

## The Immaculate Heart of Mary

### Part One

In an old Ukrainian missal we are urged to pray three "Bohorodytse Divo" (Hail Marys) to the Mother of Perpetual Help in honor of her purity once in the morning and once in the evening. The Blessed Virgin promised to St. Mechtilde special blessings and eternal salvation to those who devoutly do so.

How is Mary pure? First, she was made so by her Son. She was conceived without original sin. When Mary was given Grace she received it without selfish and sinful interference. She co-operated with grace (Luke 1:46-49). Second, Mary was the pure one who offered her sufferings with Jesus on the Cross. As Simeon the prophet had foretold, her heart was pierced by a sword of grief to reveal the thoughts of the hearts of many (Luke 2:34-35). Third, Jesus is the Savior of the world, the source of all saving grace. He has chosen to dispense this grace through His Blessed Mother. The Church calls her the Mediatrix of All Grace.

On May 13<sup>th</sup> 1917 Our Blessed Mother began to visit three shepherd children in Fatima, Portugal. They were the brother and sister St. Francisco and St. Jacinta and their cousin Lucia. On October 13<sup>th</sup> 1917 a crowd estimated by even anti-Catholic secular reports as approximately 70,000 witnessed the Miracle of the Sun. It had been raining on the muddy field and the crowd was soaked and covered with mud. They saw the sun first dance in the sky and then hurtle toward them. When the sun resumed its normal position their clothing was perfectly dry and clean. Blind people could see, the lame could walk and there were many conversions.

Our Blessed Mother's message at Fatima was that in the end her Immaculate Heart would triumph. How? By turning away from our sins and going to confession, doing penance for our sins. Especially by praying the Rosary devoutly while meditating on the mysteries and by going to the Holy Sacrifice and receiving Holy Communion. All of this should be done moved by an ardent love of the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

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### Part Two

Mary returned in 1929 to the visionary Sister Lucia and made the request that Russia be consecrated to her Immaculate Heart. We in the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church should see here how our Blessed Mother was caring for us. Would not the conversion of Russia have tremendous benefits for us? Sister Lucia, the one person who would know, stated that Pope St. John Paul II had fulfilled Mary's request in 1984. Did not the officially atheistic Soviet Union fall several years later? Did not Ukraine achieve its independence because of this?

Remember that the "Lady of the Rosary" - the title that Mary used for herself in Fatima - called everyone to prayer and repentance. Completing the moral conversion of Russia and the world depends on our own efforts to imitate Mary: co-operating with grace by confessing our sins, doing penance and praying the Rosary. God is calling us to do so this Great Lent.

Paul Senz in his book "Fatima: 100 Questions & Answers" published in 2020 writes: Mary's Immaculate Heart is one of profound and utter love of God, for her son, Jesus Christ. It is a heart of sorrows, pierced by the wounds of Jesus, in ways only a mother's heart can be. It is a heart overflowing with love for her children, given to her by Christ on the cross. Devotion to, and veneration of, the Immaculate Heart of Mary is a way to a life of love for God, a life of Christian virtue and submission to God's will, and a life full of selfless acts of charity.

"... for the mice, coming out of their holes, have presumed to challenge us to fight."

Judith 14:12