

## **LETTER No 10 – MILITIA IMMACULATAE ASIA IMMACULATE CONCEPTION AND THE YEAR OF MERCY**

Dear Knights of the Immaculata!

Each year, when the feast of the Immaculate Conception approaches, Saint Maximilian Kolbe would be filled with an overwhelming spiritual joy which he would communicate to his brothers. He often explained to them, that this great dogma concerned not only Herself, but had eminent practical consequences for us. Let us try to enter into this mystery with him and meditate on it as we approach the 8<sup>th</sup> of December, a day when all knights should definitely renew their consecration to the Immaculata.

This year the Holy Father announced a 'year of divine mercy' which will solemnly begin on the 8<sup>th</sup> of December. It has been widely explained that unfortunately both the very understanding of God's mercy and its consequences for our life underwent a complete abuse which leads to a complete disaster in many souls : instead of converting them to receive the merciful graces of conversion and sanctification, this pseudo-mercy confirms them in their sins, tolerates and justifies even abominations "crying for vengeance to heaven", and gives a totally wrong understanding of the very essence of God, "who is light and no darkness can be in him".

Nevertheless we have to distinguish between the intentions or personal visions of the pope and the acts of highest authority, that by establishing a 'holy year' opens floods of graces from heaven, if we also open ourselves to these graces. Let us remember the words of the high priest after the events of Palm Sunday in Jerusalem, when he said that "it is better that one dies for the people". The intentions of Caiphas were certainly wicked, but his words spoken in his office as high priest were prophetic and just. Similarly we can conclude, that inspite of the intentions of the "high priest of this year", the Sovereign High Priest Jesus Christ respects the objectively legally right decision of HIS vicar, and therefore HE wants to pour out HIS infinite mercy on the poor human mankind in the worst crisis ever seen in the world

and church. God alone can turn evil into a higher good, and therefore HE is able to use even the wrong ideas of mercy in the heart of many hierarchs to show during this year his TRUE MERCY.

The task of each priest on earth, however, is to show the faithful the TRUE MERCY of God as revealed and taught by the magisterium, the fathers, doctors and authentic Saints of the Church. Then the year of mercy will become a source of immense graces for all those who approach this FOUNTAIN OF GOD'S LOVE with good dispositions.

Nothing happens "by chance": therefore we should find the ways of Divine Providence everywhere and always. It is not "by chance" that Our Lord inspired the pope to begin the year of mercy on the feast of the Immaculate Conception. In fact, there is no greater manifestation of the mystery of God's mercy, than the very beginning of Mary's existence, her conception which alone amongst all creatures was immaculate, free of original sin. In the Immaculate Conception God shows the world Who He is primarily with respect to His creature, and how He wants this fundamental relationship with Him to be: INFINITE MERCY.

The MERCY OF GOD is His entirely merciful condescension to mere nothingness. God grants His love gratuitously, without receiving anything at all in return. Furthermore this grant is God's very first act in our regard, which precedes any possible response on our part. He commits His omnipotence and wisdom in order to grant, without reservation and superabundantly, His love, His light, His happiness, His interior joy. God wills that we exist on the basis of this eternally overflowing gift; He wills to fill us abundantly with His life.

Yet He can do this only if we are willing to be receptive, if we are entirely open to His gift. Through sin we have blocked this flow of divine love, and instead of allowing Him to grant us His mercy, we imagine that we can take it by ourselves, as though we had a right to these gifts. This is the attitude of pride, which denies

both God's inmost nature, as well as our inmost nature , but reverses them instead. God is considered as a servant of mankind; man wants to be like God.

But God was able even to use our wickedness and sinfulness to show yet more of his mercy. He sends his only son, the 'good samaritan' to us, half-dead mankind, and offers us pardon and purification. The good shepherd mercifully seeks the lost sheep and brings it back to the Father's home. Jesus hanging on the cross and dying for us is the greatest manifestation of God's Mercy. "Right up to the end", he has given us all what he has, up to the very last drop of his blood.

