Image: The Trinitarian and Eucharistic Vision seen by Sister Lucia of Fatima on June 13, 1929 in her convent chapel in Tuy, Spain

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One hundred and one years ago, at Fatima on July 13, 1917, Our Lady chose to give to the Church Militant a Great Secret, in three distinct parts, in the same month in which the Church commemorates the Precious Blood of Jesus. As I asked in my book, ***Fatima: The Signs and Secrets***: Is there a connection between each of the three parts of the Great Secret and July, the month of the Precious Blood? After all, St. Peter says (cf. 1 Pet. 1:18-20) that we "know that we were redeemed with the Precious Blood of Christ, as of a lamb unspotted and undefiled, foreknown indeed before the foundation of the world, but manifested in the last times."[1]

The First Secret of Fatima, which provides the means to save poor sinners of this era from hell, offers the only spiritual remedy willed by the Most High God, i.e., worldwide devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. The Second Secret tells the Church Militant, from the Pope and bishops to the lay Catholic in the pew, how to administer the remedy. It includes two specific requests, conditional prophecies, and an infallible promise of robust spiritual health and vitality for the Church and the world when the remedy is employed. The Third Secret, insofar as only the Vision is known (but not Our Lady's words explaining it), describes what seems to be a particular historic era that will culminate in the Church's Way of the Cross.

Where in all of this is the Precious Blood of Jesus?

First, let us look again at the initial supernatural manifestations at Fatima, which began with the appearance of an angel. Three times throughout the year 1916 (in the spring, summer, and fall), the angel appeared to three shepherd children: Lucia dos Santos and her two younger cousins, Francisco and Jacinta Marto. On his first visit, he identified himself as the Angel of Peace, commanded the children to pray with him, and taught them by example a brief prayer of charity toward God and of intercession of souls, concluding: **"Pray thus. The Hearts of Jesus and Mary are attentive to the voice of your supplications."**[2]

On his second visit, the angel appeared suddenly, during the children's afternoon rest on an unbearably hot summer day, admonishing them, **"What are you doing? Pray! Pray very much! The Hearts of Jesus and Mary have designs of mercy on you. Offer prayers and sacrifices constantly to the Most High!"**[3] Telling them that they could make

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everything they do a sacrifice offered to God as an act of reparation for the sins by which He is offended and in supplication for the conversion of sinners, the angel also revealed himself as the Angel Guardian of Portugal. As I also explained in my book,[4] he did not give his name but we can say with moral certainty that he was the great St. Michael the Archangel, the Prince of the heavenly host who, for 1,000 years, has been invoked as Portugal's guardian. The wondrous St. Michael concluded this visit by saying, **"Above all, accept and bear with submission the suffering which the Lord will send you."[5]**

Years later, Sr. Lucia wrote in her memoirs that on his third and final visit (which took place about a year before the Great Miracle of the Sun), the angel appeared "holding a chalice in his hands, with a Host above it, from which some drops of Blood were falling into the sacred vessel. Leaving the chalice and the Host suspended in the air, the Angel prostrated on the ground and thrice repeated this prayer:

> **"'O Most Holy Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, I adore Thee profoundly. I offer Thee the Most Precious Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, present in all the tabernacles throughout the world, in reparation for the outrages, sacrileges and indifference by which He Himself is offended. And by the infinite merits of His Most Sacred Heart and those of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, I beg of Thee the conversion of all poor sinners.'**
>
> "Then, rising, he once more took the chalice and the Host in his hands. He gave the Host to me, and to Jacinta and Francisco he gave the contents of the chalice to drink, saying as he did so: **'Take and eat the Body and drink the Blood of Jesus Christ, horribly outraged by ungrateful men. Make reparation for their crimes and console your God.'**"[6]

Our Lady and the Precious Blood

In his classic work on the Precious Blood (published only two years before the angel's first visit), Fr. M.F. Waltz wrote, "Devotion to the Precious Blood is as old as the world, and the devotion to this redemptive and Eucharistic Blood of Jesus is as old as the Church."[7] From the beginning of the Fatima apparitions in 1916, the angel directed the children's attention to great mysteries of the Faith—the Holy Trinity, the True Presence of Jesus under the appearance of mere bread and wine, the unified Hearts of Jesus and Mary (the new Adam and new Eve), and reparatory prayer and sacrifice.

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The Virgin, at Her first appearance in May 1917, asked the children to freely offer themselves to God, as an act of reparation for sins and in supplication for the conversion of sinners. Motivated by supernatural charity, Lucia gave their collective *Fiat*, to which Our Lady said, **"Then you are going to have much to suffer, but the grace of God will be your comfort."**[8] This latter type of sacrifice is the kind from which so many people shy away, forgetting that "there is an apostolate of suffering, as well as an apostolate of prayer and labor."[9] As St. Paul reminds Christians, "For whom He foreknew, he also predestinated to be made conformable to the image of His Son" (Rom. 8:29).

