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**A CLOSE LOOK AT THE  
"SIGNS AND WONDERS"  
OF THE FASTEST-GROWING  
MOVEMENT IN CHRISTIANITY**

# **EXPLOSION OF THE SUPER- NATURAL**

**JOHN M. HAFPERT**

"Blessed are those who no longer need charismatic phenomena, even though pleased to accept them. Blessed are those who have not seen, and who have believed! Why should anyone already leading a Eucharistic life, already in a deepening union with Jesus, pine for the experience of the first fervor? Why would anyone long to go backward on the path to God. Do we not know that the Promised Land is at the other end of the desert?

"On the other hand, let us not disdain or be envious of those whom God now almost miraculously sweeps into His heart in this age of the Holy Spirit, this age of the triumph of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. If they should seem to race ahead of us on the path to Divine Union, should we refuse to rejoice with them? If we did, we would be like the older son who was envious when the fatted calf was killed for his prodigal brother. His father had to remind him: 'But you have been with me always, and all that I have is yours. . . .'"

—John M. Haffert

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**John M. Haffert**

**AMI PRESS**



**WASHINGTON, NEW JERSEY**

A library edition has been published by AMI with photographs of many of the phenomena, such as the crowd witnessing the miracle of the sun at Fatima in 1917, miraculous tears, the vision in Cairo, and many others—including, in full color, the miraculous images of Our Lady of Gaudalupe and of Kazan. Price \$8.50 from AMI Press, Washington, N.J. 07882.

## EXPLOSION OF THE SUPERNATURAL

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It is sometimes said that many spiritual writings today do not sufficiently reflect the whole doctrine concerning the Holy Spirit. It is the task of specialists to verify and weigh the truth of this assertion, but it is our task to exhort everyone, especially those in the pastoral ministry and also theologians, to meditate more deeply on the working of the Holy Spirit in the history of salvation, and to ensure that Christian spiritual writings give due prominence to His life-giving action. Such a study will bring out in particular the hidden relationship between the Spirit of God and the Virgin of Nazareth and show the influence they exert on the Church. From this . . . will flow a more vital piety.

—Pope Paul VI

*Marialis Cultus*, paragraph 27

Issued February 2, 1974

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We sent the first manuscript of this book to all the Ordinaries (Bishops) of the United States and to major Catholic and Protestant leaders. From suggestions received, the book was rewritten, re-submitted to some, and rewritten again.

The names of those who have made major contributions to this book would fill several pages.

We would be glad to spare the pages to publish the names but we do not feel that we should do so (especially in the case of the bishops) without specifying the suggestions and criticisms which they made (even though almost all of them have been followed).

We are more than grateful. We are indebted. And we pray that whatever good may come to souls in these pages will flow back into the hearts of all who helped.

Captain Joseph Kelley, pilot and friend of Captain Eddie Rickenbacker, added to his comments on the original manuscript:

"There is an adage in aviation that you should learn from the mistakes of others because you won't live long enough to make them yourself. I find the experiences shared in this book to be like the lamp taken out from beneath the bushel basket. I think it's most important because much of the world is flying in the dark."

May that light, however dim or bright it may be, redound to the glory of all those who made this book possible.

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## INTRODUCTION

Pope Paul VI, on October 18, 1973, met with two bishops and eleven representative leaders who had come to Rome to evaluate "The Charismatic Renewal." His Holiness told them:

Certain common notes appear in this renewal: the taste for deep prayer, personal and in groups, a return to contemplation and an emphasizing of praise of God, the desire to devote oneself completely to Christ, a great availability for the calls of the Holy Spirit, more assiduous reading of the Scriptures, generous brotherly devotion, the will to make a contribution to the service of the Church.

In all that, we can recognize the mysteries and discreet work of the Spirit, who is the soul of the Church . . .

The spiritual lives of the faithful come under the active pastoral responsibility of each bishop in his own diocese. It is particularly opportune to recall this in the presence of these ferments of renewal which arouse so many hopes.

Even in the best experiences of renewal weeds may be found among the good seed, so a work of discernment is indispensable.

It devolves upon those who are in charge of the Church, "to whose special competence it belongs, not indeed to stifle the Spirit, but to test all things and hold fast to that which is good" (cf. **I Th.** 5:12 and 19-21) (*Lumen Gentium*, 12).<sup>1</sup>

In keeping with this counsel of Pope Paul, we have endeavored to write "a work of discernment." We seek a reply to the question: "How can we distinguish an authentic outpouring of the Holy Spirit today from counterfeit forms?"

We can profit from Christian experience of the past. There is a remarkable parallel between the sixteenth



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century and the twentieth century. In the sixteenth the world was shocked to learn it wasn't round, and in the twentieth to learn that it wasn't what it appeared to be ( $E = MC^2$ ).

Both of these historic shocks were accompanied by deep, frightening changes.

In the sixteenth century the struggles of the old powers for the new world encouraged (perhaps were even a major cause of) Christian division. There followed moral chaos out of a sequence of continuing wars despite the wonders of Guadalupe.

Now, in the twentieth century, must history repeat itself despite the miracle of Fatima?

