

Priests are in the Line of Fire from the Devil

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Sister Lucy tells us that the crisis in the priesthood has been because there has not been enough prayer; that the devil, first of all, takes away devotion to Our Lady.

Saint Alphonsus tells us that when Holofernes attacked a city, he surrounded it and the first thing he did was to cut off the aqueducts, the means of bringing water into the city. (Judith 7:6)

Similarly, the first thing the devil does when he seeks the ruination of our souls is to cut off the means of grace coming to us.

If the devil can cut off our devotion to the Blessed Virgin, then he already knows he has that soul. All the more so, especially, if that soul is a priest or a religious.

It is important for us to maintain our lines of supply — our supply of grace. As

Saint Alphonsus also tells us: “He who prays will be saved; he who does not pray will be damned.” And so we must pray. Obviously we have our daily Mass; we have the Divine Office; we have our meditations; and we have the daily Rosary.

So if we are going into battle — and we are, by our very office, leaders in this battle, whether we like it or not — we are in the line of fire from the devil.

A priest who does not pray is like a warrior who has thrown down his spiritual weapons and is waiting to be killed by the enemy. We see this in the Gospel. Our Lord, in Saint Luke, says:

“Watch ye, therefore, praying at all times, that you may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that are to come, and to stand before the Son of Man.” (Luke 21:36)

In Romans, St. Paul writes:

**“Rejoice in your hope.
Be patient in tribulation.
Be constant in prayer.”
(Romans 12:12)**

We have him writing in Colossians:

“Continue steadfastly in prayer.” (Col. 4:2)

And in the letter to the Thessalonians, the Holy Ghost tells us to pray at all times:

**“Pray without ceasing.”
(1 Thess. 5:17)**

We Must Do Penance

Besides prayer, we must do penance. Certainly, everyone is required to do the penance which requires us to fulfill the obligations of our state in life.

The first penance is to keep the Ten Commandments and do what is necessary to avoid sin.

Saint Alphonsus tells us that almost all mortal sins now committed, would not be committed if the occasions of sin were avoided. So we must learn to avoid and we must insist upon avoiding the occasions of sin.

But as we saw in the lives of the Fatima children, certainly of Jacinta and Francisco, they did such extraordinary penances. These children shame

us into at least doing some of what they did for the conversion of sinners and for our own salvation.

Promote Marian Devotion

The next thing we must keep in mind is that we must promote Marian devotion in our own lives and also Marian devotion around us.

Because God wills to establish in the world devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, we should, of course, practice this ourselves.

Secondly, we should teach it to others. Our Lady says that those who practice this devotion shall be as flowers placed by Her before the Throne of God. One of the ways the Church and the saints have taught us to practice this devotion is to consecrate ourselves to Her Immaculate Heart.

There is a book by Saint Louis de Montfort called *True Devotion*; you also have Saint Maximilian Kolbe preaching consecration of oneself totally to the Immaculata.

So we need then to be Marian priests, in ourselves first of all; and then to teach others as well.

Preach the Message of Fatima

The next thing we should be doing in practical things, after we take care of the spiritual, is to preach the history and the content of the Message of Fatima — in sermons and parish bulletins and parish newsletters; making it part of the catechesis of the faithful in our charge; and giving the example of the three child seers, even in First Communion classes and in the schools.

There are lessons in the Message of Fatima for every grade school and every high school student, and even for university students:

I: Preach and teach the history and content of the Message of Fatima.

II: Establish the Five First Saturdays Devotion.

We must establish the Five First Saturdays devotion in our parishes, in our dioceses, obviously making time for Confession. There should be more confessions on the first Saturday or near the first Saturday, encouraging then the practice of at least monthly Confession, as Our Lady is promoting this.

Padre Pio, himself, felt obliged to hear the confes-

sions of his regular penitents every week. And even when his Superior asked him to hear them only every two weeks, he said: "I cannot do that. I am responsible for their souls." And he is talking about pious souls, souls that are without mortal sin. Souls that are trying to live a more pious, a more fervent life.

III: Promote the Brown Scapular.

That is, promote understanding of the Brown Scapular and encourage the faithful wearing of it. I'm sure you will find that if you promote it you will experience Our Lady of Mount Carmel's intervention in your own people's lives, in extraordinary ways. Our Lady promised us that the Scapular is a sign of salvation, a protection in danger, and a pledge of peace.

