



THE MAGAZINE OF THE
Society of Mary



American Region Edition
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www.somamerica.org

THE SOCIETY OF MARY

(Established 1931)

THE SOCIETY OF MARY springs from two similar societies founded in 1880 and 1901 respectively, which united in 1931. It has members all over the world and is not confined to Anglicans alone.

Where there are sufficient members in one place or area, they combine to form a Ward, with a priest as Superior and an elected Secretary. They can organize regular services, meetings and many other activities. Five or more members may form a Cell, and organize joint prayer and fellowship. Isolated members are joined to the Headquarters Ward.

The Society publishes its magazine "AVE" two times each year with details of pilgrimages, retreats, festival services, etc. It is free to all members and is the effective link between the various Regions.

The Society is not affiliated to any single Shrine or Marian institution, and is the only organization endeavoring to promote equally all the different aspects of devotion to Mary.

THE SOCIETY RULE OF LIFE

The Society is dedicated to the glory of God and in honor of the Holy Incarnation under the invocation of Our Lady, Help of Christians.

1. Members shall keep a Rule of Life, which will include such special devotions as the Angelus, the Rosary, the Litany and Anthems of Our Lady.
2. They will pray for Departed Members of the Society and offer Mass for them.
3. They will take part in the Mass on the principal Feasts of Our Lady.
4. They will engage in apostolic and pastoral work, according to opportunity, under the guidance of the local Ward Officers and the General Council.

OBJECTS AND MEMBERSHIP OF THE SOCIETY

The Society was founded as an Anglican Society with these Objects:

1. To love and honor Mary.
2. To spread devotion to her in reparation for past neglect and misunderstanding, and in the cause of Christian Unity.
3. To take Mary as a model in purity, personal relationships and family life.

From the American Region Superior

November 2017

Dear Friends,

Lately I have found myself reflecting on the growing ecumenical character of the Society of Mary in the American Region. Our Constitution declares that “The Society of Mary was founded as an Anglican Society ...” But it nowhere limits membership to those belonging to churches of the Anglican Communion.

The Constitution then lists as one of its objects, “To spread devotion to [Mary] in reparation for past neglect and misunderstanding, and in the cause of Christian unity.” When SOM came to the United States in the 1960s, this object entailed promoting Marian doctrine and devotion within the Episcopal Church with the goal of furthering ecumenical relations with Rome and the Orthodox.



Fr. John D. Alexander, American Region Superior, admitting Fr. Michael Godderz Rector of All Saints, Ashmont, Boston, to the Society at the 2017 Annual Mass

This goal remains valid and worthy of our prayers. Our mission is still to demonstrate by teaching and example that it is possible to be a good Episcopalian or Anglican and practice a fully Catholic devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary.

But times have changed. While the vast majority of SOM members belong to the Episcopal Church, over the past forty years or so some have left for “other jurisdictions”—Roman Catholic; Continuing Anglican; Eastern and Western-Rite Orthodox; and, most recently, the Anglican Church in North America and the Ordinariate—while retaining SOM membership. And new members have joined from these affiliations.

In the American Region, we have taken the attitude that in most cases we should welcome those who want to walk with us, even if it means living in impaired or broken sacramental communion with fellow SOM members. Our regional Council comprises Roman Catholics and Continuing Anglicans as well as members of the Episcopal Church. Our wards and cells include a Russian Orthodox (ROCOR) ward in Pennsylvania and an Ordinariate cell in California.

We thus find ourselves called to what might be called an “accidental ecumenism.” Unlike societies founded explicitly for ecumenical purposes, we have more or less stumbled into this vocation. And unlike ecumenical venues



American Region Annual Mass at All Saints, Ashmont, Boston MA, Saturday May 6, 2017

where Mary is the subject of dialogue aimed at the resolution of theological disputes, our shared commitment to Catholic Marian doctrine and practice within SOM binds us together across disparate ecclesial communities.

One blessing is that the Society’s defining devotional practices are easily adaptable to ecumenical settings. We do not need to be in sacramental communion to pray the Rosary or to go on pilgrimage together. Going forward, one goal may be to include in our official gatherings Marian devotions in which all can participate.

Living together ecumenically requires certain standards of mutual respect and charity. There is no place for triumphalism or attempts at proselytization within our Society. We need to respect one another’s choices of ecclesiastical affiliation, mindful that others may be called to follow different paths than our own.

Since my election as Superior four years ago, I have come to value our Region’s evolving ecumenical character as a great gift and opportunity, notwithstanding its very real challenges. Through the Society of Mary, I remain in fellowship with beloved colleagues and friends with whom I might otherwise have lost contact when they left the Episcopal Church. I do not pretend to understand where God is leading us in all this; but I am confident that this call to nurture the bonds of affection is of the Holy Spirit. The goal of Christian unity is dear to our Lady’s Heart **AVE**

With all blessings in Christ and Our Lady,
The Rev’d John D. Alexander, SSC, Ph.D.

American Region Superior



Letter from the American Region Chaplain

Mary’s Role in the Redemption of the World

In a homily given by Fr Livinus Igbodekwe on the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Monday, 8 September, he stated, “Natural minds talk of history while spiritual minds ponder on divine providence.” His quote hit home as I was taking time to “ponder” the Nativity of our Blessed Lady.

I started to think of God reconciling the world to himself. From Genesis to Revelation, we witness over and over again, the continual cycle

of sin and restoration. Man sins and God, out of his mercy and grace, continues to restore. We should be most thankful that we have a God who works through covenants and not contracts.

There are times when I often think to myself, “Adam and Eve had it all, and they blew it!” They walked with God, “... in the coolness of the day.” (Genesis 3) Everything they could possibly want was theirs, and yet that still was not enough. They wanted more. They needed to be the determiner of their own destiny. What God had to offer them was not good enough. Their disobedience led them to sin, alienation and death.

But God was not going to leave us to our own devices. God intervened when he said to the serpent, “...Because you have done this, ‘Cursed are you above all livestock and all wild animals! You will crawl on your belly and you will eat dust all the days of your life. And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.’” (Genesis 3:14-15)

In the New Testament, we see the dawning of the new creation, “... and the Word became flesh and dwelt among us.” (John 1:14) However, this would not be possible if it were not for a simple *fiat*, a simple, “Yes” from a young virgin, Mary most holy. God in his infinite wisdom permitted a human being to play an integral role in the redemption of the world. God chose a woman to participate in his act



Statue in St. Mary's Cathedral, Derby, England — *Patrick Garrington Photography*

of redemption and restoration.

St. John Paul II, during his pontificate, wrote and taught continuously on the spirituality of Mary as Co-Redemptrix. There were some theologians which had difficulty with the teaching of Mary as Co-Redemptrix. While the Universal Church has never formally defined Mary's role as Co-Redemptrix as a dogma requiring assent of the faithful, individual Christians are still free to believe and use this language or not, according to whether they find it helpful.

What I have taught in the parishes, where I was fortunate to serve in these past 38 years, is that there is a deep sense by which we, the faithful baptized, are called to be co-redeemers with Christ. Through baptism, we are all called to participate in Christ's work of redemption, in a way that Mary models and exemplifies for us.

It was our Blessed Lady who worked in conjunction with the will of God and with her Son. While Christ our Lord is the mediator of our salvation, it was Mary, in her "Yes" to God who thereby participated in the most profound manner in the redemption of the world. It is with the cooperation and the obedience of Mary that her Son, Jesus Christ, was able to fully accomplish His mission to restore us from the sin of Adam. Thereby, she most certainly participated as Co-Redemptrix with her divine Son, the Redeemer of the world. **AVE**

Pax Christi

Fr. Russell A. Griffin, SSC

Rector of the Church of St. Uriel

the Archangel, Sea Girt, New Jersey



From the Editor

This latest issue of AVE includes a number of pieces about different veneration of Mary. Some short pieces from the Marianists—the Roman Catholic order dedicated to Our Lady—have also been included, thanks to their kindness in sending them to us. Finally, there are reports from a number of our Wards. Once again, I ask you to send pictures (high resolution, please) of your local Lady statues or icons, as well as those from places you have visited. In this season of the Nativity of our Lord, may you experience the joy of his blessed Mother in the mystery of the Incarnation. **AVE**

Phoebe Pettingell

Apparitions of Our Lady: Our Lady of Fatima

By The Rev. Canon Barry E.B. Swain, SSC

This article is reprinted from Pascha Nostrum, parish magazine of the Church of the Resurrection, New York City

The first thing one notices about the name Fatima is that it is in fact an Arabic name, and goes back to the days when the Iberian peninsula was Arabic and Muslim. In fact, Fatima remains a common name for Muslim women, as the original Fatima was among the daughters of the Prophet Mohammed and the name means “Enchanting” in Arabic.