In the sixteenth century, supernatural wonders took place not only in Mexico but in many parts of the world, but without much effect beyond the area of those who actually experienced them. There was little communication. The scramble for the riches of the new world and the raucous echoes of past nationalisms drowned out the Voice of God.

Will history repeat itself and deliver us now to atomic war, as more and more nations build up their deadly arsenals? Or will the Voice of God finally be heard?

Oddly enough, God's own friends have to settle many differences before we can even hope to avoid nuclear war. And Pentecostalism, or the Charismatic Renewal, is a spectacular development of such dimensions and effect that some call it an "explosion of the supernatural" . . . an explosion to blast away those traditional prejudices and differences which divide men.

Father Albert Nevins (editor of *Our Sunday Visitor*), one of the many outstanding leaders whose help we enlisted, said: "The Pentecostal movement has to chart a very difficult course between Scylla and Charybdis and many are not going to be able to navigate."

But navigation is necessary.

How are we going to interpret the triumph of God through the "Immaculate Heart" which was promised to us at Fatima? What triumph can we expect of a Heart that was the Spouse of the Holy Spirit? What triumph do we expect of the Heart that was so filled with love and outpouring that through it God formed the human heart of His only begotten Son?

We can begin by listing all possibilities as to just what might bring about the unity of man and world peace. What

would God do in the hearts of men if we were going to turn everything upside down and make this into a divine world? (And that is precisely what we have been promised at Fatima.)

The more we eliminate all possibilities we begin to arrive at the conclusion that God might change our world by an outpouring of charisms like those which united the early Church.

Should we be surprised that such an outpouring is beginning to manifest itself now in many persons and in many different faiths?

But there is the rub!

Can there be real miracles in "other faiths"? If those who are certain that they have the true faith pray with those of other denominations, are they not condoning error?

These are some of the difficult questions that we will touch upon in this book. We agree with the advice given by Father Robert Burns, C.S.P.:

"It seems to me that the Charismatic Movement can well be compared to a huge locomotive. Before the full-steam-ahead order is given a prudent engineer will check all his controls and he will not hesitate to use these controls (safety valves, brakes, etc.) if the occasion arises. As the charismatic movement pushes ahead in the Church it is well for those involved to check the controls, and those in authority should not hesitate to exercise these controls when the occasion warrants it, particularly in conformity to the teachings of the Magisterium."

Over a hundred experts, including many bishops, helped with this present book.

Before burdening them with the first rough draft, the author put it to a personal test.

Many books on this subject had recently appeared. The first draft of this book was made without consulting any of them and concentrating only on the author's own experiences and observations. Then, after the first draft of the book was finished, it was compared with *The Pentecostal Movement* by Edward O'Connor, C.S.C.; *The Pentecostal Movement and Church Unity*, by Raymond V. Roh; *The Pentecost and the Catholic Church*, also by Edward O'Connor, C.S.C.; *Catholic Pentecostalism: Problems in Evaluation* by Killian McDonnell, O.S.B. and Larry J. Alberts, BOC; *Guidelines for the Catholic Charismatic Re-*

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*newal*, by Stephen Clark; *Mary is the Model Charismatic* by Rev. Msgr. David E. Rosage; etc. etc.

There was an extraordinary consensus. Not one of these authors seemed to disagree on any basic point. One even mentioned the link between the apparitions of Lourdes and Fatima and the Charismatic Movement, which was at least one of the points we thought was perhaps "novel" or different in the present book.

Five hundred advance copies of the manuscript of this book were sent out for criticism with particular interest in the reaction of those opposed to the Charismatic Movement, and in the opinions of the bishops.

One by one the reports started to come in. Within six months they filled three flight bags.

Many of the bishops, including three cardinals, sent detailed criticisms. Some were pages long. Only two said that the book should not be published and they had not read the manuscript for lack of time and said, *a priori*, that they were opposed to the so-called Charismatic Renewal.

We were concerned that others, hearing about this book without reading it, might think we were writing a blanket endorsement of "pentecostalism." Indeed our concern was so great that we wondered if we should not rewrite the book and substitute other labels for "pentecostalism" and "Charismatic Renewal," such as "prayer and miracles" or "vital prayer."

Evil spirits are rampant in the world today. That is one of the primary concerns of us all. But, as Pope Paul VI has indicated, great fruits are to be expected from an authentic Charismatic Movement and from our openness to the Spirit:

"The taste for deep prayer, personal and in groups; a return to contemplation and emphasizing and praising God; desire to devote oneself completely to Christ; a great availability for the calls of the Holy Spirit; more assiduous reading of the Scripture, generous brotherly devotion, the will to make a contribution to the service of the Church."

Concomitant with the miracle of Fatima, an authentic outpouring of the Holy Spirit is beginning to flood across the world. Several eminent theologians have called it an "explosion of the supernatural." This present book is written in the hope that this explosion be directed most effectively for the triumph promised to the world in 1917.

NOTES

1. *L'Osservatore Romano*, November 11, 1973 (French Edition.)
2. ———, *Segno Dei Tempi*, (Magalini Editrice-Brescia, 1973) p. 134.
3. Father Robert Burns, C.S.P., the *Wanderer*, March 7, 1974.

