

# Mary's peace plan

Consecration asked at Fatima is fulfilled, but ongoing devotion will keep us on track

**By Father Christopher Rengers, O.F.M. Cap.**

The examples of popes reveal a continuing call for consecration to the Immaculate Heart of Mary by individuals, parishes and dioceses. This consecration is the culmination of a peace plan involving reform of life, praying the Rosary and making the first Saturdays devotion.

For individuals, consecration means living your baptismal promises in a particular way: Jesus' mother is the best path to union with him, so we entrust ourselves to Jesus through Mary.

Mary promised in her July 13, 1917, visit to the three children of Fatima that she would return to ask for the consecration of Russia to her Immaculate Heart and for the Communion of Reparation the first Saturday of each month.

In 1925, she appeared to the then-lone surviving visionary, Carmelite Sister Lucia dos Santos. She told Sister Lucia that those who confess their sins, receive Communion, say five Rosary decades and keep her company for 15 minutes with the intention of making reparation on five consecutive first Saturdays will receive her assistance at the hour of death and the graces needed for salvation.

## Mary's request

In 1929, Mary appeared to Sister Lucia again to request that the pope and all the bishops together consecrate the world to the Immaculate Heart with a special mention of Russia. Pope Pius responded by consecrating the world on Oct. 31, 1942, and the Russian people in 1952. Pope Paul VI renewed the consecration of Russia in 1964 at the Second Vatican Council in the presence of the world's bishops.

Pope John Paul II made an act of consecration of the world and Russia to the Immaculate Heart on May 13, 1982, at Fatima, where

he had gone to thank Our Lady for saving his life when he was shot in St. Peter's Square one year before. He invited all the world's bishops to join in, but many did not receive his letter in time. The pope renewed this consecration at the 1983 Synod of Bishops.

These consecrations, however, did not fulfill the Fatima request of full participation by all bishops. So Pope John Paul, with remarkable humility, again invited all the bishops to join him in the act. On the feast of the Annunciation, March 25, 1984, he consecrated to the Immaculate Heart "the whole world, especially the peoples for which by reason of their situation you have particular love and solicitude."

Sister Lucia reported that this act fulfilled what Mary had asked at Fatima. When some raised doubts, Father Robert J. Fox of the Fatima Family Apostolate wrote to Sister Lucia himself. Her answer of July 3, 1990, was in the affirmative: "Yes, it was accomplished, and since then I have said that it was made."

## Fruits of devotion

As the Jubilee Year 2000 wound down, Pope John Paul repeated the consecration with more than 1,000 bishops in Rome. This act at the dawn of a millennium points to the pope's conviction that the Fatima peace plan has ongoing importance and invites future acts of consecration.

The 1984 consecration preceded a remarkable series of events that led to the fall of the Berlin Wall, the collapse of European communism and the toppling of the Soviet empire. There were many human agents, too, but the eyes of faith look to the hidden forces underneath.

Devotion to the Immaculate Heart as God's plan for peace has different forms of expression, but all include looking to Mary's heart as the model for renewing our own by giving up sin, praying the Rosary and fulfilling the five first Saturdays devotion.

When enough of us awaken to the need to reform and pray, when more parishes and dioceses encourage this devotion, the path to peace will be paved. The model for giving to Jesus is the Immaculate Heart of his mother.

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