

“The Whole World is on the Brink of Disaster”

This edited transcript of a speech given at *Fatima: The Only Way to World Peace Conference* in India is of special interest to the Fatima Center. Here, Father Cyril explains how his life was profoundly affected by attending our Fatima Conference in Portugal and Tuy in 2006, and how he subsequently changed his focus to promote Fatima devotion in a big way to his parish and within his diocese and country.

Father Cyril is an inspiration to us all. He has captured the true reason why we hold these Peace Conferences — to inspire priests to be active promoters of the Fatima Message. May many priests follow his example.

by Father Anthony Cyril Dikirikawage, Sri Lanka

My speech is going to be a sharing of an experience about what I tried to do in Sri Lanka after my own experience at *The Last Chance for World Peace Conference* in Tuy, Spain and Fatima, Portugal in October, 2006.

I went to Spain and Portugal in search of an answer to a painful situation that we are going through in Sri Lanka. Our dear motherland is in a very sad, serious and critical situation. There is violence, there are killings, and there are abductions.

Thousands of people have lost their valuable lives, mostly young people. Thousands more have been wounded

and some of them are disabled for life. This morning at 7 o'clock I received word that a bomb had been detonated on a bus. The news service is reporting that 20 people have been killed and 50 more are wounded.

In Sri Lanka today, thousands of families have lost their houses and property and have been made refugees in their own land. The current numbers are about 187,000 refugees. A number of them have fled to other countries including this land, India. Family life is broken; the worse affected are the children who are made to suffer through no fault of their own. The ordinary people are left to

endure suffering, pain, poverty, hardships and despair. This is our situation.

Disasters on the Horizon

When I look around and see the TV news and the newspaper, it is not only Sri Lanka that is in a crisis, the whole world is on the brink of disaster. The subject of the news and the media is disaster, both natural and man-made.

The world is no longer close to its Creator. It has opted to shy away from God, and has made up its own kingdom based on godlessness and selfishness. It is a world not consecrated to God, a world without God. It is a world where violence, war, hatred and disunity reign.

Russia and China Plan for War

We see this particularly in what has taken place in the international political arena. Russia and China plan for war, the conflict in Iraq rages on, the violent situation in the Middle East threatens to explode into a regional conflagration, which could very well lead to World War III.

Ethnic and religious violence is flaring up every-

where. The entire Western civilization lives in fear of these attacks. Most of us law-abiding citizens are subject to personal and electronic searches in airports for fear of terrorism. What has happened to us? What has happened to our religious and political leaders? What has happened to the good people of this beautiful planet?

Many are now searching for an answer. In this tragic situation people are now turning and beginning to realize that time is running out for mankind. We cannot go forward anymore with this godlessness. It is time once again to turn to God and plead for His intervention.

I went to Spain and Portugal for *The Last Chance for World Peace Conference* in search of an answer, especially for the crisis in Sri Lanka. There, I learned about Fatima, the request of Our Mother and also the story of Her interventions when we heed Her requests.

I learned that it is a Catholic custom and practice that we turn to God and ask for His help through Mary and through our consecration to Her Immaculate Heart. I heard a few examples:

Portugal: Was consecrated to the Immaculate Heart, and the nation received a special protection.

Spain: The bishops of Spain consecrated their country to God through Mary, and Spain received Divine protection.

Sri Lanka: In 1942, the Japanese forces came to attack Sri Lanka, my own country. The Archbishop of Columbo, Father Jean Marie Masson, appealed to God through Mary to protect our country. God answered this request and the Japanese retreated without attacking. To this day, no political expert can explain why the Japanese went away, but we, the simple believers, with our simple faith, know why. God, through Mary, intervened. The people of Sri Lanka had a beautiful basilica built in honor of Our Lady of Sri Lanka.

The request of Mary to pray, especially the Rosary, struck me a lot. I realized that we have not prayed enough in our country. We have not recited the Rosary enough in our country. Therefore, I resolved to return home a changed man. I started to work on this devotion immediately.

