

## WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

***“What are you doing? You must pray. You must pray a great deal. The Hearts of Jesus and Mary have designs of mercy on you. Offer up prayers and sacrifices constantly to the Most High. Make everything you do a sacrifice and offer it to God in reparation for the countless sins by which He is offended and in supplication for the conversion of sinners. In this way, you will bring peace to your country”.***<sup>1</sup> (Angel of Portugal, 2<sup>nd</sup> apparition)

The challenge of our Lenten season, now in 2017, was set for us one hundred years ago by the Angel of Portugal. The Angel’s message was meant to prepare the little shepherds for their meeting with the “Beautiful Lady”. Let it also prepare us for our meeting with the Risen Christ and his Mother, on Easter morning!

***“What are you doing?”***

The Angel surprised the little shepherds right in the middle of their play. They were just children and they loved to play. With God’s grace they would play until the end of their lives, and Lucia would keep her sense of humour intact until the day of her death. And so why did the Angel interrupt the children’s games, in what appears to be a tone of admonition? Because the message was urgent; there was real urgency in what the little shepherds needed to experience and to understand. And not even at play were they to forget it.

If the message of conversion was urgent in 1916, it is even more urgent today. Just look at the disintegrating families around us... What are you doing? What are *we* doing? Aren’t we “playing” too much, wasting time on social networks, computer games, TV, trivial reading, futile conversation, useless arguments? Lent is the right time to abstain and to dedicate our time to other vital and pressing tasks in the Lord’s plan of salvation.

***“The Hearts of Jesus and Mary have designs of mercy on you”***

Next, the Angel explained to the little shepherds why they needed to change their conduct and pledge themselves without misgivings. The shower of mercy with which God wanted to clean the world depended on their prayer. Only God can give so much value to our prayers and actions that the destiny of humanity could depend on them! How can the Lord have merciful intentions towards us who are poor and weak? How can He be “attentive to the voice of your supplications”, as the Angel said in the first apparition? It is because God values each one of our thoughts, words and actions that He urgently needs them to be thoughts, words and actions of conversion.

---

<sup>1</sup> The translation of this passage from Portuguese is copied from JOHNSTON, F. *Fatima: The Great Sign*, Augustine Publishing Company, 1980, pp 24-25

***“Offer up prayers and sacrifices constantly to the Most High.”***

Living the spirituality of the Families of Cana is being at prayer constantly: “We, Jesus!”. In every moment, we are called to pray, keeping our hearts attentive to the voice of the Lord, to its insights and to its challenges. “We, Jesus!” is an invitation to do everything together with Jesus, praying while we work, while we walk, while we drive and while we play. In order for this voice to be heard, we need interior silence, which requires some cautions on our part, like not being continuously subjected to the sounds of a television set or a radio, which disperse our thoughts and fill our hearts with all kinds of stories and news, delaying the “urgency” of the Kingdom.

“We, Jesus!” is also an invitation to offer the Lord, as sacrifice, everything we have. We can begin from the moment we wake up in the morning, by getting up the minute the alarm clock rings. Such a simple gesture, so accessible to everyone, children and adults – and yet so difficult! And at meals we can serve ourselves the least appetising portion, or eat a little more of what we like least and a little less of what we like best. Again, such a simple yet powerful gesture! Finally, in each moment of the day we can sacrifice our temperament, staying quiet when we feel like talking, avoiding irritation, being the first to serve and to forgive. Each sacrifice is like a small drop of water poured into the clay water jar of the Lord, which Jesus, in his immense love, will change into His precious Blood for the salvation of the world. Only God could give such value to our actions!

***“... in reparation for the countless sins by which He is offended and in supplication for the conversion of sinners.”***

And if we offend the Lord three times? Then we make amends three times - three acts of love, three sacrifices - to repair the offence made. For each shout, a kind word. For each gesture of laziness, a small service. For each lost prayer time, an extra fifteen minutes of prayer the following day. And if we want to go further, beyond numbers, we can multiply the reparations beyond any offence we may have committed ourselves and begin to make amends not only for our own offences but also for the offences of others, imitating the little shepherds who submitted themselves to all kinds of sufferings for our sake.

***“In this way, you will bring peace to your country”***

Our country is our family. And to our family we want to bring true peace, the peace that only Jesus can offer. The little shepherds were just three small, illiterate children, and yet their sacrifices and their prayers were enough to bring peace to Portugal. Such power, that of prayer with sacrifice! Do we still doubt it? Are we still afraid we won't have enough strength to bring peace to our family?



### ***Commitment***

The appeal of lent is an urgent appeal. Extremely urgent. It invites us to commit ourselves entirely, thoughts and actions, from morning to night, while playing or working, without getting distracted for any reason whatsoever. The Families of Cana are an urgent call of the Lord, with an urgency that does not allow us to “look back”. Without imposing our personal rhythm, let us live the message of the Angel in the certainty that God will bring peace to our family because of our total surrender. May your lent be full of joy and may our Lord Jesus bless you forever!

© Teresa Power, 4-3-17