

FATIMA FOR TODAY

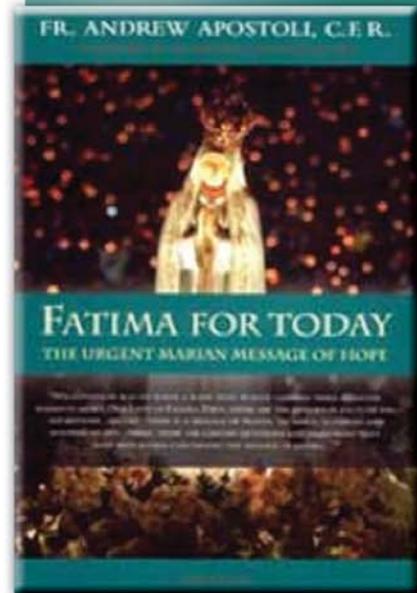
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PART 2

Introduction to Fatima for Today – Part 2

In the second half of *Fatima for Today*, Fr. Andrew Apostoli looks at the events subsequent to the apparitions at Fatima, with a particular focus on Our Lady's request for the consecration of Russia and the long struggle that ensued to fulfill this request. In addition, we will look at the Third Secret of Fatima, Joseph Ratzinger's interpretation of that secret, responses to some of the conspiracy theories that have tended to swirl around such matters on the fringes of the Church, and some of the ways that Fatima continues to point to the future as the Church moves into the 21st Century.

As we consider these issues, we must remember that this private revelation (like all private revelations) is given, not to make us privy to some inside information that is denied ordinary Catholics. Rather private revelation is meant to call us back to the ordinary demands of the Gospel for repentance, conversion, participation in the sacramental and moral life of the Church, and evangelization so that the whole world may meet Jesus and find salvation through him. As we examine this amazing story of God's supernatural intervention in 20th Century history, let us always bear in mind that our call is not to get caught up in spiritual conspiracy theories or "secret histories of our time" but to keep our gaze fixed on the public, open and obvious teaching of Holy Mother Church, which points us always to Jesus and to Mary who said, "Do whatever he tells you."



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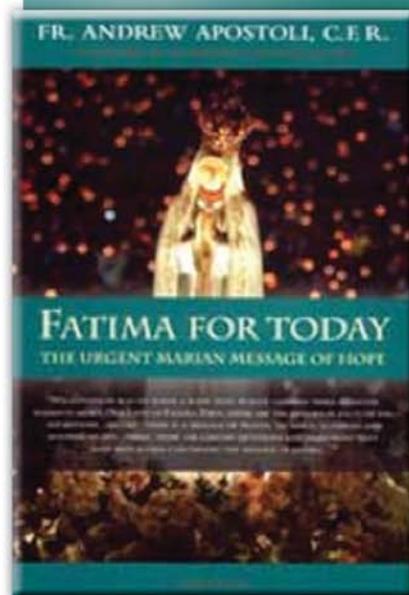
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Questions for Understanding

1. What occurred in Pontevedra, Spain on December 10, 1925? What does the First Saturday devotion consist of? What is promised to those who observe this devotion?
2. Sr. Lucia had a vision on June 13, 1929. What was it and what did it signify? After the vision, what request did Mary make of Sr. Lucia? What are some of the reasons this request went unfulfilled for so long? Who was Blessed Alexandrina de Costa? How does her request for the consecration of the world figure into the request Mary made for the consecration of Russia? How do the acts of consecration made by Pius XII, John XXIII and Paul VI begin to respond to Our Lady's request, but not fulfill her terms?
3. How did the events of May 13, 1981, impact Pope John Paul II's thinking when he read the Third Secret? How did Pope John Paul reconcile in his mind the fact that the bishop in white is killed by an assassin's bullet but he was not? What four aspects of the act of consecration of March 25, 1984, does Fr. Apostoli focus on? Did Sr. Lucia regard this act of consecration as fulfilling the wishes of Our Lady?
4. What are some of the most common controversies over the Third Secret? How does Fr. Apostoli answer them? What did Sr. Lucia say about people who wasted time obsessively speculating about the Third Secret? Can you summarize Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger's interpretation of the Third Secret of Fatima?
5. What is the origin of the name "Fatima"? What is significant about the prayer posture the angel adopts? How are the apparitions of Fatima tied to the Church's mission to the Islamic world?
6. How can we summarize Pope Benedict XVI's teaching regarding the message of Fatima? How does Fr. Apostoli teach that we can live and spread the message of Fatima?
7. What are the four blasphemies against the Immaculate Heart of Mary that the First Saturday devotion is given to help make reparation? Why is the devil so intent on insulting Mary as well as Jesus? How does the honor given to Mary actually constitute honor give to Jesus?