Above all, if we can get the faithful to wear the Scapular at all times, so that when they die wearing the Scapular, you'll know that you have fulfilled your obligation to them to get them to Heaven.

IV: Promote the Enthronement of the Sacred Heart and the Immaculate Heart in the Homes of All Our Families.

We have booklets on the promotion of that and I believe you all have some. We have more so that each and every home eventually could be using this booklet for their own home enthronement. (I am assuming that some of you will be doing translations into your various languages for whatever part of India you come from.)

V: Honor Holy Images.

Encourage them to place images, pictures or statues — and we certainly have pictures to send you if we haven't given them to you already — of both the Sacred Heart and the Immaculate Heart. Our Lord promises that He would bless those homes in which the Sacred Heart is honored and displayed in a prominent place.

VI: Promote the Rosary.

Encourage families, individuals and the communities to pray the Rosary every day. We should try to establish sodalities of Fatima in our parishes in which we get other people of like mind to come together to encourage each other to promote the life of prayer and good works.

VII: Promote Parish involvement.

I think that the way God works is, obviously, through the Pope and the bishops and the priests. But then, even among the lay people, God gives special graces and some people are more faithful to grace. We must encourage the people who are more devoted to become more involved in both the practice of the Fatima Message as well as passing it on to others, especially through these Fatima sodalities. We should have these Fatima groups promote the Message of Fatima to their family, to their friends, to their local neighborhoods or to their blocks in the city, or to their villages, and so forth.

It would be good to establish a Fatima catechetical institute in each parish to teach the children, and to have the lay people, even lay catechists learning the Fatima Message and the Block Rosary. And also to promote the Seven Fatima Prayers which are on our Prayer Cards. They are also in *The Fatima Movement of Priests* booklet, Chapter 2 (available from the Fatima Center).

And, of course, to promote the Liturgical Feast of Our Lady of Fatima on the 13th of

May, and also promote Fatima processions on the 13th of each month from May to October. Then, hopefully, every parish and every home can become a veritable Fatima Center of living the spirituality by living the Message; and by also being Apostles to promote the Message to all those around them.

It's Up to the Priests

It is up to the priests, especially those who Our Lady has touched with either the knowledge or the will to promote the Fatima Message.

Don't wait for someone else. Although we will do everything in our power at the Fatima Center to assist you — don't wait! Persevere to find the means you need and God and Our Lady will provide.

Start With the Means You Have

If we wait for everything to be perfect before we start, we will never start.

When we started this Apostolate thirty years ago — that is since I took over the promotion of the Pilgrim Virgin Statue — we only had two people in the office, myself being one of them, and a

secretary, so we did what we could. And I thought I was very courageous, at first, by going into debt for two or three thousand dollars to my printer, to print the first issue of *The Fatima Crusader*. I knew it wasn't such a big risk, I could always, eventually, find some way to pay it back.

Today, now when we go out with *The Fatima Crusader*, we generally go into debt one hundred thousand dollars. And we pray that Our Lady will continue to send the donations to pay it back.

So let us start with the means that we have, whatever they are. And the first means we have, of course, are simply our own good will and our ability to pray to ask Our Lady to provide the rest of the means. I am not suggesting we be foolish but let us not wait.

Opposition to Fatima

Part of the problem is that somehow or other some people think they can command us *not* to promote Fatima. For example, there are people in the Vatican who have sometimes claimed: "Father Gruner does not have permission to

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have these meetings.”

We have had these meetings since 1985. The 1985 meeting in Rome was advertised on Vatican Radio. I organized it within two weeks from November 10th to November 24th. Because we organized it so quickly, no one had time to try and stop us. In fact, the Latin Rite Patriarch of Jerusalem was at the meeting as honorary chairman.

But since that time, most of our international conferences were the object of attacks from the Secretary of State and his powerful allies. This was particularly the case regarding our conferences held in 1992, 1994, 1996, 2001, 2006 and 2007. In each of these cases, the then Vatican Secretary of State (or his allies) always found a way to put out false information against us and our conferences.

For example, in 1992, when we had our Peace Conference in Fatima, there were false statements printed on the front page of the newspapers published in Lisbon. Three Archbishops, along with twenty-five bishops, even before the conference started,

told me about the newspaper reports. Among other things, the newspapers said that I had been contacted directly by the Bishop of Fatima regarding my priestly ministry in Fatima. The impression was created that somehow, we were holding an illegal meeting in Fatima. This was not true. I had never been contacted by the then Bishop of Fatima and it was not true that our meeting was in any way forbidden or illegal.

