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## 006 - Fatima...in Battle Array

Joseph M. Agius

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# *Fatima...in Battle Array*

JOSEPH M. AGIUS, O.P.

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Dayton, Ohio

Number 6

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR . . .

Rev. Joseph M. Agius, O.P., spent several years organizing a Fatima Center of Marian Studies at the shrine in Portugal. A native of San Francisco, he was ordained a Dominican priest in 1933 and completed his theological studies in Rome in 1936. His varied works in the next few years included terms as pastor, prior, and Master of Students. He is presently stationed at Blessed Sacrament parish, Seattle.

In stressing the spiritual reform which the requests of Our Lady of Fatima imply, Father Agius quotes Peter Michaels, writing in *Integrity* "Superstition can do a great deal of harm to the Fatima message by regarding it as a magic formula instead of realizing that, simple as it seems on the surface, it involves a real change of life."

"Fatima—In Battle Array" is a section of the booklet *This is Fatima*, published by the Fatima Center in 1951. Father Agius' article "Jacinta and the Family Rosary" was written for *The Voice of Fatima*; "Dominican Spring in Portugal" was published in *The Torch*, "The Light of Fatima" in *Cross and Crown*.

*(published with ecclesiastical approval)*

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# FATIMA . . . IN BATTLE ARRAY

JOSEPH M. AGIUS, O.P.

In 1917 two drives were launched for the dominion of the souls of men. One of these drives made its headquarters in Moscow, the other in Fatima. The drive led by Moscow wants men to abandon all belief in God and religion and, in blind and servile obedience, to bow down before the will of the despotic state. The drive led by Fatima wants men by prayer and penance to free themselves from the slavery of sin and in amendment of life to subject themselves to the goodness of God. Mary, the Mother of God, is the Commander-in-Chief of the Fatima forces. Her symbol is hands joined in prayer. The men of the Kremlin are the Commanders-in-Chief of the Moscow forces. Their symbol is the clenched fist. Both of these drives have been on the march since 1917. Both have made great advances. In fact, both have spread throughout the entire world. Moscow, championing the evils of communism, is everywhere, and, too, everywhere is Fatima, converting souls to a more spiritual way of life. The basic issue today is the world-wide struggle between "I will not serve," sponsored openly by Moscow, and "I will return to my Father's house," the call of Fatima.

## 1. WHICH OF THESE TWO DRIVES IS TO WIN THE FINAL VICTORY? THE FATIMA DRIVE.

July 13, 1917, Our Lady said:

In the end my Immaculate Heart will triumph. The Holy Father will consecrate Russia to me, Russia will be converted, and there will be a certain period of peace.

Cardinal Cerejeira, Patriarch of Lisbon, recalling that what has taken place at Fatima is of the miraculous order, points to a new era — that of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. He writes:

Our Lady of the Rosary came down at Fatima, bringing to the world a message whose importance cannot even yet be measured. This fact opens up bright horizons of hope in the gloomy mist of the present. . . . Many might be tempted to expect the approach of the end of the world. Why not think, since we believe in Providence and in the maternal heart of the Immaculate Virgin, that it is the painful birth of a new world? . . . **We believe that the apparitions of Fatima open a new era, that of the Immaculate Heart of Mary.**

The dedication of Bishop Sheen's book **Lift Up Your Heart** opens with these words:

As Hammers Beat and Sickles Cut  
As Atoms Burst and Warfare Blusters  
At Red Lucifer's and Hell's Command  
Lift Up Your Heart!  
God Promised that a Virgin's Foot  
Would Crush These Cobras of the Night

## **2. WHEN WILL THE TRIUMPH OF OUR LADY TAKE PLACE?**

### **WE DO NOT KNOW.**

But we are certain that the time is coming when a determining number of mankind, having restored all things in Christ, will return to the Fatherhood of God. For Our Lady, nothing less than such a restoration and such a return would be a triumph pleasing to her Immaculate Heart. As St. Grignon de Montfort points out: "The Blessed Virgin will be better known and revealed by the Holy Ghost, in order to make Jesus Christ better known, loved, and served."