1917 must have been one of the most cataclysmic years of all human history, and was certainly the turning-point year of the Twentieth Century. It separates the early part of the Twentieth Century, which was more closely allied to the Nineteenth Century, and ushers in the “new” Twentieth Century, which begins what we might think of as the modern world, though in many ways that world is giving way to something new, which we barely yet understand. In 1917, the Great War had been going on for three years. There was total stalemate on the Western Front, with British & Imperial, French and Belgian forces facing the Germans, and very little



prospect of victory or even change for either side. Massive battles, for example the Somme one hundred years ago this summer, were fought with thousands dying and gravely wounded, only to gain a few acres of ground, which might then be lost several weeks later. Often troops would be holed up in tunnels, fox holes and bunkers made from trenches, for months on end. “Cabin fever” and what would later be known as “shell shock” (we would call this PTSD), were endemic. There were many cases of soldiers whose psyches were so damaged that they simply got up out of the trenches and walked toward the enemy until they were shot. Others were sent home with psychiatric illnesses from which it took long to recover, or from which they were never to recover. The Eastern Front was, in a sense, worse. Though it was not characterised by the trenches and the stalemate, the bitter cold and scorching heat of Eastern Europe were especially trying. The Austro-Hungarian fighting against Italy in the Alps and elsewhere was not overly grim or gruelling and had a low casualty rate, but the clash between the Russians and the Germans remained vicious and had extremely high casualties up to the moment it ended, compounded on the Russian side by an almost constant lack of weapons, uniforms and provisions.

1917 also saw the momentous Russian Revolution. In many ways, it was not unexpected, as there had been the beginnings of a similar Revolution in 1905 after the Russo-Japanese War had been lost, but it had been thought by the dynasty and the Tsar’s Government that such pre-occupations would be shelved until after the War, and at first it seemed so. As defeat after defeat occurred, and privation at home continued, and dark rumours about the Imperial family circulated, public opinion changed. Stacks of books and millions of words have been written about the Russian Revolution, and we can add nothing to that here, except to note that one thing is beyond question: the animators of the Revolution were, beyond doubt and with no exception, anti-Christian, godless Communists who sought to impose their own new secular religion, which was one of no mercy for any but the strong who seized power. The downtrodden masses about whom Marx and Engels spoke were simply to be pawns for the new Soviet “Tsars”. Russia, a land of nearly 900 years of fervent Christianity, was to be reduced to a godless state devoted to the false god of collectivism, which was itself but a charade covering absolutist terror. We know from our current vantage point that that effort was doomed to failure and that it was Communism that succumbed in 1991, not Orthodox Christianity. Still, all this was very much in the future in 1917, and as late as 1988 no one would have

guessed Communism was in its death throes. The Imperial Family were executed in 1918, slaughtered with less human consideration than would be shown to farm animals. The alarm that this Revolution generated both in its March 1917 and October 1917 incarnations was felt throughout Europe. For many, it was as though the genie of the French Revolution, which they thought they had put back in its bottle at the Congress of Vienna in 1815 and again after the 1848 Revolutions, had emerged with even more ferocity. Their analysis was correct; the world whose lights Sir Edward Grey had imagined going out one by one in 1914, were now extinguished forever, and “the old world in its splendour” as Sir Winston Churchill called it, would be, by November 1918, only the memory of a by-gone era.

The Allied Powers by mid early 1917 included the British Empire, the French Republic, the Kingdom of Italy, the Japanese Empire, the United States, Serbia, Montenegro, Portugal and Roumania. The Central Powers were the German Empire, the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the Kingdom of Bulgaria, and the Ottoman Empire (Turkey). The Scandinavian countries were able to remain neutral (only Sweden managed to do so in the Second World War), and likewise Spain and to a certain extent Greece. Switzerland, of course, always remains neutral. Portugal, which was neutral in the Second World War, with its wily dictator, Dr Salazar, who alone among the Fascist leaders was not a military figure, managed to remain neutral, though it became a centre of espionage and intrigue throughout the War. In the Great War, however, Portugal and Germany came head to head in skirmishes and battles where their African colonies clashed, and also in maritime shipping. By March 1916, when Portugal acceded to the request of Britain, its most ancient ally, to seize German ships in Lisbon harbour, the German Empire declared War on Portugal. It must be remembered that Portugal was in a state of almost perpetual anarchy – as recently as 1910 it had been a monarchy. In 1908, King Carlos I and his son the Crown Prince Luis were assassinated in a carriage with their wife and mother, and son and brother, looking on. Queen Amalia, being a woman was spared, and the assassin was apparently unable to complete the assassinations as he had planned to kill the second son, who immediately became King Manoel II, but was disarmed before he could. In 1910, however, a Revolution exiled the Royal Family, and the King and the Dowager Queen fled to England where the King would subsequently marry and die at an early age. The decidedly leftist-Socialist government which took over after the Revolution fought

Germany not out of any great friendship to the British Empire, but out of opposition to the absolutist powers on the other side – Germany, Austria-Hungary, Bulgaria and Ottoman Turkey. The Portuguese Government, overtly Socialist and in many areas Communist, ruled Portugal until Dr Salazar's fascist government took power in 1932, who would rule Portugal until 1974, close allies to General Franco in Spain. But at the time of the Fatima Apparitions it was Portugal's socialist anti-clerical government in power, which is a key to understanding the original apparitions.

In the spring and summer of 1916, nine-year-old Lúcia Santos and her cousins Jacinta and Francisco Marto were herding sheep at the Cova d'Iria near their home village of Fatima, Portugal. It was there that they claimed to have experienced the visitation of an angel on three occasions. The angel, who identified himself as "The Angel of Peace", taught them prayers, to make sacrifices, and urged them to spend time in adoration of the Lord.

On 13 May 1917, the children saw a woman "brighter than the sun, shedding rays of light clearer and stronger than a crystal goblet filled with the most sparkling water and pierced by the burning rays of the sun". The woman wore a white garment trimmed with gold and held a Rosary in her hand. She asked them to devote themselves to the Holy Trinity and to pray "the Rosary every day, to bring peace to the world and an end to the war". Though they had agreed amongst themselves not to mention the Angel, Jacinta excitedly recounted her sightings to her family despite Lúcia's admonition to keep them secret. Her disbelieving mother told neighbours as a joke, and within a day naturally the whole village knew.

The children said that they had been asked to return to the Cova d'Iria on the thirteenth of the following month. Lúcia's mother obtained advice from their parish priest, Father Ferreira, who suggested she allow them to go and bring Lúcia to him afterward with the aim of questioning her. The second appearance occurred on 13 June, the feast of St Antony of Padua, patron of the local parish church, a Portuguese Franciscan who spent his ministry in Italy. On this occasion the lady revealed that Francisco and Jacinta would be taken to Heaven presently but Lúcia would have a long life in order to spread her message and devotion to the Immaculate Heart. (Though this part of the account was only written down much later, and therefore it may be a *vaticinium post eventum*.)

During this same visit, the lady enjoined them to say the Rosary daily in honour of Our Lady of the Rosary for peace in the world and the end of the war. (Three months earlier, on 21 April, the first contingent of Portuguese soldiers had embarked for the front lines as Portugal joined

the Allies) The lady also revealed to the children a vision of hell, and entrusted to them a secret, “that was good for some and bad for others”. Ferreira later stated that Lúcia told him that the lady told her, “I want you to come back on the thirteenth and to learn to read in order to understand what I ask you to do. ...I seek no more.”

