



Above, left to right: Eugene Cardinal Tisserant, Most Rev. John P. Venancio, and Msgr. Harold V. Colgan at meeting twenty-five years ago at Fatima in which Blue Army leaders adopted first international statutes. His Eminence the next day (October 13) blessed the new Blue Army International Center as a Legate of Pope Pius XII.

Leaders of the Blue Army from all six continents of the world gathered at Fatima in late July-early August to elect international officers and to exchange views on the development of the Apostolate throughout the world.

Attending from the United States were the Most Rev. Jerome J. Has-trich, D.D., Bishop of Gallup and U.S. National President, together with John Haffert (National Lay Delegate), Sr. Mary Grace, A.M.I., Coordinator of diocesan Blue Army centers in the U.S., and Fr. Otto Pisoni, President of the National Executive Committee. Also present was Fr. Robert J. Fox, director of the Blue Army Cadets, who reported to the assembled international leadership on the Cadet program and its importance.

Encouragement from Sister Lucia

Sister Lucia, sole survivor of the three children who saw Our Lady of Fatima, conveyed a message to the leaders during the meeting. She explicitly mentioned the Blue Army of the United States as a major factor in hastening the triumph of the Immaculate Heart of Mary in the world. She also stressed the impor-

tance of the youth program for which she prays in a special way.

This message for the leaders of the Blue Army, not intended to be printed, was one of the greatest endorsements of the Blue Army, and one of our greatest encouragements since Pope Paul VI went to Fatima in 1967.

Asked what advice she would give to the Blue Army, Sister Lucia did not stress the need for more members, or for greater publicity, or for more television coverage, or even efforts to promote the Collegial Consecration of Russia (although she did speak of this separately). There was **one** message she felt had to be stressed above all (and she spoke about it in depth for almost an hour!):

“Intensify Your Prayer Life”

What is most important, she said, is for the existing members of the Blue Army (of whom there are millions) to **intensify their prayer life**. She stressed the power of the Rosary as a means of opening our relationship with God through Mary if we use this devotion properly, and that this opening of ourselves to

MESSAGE FROM LUCIA:

ROLE of
BLUE ARMY
in U.S. is
CRUCIAL!

by JOHN M. HAFFERT

God so that we enter into a constant state of prayer is her primary advice to Blue Army members at this moment in time.

We should be most concerned, she said, about our own conversion rather than about the conversion of Russia. She was speaking, of course, of “conversion” into a **real** relationship with God.

Our Prayers Most Important

Somewhat to our surprise she mentioned that many priests and even bishops do not place Our Lady in Her rightful position, **and that only our prayers can change this**.

If the Blue Army wants to hasten the triumph of Mary’s Heart, the most powerful of all weapons is **genuine prayer...a real** contact with God in the Hearts of Jesus and Mary. And if we use the Scapular and Rosary properly, and enter into the real meaning of these devotions, we shall achieve that Eucharistic intimacy with God which makes all things possible.

One is reminded of the words of Our Lord to Lucia in the garden of Pontevedra on February 15, 1926. When He had asked what was being done to establish devotion to the Immaculate Heart of His Mother in the world, Lucia told him the Superior-ress said there was nothing she could do, and Jesus answered: “Of herself she could do nothing, but with Me she could do it all.”

That is the glorious message we bring back from our 1981 international meeting at Fatima: By **deepening** our commitment and **living our pledge in depth**, we will be **real-ly open** to God in the Heart of Jesus through the Immaculate Heart of Mary...and everything will be possible...now!

New Officers Chosen

Top office in the Blue Army to succeed our last elected International President, the Most Rev. John Venancio, second Bishop of Leiria-Fatima, went to Bishop Constantino Luna, recently retired from

his diocese and ready to serve the Blue Army.

Fr. John Power, O.S.A., of Ireland, was elected Vice President. John Haffert was once again elected International Lay Delegate. Albert Setz-Degen of Switzerland remains International Secretary.

Bishop Venancio, who had almost died last year, was so much improved in health that he was able to attend some sessions of the meeting.

At the close of the week, the Most Rev. Albert Cosme do Amaral,

present Bishop of Leiria-Fatima, recently recovered from major surgery, came to greet the Blue Army leaders. A few days earlier, His Excellency had sent word to the assembled delegates:

"If I had ten hands to bless the Blue Army, I would bless it ten times. But since I do not have ten hands, I will do something better: I bless it with all my heart." His Excellency said the Blue Army is dear (**carinho**) to him. "And if it were not," His Excellency added, "I would be failing in my vocation as the Bishop of Leiria-Fatima."

The picture below was taken on the first day of the meeting and several delegates had not yet arrived. Among those missing from the picture are representatives of England, Austria, Belgium, Ghana, Haiti, South Africa, Taiwan, Uganda, Zaire, Portugal and Korea (which sent two delegates to the meeting). In the first row, left to right, are: Fr. John Power, O.S.A. of Ireland, Fr. Brian Ahearn of Australia, Lawrence Rozario of India, Rev. Magr. Ciriaco Billote of the Philippines, Fr. Peter Leoni, S.J. of Canada, Most Rev. Constantino Luna of Guatemala, John M. Haffert of the U.S., Most Rev. Jerome J. Haastich of the U.S., Maria T. Tandjono of Indonesia, Genia Schoett of Germany, Fr. Joseph V. Ikkitham of Thailand, Mary Jo Landick of the U.S., Joseph Chalo Vannapraphit of Thailand, Fr. Benedict Ujan, S.V.D. of Indonesia. In the second row, from left to right, are: Helen Belsir of Canada, Rita Kock of Aruba, Jose Correa of Brazil, Paquita Diaz of Spain, Sr. M. Pietras of Fiji, Fr. E.O. Idem of Nigeria, Doucan Dr. A. Niewiadomski of Puerto Rico, Sr. Edith Oberman of Togo, Aisha A. Richard of France, Albert Setz-Degen of Switzerland, Magr. Charles Murphy, Fr. M. Boer of Germany, Fr. Ales Hanasinghe, Ph.D. of Sri Lanka. In the top row, from left to right, are: Dr. Angel Palacina of Spain, Fr. Pablo Bausmann of Spain, an unidentified person, Andre Kock from Aruba, John McKenna of Brazil, George Dimitrios of Brazil, Fr. Nicholas Gruner of Canada, Fr. Otto Pisoni of the U.S., Sr. Mary Grace, A.M.I. of the U.S., Mme. Aebly-Schwaller of Switzerland, Maurice Archibong of Nigeria, Sr. Mary Ludovica of Italy, Fatima Fuziada of Singapore, Fr. Paul Ostovich, C.S.S.B. of Puerto Rico, Prof. Americo Lopez of Puerto Rico.