Because we are living between the year 1917 and the time of the triumph of Our Lady's Immaculate Heart, we may call this period — **In the Meantime.**

## **3. WHAT MAY HAPPEN IN THE MEANTIME?**

### **DESTRUCTION MAY BE OUR DESTINY.**

The history of the Jews in the Old Testament is a story of a people blessed when they turned their face to God in worship and obedience, but punished when they turned their back on Him in idolatry and sin. The prophets seem to have but one theme: a plea for sincere repentance and the threat of God's wrath if the Jews continue in their manifold sins. Sodom and Gomorrah whose "sin is become exceedingly grievous" (Genesis 18:20), and which God destroyed with fire and brimstone are cited as examples of what will happen to the people of other cities of Israel because of their sins. "Be repentant and change your hearts, saith the Lord: lest my indignation come forth like fire and burn, and there be none that can quench it: because of the wickedness of your thoughts" (Jeremias 4:4).

Are there words applicable to the people of the twentieth century?

It seems that they are, for no other than Our Blessed Mother told us at Fatima, October 13, 1917:

People must not offend Our Lord any more for He is already too much offended.

In July of the same year she had given this terrible warning:

If my desires are fulfilled, 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 and the Holy Father will have much to suffer; various nations will be annihilated.

Various nations will be annihilated!

The atom bomb is far more devastating than fire and brimstone. The atom bomb annihilates. Are Nagasaki and Hiroshima, like Sodom and Gomorrah, samples of what will happen to other cities of our world? Can it be that an enemy shall beat our cities to the ground, and our children in them because, like the people of Jerusalem, we do not know the things that are to our peace? Jerusalem was destroyed because it did not accept the things to its peace brought to it by the visitation of Christ (Luke 19:41-44). Are nations (not just one city) to be annihilated because they will not accept the message of peace brought to them through the apparitions of Christ's Mother at Fatima? We sincerely hope not. And we fervently pray that the cruel and devastating scourge of wars may quickly pass away. But we must not bury our heads, ostrich-like, and not see, as Clayton Morrison points out in **The Christian and the War**, that

war is the collapse of the Divine Order which God is striving with man's cooperation to establish in the world. The collapse of this order is due to man's disobedience. The collapse itself is God's judgment.

Nor should we overlook the same thought more graphically given by Mortimer Adler in **God and the Professors**:

If I dared to raise my voice as did the prophets in ancient Israel, I would ask whether the tyrants of today are not like Babylonian and Assyrian kings — instruments of Divine Justice, chastening a people who had departed from the way of truth. In the inscrutable Providence of God, and according to the nature of man, a civilization may sometimes reach a rottenness which only fire can expunge and cleanse.

If the Babylonians and Assyrians were destroyers, they were also deliverers. Through them, the prophets realized, God purified His people. Seeing the hopelessness of working peaceful reforms among a people who had shut their eyes and hardened their hearts, the prophets almost prayed for deliverance through the darkness of destruction, to the light of a better day. So, perhaps, the Hitlers and the Stalins in the world today are preparing the agony through which our culture shall be reborn.

#### 4. HOW SHOULD WE LIVE?

##### IN THE STATE OF GRACE — WITHOUT FEAR.

Saving our immortal souls is our most important work in life. It is the one thing necessary. "What doth it profit a man to gain the whole world and suffer the loss of his soul?" As we know so well, upon the outcome of this important work of saving souls depends our lot in eternity, that is, in Heaven or Hell. Therefore, no matter what happens in the world about us, let us keep our souls pleasing in the sight of God by doing good and hating evil; let us know Him, love Him, and serve Him in this world, so that we may be happy with Him forever in the next. In the pages of this earthly life, we may place St. Teresa's bookmark:

Let nothing disturb thee, nothing affright thee. All things are passing. God alone remains forever.

Remember, too, the consoling words of Our Lady:

I will never leave you. My Immaculate Heart will be your refuge and the way which will lead you to God. (June 13, 1917)

And even if our world — the city built by man — crumbles in complete and heartrending destruction, keep in mind that God is ever in perfect control of all things, no matter what evil befalls mankind. He has allowed it to come to pass, and in His own wondrous ways He will raise up a greater good — a city of God built by the triumph of the Immaculate Heart of His Blessed Mother. It is in the Heart of Mary, says St. Grignion de Montfort, that the world will find again true fraternity; it is by the Heart of Mary that it will obtain pardon and mercy of God; it is with the Heart of Mary that the new city will be built in truth, justice, and charity; it is for the Heart of Mary that humanity, grateful and free, will in the near future increase its manifestations of love and filial gratitude.