Thousands of people flocked to Fatima in the following months, drawn by reports of visions and miracles, some of course wildly exaggerated. On 13 August 1917, the provincial administrator Artur Santos, a socialist and atheist (no relation to Lúcia Santos), claiming that the events were “dangerous to the people” but in fact he feared they would be politically disruptive, and so intercepted and gaoled the children before they could reach the Cova d’Iria, and even subjected them to psychological and physical torture to force them to divulge the secrets. Lúcia’s mother, not believing her daughter or her friends, hoped the officials could persuade the children to end the affair and admit that they had lied. Lúcia revealed all, except the secrets, and offered to ask the lady for permission to tell the secrets to the authorities. That month, instead of the usual apparition in the Cova d’Iria on 13 August, the children reported that they saw the Virgin Mary on 19 August, a Sunday, at nearby Valiñhos. She asked them again to pray daily the rosary, spoke specifically about the miracle in October and asked them “to pray a lot, a lot for the sinners and sacrifice a greatly, as many souls perish in hell because nobody is praying or making sacrifices for them.” The three children said that they experienced six apparitions of the Blessed Virgin Mary between 13 May and 13 October 1917.

The Miracle of the Sun

As early as July 1917 it was said that the Virgin Mary had promised a miracle for the last of her apparitions on 13 October, so that all would believe. What then took place became known as the “Miracle of the Sun”. A very large crowd, estimated between 30,000 and 100,000, including journalists and photographers, gathered at the Cova d’Iria. The previously constant rain had ceased and there was a thin layer of cloud. Lúcia, seeing light rising from the lady’s hands and the sun appearing as a silver disc, called out “look at the sun!”. Subsequently, she had no memory of saying anything. Witnesses later spoke of the sun appearing to change colours and turning like a wheel. There were varying eyewitness descriptions of the “sun’s dance”. Poet Afonso Lopes Vieira and schoolteacher Delfina Lopes (with her students and other witnesses in the town of Alburita), reported that the solar phenomenon was visible up to forty kilometres away. The

phenomenon was not, however, visible beyond the environs of Fatima.

Scientists neither recorded or reported any movement or other phenomenon of the sun either at that time or later. Not all witnesses reported seeing the sun “dance”. Some saw only the radiant colours, and in an odd and perhaps significant twist, some believers saw nothing at all, while some sceptics and downright atheists, experienced the full visions they had expected to denounce and ridicule as being either a delusion or a hoax.

Various explanations have been advanced. Auguste Meessen, Professor at the Institute of Physics, Catholic University of Louvaine, points out that looking directly at the Sun is known to cause phosphene visual artifacts and temporary partial blindness. He argued that retinal after-images produced after brief periods of sun gazing are a likely cause of the “dancing” effects, and the colour changes were caused by the bleaching of photosensitive retinal cells. He notes that solar miracles have been witnessed in many places where people have been encouraged to stare at the sun. He cites the reported Marian apparitions at Heroldsbach, Bavaria, in 1949 as an example with the same optical effects as at Fatima witnessed by more than 10,000 people. Critics of this theory point to the fact that the crowd was not encouraged to look at the sun until the alleged miracle was already underway; the children did not tell the crowd to expect a sun miracle, indeed they themselves had not been apprised of any such thing. Additionally, people in towns up to forty kilometres away, who had no knowledge of the alleged supernatural events at Fatima, also reported seeing the phenomenon, who obviously could have had no expectation or explanation for the unexpected sight.

While the crowd was staring at the sun, Lúcia, Francisco, and Jacinta said later they had seen images of the Holy Family, Our Lady of Sorrows with Our Lord, and then Our Lady of Mount Carmel. They said they saw Saint Joseph and Our Lord bless the crowd.

Later lives of the Children

Francisco and Jacinta Marto died in the Spanish influenza epidemic of 1918. Francisco Marto died at home on 4 April 1919, at the age of ten. Jacinta died in hospital, at the age of nine on 20 February 1920. They are buried at the Sanctuary of Fatima, and were beatified by Pope John Paul II on 13 May 2000. Olímpia Marto said that her children happily foretold their own deaths many times to her and to curious pilgrims, and said this was what the lady had told them.

At the age of fourteen, Lúcia was sent to the school of the Sisters of

St. Dorothy in Vilar. In 1928 she became a postulant at their convent just across the border in Spain. Lúcia continued to report private visions periodically throughout her life. She reported seeing the Virgin Mary again in 1925 at the Dorothean convent at Pontevedra, Galicia, in Spain. This time she said she was asked to convey the message of the First Saturday Devotions. By her account a subsequent vision of Christ as a child repeated this request. In 1929, she reported that Mary returned and reiterated her request for the Consecration of Russia to her Immaculate Heart. She also reported an apparition in Rianxo, Galicia, in 1931, in which she said that Jesus visited her, taught her two prayers and delivered a message to give to the church's hierarchy. In 1947, Sister Lúcia left the Dorothean order and joined the stricter and more enclosed Discalced Carmelite Order in a monastery in Coimbra, Portugal. Lúcia died on 13 February 2005, at the age of 97.

In 1936 and again in 1941, Sister Lúcia said that the Virgin Mary had predicted the deaths of two of the children during her second apparition on 13 June 1917. According to Lúcia's 1941 account, on 13 June, Lúcia asked the Virgin if the three children would go to heaven when they died. She said that she heard Mary reply, "Yes, I shall take Francisco and Jacinta soon, but you will remain a little longer, since Jesus wishes you to make me known and loved on Earth. He wishes also for you to establish devotion in the world to my Immaculate Heart."

Subsequent Devotion

The Sanctuary of Our Lady of Fatima is one of the largest Marian shrines in the world. An estimated 70,000 people assembled to witness the last of the promised appearances of the Lady in the Cova d'Iria on 13 October 1917. The widely reported miracle of the sun was a factor that led to Fatima quickly becoming a major centre of pilgrimage. Two million pilgrims visited the site in the decade following the events of 1917. A small chapel - the Capelinha - was built by local people on the site of the apparitions. The construction was neither encouraged nor hindered by the Roman Catholic Church. On 13 May 1920, pilgrims defied government troops to install a statue of the Virgin Mary in the chapel, and the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass was first officially celebrated there in January 1924. A hospice for the sick was begun in that year. In 1927 the first Rector of the sanctuary was appointed and a set of Stations of the Cross were erected on the mountain road. The foundation stone for the present basilica was laid the following year.

In 1930 the Church recognised the apparitions as “worthy of belief” and a papal indulgence was granted to pilgrims visiting Fatima. In 1935 the bodies of the visionaries Jacinta and Francisco were reburied in the basilica. Pope Pius XII granted a Canonical Coronation of the statue of Our Lady of Fatima on 13 May 1946 which drew such large crowds that the entrance to the site had to be barred to keep the crowds safe.

In our times, pilgrimage to the site goes on all year round and additional chapels, hospitals and other facilities have been constructed, as well as the church gift shops inevitable in such areas. The major pilgrimage festivals occur on the thirteenth day of each month, from May to October, on the anniversaries of the original appearances. The largest crowds gather on 13 May and 13 October, when up to a million pilgrims have attended to pray and witness processions of the statue of Our Lady of Fatima, both during the day and by the light of tens of thousands of candles at night.

Private revelations are never part of the deposit of faith of the Catholic Church, and its members are not required to believe in them. (Assent may be given based on the discernment of the Church and its judgment that an apparition is probable and worthy of pious credence, and that there is no spiritual objection or contradiction to the Faith.) With millions of followers and Roman Catholic believers, the reported visions at Fatima garnered widespread attention. After a canonical process including the re-interview of all the living witnesses, the visions of Fatima were officially declared “worthy of belief” in October 1930 by the Bishop of Leiria-Fatima.

