Testimonies from Blessed Jacinta and Padre Pio

Editor's Note: ***The following articles first appeared in earlier editions of our monthly newspaper, the first in the January 2011 issue by John Vennari (RIP) and the second first published in June 2011 taken directly from Padre Pio's Correspondence with his Spiritual Daughters (Vol. III), 1915-1923***

Blessed Jacinta "Our Lady does not want people to talk in Church"

By John Vennari

With the advent of the New Mass and the banalization of liturgy has come a severe decline of reverence by Catholics in the House of God. It is now the norm in many places for Catholics to talk with each other while in church before and after Mass. The reverential silence that is due Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament has disappeared from too many churches throughout the world. This is certainly true of Catholic young adult gatherings. I have reported in the past episodes at major international Catholic youth sessions I've attended, such as World Youth Day, 2002 in Toronto, where young people in parish churches throughout the city chattered with each other in full voice before and after Mass as if they were at a picnic or social event. These youngsters were from all over the world, dressed in slovenly and immodest attire. Bishops and priests from around the world were likewise present.

This indicates that:

1) These adolescents and young adults are merely imitating what takes place at their local parish's churches. They are not receiving proper formation at home.

2) This chattering in church is now prevalent in practically every country – it is a worldwide abuse. The youngsters from all over the world were acting with the same lack of reverence while in church.

3) The priests and bishops there, who have the duty to instruct the Catholic faithful on proper comportment in church, did nothing to stop the youngsters from this irreverence, indicating that too many of today's priests and bishops do not teach, or do not reinforce, the need for silence in church.

Yet the Fatima Message contains a lesson that should help Catholics return to the

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reverential silence we owe to Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament. Jacinta Marto, the youngest of the three Fatima children, died in 1920. During her final illness, before going to the hospital in Lisbon, she stayed for a while at an orphanage run by a holy religious named Mother Godinho. Mother Godinho relates that while in the house, Jacinta would go to a room that overlooked a chapel next door to the orphanage. From there she could see the tabernacle, and she would pray with her eyes fixed upon it with love and fervor. From her vantage point, Jacinta could see the activities in the nave of the chapel, and Mother Godinho described her reaction:

> "She remarked that several people did not have the necessary attitude of recollection, and she said to me: 'Godmother … , these people should not be allowed to behave this way before the Blessed Sacrament. In church, we must be tranquil and not talk … Our Lady does not want people to talk in church'."

Our Lady does not want people to talk in church! Those old enough will remember that prior to 1962, this reverential silence in parish churches was the norm. It was unthinkable to speak out loud or talk unnecessarily in church. And if one did have to speak for some important reason, it was done quickly and in the lowest of whispers. This silence gave to Our Lord the reverence that is His due, and created an atmosphere of beauty, holiness, and otherworldliness. When in church, you knew you were in God's house! This reverence in church has virtually disappeared. It is maintained in most places where the Old Latin Mass is celebrated. I say "most places" since I have sometimes seen this prattling in church by three of four in the congregation at diocesan "Indult" Masses. The saddest part is that priests continually allow this to happen. They are not instructing their people on reverence and proper comportment in church, which makes one wonder what kind of deficient formation they received in the seminary. As for those senior priests trained in the old school who should know better, today's widespread irreverence demonstrates how the New Mass, its new spirit, and its slovenly approach to Our Lord has a deleterious effect on those who are supposed to be giving example and guidance. The New Mass, which was written with the assistance of six Protestant ministers, has caused an erosion of the Faith, and an erosion of an understanding of the true reverence we owe to Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament. "Our Lady does not want people to talk in Church". Blessed Jacinta of Fatima told us this. Let us remember it.

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St. Padre Pio on Reverence in Church

Beloved daughter of Jesus, May Jesus and Our Mother always smile on your soul, obtaining for it, from Her most holy Son, all the heavenly charisms …

In order to avoid irreverence and imperfections in the house of God, in church – which the divine Master calls the house of prayer – I exhort you in the Lord to practice the following.

Enter the church in silence and with great respect, considering yourself unworthy to appear before the Lord's Majesty. Amongst other pious considerations, remember that our soul is the temple of God and, as such, we must keep it pure and spotless before God and His angels. Let us blush for having given access to the devil and his snares many times (with his

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enticements to the world, his pomp, his calling to the flesh) by not being able to keep our hearts pure and our bodies chaste; for having allowed our enemies to insinuate themselves into our hearts, thus desecrating the temple of God which we became through holy Baptism.

Then take holy water and make the sign of the cross carefully and slowly. As soon as you are before God in the Blessed Sacrament, devoutly genuflect.

Once you have found your place, kneel down and render the tribute of your presence and devotion to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. Confide all your needs to Him along with those of others. Speak to Him with filial abandonment, give free rein to your heart and give Him complete freedom to work in you as He thinks best. When assisting at Holy Mass and the sacred functions, be very composed when standing up, kneeling down, and sitting, and carry out every religious act with the greatest devotion. Be modest in your glances; don't turn your head here and there to see who enters and leaves. Don't laugh, out of reverence for this holy place and also out of respect for those who are near you. Try not to speak to anybody, except when charity or strict necessity requests this.

If you pray with others, say the words of the prayer distinctly, observe the pauses well and never hurry. In short, behave in such a way that all present are edified by it and, through you, are urged to glorify and love the heavenly Father.

On leaving the church, you should be recollected and calm. Firstly take your leave of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament; ask His forgiveness for the shortcomings committed in His divine presence and do not leave Him without asking for and having received His paternal blessing. Once you are outside the church … be humble of heart, circumspect in words, prudent in your resolutions. Always be sparing in your speech, assiduous in good reading, attentive in your work, modest in your conversation. Don't be disgusting to anybody but be benevolent towards all and respectful towards your elders. May any sinister glance be far from you, may no daring word escape your lips, may you never carry out any immodest or somewhat free action; never a rather free action or a petulant tone of voice. In short let your whole exterior be a vivid image of the composure of your soul …

-Fra Pio, Capuchin

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