It is good for us to hold in mind such a vision of triumph, not that we may complacently sit back and merely watch the agony of our times, but that quietly, each in his own way, full of unshakable confidence in the mercy and power of Mary, we may espouse her cause, given at Fatima, and with love and energy join her in bringing peace and happiness to mankind.

#### 5. HOW CAN WE JOIN OUR LADY?

##### BY DOING WHAT SHE WISHES.

If we believe in Our Lady and realize that she is the Mediatrix of all graces, we must hold that the fulfillment of her Fatima requests is the only way under God of obtaining peace and thereby ensuring the physical existence and happiness of our families and of our nations. Fatima is a

gospel of salvation. It is also a program of survival. If we do not heed Our Lady's desires "various nations will be annihilated." Fatima reduces things to a question of either-or: **either you return to God or you perish.** United under the banner of Mary, our combined love and energy — which is her army in battle array — can save a civilization on the brink of perishing by bringing it back to God.

## 6. HOW CAN WE FULFILL THE WISHES OF OUR LADY? BY DOING THEM — AS BEST WE CAN.

Nobody can reasonably be expected to do more than the best he can. John may be able to kneel in prayer a long time, while Tom finds praying very difficult. God expects more praying from John than He does from Tom. Rather, He desires that each pray as best he can, to the fullness of his own capacity, according to his own natural gifts plus the graces received. God does not blame Tom for not praying as well or as much as John. Tom is blamed only if he does not pray his own very best. However, not only does God desire the best from John and Tom, He also wishes each to correspond with His graces and to pray more and better as time goes on. It is just as wrong not to improve in praying as it is not to pray to the fullness of one's capacity. Unless we advance in things spiritual, we tend to go backwards. Our advances may be slight, perhaps imperceptible; never mind. The essential thing is to keep doing our very best always, especially when we would rather not do anything at all. God will give the increase at the time and to the degree that is most beneficial for our souls.

As with Almighty God, so with His Blessed Mother. She will be pleased with each of us if we do her wishes as best we can, and while doing our best, strive to do better with the help of the graces she obtains for us. When we find our efforts rather feeble, seemingly fruitless, and we are overcome by the paralysis of discouragement, let us at such times above all desire with all our hearts to love and serve Our Lady — **Such a desire is in itself a love and service.** And, as the bud becomes the flower, a heartfelt desire to do Our Lady's wishes will inevitably issue in their fulfillment.

## 7. WHAT ARE THE WISHES OF OUR LADY?

### THEY ARE THE FOLLOWING:

- Stop offending God by your sins
- Ask pardon for your sins
- Amend your lives
- Pray much
- Make sacrifices: for sinners  
to keep souls from going to hell



- Bear all the sufferings which God sends you:  
in reparation for sins  
for the conversion of sinners
- Receive Communions of Reparation on the first Saturday of  
the month
- Have devotion to my Immaculate Heart
- Consecrate Russia to my Immaculate Heart
- Say the Rosary every day

These are the requests of Our Lady of Fatima. Like a knife in the hands of a skilled surgeon, they cut at the very roots of the thing this world wants us to save and cultivate — a craving for ease and pleasure. A heavenly prescription, they contain the right spiritual diet and exercise so necessary to give health and vigor to our souls sick with worldliness; without the slightest compromise, they demand a complete avoidance of all sin and a more perfect approach to God in love and service.

If we may so express it, these requests are not the banner of Mary, to be waved like a magic wand and all will be well. They are the equipment and the discipline out of which is made her army in battle array. Only those who by dint of hard and constant effort weave these requests into the fiber of their own being are in any true sense of the word soldiers in the army of Mary. It is with soldiers of this caliber that her Immaculate Heart will triumph.