However, the greatest tragedy of man is in NOT accepting this supreme merciful love of God, to close himself more or less up in his pride and self-sufficiency. Even those who open themselves to God's grace, did not allow God to show his full mercy because of their "negligence, indifference and forgetfulness towards the immense love of MY HEART".

Now is there a human being who has accepted God's mercy in its full extent, who did not put any obstacle to his overflowing grace? Now is there any possibility that we can rediscover man as he was actually predestined, as God designed him to be?

Yes, the **Immaculata!** Every fiber of her Being is a reflection of God's mercy. She receives everything from Him and accepts it, so much so that this divine attribute is, in a sense, incarnate in her. She alone received all gifts of the eternal father. She was totally open to God's condescending goodness. Love wants to give all it has: God wants to give all, what a mere creature is able to receive. And only ONE creature really received ALL GRACES of God, because she never put any obstacle to His love: always, everywhere and totally she said YES to his will. She answered to His love with absolute fidelity: no hesitation, no questioning, no doubt! God could not find a better instrument and sanctuary for his own coming on earth. Therefore the providence of the very best Father did not allow His immaculate daughter to be tainted by the slightest evil, did not allow the Evil One to have access to her soul. And that is her Immaculate Conception.

In the Immaculate Conception we discover the true extent of God's mercy: it is simply incredible, it is amazing to discover how much God wants to give to the created nothings, how much God's HEART turns towards our misery, as the latin word for mercy indicates: Misericordia!

***“Look, my beloved children, ‘nothingness’ created by me, sinners redeemed by me!***

***I want to show my boundless magnanimity in giving you my mercy. Do you see the Immaculata? How pure she is, how beautiful, how incredibly full of all virtues, with a heart burning with my Love? Highest wisdom, penetrating intelligence, full with My eternal life, Spouse of the Holy Ghost, mother of My son, my daughter participating in my infinite power? Have you ever seen a creature like this? THIS IS MY MERCY!”***

But more: because she received the totality of God's mercy, God wanted her in turn to be a source of mercy towards all her children. When Jesus on the cross said to her “behold your son”, she became our spiritual mother, which means that she became for us the motherly source of all graces, the Mediatrix of all graces, the Mother of Mercy – mater misericordiae! For this reason we understand that, wherever people implore her help, they instinctively know, as a child knows about his loving mother, that she is “merciful”, always merciful, full of motherly mercy. God wants so much our salvation and our everlasting happiness, that not only did he create the human Heart of His son to become the visible sign of God's mercy on earth, but he also gave us a 'Mother of Mercy' with her so merciful immaculate heart, which loves us so so much!

The year of mercy is in its profundity the call of God towards his creatures: “Allow me to be merciful! Allow me to give you my gifts, my light, my treasures, my love!” The only thing we need to do is to really turn ourselves towards him, to imitate the IMMACULATA, opening widely the doors of our heart. To the extent we enter into her attitude of total receptivity, we allow God to be merciful to us again, to grant us superabundant gifts,

beginning with the overwhelming gesture of the cleansing of our sins, because He never tires of forgiving us again and again, not looking upon our perversity and infidelity, but using even the smallest sign of repentance to immerse us again in His boundless gift of love.

And what is the "Knight of the Immaculata" ? Her instrument in pouring God's mercy into the souls of man: all our prayers, sacrifices and apostolic works have just one goal: to let the Immaculate Mother of Mercy approach her beloved children sitting in the merciless darkness of sin and error, touch and move their hearts towards the infinite mercy of God, to allow HIM to save them and make them saints.