The Message of Fatima, for me, contained two very important truths:

I: Sin Gravely Offends God and His Holy Mother

It explains the grave sinfulness of the world that offends the Heavenly Father and Our Heavenly Mother. The sinfulness can be explained in these terms. There is the greed for power which leads to dictatorships, conflicts and wars, and there is the greed for money that has caused such conflicts. That greed for money has caused an unjust distribution of wealth. They say 80% of the world's wealth is enjoyed by 20% of the people and the majority has only a little to share. Invariably, when you do not share, you initiate a struggle, you breed revolution and you breed conflict.

If you go back and study practically all of the conflicts, even the conflict in my country, it is due to bad distribution of wealth and unjust distribution of natural and national resources. I have learned the very sinfulness of that.

II: The Need for Reparation and Conversion

Then I learned the need for reparation and conversion, especially through our life-

long renewal to God's grace. Pope John Paul II said:

"The Message of Fatima is a call to conversion, alerting humanity to have nothing to do with the dragon whose tail drew the third part of the stars of Heaven and cast them to the earth." (Apoc. 12:4)

It calls for conversion. With this idea in my head, and basing myself on these two factors, I decided on the following actions to realize my own sinfulness and get those under my care and influence to do the same: not to be greedy for power, not to be selfish, and not to be godless.

I intended to strive to work towards the renewal of life in me and in my people, to help them to hear the call for conversion to Mary, and to consecrate ourselves to Her Immaculate Heart.

The word consecrate, as Father Gruner explained, is to give ourselves entirely to God. Therefore, we must consecrate ourselves and promote the Consecration of Russia to the Immaculate Heart of Mary as requested at Fatima. We must strive to promote Marian devotion and Marian study.

A Time for Action

In order to achieve the above-mentioned objectives, I planned two activities:

First, the organization of the Sri Lankan people to recite the Rosary daily, and to observe the First Saturdays devotion.

Second, the construction of a Marian Center for Marian devotion and also for Marian study which we have neglected. Mary is not studied nearly enough, that's my conviction.

Volunteer Rosary Family

Having learned from all these experiences and encouraged by past Divine interventions, we have initiated a campaign to build a Rosary Family in Sri Lanka. It is a call to volunteers from all over the country to commit themselves to recite a Rosary every day for the conversion of people to God through Mary.

Already the campaign has spread to many parts of the country. People have joined the family with a lot of enthusiasm and devotion and hope. Both the Sinhalese and the Tamil people, the two races in the political conflict, have joined this vast family. Many people from the north, the

south, the east and the west, now turn to God through Mary for about 15 minutes of deep prayer, meditation and determination.

Turn War Into Peace

This action, I am sure, will generate a certain spiritual power that can change this war-minded people into a peace-loving people. This can also be a powerful force that can promote peace, appeal for peace and fight against evil forces of war.

The National Rosary Family was initiated in the archdiocese of Columbo with a beautiful ceremony at St. Cecilia's Church in Raddoluwa on the first Saturday of the month of May, 2007. The principal celebrant was the Auxiliary Bishop of Columbo, Dr. Marius Peiris, a Marian theologian. He placed before the people the theological basis for our Marian devotion.

We keep in touch with the Rosary Family members by letters sent to each of them monthly. The members are requested to be apostles of the Rosary and to get others to join the Rosary Family. Each one was given a little statue of Fatima and now I find that

the statue is working its way through the villages to new families, and to new people, so it continues.

Our National Family Center was inaugurated. The main activities of the center are the following: the consecration of the families to the Immaculate Heart of Mary; the family Rosary and the family Rosary rallies to be held at various times of the year; organizing Marian pilgrimages to various Marian shrines in our country; and Marian programs made especially for the poor children. Of course, we correspond regularly with the Fatima Center.

What Can We Do For the Future?

First, if possible you, too, can start Rosary groups in your parishes and in your areas.