**8. HOW CAN WE WEAVE THE REQUESTS OF OUR LADY INTO THE FIBER OF OUR OWN BEING?**

**BY PRAYING AND WORKING FOR THE AFFIRMATIVE ANSWERS TO THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:**

- Are we sinning less grievously and less frequently?
- Are we getting to hate sin — even venial sin?
- Are we truly sorry because we offend God?
- Are we avoiding the occasions of sin?
- Are we doing something about mending our life by making it better than it was?
- Are we beginning to see sin as something terrible in the sight of God?
- Are we hoping and praying that nobody will offend God?
- Are we asking God's pardon for the sins of the world?
- Are we making sacrifices in order to convert sinners and to keep souls from going to Hell?

Are we accepting the trials and sufferings of life in reparation and atonement for sins and for the conversion of sinners?

Are we praying, that is, are we holding heart to heart conversations with God, talking over Who He is and why He made us, asking that we may love Him and may receive from Him the grace of final perseverance?

Do we receive Communions of Reparation on the first Saturday of the month?

Have we done anything to understand and to practice devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary?

Are we praying for the conversion and for the consecration of Russia to the Immaculate Heart of Mary?

Do we say the Rosary every day?

Simply reading these questions makes it clear that Our Lady of Fatima gives us her message as Christ gave us His Gospel — on a cross, not on a cushion. As we cannot be worthy of Christ (Matthew 10:38), nor be His disciples (Matthew 16:24), unless we take up our cross daily and deny ourselves, so, neither can we claim to be brave and loyal soldiers of Mary, unless our lives and not only our lips render affirmative responses to the questions given above.

Since to fulfill the requests of Our Lady calls for grace plus our own personal cooperation, let us who desire the realization of her wishes in our lives, do two things:

- 1) **get down on our knees often, and sincerely beg of Mary the grace to do her wishes;**
- 2) **work as best we can to fit her requests little by little into our own thoughts and actions, remembering that Our Lady's requests are not like a ready-made suit all must wear, whether it fits or not, but are like a perfect pattern each must cut to his own size.**

Praying will be like the roots, the trunk, the branches of a tree, working as best we can will be like the blossoms, and the actual fulfillment of the requests will be the fruit.

## **9. WHAT WILL BE THE EFFECT OF FULFILLING THE REQUESTS OF OUR LADY?**

### **PEACE.**

First of all, in our own souls — a peace the world cannot give and which only sin can take away. St. Thomas tells us that without sanctifying grace, peace is not real but merely apparent. In the second place, peace in the world, because peace in the world is but the lovely bloom of the

peace in individual souls. A chain is gold if its links are gold. The world is peaceful if its people are peaceful.

## 10. IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE WE MUST DO?

### LIGHT ONE SOUL!

A Chinese proverb says: "It is better to light one candle than to curse the darkness." The proverb refers to physical darkness. The same applies to the darkness of evil. It is better to bring light to one soul than to condemn the evil days in which we live.

What light can we bring to souls?

The light of Fatima.

Stop sinning, ask for pardon, amend your lives, pray much, make sacrifices, convert sinners, bear the sufferings which God sends you, receive Communions of Reparation, have devotion to Mary's Immaculate Heart, consecrate Russia to Our Lady, say the Rosary every day, in a word, live the life of grace — these are the rays in the light that is Fatima. They form the only light which can lead mankind out of the darkness of evil and war into the brightness of goodness and peace.

Kindle this light in one other soul!

Do it now! Our time to act runs short! The words of Goethe are perhaps more universally applicable today than ever before:

The day has not yet passed away  
But our time to act runs short  
Soon will the dark night have its sway  
When every striving comes to naught.