## CHAPTER I

### *"I Talked in Tongues"*

On July 15, 1973, I checked into the International Hotel next to the West London air terminal and then went for a walk in this once quiet part of London. In the midst of several towering hotels I came unexpectedly upon a small green park around a little Gothic-style church. Although only about a century old the church was obviously in the same tradition of faith which six centuries earlier had built Westminster Abbey in the heart of the London metropolis now pushing out to embrace this rural vestige of faith in an emBeatled world.

In one small chapel on the right side was an old icon of the Virgin and Child, perhaps as much as six or seven centuries old.

For an hour I was alone with God. Then a visitor came and silently went up to the little side chapel and knelt before the old Byzantine icon of the Virgin and Child. Others began to come. I was just wondering whether I should leave when a buoyant young man with long hair made his way to where I was kneeling and asked: "Would you like to join us for Vespers?"

They read from the Old Testament and the New. They sang the Magnificat and some psalms. The vicar gave a comment on the lessons and more hymns were sung. Then the vicar announced:

"As is our custom we invite everyone here to join us for coffee in the tower room. Those who would like may then remain for our Pentecostal service."

It was the first time that I had ever attended a service in other than a Catholic church, let alone a Pentecostal service. What would it be like?

Not knowing anyone in the tower room I took a cup of coffee and found a corner. I was there only a short time when a young man, perhaps in his late teens, sat beside me.

"What is the pentecostal service?" I asked.

"Oh," he replied, "we all just pray as the spirit moves

us." Then he added in a soft confessional tone: "I once talked in tongues."

"What was it like?" I asked.

"Words came from my mouth that I did not understand. Neither did anyone else."

"But what could have been the value of that?"

"Well," he answered without hesitation. "I felt the Holy Spirit."

There was a bit of silence. Then, almost as though reading my thoughts he added: "I suddenly had the consolation of knowing that I was praying without the need of my own words . . . and the devil couldn't even understand."

The thought now occurred to me: What could a boy of his age know about the Holy Spirit? (Indeed what would be the answer even after a lifetime of prayer to the question?) I asked aloud: "What is the Holy Spirit?"

Without a moment of hesitation the young man replied: "I know He is not God the Father, because I pray to Him in Heaven. I know He is not Jesus because I pray to Jesus inside myself. I suppose the best way I could describe the Holy Spirit is to say that He must be the Power of God."

I remembered with awe the words of Our Lord to Peter after the crowds had turned away because He told them that they must drink His blood and eat His flesh. When He then asked the Apostles themselves if they, too, would go away and Peter made the great profession of faith, Our Lord replied: "*Blessed art thou, Simon son of Jonah, because flesh and blood have not revealed this to thee, but My Father in Heaven.*" (Matt. 16:17)

How could a London hippie (which is what we were then calling every young man in London who dressed in jeans and a sloppy shirt and wore his hair down to his shoulders) possibly have known about the Blessed Trinity? How could he have an experimental knowledge of the three Divine Persons?

After the coffee break, the group (which had not diminished after the Vespers service) now assembled in the sanctuary, filling the tiers of pews on either side.

The vicar suggested a hymn. Everyone sang it with devotion. The vicar then made a short scriptural reading and said a prayer. Then he invited any of those present to pray aloud as they wished.

One by one voices were raised in prayer. To my surprise the prayers were not for some individual favor, for the cure

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of some ailment, for restoration of health to a sick relative, for solution to a business problem, as one so often hears in the prayers of novenas and even too often during the prayer of the faithful in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass itself. And there was no emotionalism.

These were deeply sincere prayers for the parish, for the city of London, for the world. They were prayers for peace, for grace.

Suddenly I reacted to one voice praying: "Dear Father, there are now so many hotels in the area of this church. Touch the hearts of visitors in these hotels to find their way to Your house that their lives may be touched by Your reality and they may be filled with the joy and the faith which You have so lavishly shared with us."

The service seemed so short. I was surprised when I went outside and found it was night. I had been in that church for more than three hours. And there was something else.

When we had gone into the tower room for coffee, only one person spoke to me. But after the Pentecostal service it seemed that everyone wanted to talk to everyone else. Hands were reaching out for other hands, eyes were filled with a light difficult to describe. There was such an atmosphere of love that certainly no one would have thought to ask anyone else: "What is your race or religion?" All had prayed together. All had experienced the reality of God together.

If I could at all trust a lifetime of personal Christian experience, I had just participated in authentic prayer. And if such experiences were now widespread among many different communions, was this the new Pentecost I had been hearing so much about? Was this the kind of experience that was worrying many of us who, already deeply wounded by an excess of change in the wake of Vatican II, suspected pentecostalism to be?

In the past the word pentecostal brought up an image of emotionalism. It conjured a picture of dissident Christians waving their hands in the air, rolling their eyes, and shouting "Amen! Amen!," or of men deliberately allowing themselves to be bitten by serpents or refusing medicine as a treatment for illness.

But what if true and deep experience of the Holy Spirit were now sweeping through the world? Would not people discover that if we really pray together, really experience

the Holy Spirit together, we are no longer black or white, no longer Catholic or Protestant or Jew or Mohammedan, rich or poor, even young or old . . . in each other's eyes?

