

LETTER No 14 TO THE KNIGHTS OF THE IMMACULATA (Dated: 5th April 2016)

The first apparition of Our Lady in Fatima 13 May 1917
(Also contains: TOWARDS FATIMA 2017 – part 6)

Dear Knights of the Immaculata!

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE MI PRAYER CRUSADE

Dear Knights of the Immaculata,

Saint Maximilian Kolbe from the very first issue of his bulletin "Rycerz Niepokalanej – The Knight of the Immaculata" invited all knights to pray daily in the intentions of fellow knights. He also invited the knights to send their prayer request to the headquarters. The most important of these requests he even had them published in his bulletin.

The effect of this apostolate was unexpected: he received more and more letters of thanksgiving that the requests were miraculously granted. So he decided to dedicate an extra page in his bulletin with the title: "thanksgivings to the Immaculata". In very small fonts one can read on this page 100 - 200 testimonies like

"Thank you, dear Knights, my dying son was cured miraculously exactly 9 days after having asked for your prayers",

"Thank you, Immaculata, through the prayers of your Knights I found my vocation",

"Special thanks to the knights of ... region, to save the Catholic school which was about to be closed to the damage of many of our children".

After 6 months, the redactor was obliged to add another page, and when the bulletin reached the score of 800,000 copies, he dedicated 4 pages for this rubric with total 700 – 800 thanksgivings monthly for received graces. This means, that every year almost 10,000 people wrote to the redaction to thank such obvious interventions from heaven, thanks to the prayers of the knights. But how many more received graces without writing back?

This is an important lesson for us: Our Lady always hears our prayers (if they are well done with good intention – read your catechism on this aspect!), and if we ask her seriously and constantly, she will surprise us with even miraculous answers. Why such unexpected fruits to our prayers? Because Our Lady loves generous souls. The more generous we are towards her requests, the more generous she will be to us. Her generosity is definitely thousands, million times more than ours.

But there is another, even deeper reason for all that: it makes us understand the essence of the Militia, which is the victorious presence of the Immaculata herself in the world through and by her instruments. The MI is the mediatrix of all graces "in full action". SHE wants to bring her lost children on the right way and infuse in their souls graces of conversion and sanctification. This is the mission she received from her Divine Son when he was dying on the cross. But she can accomplish this mission only if she finds instruments, channels through which she can pass the floods of graces into these souls.

Through your enrollment you have become such an instrument, HER KNIGHT! However, you are her instrument only when you act with the precise goal of "striving for the conversion of sinners, schismatics, heretics, and specially free-masons....". This is the case, if you do something for their salvation, if you distribute the miraculous medals, if you set a good example, more specially if you offer your sufferings and sacrifices in that intention; but most of all, if you PRAY.

Saint Maximilian Kolbe insisted many times: The universal and primary means of the MI is prayer, and concretely the apostolic prayer. "The goal of the Knight of the Immaculata is the conversion of souls, the triumph of the Immaculata throughout the world. Yet all external

activities and projects are not capable of converting even one soul, for this is the work of divine grace.”

The apostolate among free men consists of turning the will, which is perhaps wicked, to what is good, so that a person who may be far from God or even God’s enemy might draw near to God and become God’s friend. And God assigns this task to His Knights through the Immaculata: that they go to the rescue of souls and become missionaries of Christ’s Kingdom. It depends on them whether people are snatched from the fires of hell and how many souls will be. This, however, is the greatest grace of all. How can the Knight draw this grace down from heaven? Principally through prayer.

“Through prayer and suffering we can obtain many graces. External activity only prepares the way for grace; of itself it cannot provide these graces. There is one prayer that surely corresponds to God’s will, namely the request for one’s own sanctification and that of one’s neighbor. When we pray that the Immaculata might win all souls, then that is surely God’s will. For this intention we can offer up all our efforts, troubles and sufferings to the Immaculata, so that she might conquer the world.

Napoleon was once asked what was needed to win a battle. He answered: “Three things are needed: Money, money, and still more money!”

Just so, when it is a matter of sanctifying souls, one needs prayer, prayer and still more prayer. If prayer is lacking, the soul becomes weak. One will have precisely as much from the treasury of graces as one draws from it. Prayer is the most misunderstood and yet the most powerful means of restoring peace to souls, of making them happy, and of bringing them close to God’s love. Prayer renews the world. Prayer is the prerequisite for the rebirth and the life of every soul. Through prayer St. Thérèse [of Lisieux] became the patroness of all the missions, although she never went outside the walls of her cloister.

That is how we, too, want to pray: to pray well, to pray much, with the lips, with the heart. Then we will personally experience how the Immaculata rules more and more over our souls, how we will belong more and more completely to her, how guilt vanishes and faults diminish, how gently and powerfully we draw closer and closer to God. External activity is good, but it goes without saying that it is secondary, and even less than secondary in comparison with the interior life, the life of recollection and prayer, the life of personal love for God. To the extent that we ourselves burn more and more with divine love, we will be able to kindle the hearts of others with this love. To win souls for God is a very difficult undertaking. Often human means fail: fruitless conversations and discussions, projects that trickle away into the sand, publications printed in vain, and so on. But prayer never disappoints!