The devotion to Our Lady of Fatima in the Roman Catholic Church has a long history of association with rightist and even fascist groups. At the time of the apparitions, Portugal was undergoing tensions between the secularising Republican government, which had actually outlawed the church for a time (no public services took place for more than a year), and more conservative elements in society. The Catholic opposition compared the actions of the Portuguese government to the contemporary actions of the Russian Bolsheviks, and in this they were not far wrong as the Portuguese authorities admittedly admired the Russian revolutionaries. Later in Spain, as the forces of the Republic gathered strength, the Virgin Mary was to be found leading the armies of the faithful ranged against the “Godless”. (It is certainly true that most of the Republican forces in Spain were anti-clerical and often atheist.) During the Spanish Second Republic, there were reports of the Virgin Mary being seen in Spain. The Fatima visions gained much credence in Integrist and Carlist circles. The

visions at Ezquioga in Spain were widely covered in the press, as were the sixteen other visitations of the Virgin to Spain in 1931. Conservative elements in the Spanish Church actively encouraged the Fatima devotion as a way of countering the threat of atheistic Communism. In Portugal and its former colony of Brazil, and current colonies of Angola, Mozambique and Macao, Fatima and right-wing groups were also strongly linked. When Germany invaded Russia in 1941, some Catholics interpreted this in terms of the Fatima apparitions, thinking the Virgin's prophecy at long last was about to be fulfilled. Some of them willingly joined the fight and enlisted in the Spanish Army's Blue Division that was engaged on the Eastern front. (It must be remembered that at this time, the excesses and crimes of the Russian Revolutionaries were widely known, whereas those of the Third Reich were not.) The publication of Sister Lúcia's Memoirs after the outbreak of the 1939 War and the focus on Russia and "her errors" in the alleged messages of Our Lady strengthened this anti-communist element. Our Lady also said that "if Russia was not consecrated, it would spread its errors throughout the world." The Blue Army of Our Lady of Fatima, for instance, has always been strongly anti-Communist and has often put the Fatima story firmly in the context of the Cold War especially in America. The Blue Army is made up of Catholics and non-Catholics who believe that by dedicating themselves to daily prayer (specifically, of the Rosary) they can help to achieve world peace and put an end to the error of Communism. Organisations such as the Blue Army have gained the approval of the Catholic Church. Many believe the Bolshevik Revolutionaries in Russia in 1917 are the evil conspirators of whom Our Lady spoke.

The Three Secrets

In her third memoir, written in August 1941, Sister Lúcia described three secrets which she said had been revealed to the children during the apparition of 13 July 1917. The first secret was a vision of hell, which Lúcia said they experienced on 13 July 1917. According to Lúcia, the second secret, was the inculcation of devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary as a way to save souls and bring peace to the world. It foretold an end to the Great War, but predicted an even worse one if sinners did not cease offending God. To avoid this, Our Lady would return to ask for the consecration of Russia to the Immaculate Heart, and the establishment of the First Saturday Devotions. If her requests were heard, "Russia would be converted, and there would be peace; if not, Russia would

spread her errors throughout the world, causing wars and persecutions of the Church. In the end, my Immaculate Heart will triumph. The Holy Father must consecrate Russia to Mary, and a period of peace would be granted to the world.”

On 25 January 1938, bright lights, an aurora borealis appeared over the Northern Hemisphere, including in places as far south as North Africa, Bermuda and California. It was the widest occurrence of the aurora since 1709 and people in Paris and elsewhere believed an enormous fire was burning and fire departments were called. Sister Lúcia indicated that it was the sign foretold and so informed her superior and the bishop in letters the following day. A month later, Hitler seized Austria in the Anschluss and eight months later gobbled up the remainder of Czechoslovakia, having already been given the appetizer of the Sudetenland by the Allies.

Pope Pius XII, in his Apostolic Letter *Sacro Vergente* of 7 July 1952, consecrated Russia to the Blessed Virgin Mary. He wrote, “Just as a few years ago, We consecrated the entire human race to the Immaculate Heart of the Virgin Mary, Mother of God, so to-day We consecrate and in a most special manner We entrust all the peoples of Russia to this Immaculate Heart...”

In 1952 the Pope said to the Russian people and the Stalinist regime that the Virgin Mary was always victorious. “The gates of hell will never prevail, where she offers her protection. She is the good mother, the mother of all, and it has never been known, that those who seek her protection, will not receive it. With this certainty, the Pope dedicates all people of Russia to the immaculate heart of the Virgin. She will help! Error and atheism will be overcome with her assistance and divine grace.”

Popes Pius XII and St John Paul II both had a special devotion to Our Lady of Fatima. Pope Benedict XV began Pacelli’s church career, consecrating him a bishop in the Sistine Chapel on 13 May 1917, the date of the first reported apparition. Pius XII was buried in the crypt of St Peter’s Basilica on 13 October 1958, the Feast of Our Lady of Fatima. Pope St John Paul II again consecrated the entire world to the Virgin Mary in 1984, without explicitly mentioning Russia.

The third secret, a vision of the death of the Pope and other religious figures, was transcribed by the Bishop of Leiria during his interview with Lúcia:

“After the two parts which I have already explained, at the left of Our Lady and a little above, we saw an Angel with a flaming sword in his left hand; flashing, it gave out flames that looked as though they would set


the world on fire; but they died out in contact with the splendour that Our Lady radiated towards him from her right hand: pointing to the earth with his right hand, the Angel cried out in a loud voice: 'Penance, Penance, Penance!' And we saw in an immense light that is God: 'something similar to how people appear in a mirror when they pass in front of it' a Bishop dressed in White 'we had the impression that it was the Holy Father'. Other Bishops, Priests, Religious men and women going up a steep mountain, at the top of which there was a big Cross of rough-hewn trunks as of a cork-tree with the bark; before reaching there the Holy Father passed through a big city half in ruins and half trembling with halting step, afflicted with pain and sorrow, he prayed for the souls of the corpses he met on his way; having reached the top of the mountain, on his knees at the foot of the big Cross he was killed by a group of soldiers who fired bullets and arrows at him, and in the same way there died one after another the other Bishops, Priests, Religious men and women, and various lay people of different ranks and positions. Beneath the two arms of the Cross there were two Angels each with a crystal aspersorium in his hand, in which they gathered up the blood of the Martyrs and with it sprinkled the souls that were making their way to God."

When Pope St John Paul II was the object of an assassination attempt on 13 May 1981, and nearly died, many were not slow to realise that this was a key date of one of the first apparitions at Fatima, and this lent credence to the idea that this event was that of the Third Secret. Pope John Paul II clearly thought this, as he later sent one of the bullets removed from his body by surgeons to Fatima, and asked that it be permanently soldered inside the Crown of the major image of veneration, where it remains to this day. He also gave thanks to Our Lady of Fatima for his preservation. The fact that he had been an ardent anti-communist also seemed significant, and when communism fell in 1991, exactly ten years later, many felt that the Pope's sufferings as well as his political and pastoral activities in Poland and later as Pope, were a large part of the cause. This was similarly the case when it was proved that the would-be assassin, a Turk, had been in the pay of the Bulgarian Communist government to assassinate the Pope.

Lúcia declared that the Third Secret could be released to the public after 1960. Some sources, including Canon Barthas and Cardinal Ottaviani, said that Lúcia insisted to them it must be released by 1960, saying that, "by that time, it will be more clearly understood", and, "because the Blessed Virgin wishes it so." Instead, in 1960 the Vatican

published an official press release stating that it was “most probable the Secret would remain, forever, under absolute seal.” This announcement gave rise to widespread speculation. According to The New York Times, speculation over the content of the secret ranged from “worldwide nuclear annihilation to deep rifts in the Roman Catholic Church that lead to rival papacies”. The Vatican withheld the Third Secret until 26 June 2000.

Envoi

While all these political considerations relating to the cultus of Our Lady of Fatima may be very interesting, it is important to remember that they are a side issue, in the end, to her main message of prayer for Peace. However this request is interpreted in subsequent generations, it is plain that this is the main thrust of Fatima, and is increasingly so seen. The millions of pilgrims to Fatima, including many who are the recipients of what is often conceded even by the medical profession, of miraculous healing, are almost entirely uninterested in these political spheres of enquiry. It is probably best that it be so, especially now that the heavily controversial and largely problematic questions relating to them, are largely moot owing to the fall of atheistic communism after 1991. Only two bona fide Communist countries remain in the world to-day, Cuba and the People’s Republic of China, and neither is economically Communist anymore, and progress in human rights has been made in both, though slowly, and there is some light at the end of the tunnel in both countries for increased human rights and liberty. It is therefore probably inevitable that the controversies surrounding Our Lady’s apparitions at Fatima recede, and the message of devotion, love and peace at their heart become paramount. 