We do not intend in this book on the "explosion of the supernatural" to let theology snub physical science by omission. Between the lines is a constant awareness of the nature of matter of which we wrote in *The World's Greatest Secret* which we could not have written were it not for recent spectacular scientific advances and for the special help of such eminent scientists of our day like Dr. Francis J. Heyden, S.J., professor of two of the top NASA scientists who put men on the moon.

We are about to probe experiences, some personal and "first hand," which show that while the great mystery of BEING challenges men of genius it is not hidden from the "little ones." And in this age of science perhaps the "little ones" may achieve a miracle greater than solving the problems of outer space. They may solve the problems of peace on earth.

We gasped when man first walked on the moon. When astronaut McDivitt reported seeing an unknown flying object in space, and we heard repeated reports of UFO sightings, our gasps turned into a dull, almost aching wonder.

How much do we know even about this universe! Does it sometimes frighten us?

There appears to be a growing acceptance that what we see through a telescope, the macrocosm—and what we see through a microscope, the microcosm—is all, like our own complex selves, of and from God. The Soviet magazine *Science and Religion* said in its October 1967 edition (the fiftieth anniversary, golden jubilee edition of the atheist revolution) that the three main deterrents to the success of world atheism were World War II (specifically Hitler's attack on Russia), the subsequent Cold War and the Blue Army<sup>2</sup> based on the miracle of Fatima which Paul Claudel called "an explosion of the supernatural."

Is not the latter an admission that atheism, albeit an escape from moral obligation or from refusal to accept the limitations of the mind before the mystery of Being, is opposed by an objective REAL FORCE? The Blue Army is purely and simply an apostolate of prayer and an increasing instrument of worldwide charisms. And is not the Soviet's official voice of atheism saying that the great deterrent



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is therefore a force from God Himself, as real as Hitler and the Cold War?

We can recall not one but two occasions of Pentecosts in history. The first was in Jerusalem when three thousand were baptized in one day. The second was in Mexico when an average of three thousand were baptized every day for eight years<sup>3</sup> . . . at the very time that the Reformation opened a gashing wound in the Christian body which has bled copiously ever since.

### NOTES

1. John M. Haffert, *The World's Greatest Secret* (Washington, N.J.: AMI Press, 1968). The book has now been read by over half a million people. Of special interest has been the reaction of only a sophisticated minority to the viewpoint of science as enthusiastically as the majority reacted to the viewpoint of theology.
2. The Blue Army of Our Lady of Fatima, which now has twenty-five million members throughout the world, was founded in 1947 by the late Monsignor Harold J. Colgan. The national center is in Washington, New Jersey, and the international center is in Fatima, Portugal. The apostolate is described more fully in other sections of the book.
3. Harold J. Rahm, S.J., *Am I Not Here* (Washington, N.J.: AMI Press, 1962).

## CHAPTER II

### *The Second Pentecost of 1531*

On December 9, 1531, a Mexican Indian, fifty-seven years old, walked fifteen miles to participate in a Christian service even more important than the one which took place in that little Gothic church on the West side of London in July of 1973.

This Indian had had a true experience of Christ. He had been a pagan until four years before. And new faith was being put to a terrible test. The very men who had brought Christianity to his land had become insatiable for gold. They were turning other Indians like himself into slaves.

Only a few, like this man, still went to participate in the Eucharistic liturgy on a weekday. Only a man who had had a true personal experience of Christ, with a total inner conviction, would rise long before dawn, in a village fifteen miles from the nearest church, so that he could walk to a weekday service in a church of the "Conquerors."

This Indian's Christian name was John James, the first after the beloved disciple and the second after the first apostle to suffer martyrdom.

John James was one of the Aztecs conquered by Cortez in the first major transplant of the Old World into the New. Some historians say that it was the greatest single conquest in history but it merits a different superlative: it led to the greatest historic rift in Christianity.

We have blamed the Reformation or the Inquisition. But Christianity had survived protests and abuses and had absorbed changes of structure for fifteen hundred years.

Greed for the treasures of the New World turned the Reformation into an excuse. Christians divided. French, Spanish, and English set out to kill each other. Shortly after the first gold shipments of Cortez, it seems almost a diabolical coincidence that in 1517, the very year that Luther nailed his theses on the door of a church in Wurtemburg, the Spaniards fixed their feet for the first time on the Yucatan peninsula.

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Certainly there are many other reasons why the Reformation which called basically for many of the changes now taking place in the Church after Vatican II, resulted in such a splintering of Christianity that today instead of one church there are more than four hundred, and some Christians are still killing each other in the name of religion.

Strife over America became a wedge between England and Spain. The conflict which followed took an almost incalculable toll in human misery. After a thousand years of union in the same faith, a dispute with Rome by Henry VIII gave Spain (then the most powerful of Christian states) an excuse for a "holy war."

English pirates sanctioned by the successor of Henry VIII raided Spanish gold fleets as they crossed the ocean. When the treasure increased and English pirates headed for the New World itself, the king of Spain decided to attack "schismatic" England.

Bewildered "little people," like that fifty-seven-year-old Indian, still walked distances to attend a Christian service because of a very real personal experience of Christ. (Then as now, such men overcome the evil of the world even as Christ overcame in them.)