“Short sighs from the heart while at work are the best prayer, for it unites us again and again, ever more strongly with the Immaculata, unites the instrument with Our Lady’s hand, and thereby we receive many graces. When something in life goes wrong, when the Knight is defeated by the Enemy or the victory is not won, one should first ask oneself: Have we prayed enough? Has each one of us really taken this matter to prayer? We must especially guard against activism, which sees in external activity the entire effectiveness of a project. The Knight who spends himself completely in these externals is in great danger of becoming fruitless himself and of maneuvering himself into a great deception.”

Only in 2012, after having re-established the MI in its traditional observance, I answered to the request of some knights in Poland to start this prayer apostolate, established a special list of knights who agree to say one decade of the Rosary with the Memorare in the intentions given by the secretariat. After one month we had 50 knights in the apostolate, after one year there were almost 1000. The reason?

After 3 months, I had to print in our bulletins similar ‘thanksgivings’ as quoted above. The effects were totally overwhelming. Never in my life could I imagine, that the Immaculata was just waiting for this apostolate to pour out her graces to her beloved knights.

Therefore I have decided to start a similar apostolate in Asia.

Here is the special email address to which you may write:

[prayer @ militia-immaculatae.asia](mailto:prayer@militia-immaculatae.asia)

1/ Please write that you want join the MI – PRAYER CRUSADE. For that you promise to say every day at least one decade of the Rosary with the MI prayer “O Mary conceived without sin” as well as the Memorare of Saint Bernard (“Remember, o most blessed Virgin Mary...”). Attention: if for whatever reason you do not pray this decade (you forgot, you had no time, you were sick etc.), you do NOT commit any sin. But it would be good, that the next day you would then say 2 decades.

The intention of this decade is: to pray for all prayer requests given

a) by the Knights of the Immaculata who join the MI PRAYER CRUSADE,

b) by the moderators of the MI.

2/ Send your prayer requests as much and as often you want! These requests will be automatically forwarded to all Knights who participate in the MI Prayer Crusade (exception: if your request would not be in concordance with the laws of the Church, it will be sent back to you asking you to modify).

Attention: the secretariat will decide if your prayer requests will be sent explicitly to the fellow knights or only in general (e.g. “20 knights asked for prayers for the conversion of their family members etc.). If you do NOT want your request to be published, please mention that in your email.

3/ You are strongly encouraged to send a note of thanksgiving if your prayer request was granted.

May I invite you all to join the MI PRAYER CRUSADE. Imagine: if 10 000 knights will pray every day one decade, 2000 rosaries would be said daily for the intentions of the Knights. Besides that, you will have done every day an extraordinary apostolate for HER.

Remember always: If you pray for yourself seriously, you will receive.
If you pray for others, you yourself will receive double.

Fr. Karl Stehlin

Manila, 5 April 2016

TOWARDS FATIMA 2017 (PART 6)

13 MAY 1917 (II) – THE IMMACULATA AMONGST US

“Thou art all beautiful, O Mary” our liturgy chants. This was also what Jacinta kept repeating after her contemplation of the Heavenly vision: “o what a beautiful Lady! O what a beautiful Lady!” So beautiful that all images, all statues of the apparition disappoint her: “it is impossible to depict Her as she really is, and we cannot even describe her with words of this earth”.

No doubt, the children of Fatima (as well as Saint Bernadette in Lourdes, Saint Catherine Laboure in Paris, Melanie and Maximin in La Salette) had the privilege to see the glorious body of the Immaculate Virgin, Queen of Heaven and Earth: that body with which she was assumed into heaven. The saw Mary, as she is now and for ever sitting at the side of her divine son!

It is worthwhile to contemplate her, as she appeared to the visionaries with all the details mentioned by Lucy: it will help us to approach and to love her much more than before!

1/ As in Lourdes before, in Fatima, too, Our Lady appeared very young, Lucy said around 15 years old. This astonishing youth evokes one aspect of her mystery. If we see children or young people, we often think of their parents – the youth of Mary reminds us, that she is the “eternal Daughter of the Heavenly Father”. This aspect brings us to think about her origins, her creation, her birthday, but above all her conception, her Immaculate Conception. She comes somehow from the depths of the divine light out of the ‘bosom of the Most Holy Trinity’ and she receives always freshly his power and light and beauty.

“Young” means purity and beauty – the Immaculata! Mary is always fresh in her soul, heart and body, because full of light and life of God. We should often lift our eyes to this eternal beauty, the masterpiece of God's works, the living mirror and icon of his own eternal LIGHT.

2/ Again as in Lourdes she appeared very small, scarcely five feet tall, Lucy said. This littleness also has its meaning, it says something to us. In the breviary we sing about her: “When I was a little one, I pleased the Most High, and in my womb I brought forth God made man!” Before HIM she wants to be small, so small that she would disappear completely if possible. This is her humility which attracted God so much to choose her to become the Mother of God.

