sins and faults we combat and overcome, the fasts we observe, the sacrifices we make, and the acts of charity we perform. We Catholic laity are the front line troops. The battle will be won only when we earn enough graces through our spiritual efforts to win it.

I have been privileged to have come to know a couple that are living examples of what I just described. They met Father Gruner at one of the first *Our Lady's Army of Advocates* conferences and he directed them to a chapel where the Traditional Latin Mass was said. They started attending Mass there – their understanding of the Faith increased and their prayer life deepened. The wife joined the Legion of Mary.

Now they are spreading the Faith and the Message of Fatima to their family members and friends. They have come to

know God, love God and serve God better in this world and the graces they have obtained are affecting the lives of those around them.

A Conference Full of Inspiration and Information

This weekend we will hear inspiring talks and attend workshops that will give us practical advice on spreading the truths of the Faith and the Message of Fatima. When we return home after the conference, let us all make Father's fight our fight by sanctifying ourselves to obtain actual graces for the release of the Third Secret and the Consecration of Russia.

I have a simple challenge for all of us in that regard. Let us make one improvement to our prayer life and one small sacrifice and offer them for someone dear to us and for the Consecration of Russia.

The improvement to our prayer life could be anything from saying the Rosary or carrying out the Five First Saturdays Devotion, to meditating on Scripture for 15 minutes a day. If that is too much, it could be something as simple as three Hail Marys first thing in the morning and last thing before bed. The sacrifice could be anything from skipping a meal on Friday, to

doing something concrete to combat a fault or area of sin in our lives, to taking one less sugar or cream in our coffee.

Offer this prayer and this sacrifice for someone dear to us, like a family member who has fallen away from the faith or a friend in special need. And offer them also for the Consecration of Russia to Our Lady's Immaculate Heart, for in these dire times for the Church and the world, in which goodness seems to have been vanquished and evil and sin are ascendant, the words of Our Lady to the children of Fatima remain true: "Only I can help you. My Immaculate Heart will be your refuge and the way that will lead you to God."

You Can Make a Difference

You may think, what difference can my little prayer and sacrifice make? I am just one person among seven billion on Earth and what I do can't really make a difference to the Church or the world, let alone to God. But Our Lord told us that God knows us intimately such that even the hairs on our head are numbered. He knew us before He made the stars and planets and He chose this time for us to live and to work out our salvation. Just the efforts of a child warms the heart of its parents so much

that they would do anything for him, so our little prayers and sacrifices are precious and of great value in God's eyes, and the crucifix is proof that God will do anything for us.

The loss of Father Gruner almost a year ago has been hard. His passing was not the end of the battle for which he gave his priestly life but just the beginning of a new phase.

In last Sunday's Gospel, Our Lord, speaking of His own death, said: "Amen, amen, I say to you, that you shall lament and weep... but your sorrow shall be turned to joy." May we come to know and spread the truths of the Faith and the Message of Fatima and, through our own sanctification by prayer and sacrifice, may we obtain the graces for the Pope and the bishops to consecrate Russia. In so doing, the sorrow we feel at the plight of the Church and the world will be changed into the joy that will accompany the triumph of Our Lady's Immaculate Heart.

I wish you an enjoyable and fruitful conference. May Our Lord through His Blessed Mother bless you and yours always. 

Order your CD or DVD of the entire speech. See [pg. 32](#).