Our Lady Untier of Knots

A sermon by Fr Rodney Marshall*

“Do whatever he tells you”
 I am sure you will all think I am a very sad person who ought to get out a bit more when I tell you that one of my pleasures in life is reading notices. Notices in various places have always been a source of

**(Given at the 2016 October Devotion in Sheffield, England, and reprinted from the Annunciation 2017 English edition of AVE)*

endless amusement to me. Like the notice in the hotel room which read “The manager has personally passed all the water served here”, or one in the Swiss Restaurant which informed us that “Our wines leave you nothing to hope for”, or the notice in the Rome laundry which read “Ladies leave your clothes here and spend the afternoon having a good time” or the ecumenically minded notice in a Hong Kong dentist which proudly announced “Teeth extracted using the latest Methodists”. Even in my own church hall in Barnsley somebody put up a notice about a Friendship Club which began “Are you depressed between 10.00am and 12 noon on Tuesdays”.



Notices can be a source of great fun but some notices are much more serious and need to be heeded. Like this one:

“When your thread gets tangled, call the foreman”

These words appeared on a large notice in the spinning room of a Cotton Mill in Lancashire. A young woman had just started to work at the Mill and before long her thread got tangled up. Being a very resourceful person she ignored the advice on the notice and tried to untangle the thread herself. The more she tried the worse it got so in the end she had to call the foreman. I’ve tried my best to sort it out she says, but the foreman is unimpressed. No you haven’t he says because if you had really tried your best you would have called me. There was an important message in that notice for the woman and actually there is an important message for us too.

I don’t believe that there is anybody in this Church today who could honestly say that there were not areas of their life which are tangled and knotted and which makes them less than happy. There is nobody here

whose life would not be improved if some of these knots were undone. Situations in our lives for which we see no solution, that recurring sin we try so hard to address and fail time and again, the knots of family discord, lack of understanding between parents and children, the knots of deep hurt between husband and wife, the absence of peace and joy in our home, the knots of broken relationships, of addiction, of sickness and death, the knots of depression, unemployment, loneliness and fear. These are some of the knots which strangle the life out of all of us, often come between us and God and make us desperately unhappy. Unfortunately when faced with the tangled thread of our lives we far too often do what the woman did, we try to sort it all out ourselves. We fall into the way of the world which holds self-reliance in very high regard. He did it all by himself or she pulled herself up by her own bootstraps or he's a self-made man are among the highest accolades we can be given. But self-reliance is dangerous because it encourages us to think that we can do anything if we try hard enough. And then something happens which brings our self-reliance crashing down around our ears. We or someone we love is diagnosed with a terminal illness, or our marriage breaks up or we lose our job, or we stand at the grave of a loved one. Where is self-reliance then? The truth is that we cannot deal with the tangles and knots in our lives alone; all of us need a helping hand to get through life, we need the support of others if we are going to undo those knots. And that goes for everyone, including Popes.

Back in the 1970s and 80s the present Pope Francis was ordinary Fr Bergoglio and at the time was Superior of the Jesuits in Argentina. It was a very difficult time in the life of the Church especially in Latin America, and to make matters worse Argentina was in the middle of a bloody civil war. Unwittingly Fr Bergoglio became a focus of division between rival factions in the Church and was unfairly accused of being in league with the government authorities. This was a bad time for Fr Bergoglio, made worse by the death of his beloved mother and to cut a long story short during the 1980s he found himself in Germany completing his academic studies.

We can only imagine his state of mind as he left Argentina or the turmoil which tangled his life and made him deeply unhappy. No amount of effort on his part was going to sort all this out. Like all of us he desperately needed help and he found that help in an unexpected place. One day he went into the Church of St Peter in Perlach in Augsburg in Bavaria and there he saw a painting of Our Lady. In the painting she is suspended

between heaven and earth and has a crown of twelve stars on her head. Over her head the Holy Spirit hovers and she is surrounded by angels. In her hands is a knotted white ribbon which she is serenely untying, helped by one of the angels whilst the other angel presents the ribbon, free from knots to us. The picture which had been in the Church since 1700 is called Our Lady Untier of Knots and the painting made such an impression on Fr Bergoglio that when he returned to Argentina he took a copy of the picture with him and promoted devotion to Our Lady Untier of Knots throughout Argentina. That devotion has now spread throughout the world. What happened to Fr Bergoglio as he prayed before the picture we shall never know, what knots in his life were undone we can only guess. Maybe he experienced a fresh the mercy of God in his life, maybe Our Lady showed him the Merciful love of God and as we know Mercy has been a constant theme of his life culminating in this Year of Mercy. We shall never know for certain what happened as he prayed before the picture but one thing is certain that when he returned to Argentina Fr Bergoglio was a very different person and the rest, as they say is history.

What a strange title for Our Lady that is, “ Our Lady Untier of Knots” but what a wonderful title for us especially in this Year of Mercy.

The idea of Mary as untier of knots is not new. St Ireneus, writing in the 2C says this “the knot of Eves disobedience was loosed by the obedience of Mary. For what the Virgin Eve had bound fast by unbelief, this did the Virgin Mary set free through faith”

The undoing of knots in our lives, the untangling of all that makes us unhappy and keeps us from God is a supreme work of mercy. Ultimately it is God’s mercy manifested in Jesus Christ that undoes those knots, but Mary, Untier of knots, is the Icon of that mercy and the supreme example of what God’s mercy can do in a human person who cooperates fully with him.

If we want to know about the mercy of God and what it can do in our lives we need look no further than Our Lady. She is Untier of Knots because she is Mother of Mercy. She is the greatest recipient of the mercy of God in her Immaculate Conception when the mercy of God preserved her from sin from the very moment of her conception. She is the Mother of Jesus, the face of the Father’s Mercy and through her prayers she brings us closer to her divine Son the source of mercy for us all.

It is God’s mercy alone that can undo those knots in our lives, that can repair the broken relationships, forgive the persistent sin, heal the broken hearted, replace fear with love and despair with hope. Mary is not a Fairy Godmother with a magic wand who can wish all our problems

away. Rather she is a Mother who can show her children where to get the help they need and then support them with her prayers. What Mary, Untier of Knots says to us is if you want your life untangling, if you want those knots untying, if you want to be truly happy then simply “Do whatever he tells you”.

Maybe Jesus is saying to you today, you need to be reconciled to God and his Church through the Sacrament of Confession, maybe he is saying you need to say sorry to that person you have hurt or you need to forgive that person who has hurt you, maybe you need to recognise a particular sin which plagues your life and comes between you and God and to bring it honestly to the Lord in prayer. And because many of the knots in the ribbon of our lives are beyond our control we need never despair but bring them to the Lord in prayer. Above all we need to accept that we cannot sort out our lives unaided. When our thread gets tangled we need to call the foreman, we need in the first instance to bring it to the Lord in prayer and to ask Our Lady to join her prayers to ours. Remember that old hymn we used to sing as children:

What a friend we have in Jesus All our sins and griefs to bear
 And what a privilege to carry Everything to God in prayer
 Oh, what peace we often forfeit Oh, what needless pain we bear
 All because we do not carry Everything to God in prayer

So I guess the question for us all today is what are the knots in the thread of my life? What is it that comes between me and God and between myself and others? What is it that needs changing or healing in my life? What stops me living the kind of life God intended for me? What is it that is making me unhappy? There’s a powerful Novena to Our Lady Untier of Knots (Google it!). Why not use it during what is left of this Year of Mercy. Ask Our Lady Untier of Knots, Our Lady of Mercy to show you the way forward, and ask her to help you to experience again the loving mercy of God in a life free from knots.

May Our Lady of Mercy, Our Lady Untier of Knots pray for us all. **AVE**

Editor’s Note: the 2018 American Region Annual Mass and Meeting will be hosted by the recently-formed Our Lady Undoer of Knots Ward at St. Timothy’s Church, Winston – Salem, NC. More details on page 35.