Negombo, the 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2015, Feast of Saint Francis Xavier

Fr. Karl Stehlin

# **TOWARDS FATIMA 2017**

## **(3)**

### **SUMMER 1916 - THE SECOND APPARITION OF THE ANGEL**

Summer in Portugal is always very hot and during noon time everybody takes a rest. So the children often spent that time close to the well in the garden of Lucy's home to play in the shadow of the trees. And there the angel surprised them a second time saying:

**<"What are you doing? Pray, pray very much! The Holy Hearts of Jesus and Mary have designs of mercy on you. Offer prayers and sacrifices constantly to the Most High".**  
**"How are we to make sacrifices?" I asked.**

**“Make of everything you can a sacrifice, and offer it to God as an act of reparation for the sins by which He is offended, and in supplication for the conversion of sinners. You will thus draw down peace upon your country. I am its Angel Guardian, the Angel of Portugal. Above all, accept and bear with submission the suffering which the Lord will send you”.>**

## **I. LET US MEDITATE ABOUT THE IMPORTANT WORDS OF THE ANGEL:**

### **1. THE HOLY HEARTS OF JESUS AND MARY**

Already at the end of the first apparition the angel mentioned: The Hearts of Jesus and Mary are attentive to the voice of your supplications. This time he declares: The Holy Hearts of Jesus and Mary have designs of mercy on you. During the third apparition (see next letter) he teaches the children the second part of the famous “prayer of the Angel” which terminates with the words: Through the infinite merits of His most Sacred Heart and the Immaculate Heart of Mary, I beg of You the conversion of poor sinners.

These allusions bring us already into the center of the great message of Our Lady. Obviously the children had to be prepared for such an important call from heaven, therefore the angel in each apparition mentions the Hearts of Jesus and Mary.

During the first apparition the children pray to God himself, but who is 'attentive' to their prayers and exalts them? The Hearts of Jesus and Mary.

In this very simple way we learn again, that there is only one way to God: through the mediation of the hearts of Jesus and Mary. In this apparition the angel announces to the children their future vocation, a gesture of infinite mercy towards them. The task God gives us to accomplish in our life, the “designs” of the Most Holy Trinity, His Holy will – again we receive it only through the mediation of the Holy Hearts of Jesus and Mary.

Finally at the third time the grace of conversion of the poor sinners comes again

It is only "by the infinite merits of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary".

Notice, that the first time the angels says only "the Hearts ...", The second time he specifies: "the Holy Hearts", and the third time he makes it fully clear: "the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary".

In this way the children (and behind them us all.) are invited to go always deeper in our meditation:

Firstly, we should ask what 'heart' means?

It means the very center of our personality, the most precious valuable we have, our intimacy, the source of our life, the seat of our love. So when at this moment the angels says, that they are "attentive" towards us, that means, that they open their intimacy to us, they direct their love towards us, we are not indifferent to them, on the contrary, we are the object of their loving attention.

Secondly, we have to understand, that these hearts are special: they are HOLY!

In the human heart is everything, from the best to the worst, as says our Lord: 'from the heart, from our innermost being come the bad thoughts. Here sins starts. Here we get attached to all kinds of impurities etc.'

But these hearts are Holy, which means perfect, without dirt or darkness, only beauty, light and fullness of virtues, especially fullness of love.

Revealing this important detail, the angel underlines their "designs of mercy".

What does that mean? If these hearts are turned towards us in immense love, they want to communicate to us their holiness: and this is exactly their "designs of mercy".

Mercy – *miseriordia* is a Holy Heart (*cor*), which turns towards the nothingness and misery (*miser*) of the poor sinner to fill him with its infinite treasures. And what are these treasures? Their holiness, their incredible love, the eternal happiness.

Thirdly, they are the Sacred Heart and the Immaculate Heart with their infinite merits.

What does this mean? These hearts are not something abstract, a theological metaphor, a way of speaking by mystics. They are very concrete and have a concrete and visible history in our world.

The Sacred Heart had already appeared in history explaining to Saint John Eudes, Blessed Claude de la Colombiere and especially to Saint Marguerite Mary Alacoque, what this "Heart" means exactly, what His desires are, what its importance is for us, how He wants to be worshipped, what graces He gives to those who answer to His request.

The Immaculate Heart of Mary is just about to reveal accurately the same things in Fatima. And if we enter in this concrete appeal from heaven, we will really "save poor sinners" and receive many, many other graces.