Second, I think Father Gruner will speak about an important subject called *The Fatima Movement of Priests*. We can all join that movement and be priests who will promote reparation, reconciliation, conversion and consecration to God. Finally, we can promote consecration of the families to the Sacred Heart of

Jesus and to the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

Pope Benedict XVI said: "Undoubtedly, the heart that is most like Christ, is the Heart of Mary, His Immaculate Mother." Responding to the invitation addressed to us by the Virgin at Fatima, let us, the whole world, come into Her Immaculate Heart so that it will experience the merciful love of God.

Father Gruner wrote to me these words,

"As a Catholic Priest charged with the care of souls of the Faithful, you understand the daunting challenges faced by the Catholic Family. They are frightened by the signs of the times, by tsunamis, hurricanes, earthquakes, terrorism and the spread of nuclear weapons. They are besieged by an ever worsening popular culture that glorifies material goods and cheapens God's gift of procreation.

"They worry about their jobs and financial well being, about their children's education and future, and about their health and retirement years. They are bewildered by the inconsistent and even contra-

dictory messages they get from their Church, herself wracked by scandal and the crisis of faith.

"In this situation, we talk about establishing the devotion to the Sacred Heart and the Immaculate Heart. In the enthronement ceremony, the family, in the presence of the priest, their relatives, neighbors and friends, publicly and solemnly acknowledge that Christ is the King and loving Master of their home.

"Pictures or statues of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary are installed in a place of honor in the principal room of the home. The family members then consecrate themselves to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and to the Immaculate Heart of Mary."

Therefore, we must get people to recite the Rosary. We can promote the Fatima Movement of Priests. We can promote the consecration of our people, and of the families of the world to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and to the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

Reparation for Sins

While I was doing all these

things I also began to reflect deeper into the Fatima event and deeper into the life of Mary. There is a great message in this. The Fatima event talks about reparation for sins. I mentioned some of the sins of today. The sins of greed that promote conflict, war and violence. Then there is the cry for prayer, Our Lady's cry for prayer, especially for us to pray the Rosary. Then there is the request of Our Lady to sacrifice, to suffer for the people for their sins, to pray the Rosary every day for peace in the world, to make Her known to people and make Her Son known to people.

She wants chapels to be built. She wants Marian Centers to be built. She also spoke of the Consecration of Russia. Through all these things we see Mary as an important figure in the history of our world.

Devotion Leads Us to the Real Mary

I began to study Mary through the World Peace Conference and that has opened up an area which I had not discovered earlier; and through this, I began to discover Mary. She has a mes-

sage to each one of you, just as She had a message for me. My request is not to make Mary only a devotion. That is a danger to make Mary simply a devotion. She is more than a devotion, the devotion takes us to the real Mary.

Somebody during the course of this seminar spoke about the prophetic mission of Fatima. Prophets are people, they are God's messengers calling men to change their hearts and minds. Mary is a voice calling for conversion and change. The devotions and the consecrations help us in that great need. The Blessed Virgin Mary, through Fatima, primarily wanted a world to change its course, to turn to God and to the Gospel way. The practical cry for this change was made in the main Fatima Message: repentance, reparation, consecration, recitation of the daily Rosary, the First Saturday devotions and the Consecration and conversion of Russia.

I request that while you are here at this Peace Conference, you listen to these messages and put them into action. Let us not forget the ultimate call, the ultimate goal of all these actions — not only to make

the people feel this devotion, but to make them pass the conversion on to others.

Marian Spirituality

Promote Marian spirituality through Marian devotion. We have built up our whole Marian theology on tradition on what the Church teaches and we have Marian dogmas, which is very good; however, I think not much attention has been paid to Mary in terms of the New Testament events. She is mentioned in the New Testament. If you carefully study the events which mention Mary, there is a whole spirituality of Mary which is very down-to-earth, which the world today needs, and which the Message of Fatima brought to this world.

Fatima, incidentally, is a little different from the other Marian apparitions that have occurred in history. Here, Mary came down to see Her children, and to protect Her children. If you look at the Gospel, you find a very deep spirituality of Mary. Mary's feat, the great feat of the history of the human race, was to bring a Savior to us.

In Mary's life many things were sort of unexpected. What

was told to Mary in these unexpected events, caused Her not to revolt. In Her Heart, She maintained the teaching of the Gospel, and meditated. That is Mary's spirit.