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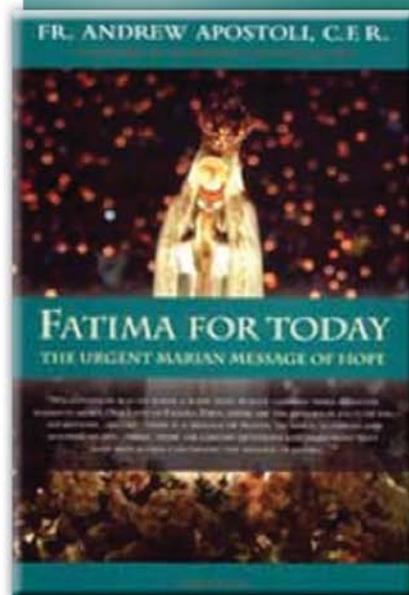
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1. On July 13, 1917, Mary promised that she would return and ask for the consecration of Russia to her Immaculate Heart. On June 13, 1929, she finally appeared to Sr. Lucia and did so. One of the mysterious questions is, “Why did it take 12 years between the promise and the fulfillment?” Likewise, in scripture, we often see a long delay between promise and fulfillment (for instance, the promise of a son to Abraham who has to wait until he is extremely old and the promise that through him all the nations of the earth will be blessed has to wait nearly two thousand years till the coming of Christ). Similarly, in our lives, God will often put us through a long trial of waiting until some promise is fulfilled. Have you ever had to wait a long time between a promise and the fulfillment of the promise? What happened? What was that like? What did you learn during that time of waiting?
2. Once Mary asks for the consecration of Russia, Heaven has to wait 55 years until that request is fulfilled by the act of consecration performed by Pope John Paul II on March 25, 1984. Have you ever taken a long time to get around to doing something you know God has called you to do? What happened? What was that like? In the story of Fatima, we sometimes see Jesus complaining about the slowness of the Church to respond and we sometimes see Heaven cutting the Church some slack in allowance for human weakness. Have there been times where it seemed God was impatient with your dawdling to obey and times where God has graciously made leeway for your weaknesses or difficulties? What happened? Did it change you?
3. On a number of occasions Sr. Lucia acts or refrains from acting out of obedience to her confessor or spiritual guide. Have you ever taken spiritual direction or placed yourself in obedience to a confessor? Without betraying any confidences spoken in the confessional, can you describe your experience of obedience? Was it liberating? Difficult? Both?
4. One of the difficulties Sr. Lucia encountered in her long life was people who were, for want of a better term, spiritual voyeurs and conspiracy mongers. These were the people with elaborate theories involving the Third Secret of Fatima and a longing to have the special inside track on “secret knowledge.” Some were actually outraged and disappointed that the Third Secret was not about some nuclear war or mass apostasy, and fell to guessing that the Third Secret released by the Vatican was a hoax to cover up the “real” Third Secret despite Sr. Lucia’s confirmation of its genuineness. Have you ever been tempted to the Gnostic desire for “inside spiritual information” or the hunger to know “secrets” denied the ordinary person? The actual revelations of Fatima always point us back to the ordinary teaching of the Church that is public and available to all. Have you ever had the experience of discovering that the glory of God is available in the ordinary? What happened? What was that like?



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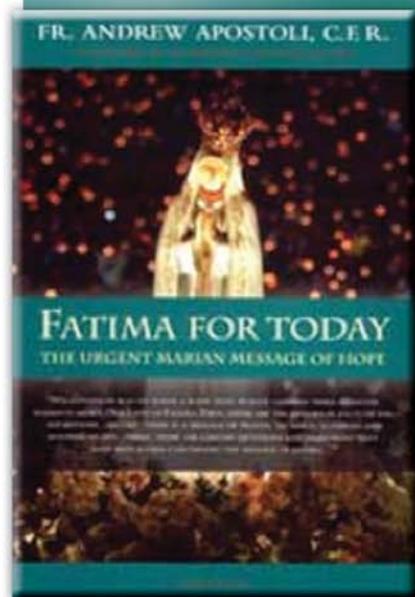
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Questions for Reflection *continued*