OUR LADY OF PEW AT WESTMINSTER ABBEY

By Fr. John D. Alexander

Not to be missed when visiting Westminster Abbey in London is an alabaster statue of the Virgin and Child tucked away in an unassuming niche in the entrance to a side chapel off the north ambulatory. “Our Lady of Pew” now sits where a medieval statue of the same name sat until it disappeared around 1538 during the English Reformation.

Carved by Sister Concordia Scott, OSB, and installed in 1971, the new Lady of Pew is modeled on a prototype that stands in the Lady Chapel of Westminster Cathedral, a fifteen-minute walk (or five-minute bus ride) away. Dating to about 1450, “Our Lady of Westminster” is the oldest devotional work of art in the Cathedral.

Ironically, Our Lady of Westminster



Our Lady of Pew, Westminster Abbey



The Wilton Diptych, 1395, The National Gallery, London

is a late medieval statue housed in a nineteenth century neo-Byzantine Roman Catholic Cathedral, while Our Lady of Pew is a modern work housed in a medieval gothic Anglican Abbey. But both statues invoke the same tradition of devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary in the City of Westminster.

The story begins in the fourteenth century. Shortly before her death in 1377, the Countess of Pembroke, Mary de St. Pole, endowed a chantry chapel for the daily offering of Masses for her husband the Earl of Pembroke, Aylmer de Valence, who had died fifty-three years earlier, in 1324, after just three years of marriage. The chapel included a statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

At the time Lady Pembroke endowed this chapel, there was already a statue of “Our Lady of le Pewe” in St. Stephen’s Chapel in the nearby Palace of Westminster. Various hypotheses compete to explain the dedication’s derivation. One is that it refers to an image painted in the thirteenth century at the order of King Henry III on the outside of the King’s Pew in St. Stephen’s Chapel. The word “puits” for “wells” is another possibility, as there were four wells beside St. Stephen’s Chapel; other suggestions are that the dedication was originally “Our Lady of Pity,” or that it was derived from the shrine of “Notre Dame du Puy” in France.

Whatever the derivation, a tradition of devotion to “Our Lady of Pewe” was already well established in Westminster when the Countess of Pembroke endowed her chantry chapel, so it made sense for the statue installed there to receive the same dedication. For many years, then, there were at least two statues of Our Lady of Pew: one in St. Stephen’s Chapel in the Palace, and one in the chantry chapel in the Abbey.

Our Lady of Pew was an object of devotion for the English monarchs up until the Reformation. According to one account, during the Peasants’ Revolt of 1381, before going out to meet the rebels led by Wat Tyler, the thirteen-year-old King Richard II “went to Westminster, where he heard Mass at the Abbey with all his Lords. He made his devotions at a statue of Our Lady in a little chapel that had witnessed many miracles and where much grace had been gained, so that the Kings of England have much faith in it.”

Another chronicler tells a similar story: “On the coming of the rebels and Wat Tyler, the same king went to Westminster . . . confessed himself to an anchorite; then took himself to the chapel of Our Lady of Pew; there he said his devotions, and went to Smithfield to meet the rebels.”

The king regarded his subsequent success in putting down the rebellion as a miracle wrought by the Virgin. Richard declared his Kingdom to be Our Lady’s Dowry in thanksgiving for her assistance. He later commissioned the Wilton Diptych, which depicts him placing himself and England, represented by the banner with the St. George’s cross, under the Virgin’s protection.



Above: Another view of
Our Lady of Pew



Left: Our Lady of
Westminster, Westminster
Cathedral, London

The original statue of Our Lady of Pew in St. Stephen's Chapel was destroyed in a fire in 1452. Nothing is known of the circumstances of the disappearance about 85 years later of the statue in the Abbey. But most such images of Our Lady and the Saints were destroyed in the iconoclastic frenzy of the English Reformation. The statue of Our Lady of Walsingham, for example, was burned at Smithfield in 1538 at the direction of Bishop Hugh Latimer. Our Lady of Pew most likely suffered a similar fate at around the same time.

Our Lady of Westminster, also known as "Our Lady of Power," was installed in Westminster Cathedral in 1955. Little is known of its history before its discovery in a private collection in Paris the previous year, although it displays characteristics of the Nottingham school of English alabaster carving. Some believe that it is the original Our Lady of Pew from Westminster Abbey, which escaped destruction by being spirited off to France during the English Reformation. But this is extremely unlikely—not least because it dates to around 1450, well after the installation of the Westminster Abbey statue in 1377. More likely, after being carved in England in the fifteenth century, it was exported and installed in a church or shrine in France. At the time of the French Revolution it may have passed into private hands to escape destruction before eventually coming to light in 1954.

The statue is now on display in Westminster Abbey was commissioned by Albert Joseph Freeman in the 1960s. During World War I, Freeman was severely gassed. Lying near death in a field hospital, he promised the Blessed Virgin that if he recovered, he would dedicate the rest of his life to her service. He survived, and on a visit to Westminster Abbey he was deeply moved by the empty niche in the Pew Chapel, and vowed to replace the statue that had once sat there.

At length, Freeman approached Sister Concordia Scott, OSB, of the Roman Catholic Benedictine nuns at Minster Abbey in Kent. Sister Concordia was one of the most gifted religious sculptors of her day. Little was known of the appearance of the original Our Lady of Pew. After visiting Westminster Abbey, however, she decided to model her statue on the fifteenth-century English alabaster statue in nearby Westminster Cathedral. The one difference was that she substituted a rose for a scepter in the Virgin's left hand, signifying love rather than authority.

Nearly two years passed before a suitable block of alabaster was found in a studio in Nottingham in November 1969 and shipped to Sister Concordia at Minster Abbey. The gradations in the alabaster's coloring were such that she had to make an immediate decision as to how the block should be unloaded into her studio, since its weight meant that it could not be moved again. The upper part of the block was clear and almost translucent; the lower part flowed into deep amber tones.

Sister Concordia described her composition in these words: “The Virgin’s eyes are closed; she is pondering these things in her heart. The Word is sitting on her knees, and the Child is looking at his Father. The Virgin holds a rose, a symbol of love.” On the back of the statue are the words, “That they all may be one in us.”

The new Lady of Pew was installed in Westminster Abbey on March 10, 1971 in a ceremony presided over by the Dean of Westminster and attended by Sister Concordia and her Mother Superior. Sadly absent was Albert Freeman, who had died a few days earlier.

In the years since the statue’s installation, the flourishing Society of Our Lady of Pew has sponsored regular Masses and other devotions at the restored shrine. More information on the Society can be found on the Westminster Abbey website at: www.westminster-abbey.org/worship/society-of-our-lady-of-pew.

On a personal note, I first attended a Mass of Our Lady of Pew when I lived in London in the mid-1980s. In the evening after regular visiting hours, the normally noisy and crowded Abbey was uncannily empty, still, and quiet, except for the congregation of thirty or so worshippers gathered outside the chantry chapel. The stillness accentuated a sense of the beauty of holiness in the vastness of the Abbey’s great interior.

When, God willing, I am next in London, I hope to make the pilgrimage to both Our Lady of Westminster and Our Lady of Pew in conjunction with one of the Society’s scheduled devotions. Perhaps I will start in Westminster Cathedral and make my devotions there before walking the length of Victoria Street to the Abbey. My hope is that more American pilgrims to England will discover this ancient and beautiful devotion to Our Lady in the heart of the bustling city close by the mother of parliaments.

*Acknowledgment: My principal source for much of the above history is Anne Vail, *Shrines of Our Lady in England* (Gracewing, 2004), pp. 211-217—a book highly to be recommended. **AVE***



OUR LADY OF THE ROSARY

Homily given by Fr. John D. Alexander
at St. Stephen’s, Providence, RI, on Saturday, October 7, 2017

Today’s feast of Our Lady originated as a commemoration of the naval Battle of Lepanto on October 7, 1571, when a fleet of the Holy League, a coalition of Catholic maritime states defeated the fleet of the Turkish Ottoman Empire.



