

THE DESIGNS OF GOD WITH THE SHEPHERDS OF FATIMA

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Foundress

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Dear Brothers and Sisters:

"Father... to you I offer praise; for what you have hidden from the learned and the clever you have revealed to the merest children" (Mt 11, 25). The Holy Father begins his homily at the beatification of the shepherds, visionaries of the apparitions of our Lady of Fatima, with these words of the Sacred Scriptures.

"Pray, Pray much! The Hearts of Jesus and Mary have designs of mercy over you" (Angel of Fatima to the shepherds).

God the Father has not only wanted to open the Kingdom to those who are little, but we can see from the Marian apparitions that He has desired to choose the little ones to bring about His designs. It was the divine design of God that, in 1917, the Blessed Virgin Mary would come from Heaven in search of some children in order to give them a clear call to conversion, penance, sacrifice and heroic love. With the heart of a mother, she spoke to their little hearts, revealing to them Her pain from the offenses committed against the Heart of her Son; she spoke to them of sinners; she showed them hell; she revealed Her to them Immaculate Heart as the sure path to God; she invited them to offer themselves as victims of reparation and to embrace the sufferings that the Lord would send them for the conversion of sinners. The Virgin Mary announced to them times of tribulation for the Church and for the world. She spoke to them of wars and persecutions against the Church. She showed them the sufferings of a Pope and the great danger that threatened both the eternal and temporal destiny of humanity.



Repeating the words of Christ in the Gospel of Saint Matthew, I also want to thank the Father for having revealed all this to the little children of Fatima. These children received the words of our Lady with so much love and seriousness that the Holy Father told us this past 13th of May, "With this beatification the Church wants to place upon a stand these two lights that God has ignited to illuminate humanity in its moment of shadows and unrest."

During these dark hours of our historic moment, the Church presents us two lights which enlighten our pathway: Francisco and Jacinta. Why? Because they both disposed themselves completely to fulfill the designs of the Two Hearts, designs of mercy which were to be realized through their generosity, through their sacrifices, and through their lives of heroic charity - heroism of children, but nonetheless, authentic heroism, says our Holy Father.

What were these designs of mercy with which they were called to cooperate?

The Lord gave Francisco the grace to deeply understand how sad the Immaculate Heart of Mary was because of the offenses committed against God. The experience of hearing the Virgin ask them, "Do you desire to offer yourselves in reparation for the sins with which God is offended?" marked his heart forever. One day when Francisco was very quiet and withdrawn, Lucia asked him what was wrong. He answered that he was thinking about how sad God was because of so many sins. He continued, "If only I could console Him." This is how he became the consoler of the Eucharistic Heart. He would spend long hours in adoration and contemplation of the Eucharistic Jesus, whom he called the "Hidden Jesus." The prayer the Angel taught them became for him a way of life: "I believe, I adore, I trust and I love thee, and I beg pardon for those of us who do not believe, adore, trust or love you." Francisco gave himself over to an intense spiritual life of fervent prayer which led him to a true, mystical communion with the Lord and to a progressive purification of spirit by means of the denial of his own preferences and desires, even in the games they played. A radical transformation took place in him. He bore the great sufferings of his illness that eventually resulted in his death without a single complaint.

Jacinta was so moved by the vision of hell and by the fate of the souls in mortal sin that, for her, there were not sufficient sacrifices to offer for poor sinners. Animated by a profound charity towards souls, she offered herself as a victim for them. The words of the Virgin, "Do you wish to offer yourselves to God, to endure all the suffering that He may be pleased to send you, as an act of reparation for the sins by which He is offended, and to ask for the conversion of sinners?" so marked her heart that she told Lucia, in the final stages of her painful illness, "Tell Jesus and Mary that I am willing to suffer all that they desire to bring about the conversion of sinners." Jacinta also had another great desire: to pray and sacrifice herself for the Holy Father, especially

for the "bishop all dressed in white" whom she had seen suffer and cry in a vision.

In Fatima, the Blessed Virgin chose two children, shepherds, in order to make them participants in the designs of mercy of the Hearts of Jesus and Mary. Children, who with their "fiat," obtained abundant graces for the Church and for humanity in an era of great darkness and tribulation. These children, totally placed in the hands of Our Lady, consecrated themselves to Her Immaculate Heart, allowing themselves to be formed by Her and embrace fully the maternal mission of Our Lady. As a result, they became great channels who obtained great graces of mercy and conversion for the Church and the world.

What a great lesson is given to us by Blessed Francisco and Jacinta! We have to be like children to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven and to cooperate with the establishment of the Reign of love of the Pierced Hearts of Jesus and Mary. We have to be like children in order to dispose ourselves with humility and obedience to be guided by the Blessed Mother and to hear the designs of the Heart of Christ that reside in Her Immaculate Heart. We have to be little, very little, in order to participate in the designs of mercy that the Hearts of Jesus and Mary have for us. We have to have pure and simple hearts in order to learn how to "*Contemplate* like Francisco and *love* like Jacinta" (Theme of the Beatification).

May the Pierced Hearts of Jesus and Mary reveal to us their designs of love and mercy. And may we, with new hearts like those of Francisco and Jacinta, respond to such a sublime call, by offering our lives for the fulfillment of these designs.

May love always triumph!

In the Love of the Pierced Hearts,

Mother Adela, Foundress SCTJM

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