So three Archbishops — one is still in charge of his diocese in Brazil, one from the Philippines and one from India — went to visit the Bishop of Fatima and got him to acknowledge that we were perfectly within our rights to hold the conference. In fact, contrary to what he told the media, the bishop endorsed the meeting that night, before the three Archbishops.

Nevertheless, the opposition came from higher places still.

All Authority Comes from God

But we must remember, all authority in the world comes from God. All authority in the Church comes from God.

And there is something about authority that, except for God, all authority has defined limitations. Even the Pope's authority has defined limitations. If you know the faith, you know what those definitions are.

After doing this work for thirty years, contrary to what some people have said, I personally have never been told *not* to promote the full Fatima Message. I have never been told that. It has never even been suggested directly to me by any person in authority. However, it is inferred to priests, to bishops and to the general public — by the anti-Fatima forces inside the Vatican — that I, Father Gruner, have somehow been disobedient, that I am forbidden to hold these conferences. This simply is not true. These less-than-straightforward anti-Fatima forces say that these meetings do not have the permission of the Holy See. Well the fact is, as I mentioned a few days ago, the Code of Canon Law tells us that we have this permission to meet with each other and discuss things that concern the common good of the Church.

We do not have the explicit,

solemn, public “permission” of the Holy See, nor have we sought it. We do not need it because the Holy See, by the law of the Church, gives us our permission to hold these meetings. They cannot say that we are disobedient or that we are illegal — and they don't. But they speak in such a way as to frame the accusation “well, we didn't give our permission.” That's not the same as saying we don't have permission. It's a subtlety.

If you are not aware that the Message of Fatima is opposed, is fought against, then you will be taken in by some of these half-truths. It is true they haven't given explicit permission to hold this particular conference. But then again, it is true we don't need permission. In fact, the law of the Church says we have permission already.

We have answered these objections and people have occasionally asked me “What is going on?” or “Why this?” or “Why that?” I prefer not to talk about these things because there is really, ultimately, nothing to talk about. And the more I explain, the more it will lessen the prestige of those Vatican officials who

are misleading the public.

However, if these issues are a problem in your mind, then, yes, we have to address these issues because we want you to know that you are on the side of the Angels; that you are doing what Our Lady wants, what God wants, when you hear the Fatima Message and when you promote Her full Fatima Message.

It is Our Obligation to Seek the Truth

It is our obligation to serve the truth. The prophetic Fatima Message is approved by the Church. For us to know it more fully and to promote it more fully is not a bad thing. It's a good thing to promote the full Fatima Message.

I would like to address this opposition, where it comes from, and how to deal with it and still always be on the side of the Angels.

We know that Fatima helps people grow in their personal devotion to Our Lady. On our pilgrimage to Pondicherry yesterday, you saw how the faithful welcomed Our Lady. This was certainly gratifying to see.

But this devotion to Our Lady is not only at

Pondicherry. I have travelled with the Statue throughout Tamil Nadu, one time for thirty days. I was invited to several dioceses, among them Pondicherry, Coimbatore, Ootacamund, Madras/Chennai. A man from Madras helped me organize these church visits and processions, and at the end of the trip he said: "You know, Father, in these thirty days, we have had more than one million people come out to show their reverence and devotion to Our Lady."

Whatever little that we do, it really is Our Lady Who is inspiring them, it is Our Lady Who promotes it, and all we can do is to do our best to keep up with Her, to serve Her cause.

Roadblocks to Overcome

When I was in Canada with the Pilgrim Virgin Statue, I went to a small town in Saskatchewan called Ituna. The people were very enthusiastic. I was at a Ukrainian Catholic Parish and I had lunch with the parish priest at the Sisters' Convent. The Mother Superior said to me, in the presence of the parish priest, "Father, the people

respond very well to Our Lady." This is universally true in Canada, and certainly in India and in other parts of the world. And I said: "Yes, Sister, that is correct. If I can get past the roadblocks then the people respond very well."

I used the term "roadblocks", I didn't explain what I meant by that. But the parish priest then spoke up and said: "Sister, you have to understand what Father Gruner means. The roadblocks are a number of Catholic clergy. I have suffered the rejection and isolation by seven parishes around me because I accepted the invitation to have the Pilgrim Virgin Statue, and these other parish priests didn't want it."