Taking place off the western coast of Greece, the battle lasted for five hours. The Holy League's Victory prevented the Mediterranean from becoming an uncontested Muslim lake, protected Italy from an Ottoman invasion, and prevented the Turks from advancing further into the southern flank of Europe. Lepanto was also the last major naval battle fought entirely between galleys.

The battle took place on the first Saturday of the month, a day given to recitation of the Rosary by Catholic confraternities and guilds throughout Europe. Our Lady soon received

credit for the victory. Pope Pius V proclaimed October 7 the Feast of Our Lady of Victory – a name changed in more recent years to Our Lady of the Rosary. At the same time, the invocation of our Lady as “Help of Christians” was inserted in the Litany of Loreto.

Whatever we may think of its militaristic origins, the feast remains a valuable opportunity to reflect upon and give thanks for the gift of the Rosary. The use of prayer beads takes a number of forms in both the Christian East and the Christian West; and is probably an import from Islam – which is ironic given the origins of today's feast in a Christian victory over Muslim forces. Tradition holds that our Lady gave the Rosary in its present form to Saint Dominic in the twelfth century. It was named the rosary to reflect the chivalrous image of each of the decades of Hail Mary's as a “rose” offered by the worshiper in a bouquet to our Lady.

The Rosary is a vehicle of meditation on the mysteries of the life of Christ as seen through the eyes of his Blessed Mother. We use beads on a string to keep track of the prayers; this combination of tactile and vocal engagement frees the mind to contemplate the various scenes from the life of our Lord as the set prayers are repeated. A traditional collect concluding the recitation of the rosary asks that meditating on these holy mysteries we may “imitate what they contain and obtain what they promise.” **AVE**

CATECHESIS BY ROSARY

Brother John M. Samaha, S.M.

Brother John M. Samaha is a member of The Society of Mary (Marists), commonly known as simply the Marist Fathers, an international Roman Catholic religious congregation, founded by Father Jean-Claude Colin and a group of other seminarians in Lyon, France, in 1816 and not to be confused with the Anglican devotional society of the same name.

At Fatima, as at Lourdes before, Our Lady asked the children to pray the rosary, then she prayed the rosary with the seers and taught them how to do so devoutly.

Consider the rosary as a catechetical tool. This thought arises from many bishops and lay catechists and all the religious and lay educator groups in between.

Religious educators and parents often comment that many today – youth and adults – are lacking in Christian formation. A certain religious illiteracy has infiltrated the family, school, and society in general. Children especially lack a strong basic understanding of fundamentals of our faith and of how to pray. The challenge is clear for catechists at all age levels. In addition, we must remember that faith and virtue are caught more than taught. We must model what we teach. We must echo Christ; resound faith, hope, and charity by walking the talk.

Catechists and parents often seek new methods, programs, and books of religious instruction, and we are at a loss for knowing any. But one sure-fired and time-tested method is centuries old, tried and true, and easy to handle – the rosary.

If youngsters and adults learn the rosary, they are learning the basics of the Christian faith as well as learning how to pray. They would know from memory the Apostles' Creed, the Our Father, the Hail Mary, and the Glory Be – the latter three lifted literally from the Gospel. By praying the rosary they would be reviewing the fundamental truths handed on by Jesus and practicing the art of praying. By teaching the rosary we help others to learn that prayer is simple, Biblical, done in union with our Mother Mary, and leads us to become absorbed in the mysteries of the life of Christ and of salvation history.

To know how to pray the twenty mysteries of the rosary means that we know the basics about the life of Jesus and his teachings – his life, pas-

sion, death, resurrection, and ascension; the meaning of Jesus' Incarnation and Redemption. This challenges us to ponder what these mysteries mean for us today. In reality the rosary is a compendium of the Gospel; it is the Gospel strung on beads.

The rosary is not a panacea; it does not solve all the challenges of catechesis and faith formation. But it is one effective catechetical tool for teaching and praying. In the past noted saints and teachers have utilized it successfully. It worked for St. Dominic and his companions in combating the Albigensian heresy in his day.

Let's try again. **AVE**



WHY DOES MARY APPEAR?

Brother John M. Samaha, S.M.

What is the meaning of Marian apparitions?

In 2017 we will observe the centenary of Mary's apparitions at Fatima. What is the significance of the well known apparitions at Lourdes, at Fatima, and other apparitions? In our world of rationalism and secularism, of materialism and consumerism, God and the supernatural seem far removed from the generality of human beings.

Yet God continues to intervene in human history by sending the Mother of Jesus when the Christian faith is challenged and under attack. The human family needs to be reminded, sometimes in a dynamic and supernatural way, that God exists, that the Gospel of Jesus Christ is a universal call to goodness and holiness, that we are all responsible before our maker for our human choices. Apparitions are a wake-up call for a societal examination of conscience on how well we are responding to God's manifold invitations for personal salvation and world peace. How are we responding?

The Church is necessarily both cautious and open in the matter of private revelation. The Church must avoid the risk of losing credibility as the guardian of public revelation by too hastily confirming a reported private revelation or apparition, let alone something false. Yet we can clearly observe the abundant blessings of Mary's action in private revelation. Her appearance is a heaven-sent reminder to compel the world to live the Gospel fully and to assist the Church in its continuing mission of evangelization.

What would the 16th century have been without Guadalupe? Or

the 19th and 20th centuries without the Miraculous Medal at Rue de Bac in Paris, without Lourdes, without Fatima? While always respecting the Church's judgment about a private revelation, we thank God for the tremendous graces and blessings that result from authentic apparitions of Mary.

The purpose of private revelation is never to replace public revelation contained in Scripture and Tradition. Rather, private revelation accentuates the challenge of the Gospel to prayer, penance, fasting, and conversion, which lead to peace of heart and the peace of all societies of the human race.

In contemporary times we have seen more apparitions approved than in any other era of church history. What does this say about our individual and communal faithfulness and relationship to God? If true Marian apparitions are on the increase, our age is in greater need of encouragement to live generously the Christian life. Recall the words of St. John XXIII about Lourdes in 1959: "Listen attentively to the salutary warnings of the Mother of God, who seeks to guide us in our conduct."

St. John Paul II taught us to see that Marian doctrine and devotion are both Christ-centered and Church-centered, to see the harmony of her unique participation as coredemptrix in the redemption earned by Jesus Christ with her subsequent and consequent maternal mediation and advocacy for all humanity. Mary is the perfect model for the People of God to be with Jesus and herself co-redeemers and intercessors for each other and all humankind.

Knowing and teaching the whole truth about Mary is the best means to teach the whole truth about Jesus and his saving incarnation, his redemption, and his Church.

The full truth about Mary safeguards the full truth about Jesus. Mary is the most effective guiding star and mediating force for the new evangelization. The Mother prepares the way for the Son. **AVE**



A Different Marian Shrine

Consider a Cyber Pilgrimage

You can enjoy the blessings and pleasures of a pilgrimage by sitting at your computer and visiting a different kind of shrine. Simply call up The Mary Page, website of The Marian Library and its International Marian Research Institute at the University of Dayton in the USA. Then

embark on a cyber pilgrimage in honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Acknowledged as the premier Marian website, The Mary Page is a fascinating and valuable resource about everything concerning the Mother of the Redeemer. Encyclopedic in scope, it treats an extensive range of topics that will both inform and inspire the pilgrim inquirer. This website is a veritable treasure trove of matters Marian.

Your ticket is www.udayton.edu/mary. Or enter “The Mary Page” on Google or another search engine.

Architectural Tributes to Mary

In the span of time between 1140 and 1880 A.D., more than eighty cathedrals and large churches were built in honor of Mary in France alone. Many of them are classic masterpieces and marvels of architecture.

Mary and the Mississippi River

In 1673 Father Jacques Marquette, S.J., explored the Mississippi River with Louis Joliet. The Mississippi River was originally named Conception by the missionary Father Marquette, who had a deep devotion to the Immaculate Conception of Mary. **AVE**



News from the Wards and Cells

Mystical Rose Cell — Salem, Illinois

The Mystical Rose Cell of the Society of Mary started in April 2016 with five dues-paying members. One decided not to continue even before we had our first meeting, but since then others have joined, including two priests, one of whom drives three hours one way to attend. We now have seven members; we meet once a quarter on a Sunday afternoon in Salem, Illinois at the home of Father David and Elizabeth Baumann. Tea and homemade refreshments are served, and there is a program for each meeting.