The Holy Trinity prayer (offered thrice in succession) is one that we, too, are meant to pray. It is the perfect prayer to offer when in the Presence of the Blessed Sacrament, before or after receiving absolution, when the Host is elevated at Mass/Benediction, before or after our Rosary prayers, and most certainly in thanksgiving after receiving Holy Communion.

The True Presence of Our Lord is the same Jesus Who, in the hypostatic union of true God and true Man, assumed from His Immaculate Mother His own Flesh and Blood. "It is an article of faith that the Blessed Virgin gave to the Son of God that most pure and Precious Blood which the Holy Ghost drew from her virginal veins as from the original source of man's redemption. This body of the Mother of God, in order of nature, was purer than the rays of the sun and, in the order of grace, purer than the blessed Spirits" (the angels).[10]

The 19th century priest, Fr. Frederick Faber, explained, "The Precious Blood was assumed directly to Our Blessed Lord's Divine Person from His Immaculate Mother. It was not taken merely to His Body, so that His Body was directly assumed to the Person of the Word, and His Blood only indirectly or mediately [*sic*] as part of His Body. The Blood, which was the predetermined price of our redemption, rested directly and immediately on the Divine Person, and thus entered into the very highest and most unspeakable degree of the Hypostatic Union – if we may speak of degrees in such an adorably simple mystery. It was not merely a concomitant of the Flesh, an inseparable accident of the Body. The Blood itself, as Blood, was assumed directly by the Second Person of the Holy Trinity."[11]

"It came also from Mary's blood. Mary's blood was the material out of which the Holy Ghost, the Third Person of the Most Holy Trinity, the artificer of the Sacred Humanity, fashioned the Blood of Jesus. Moreover," Fr. Faber continued, "there is some portion of the Precious Blood which once was Mary's blood, and which remains still in Our Blessed Lord…At this moment in heaven, He retains something which once was His Mother's…"[12] Already we receive glimpses of understanding why souls may attain salvation via devotion to the Immaculate Heart, because "the Precious Blood is the fountain of the plenitude of all graces in Mary, but it is also the source of her power to help us."[13]

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The Great Secret Revisited

The First Secret opened with Our Lady momentarily showing the children a terrifying vision of hell. Then the Virgin said "so kindly and so sadly: You have seen hell where the souls of poor sinners go. To save them, God wishes to establish in the world devotion to my Immaculate Heart."[14]

"If what I say to you is done, many souls will be saved and there will be peace. The war is going to end; but if people do not cease offending God, a worse one will break out during the reign of Pius XI. When you see a night illumined by an unknown light, know that this is the great sign given you by God that He is about to punish the world for its crimes, by means of war, famine, and persecutions of the Church and of the Holy Father."[15]

Then begins the Second Secret: "To prevent this, I shall come to ask for the consecration of Russia to my Immaculate Heart, and the Communion of Reparation on the First Saturdays. If my requests are heeded, Russia will be converted, and there will be peace. If not, she will spread her errors throughout the world, causing wars and persecutions of the Church. The good will be martyred, the Holy Father will have much to suffer, various nations will be annihilated. In the end, my Immaculate Heart will triumph. The Holy Father will consecrate Russia to me, and she will be converted, and a period of peace will be granted to the world."[16]

A Vision of the Church's Calvary

Like the First and Second Secrets, the Third Secret of Fatima has two parts. It begins with the words written in Lucia's Fourth Memoir, "In Portugal, the dogma of the Faith will always be preserved etc."[17] At some point, the children saw another Vision (described below by Lucia), but the Church Militant and the world still await the publication of the Virgin's words that describe this mystifying Vision. Let us again look at Lucia's description of it, which indicates a modern-day Calvary for the Church:

> "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

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> Father.' Other Bishops, Priests, men and women Religious 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, men and women Religious, 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."

Truly, the Third Secret Vision is a sobering one. It brings to mind what was said by Our Lord, appearing to St. Margaret Mary Alacoque with His Sacred Heart torn and His Body so grievously wounded: "Behold the state to which I am reduced by My chosen people that should have appeased My justice, and that instead persecute Me. If they amend not, I will chastise them severely. I will withdraw the just and the innocent, and immolate the rest in My just anger, inflamed against them by their sins."[18] Christ's warning came to pass in the French Revolution and the 19th century's subsequent revolutions.