But the Western world has never been the same since that war between England and Spain.

It is frightening to see in the pages of history how such divisions among men perpetuate themselves. They are passed from generation to generation in the form of religious prejudice, sometimes leading to more terrible wars than the ones which begot the hatred in the first place. Our last two World Wars are the ultimate lesson.

In 1917 a leader in England apparently decided to let the Lusitania be sunk by a German submarine in order to get the United States involved in World War I. Subsequently, the infamy of Versailles led to World War II.

How many millions of lives have been tragically affected!

Documents recently discovered in the papers of President Wilson and national archives show that the Lusitania<sup>1</sup> had been carrying munitions, that it had been converted into a ship of war, and that the Germans had tried to advise passengers not to sail on it because it would be sunk for these reasons.<sup>2</sup>

Winston Churchill, who is said to have borne a major part (if not the sole responsibility), was Christian. The

"enemy" leader on the other side was a Christian. Both were apparently sincere in their faith. We presume both acted in what they believed the best interest of their people.

But what a terrible price was paid in blood by almost all the world!

Had Christianity failed?

No words can describe the hatreds unleashed between Christian nations since the nationalistic and religious divisions of the sixteenth century concomitant with the conquest of Cortez. In one day after the Lusitania sank, most of the world became involved in the first "world" war. Millions died. And now—in the dangerous era of atomic power and satellites in space—do we have the gnawing realization that if things do not change we may destroy each other?

Does the ultimate victory lie in the "little man"—like the Aztec Indian making the sacrifice of walking miles to church at a time when one of the cruelest of all the "conquistadors" had usurped power in his world and was betraying the very faith which he had helped this Indian discover? Does the ultimate victory lie in that deep personal conviction of an individual . . . whether an Indian on a reservation or a deprived person in a ghetto, or a worker in England or Germany or America or Russia?

What happened in the case of that Aztec Indian may be the most meaningful lesson of history to our present moment.

After the first Pentecost there were three thousand conversions in one day. Following the miracle of that Indian, for eight years there was an average of three thousand baptisms a day, every day for eight years; a total of eight million altogether! And the cruelest of the conquistadors was ordered back to Spain.

Statistically this must have been the greatest single experience of what could be called a "new Pentecost" in history. And is it not significant that it happened at the beginning of the infamous contradiction not only in the former Aztec capital but in Christianity itself? And in microcosm it reflected that contradiction.

On the one hand Bishop Zumarraga, a devout man, wanted justice for the Indians in the newly conquered Aztec empire. On the other Guzman, one of the worst types of piratical adventurers, connived to have Cortez removed so that he could exercise total despotism.

It was only after the miracle we are about to describe that King Philip II finally learned of Guzman's cruelty and had him removed.

What happened came through the "Spouse of the Holy Spirit." It is called the "Miracle of Guadalupe" and it was a real, objective miracle not only to be seen on that day, but still to be seen to this present moment.

The Virgin Mary appeared to the Aztec Indian as he was on his way to church that December 9, 1531. She said: "I am your merciful Mother and a loving Mother to your fellow men who love me and trust me and seek my aid. I will listen to their lamentations and give solace in all their sorrows and their sufferings."

John James fell to his knees as She instructed him:

"To bring about all that my love demands, go now to the house of the bishop in Mexico. Tell him exactly what you have seen and heard. Know that I shall be grateful and that I will reward you. I will show you that this labor is worth while. Now you have heard my desire, dear son. Go and do your very best."

Without waiting to see what became of the Lady or to observe the fading of the glow of her presence, he turned to hurry down the causeway into the city. At the house of Fray Juan de Zumarraga, bishop-elect of Mexico, he rapped on the gate. The hour was early. The importance of his mission could not be guessed by those inside. Patiently, he waited until the bishop's assistants were willing to let him enter.

The bishop wondered: Wasn't this just another Aztec story about the goddess of fertility, whose temple had been around Tepeyac? What could this Indian possibly have in mind, coming at this early hour with such a preposterous story? The devil was always full of tricks to deceive believers. Close questioning might show some flaw in the story.

But John James would not change the minutest detail. He knew what he had seen and heard, and he had carried the message entrusted to him.

"I'll think over what you have said," the bishop told him. "Come back in a few days."

The Aztec walked back to the hill, fearing that his failure would hurt the Lady, yet knowing within his heart that She would understand. Perhaps he was not the right messenger. After all, he was only a poor Indian; he could not speak in words grand enough to impress a man as impor-

tant as the bishop. He would ask the Lady to call upon someone with more dignity and influence who could carry out the mission.

Deep in thought, he moved swiftly up the trail to Tepeyac Hill where again he saw the Lady. He ran to Her and knelt, sensing a peace that erased his fretful fears. "My sweetest Lady," he said tenderly, "I obeyed your command and went to the house of the bishop. After great difficulty I saw him and gave him your message exactly as you had instructed. The bishop received me kindly and listened attentively, but when he answered me, I knew that he did not believe me."

John reverently bowed his head and awaited the Lady's reply.