## **2. THE ANGEL OF PEACE, THE ANGEL GUARDIAN, THE ANGEL OF PORTUGAL:**

This gives an important precision to what we already said about the role of the angels in our life. The titles, which the angel gives to himself, show that he is involved in very concrete historical and political realities. At the moment of his apparitions we were in the worst epoch of the First World War. The people were longing for peace and the angel promised exactly this peace giving the means to obtain it- prayer and sacrifice. When the crimes of men have been compensated for and the Justice of God appeased, when the chastisement shall have led the sinners to conversion, then peace will come!

Moreover, we learn here, that not only does each one of us has a Guardian Angel, but even countries and nations. Now the role of the Guardian angel is to protect us from all evil and to guide us to heaven. Therefore not only our own souls, but also our countries are not profane societies, which would have nothing to do with God and our destiny. God wants to protect them through the angels to achieve their proper mission: to guarantee and promote a Christian world order by observing the commandments of God and proclaiming Our Lord Jesus Christ King of nations. How is this "angel of peace", the "angel of Portugal"?

He did not reveal his name. However, in the breviary of the 29th of September we read: "Michael, the Angel of Peace". Portugal always venerated Saint Michael the Archangel as their heavenly patron. There is even a feast in honor of Saint Michael the Archangel as the "Guardian Angel of Portugal". Therefore it is probable, that the Angel of Fatima is none else than the chief and head of all angels in heaven, which gives to the message of Fatima a very special weight and importance.

## **II. LESSONS FOR US:**

### **1. THE INTERPELLATION: "What are you doing?"**

When God appeared to the great prophet Elias at Mount Horeb, he surprised him by saying to him: "What are you doing Elias"? Just the same with the children of Fatima: the angel interrupted them suddenly when they were playing, asking: "What are you doing? Pray, pray much!"

The masters of spiritual life invite us to ask ourselves often 'what are we doing right now?'

They want to emphasize that the present moment is most important in our lives, because only NOW we live, not yesterday, not tomorrow. Only NOW we can please God or offend God, use or waste our time etc.

Let us hear the voice of our Guardian angel, who very silently asks us the same: "What are you doing right now? Do you fulfill the will of God? Are you doing something which helps you on the way to heaven? Or are you wasting your time?...."

### **2. What is important in our life? Everything!**

Even the banal nothings should become occasions to show our love to God.

If it is very difficult to make big sacrifices, to arrange important changes in our life, it is more than easy to "make of everything you can a sacrifice, and offer it to God as an act of reparation for the sins by which He is offended, and in supplication for the conversion of sinners." Our movements, work and rest, day and night, all the many small trials and difficulties, even all circumstances of our life can be transformed to an incredible

greatness and value: "one act of love towards God is worth more than the whole natural cosmos", teaches Saint Thomas. And it will be exactly that, which will make Francis and Jacinta saints after only 2 years of such life. How our banal, common, modest and insignificant daily lives would change and become a source of salvation of many and of our holiness, if we answered more generously to the angel's request!

### **3. Importance of sufferings:**

Who professes 'sacrifice' professes 'sufferings'.

The angel emphasizes: "Above all, accept and bear with submission the sufferings which the Lord **will send you.**"

Later Sister Lucy recalls these words of the angel: "These words were indelibly impressed upon our minds. They were like a light which made us understand who God is, how he loves us and desires to be loved, the value of sacrifice, how pleasing it is to him and how, on account of it, he gives the graces of conversion to sinners. It was for this reason that we began, from then on, to offer to the Lord all that mortified us". Later on Our Lady Herself will continue this utmost lesson for our sanctification and for our role as 'saviours of souls'.

By now, we should have learnt by heart and meditated over and over again these angelic words, each one like a light in our life. First we must learn to 'accept' and not (as habitually) to refuse or to grumble when a suffering comes. Then we must understand that the sufferings in our life are not fatalities coming 'by chance or by mischance', but they are sent from Our Lord, because He loves us and therefore He wants us to gain many merits. How many rewards He has prepared for those who in this world go along with Him on the way of the Cross, on the way of sufferings!