What a difference to us, who only desire to become 'great', visible, known, estimated, appreciated and cannot tolerate to 'disappear'! The way of holiness however is here: to become small and to wish to disappear, so that God may be glorified.

3/ Another detail: she came very close to the three children. For a pedestal she had chosen a little holm oak, about a meter high. “We were so close, that we found ourselves in the light surrounding her, or rather emanating from her, about a meter and a half away, more or less.” She always looks to the children, “her voice is soft and pleasant”. Do we not desire to come close to our beloved, if we really love them? And the more we love them, the more close we want to be to them! And when we are in their presence, we keep attention not to speak anything or to behave which would disturb the atmosphere of intimacy and love. Exactly this happens in Fatima. But attention! It is Our Lady, who comes close to us, She loves us so so much. It would be one of the greatest benefits for our life to understand and appreciate, how much Our Lady wants to come close to us, to our heart, to our life, to each moment of our life.

4/ “ERA DE LUZ”: But the most important word to describe the figure of our Lady is “light brighter than the sun”. Lucy often declares: “We saw a Lady all dressed in white, more brilliant than the sun”, a light so sparkling that it dazzled themselves: “She came in the midst of a great light. Again this time she blinded me. From time to time I had to rub my eyes”. In short, it was Her risen body in all the splendor of its glory in which She manifested Herself at the Cova da Iria. And Her body is similar to that of Jesus himself during his transfiguration: “His face shone like the sun, and His garments became white as light” (Mt 17,2). In the great vision of the glorious Christ at the beginning of the Apocalypse, Jesus appears “as Son of man, whose face was like the sun shining at full strength” (Apoc. 1, 16). When he throws Saul down to the ground on the road to Damascus, it is once again in the same light. “At midday I saw on my way a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, shining round me and those who journeyed with me” (Acts 26,13). The light was so intense, that he lost his sight. The sun is only the image of the divine light which the risen bodies of Jesus and Mary shine. It was thus that the Virgin appeared at Fatima, like the Spouse in the Canticle of Canticles: “fair as the moon, bright as the sun (Cant. 6,10), and also like the apocalyptic Woman: “a woman clothed with the sun” (Apoc. 12, 1). By her apparitions at the Cova da Iria, the Blessed Virgin confirms for us, that as mother of the “Sun of Justice”, she has been clothed with the divine Light since her Assumption. While remaining a creature and fully human, she has penetrated, so to speak, into the sphere of the divinity.

5/ The glorious body:

Although “all shining with light”, the Apparition nevertheless seemed to be a real human person, of ineffable beauty: Her body seemed like different “undulations of that ineffable light”. When praying to Her, we should sometimes first have a deep spiritual look towards her

and try to imagine how the children saw her: "the face, with infinitely pure and delicate lines, shines in an aureole of the sun. The eyes are black. The hands are joined on top of the breast. From the right hand there hangs a beautiful Rosary with white beads, brilliant as pearls, ending in a little cross of silver, which also sparkles. The feet gently come down onto a little ermine cloud which comes over the green branches of the shrub. The dress, which is snow white, falls right down to the feet. A white veil (a veritable mantle), with edges adorned with fine braided gold, covers the head, the shoulders, and falling almost as low as the dress, envelops the whole body".

The Church sings at the feast of the Immaculate Conception: "My soul shall be joyful in my God, for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation, and with the robe of justice He has covered me, as a bride adorned with her jewels" (Introit). Is it not this way that she appeared in Fatima? Clothed with a robe of light, a symbol of the singular privilege by which she would benefit more than any other from the grace of salvation, since in view of the future merits of her Son she was preserved from every stain of sin. Draped in a sparkling white mantle, resplendent in the golden flashes of light, She is the image of original justice rediscovered and restored in greater splendor: "He has covered me with the robe of justice". In the further descriptions Sister Lucy also sees, how Our Lady is "adorned with jewels". She speaks particularly of one of them like a "ball of light" but without further explanations. Visibly Our Lady of Fatima wants to be recognized and identified exactly as the Spouse of the Canticles and the Apocalyptic Woman. The apparition is the visible expression of the Catholic doctrine about Mary in contradiction to any other religion: She is the Immaculate Conception (spouse of the canticle), the Virgin assumed into heaven with body and soul (light), the mediatrix of all graces, Queen of heaven and earth, who crushed the head of the dragon (apocalyptic woman).

SUMMARY: Fatima is not only a "message", it is an overwhelming REALITY: the very presence of the Queen of heaven here on earth. And she wants to approach us and let us approach her. The more we have her in mind, consider her in this appearance full of light and majesty, but also full of humility and delicacy, the more she can protect and guide us, preserve us from the dangers of error and sin. When looking to her with the eyes of the children of Fatima, we can only be fascinated by such a vision, 'blinded' by so much light! And living in this light, we will easily discover the false lights which tempt us by their worldly brilliance, and not any more being impressed by them.