I think that these poor priests who didn't want it thought somehow or other they were acting out of obedience to their superior. At that time, the Ukrainian Bishop of Saskatchewan was a very good man and devoted to Our Lady, as Ukrainian bishops generally are. But the Latin priests and bishop were, perhaps, not as devoted to Her.

The fact is, the opposition to Fatima and to Our Lady comes from within the clergy.

And you would be surprised *where* it comes from.

But let us not be intimidated by false reasons. For example, Our Lord, Himself, said that the Pope and the bishops would not obey at first: "Make it known to My ministers, given they follow the example of the King of France in delaying the execution of My command ..." And that opposition to the plan of Our Lord and of Our Lady has filtered down to a number of priests.

Whether it is ignorance or misinformation they have been fed, or whatever it is that causes them to oppose, or whether it is a policy from the Secretary of State, even the present Secretary of State, Cardinal Bertone; they are either misinformed or they are misjudging the situation. But we do *not* need their permission.

Think, for a moment, that when the Third Secret was announced to be released on May 13, 2000, the announcement came, not from the Pope, not from then Cardinal Ratzinger, the Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith — but from Cardinal Sodano, the Secretary of State.

One priest this afternoon asked me, "What does the Secretary of State have to do with promoting the Message of Fatima?" It's a very good question. I said, "He has no jurisdiction over it but *de facto*, even though he doesn't have jurisdiction, the fact is he *thinks* he does and he *acts* like he does."

What Can We Do About it?

After all, most of us are not bishops, and we are not the Pope, and so what can we do if they are going to oppose Our Lady of Fatima and Her Message and not obey? Our Lord answers that question by saying that they will repent and then they will do it.

And also, above all, we know we are on the winning side. We are on the side of Our Lady.

The Church Needs This Prophetic Message

Let us realize that the Message of Fatima takes a priority in the Church as a prophetic Message. It is a public, prophetic message which John Paul II, himself, tells us, "imposes an obligation on the Church."

It is a prophetic message. It

is not simply a private revelation. And this prophetic message is one of those messages which, as Saint Thomas tells us, is a message given to our time for this generation. It is not just for Lucy, it is not just for Jacinta and Francisco, it is for the Church.

The Church needs this prophetic message because we are told there is no other way out of the crisis we find ourselves in. I don't only mean here in India, I mean worldwide.

In the Old Testament, Moses and the whole people of God were on the banks of the Red Sea and there was nowhere to go. In front of them was the Red Sea, behind them was the Egyptian Army. The army had their swords drawn and they were coming after them.

Moses was given the order to use the authority God had given him over the Red Sea. He obeyed and the sea opened and the people of God were led by the virgin, Miriam, the sister of Moses, through the Red Sea.

It is evident today that the people of God, the Catholic Church around the world, is surrounded and we have no-

where to go. And our enemies are ready to kill us.

The Only Solution is to Consecrate Russia

The only solution will be for the Holy Father to use his authority to tell the bishops that they must join him in consecrating Russia to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. And it is only through that act of obedience that the people of God will be delivered from otherwise certain death.

I wish it was as plain to you as it is to me. I wish it was as plain to the bishops and the Pope as it is to me. There is no other way out. Truly there isn't. And that is why, if you don't see it all today, that at least you do the part that you do see.

If you continue to pray the Rosary, continue to promote the Message of Fatima, promote the First Saturdays, promote all that you can, God will give you that grace to see. And hopefully, from among yourselves and other priests around the world, some of you, some day, will finally see this triumph. I cannot promise that I will see it in my time, but some of you will see it.

It will be a great day when:

“In the end, My Immaculate Heart will triumph. The Holy Father will consecrate Russia to Me, she (Russia) will be converted, and a period of peace will be given to the world.”

And the whole world will be Catholic because they will be converted.

These Fatima prophecies are a realization of prophecies in the Old Testament that are yet to be realized. They will turn their swords into plowshares. They will learn the art of war no more. (See Micheas 4:2-3.) They will come and climb the Lord's mountain and join the Church. They will come and see the Lord's ways. (See Isaias 2:2-4.) All of these things. But it will only be through Our Lady of Fatima and through Her peace plan.

Much of these things are further explained in *The Fatima Movement of Priests* booklet available from the Fatima Center.

- **And now it is up to you to do the part that Divine Providence calls you personally to do.**
- **Let us renew our resolve today. Let us do all we can.**
- **Let us never give up!** 