



WHAT NOW ?

by JOHN M. HAFFERT

Do you know of any time in the history of the Church when the Pope contacted every bishop in the world for a collegial, spiritual act on one given day?

From the solely historical point of view the **collegial** act of consecration of the world to the Immaculate Heart of Mary made last May 13 staggers the imagination. Aside from its importance relative to the prophecies of Fatima it was, in the manner done, unprecedented collegiality in action.

But what exactly are the implications of this act with reference to the Fatima prophecies?

First: Russia

In 1917 Our Lady foretold a "great sign" that God was about to chastise the world by means of war, hunger, and persecution. Then Our Lady said:

"In order to prevent this, I shall come to ask the consecration of Russia to my Immaculate Heart and

the Communion of reparation on the first Saturdays." (Martins ed., *Memoirs of Lucia*, p. 219)

Eight years later, Our Lady came to Lucia (who was then in a convent in Pontevedra, Spain) to ask for the Communion of reparation on the First Saturdays. Four years later, on June 13, 1929, She came again to Lucia (at Tuy, Spain) and asked for a **collegial** consecration of Russia in these words:

"The moment has come when God wants the Holy Father, in union with all the bishops of the world, to consecrate Russia to my Immaculate Heart, promising to save it by this means." (Martins ed., *Memoirs*, p. 433)

The immediate effect to be expected from the collegial consecration, therefore, is that Russia will be "saved." And in the context of other Fatima messages this would mean a **change in Russia**, a "conversion" or turning around. At the least it would imply an end to mili-

tant atheism in Russia and perhaps freedom of religion there.

Next: The World

But also associated with Russia, in the Fatima Message, is world peace.

Our Lady said on July 13, 1917: "Error will spread from an atheist Russia throughout the world...fomenting further wars...several entire nations will be annihilated...but if my requests are heard, Russia will be converted **and there will be peace.**" (Martins ed., *Memoirs*, p. 219)

Also, in the same message of July 13, 1917, Our Lady said:

"In the end, my Immaculate Heart will triumph; Russia will be converted and an era of peace will be granted to mankind."

So we have two immediate possibilities: The effect of the collegial consecration on Russia, and the effect of a change in Russia upon the world.

"Too Late"

In a letter to her confessor on January 21, 1935, Lucia wrote:

"About three years ago Our Lord was much displeased because His request (for the collegial consecration) was not fulfilled....It seems that He is ready to show His mercy toward Russia, as He promised five years ago, which He wishes so much to save."

On May 18, 1936, less than two years before the beginning of World War II, Lucia again wrote to her confessor:

"The Holy Father will do it but it will be too late. Nevertheless the Immaculate Heart of Mary will save Russia. It has been entrusted to Her." (Memoirs, p. 465)

Our Lady explained that the consecration would be "too late," because Russia would already have spread her errors throughout the world, causing wars and persecution of the Church.

"Annihilation of Nations"

In a communication in March, 1939 (cf. Memoirs, p. 465), Our Lord told Lucia:

"Ask, ask again insistently to make known the Communions of Reparation to the Immaculate Heart of Mary on the first Saturdays. The time is coming when the rigor of My justice will punish the crimes of various nations. Some of them will be annihilated. In the end the rigors of My justice will fall most severely on those (nations) which seek the destruction of My Reign in souls."

Would this seem to indicate that since the collegial consecration of Russia was so long delayed, and since the devotion of First Saturdays has not been sufficiently diffused in the world, that we still face "annihilation of nations"?

We are left with the question: "What will be 'the end'?" If both Our Lord and Our Lady intended the same period of time as "the end," then it could be the immediate future...since the collegial act of consecration has just been made.

The statement of Lucia last May 16 that the Collegial Consecration will have its effect, but the degree

will depend on the response of the world to this consecration and that the Blue Army will have much to do in order to bring this about, becomes almost frighteningly important.

One thing is certain: Now is a moment of Grace — and a moment for final, all-out effort to diffuse the First Saturday Communions of Reparation in response to the consecration just made by the Pope in spiritual union with all the bishops of the world.

Conclusion

If the reader feels a little confused by all the above, there is nothing confusing about the conclusion to be reached:

We are at a climactic moment in these times which more than one Pope (including Pope John Paul II in his homily at Fatima last May 13) have referred to as "apocalyptic."

The struggle in the world is between good and evil, as the Pope so clearly put it in his homily at Fatima. The love of the Immaculate Heart of Mary reflects God's love for us and the love which we should have for God. And that love, said the Pope, "will prove stronger than the evil".

Why "Too Late"?

Was it the fault of past Popes that the collegial consecration was delayed until fifty-three years after Heaven requested it?

On July 15, 1940, in a letter to her confessor Lucia wrote:

"As for the consecration of Russia to the Immaculate Heart of Mary...it will be done, but not at the moment. God permits it (the delay) to punish the world for its crimes. We deserve it (the punishment). Afterwards He will listen to our humble prayers. I suffer much that it has not been done. In the meanwhile, so many souls continue to be lost!"

This makes clear what our common sense also tells us: A change in the world depends on our response to the Message and unprecedented miracle (at a predicted time and place) of Fatima.

The collegial consecration to Mary's Heart was a worldwide act of love. It was a recognition of God's love for us in having become man through Mary and having redeemed us. And it was a consecration of us back to God in that same love.

But only to the degree that this love fills us and overflows to the world around us can the evil be overcome.

And how do we show our love?

Live the Pledge!

We do so by living the pledge which Lucia formulated in 1946 as containing the essentials of Our Lady's message: the Blue Army Pledge. And we do so by "doing" for those who "do not."

For those who do not make the First Saturday devotion (which requires only about an hour), let us make the All-Night Vigils!

For those who do not offer up the sacrifices required by daily duty, let us make extra sacrifices! Let us give, and build, and do whatever Church authority encourages us to give and do with all-out generosity.

Let us make pilgrimages to Our Lady's shrines — following the example of the Pope last May 13 who described any Marian shrine as 'Her House' — where we more intimately and completely absorb the wonder and meaning of Her message to our age and most easily pledge our response to Her.

Let us form the cells in our parishes! Let us generously give that one hour a week with one or two neighbors, thus following the example of the three children of Fatima whom Our Lady Herself taught and "formed" to respond to Her message!

Those few easy steps are the Blue Army. And Sister Lucia has now said that upon the degree that we take those steps will depend the effect of the unprecedented historical action taken by the Pope, in spiritual union with all the bishops of the world, this past May 13.

The Act of Consecration has now been made. We are at a turning point. If we want the full and immediate effect of the great miracle of Grace (which God promises us in the Message of Fatima), we must respond now, as never before, with renewed confidence and resolve.