As St. Jean-Marie Vianney once said, "The good God asks not for the martyrdom of our body, but asks for the martyrdom of our hearts and wills."[19] Fr. Faber noted, "Each age is a stray sheep from God; and the Church has to seek it and fetch it back to Him…Each age needs persuading in a manner of its own," but as he also observed, "Works of mercy are not attractive to hearts untouched by love."[20]

Only a few years before the Fatima apparitions, Fr. Waltz of esteemed memory also remarked, "In our age of luxury and religious indifference, men do not want to be reminded of moral regeneration, of the necessity of struggling against the flesh, the world, and the devil; they do not want to hear of their obligation to use the means of salvation and thus cooperate with God's grace."[21] Finally, St. Paul infallibly stated, "And almost all things, according to the law, are cleansed with blood: and without shedding of blood there is no remission" (Heb. 9:22).

Devotion to the Precious Blood

The Precious Blood will inspire us with a love for Jesus that is willing to make any sacrifice for Him. "The principal part of the divine work of the Precious Blood is hidden in the secrecy

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of souls, and there are countless triumphs of truth and grace which will never be known till the Day of Judgement. The very greatest sacrifices we have to make are hidden from the gaze of an admiring world. Those have always been the heaviest crosses which we must drag along, unseen by human eyes. The most painful struggles ever endured are fought out in the stillness of the heart. Fiercer battles have been fought, and greater heroes are to be found, in the spiritual and hidden life of Christians…These are the triumphs of the Precious Blood. They will come to light on the Day of Judgement."[22]

The Third Secret is a serious warning for the Church because she is the work of the Precious Blood. As Fr. Faber said, "The salvation of individual souls is dependent on the Church. Hence the building up of the Church is one of the grandest works of the Precious Blood. The conversion of nations, the history of doctrine, the holding of councils, the spread of the episcopate, the influence of the ecclesiastical upon the civil law, the freedom of the Holy See, the papal monarchy of ages past, the concordats of the present day, the filial subordination of Catholic governments—all these things alter the face of the spiritual world."[23]

As the "diabolical disorientation" of which Lucia spoke increases daily, the one true God Who died for us desires our reparation, so that He may grant the entire world both conversion and an era of peace. Hidden in all of the Fatima Virgin's requests is the Precious Blood, the secret behind the Great Secret, because, as Fr. Faber once wrote, "God's goodness is at once the most public of all His attributes and, at the same time, the most secret."[24] The Virgin, fountain of the Precious Blood, is the rightful dispenser of the Precious Blood, the source of all the graces which the Savior channels through the hands of His Virgin Mother. And so, it follows that whether for a nation or an individual, it always remains true that "belonging to Mary is a privileged means of belonging to Christ."[25]

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Notes

[1] Faber, Frederick William. *The Precious Blood; or, The Price of Our Salvation*. [Baltimore: John Murphy & Co., 1960. Free Kindle edition, made available by the Internet Archive]: Loc. 1472.

[2] Sister Maria Lucia of the Immaculate Heart, *Fatima in Lucia's Own Words: The Memoirs of Sister Lucia, the Last Fatima Visionary* [Lapeer, MI: KIC, 2015. Digitized from the original *Memoirs*. Annotated by KIC.]: Loc. 1344-1345.

[3] *Ibid*., Loc. 1352.

[4] Bartold, Marianna. *Fatima: The Signs and Secrets*. [Lapeer, MI: KIC, 2014. Also available on Kindle, 2013 Edition]: pp. 3-10.

[5] Sister Maria Lucia, *op. cit.*, Loc. 1355.

[6] *Ibid*., Loc. 1365-1371.

[7] Walz, Rev. Max Francis. *Why is Thy Apparel Red? Or, Glories of the Precious Blood* [Lapeer: KIC. Digitized from the 1914 original.]: Loc. 266.

[8] Sister Maria Lucia, *op. cit.*, Loc. 1425.

[9] *Ibid*., Loc. 1490.

[10] Walz, *op. cit.*, Loc. 87.

[11] Faber, *op. cit.*, Loc. 470.

[12] *Ibid.*

[13] Walz, *op. cit.*, Loc. 109.

[14] Sister Mary Lucia, *op. cit.*, Loc. 2058.

[15] Ibid., Loc. 2060.

[16] Ibid., Loc. 2063.

[17] Sister Mary Lucia, *op. cit.*, Loc. 2939.

[18] Walz, *op. cit.*, Loc. 1159.

[19] Vianney, St. Jean Marie. Cited by Waltz, *ibid*., Loc. 1366.

[20] Faber, *op. cit.*, Loc. 340, 914.

[21] Walz, *op. cit.*, Loc. 334.

[22] Walz, *op. cit.*, Loc. 1584.

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[23] Faber, *op. cit.*, Loc. 1686, 1688.

[24] *Ibid.*, Loc. 872.

[25] Murphy. John. F. "The Immaculate Heart" in *Mariology*, Vol. III.

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