Her concern for him was apparent as She said: "My dearest son, you must understand that there are many noble servants to whom I could entrust my message; however, I have chosen you to undertake the task. It is through your help that my purpose will be accomplished. Go again to the bishop tomorrow, speak to him in my name . . . Tell him I am in person "Santa Maria," ever Virgin, Mother of God, who sends you."

John felt his courage returning. Reassured of his mission, he said, "Sweetest Lady, I will not cause you more affliction. I will joyfully go to carry out your desire. Perhaps the bishop will not hear me, or if he does, perhaps he will not believe me. I will return tomorrow afternoon to tell you what the bishop answers. With your permission, I take leave of you. Rest quietly until I see you again."

We are fortunate in having an early record in the original Nahvatl language which preserves to us the marvelous humility and simplicity of the Indian's words as recalled by him shortly afterwards.<sup>4</sup>

Early Sunday morning, John James went to Tlateloco to assist at Holy Mass. Afterward, he went to the bishop's residence. Bursting into tears, he related that he had conversed with the Mother of God a second time. She had again entreated him to ask the bishop to build a temple at Tepeyac Hill.<sup>5</sup> Truly he said, it was the Mother of Jesus Christ who sent him.

This time the bishop was more sympathetic. Taking the conscientious Aztec at his word was too much to ask, but perhaps some proof might be forthcoming.

The bishop called for two trusted members of his house-

hold. Speaking in Castilian, which John did not understand, he instructed the men to observe John and to follow him to the spot where the vision was said to have occurred. They were to bring back a complete account of all they saw and heard.

The servants followed the Indian to a small stream at the base of the hill where he suddenly disappeared. They searched for him in vain and angrily decided he was a fraud or a sorcerer. Returning to the bishop, they declared that the Indian could not be trusted.

In the meantime, John had mounted the hill where the beautiful Lady awaited him. He told her of the bishop's request. Reassuringly, She said: "So be it, my son. Come back tomorrow morning so that you may obtain the sign for the bishop. With my sign he will believe you and no longer will he doubt you or suspect your good faith. Know that I will reward you for your trouble. At dawn, tomorrow, I shall await you here."

When John reached home that evening, he found his uncle Bernardino very ill with a fever. He was distressed by his beloved uncle's condition and spent the following day, Monday, nursing him. He was unable to keep his appointment with the Lady of Tepeyac.

In spite of John's loving care the uncle grew worse. Fearing that he might die, he asked John to rise before dawn and go to the Monastery of Santiago-Tlalteloco, to bring a priest for the last sacraments.

At dawn, Tuesday, December twelfth, John approached Tepeyac Hill where he was stopped by the Lady, who greeted him warmly: "What troubles you, my dear son? Where are you going?"

Overwhelmed with shame at having disappointed her, and frightened as well, John explained his urgent mission for his uncle. "After I have accomplished my duty, I will return to you and deliver your message. Forgive me my Lady, and be patient with me. I am not deceiving you. Tomorrow I will accomplish your desire."

As he spoke, She regarded him with loving compassion. He understood that She realized his problems without his having put them into words.

"Listen, my son," She replied gently. "There is nothing to fear. Be neither troubled nor afraid; do not fear this illness or any other sorrow or affliction. Am I not here? I am your merciful Mother. Have I not taken you unto myself

and made you my charge? What more do you need? Let nothing distress or disturb you. As for you uncle's illness, it is not unto death. At this moment I ask you to believe that he is already cured."

If these words were true, this would be the first "miracle," the first confirmation of a heavenly message.

She instructed him, "Go, my son, to the summit of the hill where you first saw me. There you will find a variety of flowers. Gather them and bring them to me."

The Indian hurried up the hill, gathered the flowers, and placed them in his *tilma*. He carried them to her and she took the flowers in her hands and rearranged them in his cloak.

"My dear son," she told him, "these roses are the sign which you must give to the bishop. Tell him in my name that in these roses he will see my will and accomplish it."

The bishop's servants were rude and refused to admit John when he arrived. He waited patiently for several hours, confident that he would eventually win the bishop's attention with his extraordinary flowers. The curious servants tried to see what it was that he carried in his *tilma* that required such careful attention, but John refused to disclose his secret.

At long last John was permitted to see the bishop.

As he unfolded his *tilma*, roses spilled to the floor. They lay at his feet, still bright with dew, delicately fragrant.

John, his heart beating heavily, stared at the beauty of the roses. He looked up to see Bishop Zumarraga falling to his knees, praying. Tears, bright as the dewdrops on the roses, glistened in his eyes. He was not looking at the roses, but toward the *tilma*.

John, embarrassed, started to move his cloak, then witnessed the miracle which had impressed the bishop. *There on the tilma was the image of the Blessed Virgin exactly as he had seen her at Tepeyac.*

The two men took no note of time as they regarded the miraculous sign. Eventually, the bishop took the *tilma* and reverently placed it in his private oratory. He respectfully detained John in his home all that day. On Wednesday he accompanied him to the place where the Mother of God wished to have her temple.

"Here," said John, indicating the exact place where he had seen and conversed with Her.

At length, John timidly asked the bishop's permission to



visit his uncle who, he said, had been cured by the Virgin. The bishop sent some of his servants, instructing them to bring Bernardino to his house if he indeed had been cured.