What God Wants May be Unexpected

We must keep the Gospel in our hearts and try to realize that sometimes, what God wants may be unexpected.

Like the wedding at Cana, there was an unexpected event; they had no more wine, so there was the great Marian request to Her Son.

The world today has no wine and Mary sees it and She wants *you* and *me* to see it and make a great Marian request to Her Son.

Mary was there in the crowd with Jesus, as was mentioned in the Gospel. It was mentioned to enable us to see that Somebody Who was with Jesus, who listened to what He said and participated in what He did, maintained Her spirituality. The great Lady Who stood by the Cross — the Cross was not a defeat for Her Son, the Cross was not a sorrow which She couldn't bear. She stood on that spirituality.

It is a beautiful, magnificent theology. The theology of the power of God, that uses weak human beings as a beautiful spirituality which you must see through the devotions of the Rosary, consecration, conversion and reparation.

Live that spirituality and convert the world to God. I want to stress to you what I stress in my work in Sri Lanka with the Fatima Message. I pray, I reflect, but I also try to act like Mary did towards those who had no wine. "I have pity on the crowd," Jesus said, and Our Lady was there.

There is a whole program of action that is connected to the Marian devotion. I think, without action, without bearing fruit in the lives of people, devotion becomes meaningless.

My center has banks for people, it has development programs for the farmers and helps to build houses for children. This action in response to unexpected events, is what I wish to stress in my presentation.

The Silence of the Church

I also urge you to study the question of the silence of

the Church with regard to the Third Secret of Fatima. Study the question of the Consecration of Russia. These two questions have become, I found, big subjects of the Fatima movement. Father Gruner will have to explain more and more why these are important so that the people can understand.

Yesterday, I heard for the first time the explanation of the historical reason for this cry for the Consecration of Russia. Russians are not guilty. I think we should do a study and make them subjects of discussions with our people. We should try to absorb the message behind these things.

India Peace Conference a Wealth for the World

I also want to say, what an honorable assembly we have here. So many people, so many good people who have devoted their lives to God and to the priesthood. What a wealth for the world.

I think it is the first time that Father Gruner's Marian team has been able to gather the whole of India, almost, into one assembly. It is only now, being up on this stage,

I can see the enormity of this gathering, what dedication, what potential.

Finally, I would like to end my talk with that beautiful prayer of the bishops of Portugal. Try to make it your prayer,

“We the pontiffs of our people, feel a terrible storm raging around us, threatening to disperse and destroy the faithful flock of those who bless You because You are the Mother of Jesus. Afflicted, we stretch out our suppliant hands towards Your Son, as we cry out: ‘Save us O Lord, for we perish.’

“Our Lady, intercede for Portugal in this most grave hour when from the East blow furious winds, bringing cries of death against Your Son and against the civilization founded on His teachings, deceiving minds, perverting hearts, and lighting the fires of hatred and revolution in the world. Help of Christians, pray for us!

“Intercede for Portugal, O Blessed Lady, in this

troubled hour when the impure waves of brazen immorality (which has even lost the very notion of sin, dares to proclaim, before the Cross of Your Son, the exaltation of the flesh) threatens, throughout the world, to choke the lily of purity nourished by the Eucharistic Blood of Jesus. — Virgin Most Powerful, pray for us!

“Intercede for Portugal, O Blessed Lady, in this hour of passions and doubts when even the good run the risk of being lost ... Unite all the Portuguese people in obedience to Your Son, in the love of the Church and also in the cultivation of virtue, in respect for order and fraternal charity. Queen of Peace, pray for us!

“Remember finally, Patroness of our country, that Portugal once taught so many lands to proclaim You blessed among all women. In remembrance of what it once did for Your glory, Our Lady of Fatima, save it, giving it Jesus, in Whom it will find Truth, Life and Peace.” Amen. ☩

Expressions of Gratitude

**“This conference gave me a very clear exposition of the urgency of the Message. It was challenging. I am going to be a Marian priest to do all I can to please Our Lady and Her command.”
... Father Francis**