5. Pope John Paul II had a sort of “conversion experience” as he lay recuperating from his assassination attempt. In a sort of gift of holy hindsight, it suddenly occurred to him that everything that happened made sense in light of the prophecy of Fatima. Have you ever had a moment where an incident of radical confusion or sin suddenly took its place in the designs of God and you realized that God had his hand on the events in your life? What happened? What was that like? What did you do as a result?
6. Pope John Paul II consecrated the world and Russia to the Immaculate Heart of Mary in 1984. Have you ever consecrated yourself to Mary’s Immaculate Heart? What did you do? What happened? How has this changed your life? Do you find the idea of consecrating yourself to the Immaculate Heart of Mary difficult, fearful or confusing for some reason? Why?
7. The ultimate promise of Our Lady of Fatima is that “in the end, my Immaculate Heart will triumph.” In a world weighed down by global economic woes, the threat of war, a troubled Church, and numerous problems facing the family and the culture, do you find this promise consoling or difficult to believe? Why? What are three ways in which you plan to try to respond to the message of Fatima?



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Books:

The Message of Fatima

by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, available on-line at:

http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_20000626_message-fatima_en.html

What Happened at Fatima

by Leo Madigan (Catholic Truth Society/Ignatius Press) 2000.

Fatima for Today: The Urgent Marian Message of Hope

by Fr. Andrew Apostoli (Ignatius Press) 2010.

Fatima in Lucia's Own Words

by Fr. Louis Kondor (Postulation Centre, Fatima, Portugal) 1976.

Our Lady of Fatima

by William T. Walsh (Image Books) 1954.

A Still, Small Voice: A Practical Guide on Reported Revelations

by Fr. Benedict Groeschel, C.F.R. (Ignatius Press) 1993.

Mary, Mother of the Son

by Mark P. Shea (Catholic Answers) 2009.

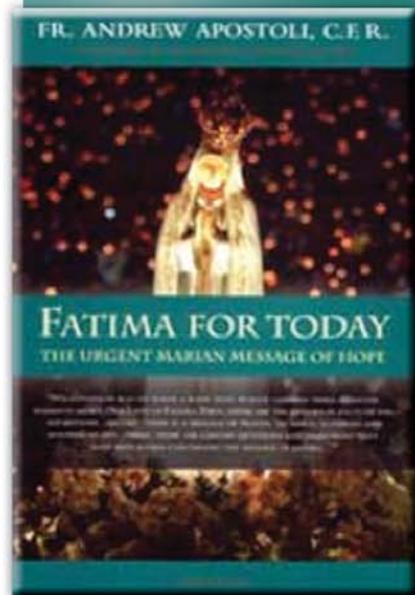
“Private Revelation” in the *Catholic Encyclopedia*
(<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/13005a.htm>).

Video:

The Miracle of Our Lady of Fatima (Warner) 1952.

The Day the Sun Dance (Ignatius Press) 1997.

Apparitions at Fatima (EWTN) 1992.



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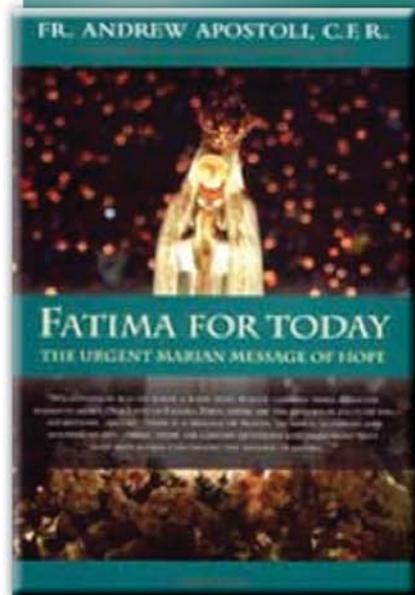
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1. Read pp. 148-152.
2. Read pp. 160-179.
3. Read pp. 186-189; 193-196.
4. Read pp. 263-268. Read p. 214. Read pp. 278-284.
5. Read pages 11-12, 22-23, and 223-226.
6. Read pp. 230-232.
7. Read pp. 243-248.



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