The retinue with John James found Bernardino well. The old man did not seem surprised as his nephew told of the Blessed Mother's assurance of his miraculous cure. The older man nodded and smiled at the description of the Lady.

"I, too, have seen her," he said. "She came to me and spoke to me. She said that her image should be called 'Holy Mary of Guadalupe,' though she did not explain why."

News of the miracle spread rapidly throughout the territory. The curious swarmed to the bishop's house to honor the picture. In order to satisfy the devotion of the Spaniards and the Indians, the bishop carried the sacred image to the cathedral and placed it above the high altar for all to view.

The *tilma*, or *ayate*, consists of three strips of coarsely woven cactus cloth, material similar to sacking, made from the maguey plant. Each strip measures approximately twenty-one inches in width and seventy-eight in length. Two strips are visible as the image of Our Lady of Guadalupe is seen today, the third being folded behind the other two in a beautiful frame which now encases the *tilma*. The image is imprinted on the two front pieces only—not the third, as this was folded over John's shoulders and back.

Experts in painting have examined the material closely and have stated that the hand-woven material was not only unprepared for the application of paints, but could not be so prepared because of its loose weave and texture. They are unable to explain how the colors were applied. And there are no brush marks. The proportions of the image of Our Lady are perfect.

Following this miracle, as we said before, the number of conversions and baptisms of the first Pentecost was renewed on the average of three thousand every day for eight years . . . totaling over eight million!

The "miracle" was a lesson in Christianity to the illiterate Indians. It shows Holy Mary blocking out the sun, so she is greater than the sun, which the Aztecs had adored. And she is standing on the moon, so she is greater than the moon, the other of the two principal Aztec gods. The two

great pyramids seen by so many tourists in Mexico are of the sun and the moon.

She appears borne up by an angel, so she is greater than and angel. *But she is not God*, because she is *praying* with downcast eyes. And she wears the sign of the Cross at her throat: *like all of us she has been redeemed by Christ*. But she calls herself the Virgin Mother of the one true God because Christ became man through her. Thus He established between this creature and the Godhead a true relationship of "Mother." "So," they exclaimed, "how great God must be!"

She appeared blocking out the sun . . . and, at Fatima, four hundred years later, she appeared with hands folded in prayer while tens of thousands of witnesses saw a fire like the sun whirling in the sky and then plunging toward the earth, causing all for miles about to think it was the end of the world.

Should it be surprising that something like another Pentecost has begun in our own day?

Concomitant with the miracle of Guadalupe, with its daily Pentecost for eight years, there occurred many miracles as a result of the flaming faith engendered by this massive deluge of grace and faith.

Some of these miracles are still to be seen and are perhaps even more extraordinary now than they were then.

One is the portrait itself. The maximum normal duration of maguey fibres (which are vegetables) is twenty-five years. Yet the miracle picture is on untreated maguey fibres over four hundred years old and still intact; in addition, a few years ago it was only slightly marked when a workman cleaning the frame spilled acid over it. And when on November 24, 1921, revolutionaries exploded a bomb under the picture, a massive bronze crucifix was twisted like wax, the basilica windows shattered, but the glass over the front of the miracle-picture—and the picture itself—remained untouched, as though the bomb beneath it had never exploded. And most extraordinary is the testimony of scientists who have examined the picture. The manner of its execution cannot be explained, and a detail like the eyes is so extraordinarily real that doctors examining have testified that they had the impression of gazing into real eyes.'

Another great miracle took place miles away from Mexico City where thousands of Indians were being slaughtered

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for not submitting. On July 25, 1531, suddenly a cross appeared in the sky. Such a "feeling" came upon both Spaniards and Indians that the conflict stopped. In gratitude the Indians sculpted a crude stone cross on the spot. From that day to this the cross emits an extraordinary fragrance and grows in size. The cross and records are to be seen in the Church of the Holy Cross in Querétaro, Mexico.

Soon the perfidy of Guzman became known to Philip II and a gentle, some say even saintly, governor was appointed in his place and Mexico enjoyed peace for the next three hundred years despite the turmoil that continued to develop in the Old World.

### NOTES

1. Colin Simpson, *The Truth About the Lusitania* (Boston, Little Brown & Co., cf. *Reader's Digest*, November 1973, pp. 301-342.
2. Newspaper advertisements by the German government to warn Americans were suppressed, the escort vessel that was to meet the *Lusitania* as it approached England was ordered to withdraw, and the great liner, with over a thousand aboard including hundreds of Americans, was exposed to a waiting U-boat. When the torpedo struck, the U-boat commander thought there would be ample time for passengers to leave the ship. But the munitions on the *Lusitania* exploded and she went down in minutes.
3. This term does not mean that Mary is Divine or that She precedes God in any way. It merely means that She . . . Who is a creature . . . bears the relationship of Mother to God because She is the Mother of Jesus.
4. Album Historico Guadalupano del IV Centenario, *Ser-cera Decada*, pp. 57-67.
5. Tepeyac Hill is near Mexico City. The present magnificent basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe, completed in 1709, is annually visited by thousands of pilgrims from all over the world. It replaces two smaller shrines, the first of which stood until 1622. After twenty-five years of effort, the first shrine to Our Lady of Guadalupe in the United

States was dedicated on October 5, 1974, in the church of the Immaculate Conception in Allentown, Pa. The Rt. Rev. Abbot Guillermo Schulenburg, Msgr. Gregorio Aguilar, Most Rev. John Venancio of Fatima, came for the occasion and concelebrated the Mass of dedication with Bishop Joseph McShea of Allentown and Bishop Sydney M. Metzger of El Paso, Texas. This shrine will be the National Center of the Apostolate of Devotion to Our Lady "Mother of the Americas."

