



FORMATION PROGRAM #2
Second Apparition of the Angel

LUCIA SPEAKS:

"What are you doing?"

"Pray! Pray very much!"

"The Hearts of Jesus and Mary have designs of mercy on you."

"Offer prayers and sacrifices constantly to the Most High."

[Lucia]: "How are we to make sacrifices?"

"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."

Accompanying Commentary:

Are we making good use of our time? or wasting it?

Form a habit of prayer. Practice (be aware of) the presence of God.

Jesus and Mary have a plan of mercy for EACH of us. Prayer is necessary to prepare and dispose us to receive the inspirations They wish to give us.

Prayer opens the heart to God; sacrifices (acts of self-denial) dispose us to say "yes" to God, lest we be selfish. Do these constantly so that we will be ready to be used by God.

This is a good question. Are we expected to inflict punishment on ourselves or offer difficult fasts? Are we expected to spend hours in prayer? Jesus told Sr. Lucia, "The sacrifice required of every person is the fulfillment of his duties in life and the observance of My law. This is the penance that I now seek and require."²

There is, or can be, a sacrifice in everything we do: persevering and perfecting our daily work despite its drudgery, putting another's preferences before our own, forgiving or overlooking something done to us that was unkind, striving against our anger to obtain peace, etc.

Our sacrifices are to be united with Christ's daily life, Who spent His every moment living this First Great Commandment. God loves, but is so little loved in return.

In offering a sacrifice, it obtains mercy from God's consoled Heart for those who willfully choose not to give, not to love; who stubbornly choose to be selfish. In this way, Christ lived the Second Great Commandment.

ALL have something to give. ALL are able to sacrifice. But it begins with the willingness of a few: the rich have money to help meet the needs of the poor, the poor have talents to enrich others from the blessings God has given them, the sick can offer their sufferings as a share in Christ's redemptive Passion to save souls, the healthy can make good use of their time in the service of others. Sacrifices, seen or unseen, whether they show mercy to body or soul, will draw down peace on those around us. The mountains made low, the valleys filled in: Peace will come when we remove the extremes of selfishness.

From this it can be reasoned that every city, country, parish, and family has its own Guardian Angel. Keeping this in mind, we can pray with them. They intercede for and with us for peace. Their prayers are powerful.

MOST IMPORTANT SACRIFICES. Recognize them as from God. We don't choose these. For example: sudden sickness or death of a loved one, disappointments or misfortune, things we didn't expect or plan for, or that which we cannot change. These are tailor made by God for the good of souls: ours and others. God knows what is best for our growth in holiness if we trust Him and if we accept these as coming from His love for us. His desire is to be loved by the sacrifice of our offering. This mutual love obtains the conversion of sinners.

REFLECTION & RESOLUTION: Sacrifice- self denial- is indeed the most difficult, the most ignored or refused part of the Message of Fatima because of the natural repugnance we have for them. Even if we choose to give up something, there are other things that we refuse to sacrifice. Complete conversion to Christ requires a total gift of self in imitation of Christ Who gives Himself completely to us. We can't do it by ourselves. We need His help; we even need help to have the DESIRE to do it!

Let us slow down our thoughts and bring to our awareness that we live in His Presence. Let us reflect before Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament and ask His help. At each moment we have a choice: either to please God by offering the sacrifice of the present moment, or to please ourselves by avoiding what is difficult or inconvenient. It is at that moment, our feelings can get in the way and make our choice difficult. We **want** to please God, but we **recoil** from the sacrifice it entails. What can we do to overcome our natural aversion to suffering when we find our will power to love God is not strong enough? Only practical experience will convince you of this truth: **Turn to Mary and give Her your feelings! Ask Her help!** Her

² There is Nothing More, AMI Press, pg. 146

Immaculate Heart will take your heart and remove the feelings that cause the difficulty. With your feelings of repulsion removed, you will then be freed to make your choice.

It will work the same for you whether it is a physical, mental, or emotional suffering. Simply surrender your thoughts and/or your feelings of complaint, anger, stress, hurt, or anxiety, and place them in Our Lady's Heart ("it is Yours now, Mary, not mine"). Take a deep breath and relax your whole being; turn your thoughts to a similar situation in the life of Christ or His Mother and unite yourself to Their sentiments. In that surrender, make a gift of yourself to God through Her. You will find that you can be as a tree that stands tall, even holding its branches high as the cold wind passes through it.

[Brief period of silent reflection]

Discussion

Examination of last month's resolutions

Apostolic resolution

Resolution in brief: **Consciously surrender personal difficulties to Our Lady by renouncing your will in surrender and prayer, making everything you can a sacrifice.**

Act of Consecration