At our inaugural meeting, each member had a turn to share what led him or her to an interest in devotion to Mary and membership in the Society of Mary. Other programs have included a presentation on the Roman Catholic Marian missal, made by Father Matthew Dallman, who celebrates a Marian Mass nearly every Saturday in his home parish of Tazewell in the Diocese of Springfield; and a reflection by Father David Baumann on the character of “Mara, the Lady of Sorrow” in the classic full-length fantasy *Lilith*, by George MacDonald, published in 1895. George MacDonald, a major inspiration to C.S. Lewis and other influential twentieth-century Oxford Christians, had not been previously recognized as having a particular devotion to Mary, but the character of Mara gives evidence of a very well-developed Marian devotion as a vital part of Christian discipleship.

Our Lady of Providence Ward

In August, members of Our Lady of Providence Ward took the Providence/Newport fast ferry for a pilgrimage to The Zabriski Memorial Church of St. John the Evangelist, an Anglo-Catholic parish on the Newport “Point” near the harbor. We were in time to hear an organ concert given by a 16 year old Juliard student. Then we made our devotions at their Lady Shrine. After an outdoor lunch on the harbor, we walked around this historic town, also visiting its other two Episcopal parishes, 18th century Trinity, and Emmanuel. Some members went “antiquing,” while others explored the Touro Synagogue, one of the oldest in the United States. It was an enlightening and fun-filled day, a mixture of devotion and play. The weather had been windy and choppy on our morning ride, but for the return, Our Lady Star of the Sea smiled on us with sunlight and calm waters.

We continue to meet monthly for Morning Prayer, Mass, Rosary and a fellowship breakfast. We also put on periodic Coffee Hours following the Sunday Mass at S. Stephen’s, with tables decorated with Lady statues and icons.

Queen of the Angels: St. Michael and All Angels, Denver, Colorado

Our joyous ministry continues to be vibrant and active! Our ward members gather every second Saturday of the month, offering special devotion to our Lady with Matins, Mass, praying the Rosary, and then a meeting afterwards. We keep all of the major feast days by offering the Mass, and we hosted dinner for the Parish on the Feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Both our internal and external outreach activities remain strong as



Above: Walsingham Shrine, St. Michael and All Angels, Denver, CO.

Below: Virgin and Child, St. Michael and All Angels, Denver, CO.

we do daily prayer intercession at our Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham. In addition, several members were able to prepare, and provide a delicious home-cooked meal to 78 people at Ronald McDonald House recently. Many of these families had children accessing specialized medical care in hospitals nearby, and greatly appreciated this hands-on ministry. Also, the ward continues to support Denver's homeless population. With generous donations from the parish, we purchased and gave 1632 breakfast bars to Christ in the City — as they minister to the chronically homeless in our inner city.



With the intention of both furthering devotion and education about Mary, our ward has co-sponsored two retreats per year — during Advent and anteceding Lent-- with our parish's sister devotional society, the St. Teresa of Avila Ward of The Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament. This year we will be co-sponsoring a quiet day on the Feast of St. Matthias, Saturday, February 24, 2018. Guest speakers have offered reflection about Our Lady, and helped guide personal preparation for these Penitential seasons. Time is also set aside during every regular meeting for a short presentation on any related topics. This Fall, members were treated to the fascinating history of a hand-carved statue of the beautiful Mary and Child received as a gift from St. Andrew's Episcopal Church in La Junta. It was designed and created for the 1960 Passion Play by the famous Joseph Albi family woodcarving business in Oberammergau, Germany. In addition, our rector, The Reverend Father R.Trent Fraser, gave an interesting presentation in honor of the 100th anniversary of the apparitions at Fatima, Portugal.

We welcome you to join us in all of our devotions and activities when in Denver!

Respectfully submitted by:

Mrs. Rachelle Stoddard, SOM member

Mary, Ark of the Covenant Ward at St. Mark's, Philadelphia.

Seventeen years ago on the Feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, St. Mark's ward was established.

We continue praying the Rosary each Saturday following the 10 AM Mass.

Some members and other parishioners find it more suitable to their schedules to meet and pray the Rosary on Sunday morning prior to the High Mass.



*Mary, Ark of The Covenant
St. Mark's Ward of The Society of Mary*

Notices

**2018 Annual
Annual Mass and Meeting
of The Society of Mary, American Region
Saturday, April 28, 2018, 11:00am
St. Timothy's Episcopal Church
Winston-Salem, North Carolina**

**For more information visit the
“News and Events” page at www.somamerica.org
and the parish website at www.sttimothysws.org**

**SOCIETY OF KING CHARLES THE MARTYR
XXXV ANNUAL
SOLEMN MASS OF SAINT CHARLES, K.M.**

**11 a.m., Saturday, 27 January 2018
St. Timothy's Anglican Church, Fort Worth, TX
Solemn Pontifical Mass in the Presence of a Greater Prelate
American Missal**

**Celebrant & Preacher: The Rt Rev'd Keith L.
Ackerman, SSC, DD, Vicar; The Rt Rev'd Jack Leo
Iker, SSC, DD, Bishop of Fort Worth, pontificating
Choir of the Diocese of Fort Worth with Orchestra
Music under Direction of Tomi Godbee**

**Buffet Luncheon reservations: \$20 by 19 January;
checks to “St. Timothy's” - memo “SKCM”
Send to church at 4201 Mitchell Blvd., Fort Worth, TX 76119
Contact: 817-536-7856 or info@sttimothysacc.com
Church website: www.sttimothysacc.com**

The Shrine of Our Lady of Clemency

*75th Anniversary
1943-2017*

12th May 2018 (Saturday)

*S. Clement's Church
2013 Appletree Street
Philadelphia PA 19103
215-563-1876*

The 75th Anniversary of the Installation of the Shrine of Our Lady of Clemency will be celebrated on Saturday, 12th May 2018 at S. Clement's Church in Philadelphia.

The ceremonies will include the Holy Rosary, Mass, a luncheon reception, commentaries from visiting clerical and lay dignitaries, and conclude with evening devotional offices at the shrine.

All are welcome to attend.

*The Ecumenical Society of the
Blessed Virgin Mary
USA (ESBVM-USA)*

is an academic organization of Catholic, Anglican, Methodist, Orthodox, and Presbyterian scholars that is open to all Christians.

We are now accepting paper proposals for our upcoming conference to be held at Misericordia University in Dallas, PA (just outside Wilkes-Barre) from July 26-28, 2018.

For more information, contact ESBVM USA President
Maura Hearden at maura.hearden@desales.edu

FORM OF APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

Send to the AMERICAN REGION MEMBERSHIP ADMINSTRATOR

Lynne Walker

Society of Mary, P.O. Box 930

Lorton, VA 22079-2930

membershipadminstrator@somamerica.org

DECLARATION

(which must be made by those desiring to
be admitted to membership of the Society of Mary)

I, _____ (Revvd/Dr/Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms)
(block letters – Full name) *(Delete as appropriate)*

Declare that I am a member of the Holy Catholic Church and that I conform to her Discipline and Precepts, and desire to be admitted a MEMBER of the Society of Mary and hereby PROMISE to fulfill the Conditions and Undertake to Promote the Objects and keep the Rules of the Society.

*I enclose herewith my first subscription of \$15 for one year or \$250 for a Life Subscription.
If I want a Society of Mary medal, I have enclosed an additional \$20 for that purpose.*

Signed _____

Mailing Address *(block letters)* _____

E-mail Address _____

RECOMMENDATION by a Priest *(who need not necessarily be a Member)*

From my PERSONAL knowledge of _____
(block letters)

I believe that he/she is suitable to be admitted as a member of the Society of Mary.

Date _____ (Signed) _____

Address _____

Parish/Appointment _____



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Cover photo:
Luca Giordano, Madonna of the Rosary, 1657
Museo di Capodimonte, Naples, Italy

For information on the Society of Mary
in the Church of England, including
the English edition of AVE, please visit
<http://societyofmary.weebly.com>