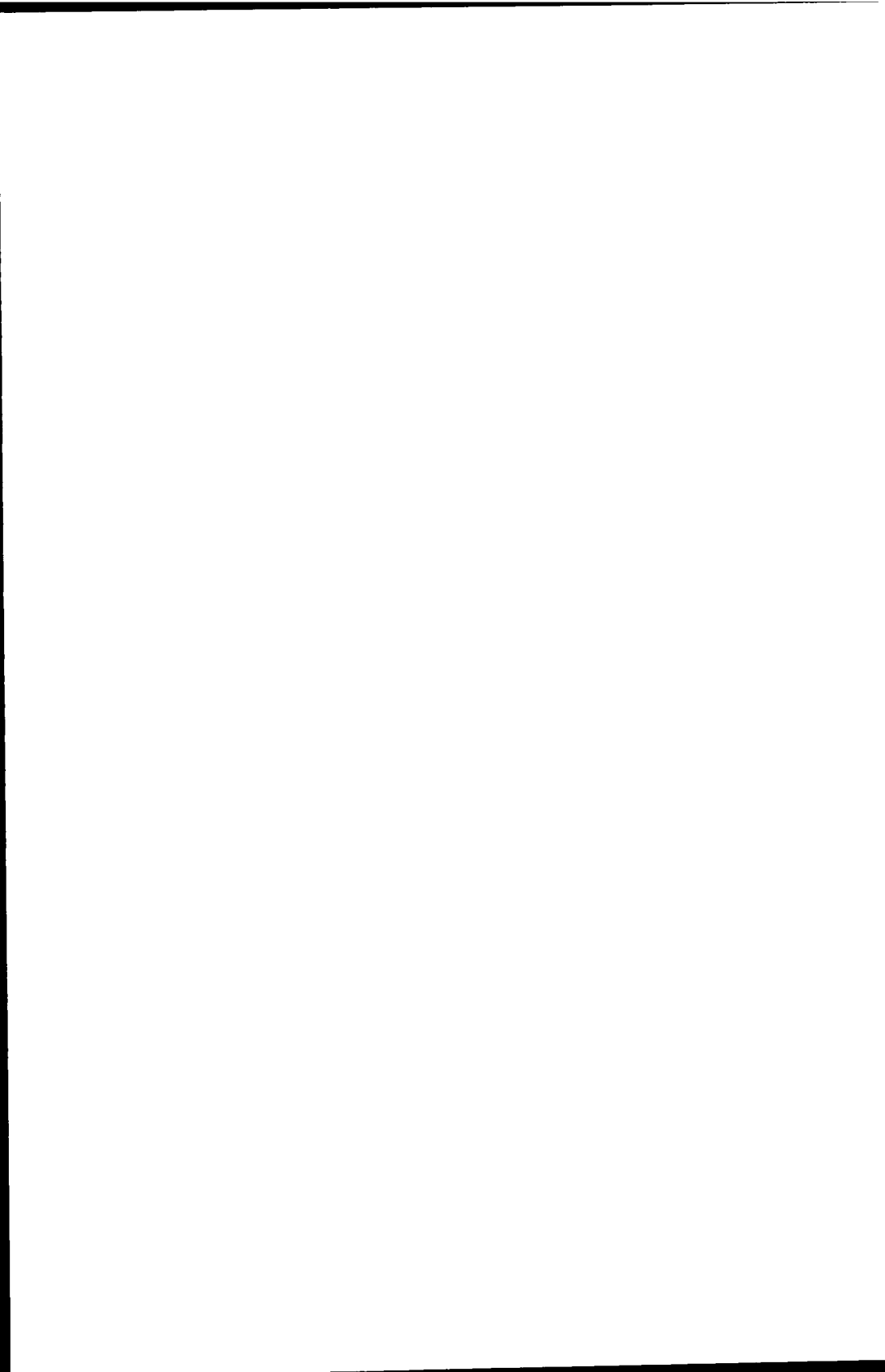
When every striving comes to naught!

Only the light of Fatima, because it is of the Light, enkindled in the souls of men, can keep the dark night from having its sway.

Six times in 1917 Our Lady was seen above a little oak tree by Lucy, Jacinta, and Francisco. She was indescribably beautiful. To these three shepherd children she makes known her desires for all of us of the twentieth century. Hundreds of thousands of people in all parts of the world have heard these requests of the Mother of God. Some have said: "I will not heed them." But afterwards they began the difficult task of changing their lives in accord with her wishes. Others said: "Yes, I will heed these requests of Our Lady." But they never did.

What think you? Which of the two groups fulfills Our Lady's wishes? All will answer: "The first, of course!"

**To which group do I belong?**



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