6. In the Indian language the word probably meant "Immaculate Conception" but it sounded like "Guadalupe" a Shrine in Spain, so the Spaniards called Her "Holy Mary of Guadalupe" rather than "Holy Mary Conceived Immaculate."

7. *Am I Not Here*, by Rev. Harold Rahm, S.J., AMI Press, Washington, N.J. 07882, 175 pp., 1963, pages 72-76.

## CHAPTER III

### *The New Pentecost*

This great wonder which took place at the heart of the New World only a few years after the voyage of Columbus was really a miracle, and we would like to repeat here what we said in our foreword (since we presume most forewords are rarely read.)

In the sixteenth century the struggles of the old powers for the new world encouraged (perhaps were even a major cause of) Christian division. There followed moral chaos out of a sequence of continuing wars despite the wonders of Guadalupe.

Now, in the twentieth century, must history repeat itself despite the miracle of Fatima?

In the sixteenth century, supernatural wonders took place not only in Mexico but in many parts of the world, but without much effect beyond the area of those who actually experienced them. There was little communication. The scramble for the riches of the new world and the raucous echoes of past nationalisms drowned out the Voice of God.

Will history repeat itself and deliver us now to atomic war, as more and more nations build up their deadly arsenals? Or will the Voice of God finally be heard?

Today many do not believe in miracles, including many who profess to believe in God. We have tried in these pages to avoid calling any phenomenon a miracle without being reasonably certain we were speaking of an exception to the laws of nature attributed to God. And there are enough such authentic phenomena now (if we take only those of the Pilgrim Virgin, Alexandrina da Costa, and Father Pio) to assert that with the miracle of Fatima, a "new" Pentecost has begun. It has two basic elements: *An explosion from Heaven down over the earth, and an explosion in the world among "communities" upwards to God and towards each other in Him.*

First let us glance at the former, the "Voice of God":

In 1973 several respected theologians of Italy and France worked together on a book titled *Sign of Our Times*,<sup>1</sup> in which they explored miraculous phenomena "in unprecedented numbers" taking place today. Not all such experiences were affirmed as miracles in the strict sense of the term, but these authors focused attention on a "beautiful explosion" of them. The miracle of Fatima itself is the first miracle in recorded history which took place at a predicted time and location.

Dr. Carmelo Naselli, C.P., former professor of Church history in the Theology School of St. John and Paul in Rome and today director of the Historical Committee of the Passionists in Rome, explained why he and other theologians decided to write the book. He said that Vatican II "opened a new epoch in material for theological reflection on these phenomena" which one of the authors, Father Domenico Grasso, S.J. (professor at the Gregorian University in Rome) called nothing less than "a *charismatic explosion*." Dr. Gabriella Lambertini, of the Cittadella of Assisi, participating with Father Naselli and Father Grasso in the book *Sign of Our Times*, presents seventeen locations of possible apparitions and miracles taking place currently in Italy alone as a part of this unprecedented wave of charismatic manifestations.

All such manifestations within the Church support or repeat, with hardly any variation, the original message given at Fatima. In order of frequency of repetition, in some twenty reported and current apparitions, the message asks for 1) prayer (usually mentioning the Rosary); 2) penance; 3) Eucharistic devotion; 4) need to counteract the power of the devil; 5) need of strength in our faith; 6) love for the Holy Father and the Church; 7) prayer for priests; and 8) Christian unity and peace (to be obtained if the previous parts of the message are carried out).

Commenting on this wave of supernatural experiences now taking place, Pope Paul said on November 29, 1972:

"The Church wishes to be most respectful regarding the supernatural experiences granted to certain souls, and marvelous happenings which Our Lord deigns to introduce miraculously into the course of natural events."<sup>2</sup>

This statement refers to personal supernatural experiences, and public miracles.

In the first part the Holy Father refers especially to vi-

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sions, stigmata, survival only on Eucharist, and similar very extraordinary favors experienced by persons like Father Pio, Theresa Neumann, Alexandrina da Costa, etc., rather than the simpler charisms now becoming so common. But when the Holy Father refers to the marvelous happenings which Our Lord deigns to introduce miraculously into the course of natural events at the present time, the Pope is obviously acknowledging the "explosion of the supernatural" which we are now witnessing, with events following so rapidly and in such number that authorities hardly have time to evaluate them all. It is in the presence of this explosion that the Holy Father explains that "The Church wishes to be most respectful." And of course he encourages us also to regard these matters with respect. In his message a year later to bishops who had met in Rome to evaluate the charismatic renewal (October 18, 1973), the Holy Father "rejoices" in the spiritual manifestations taking place in the Church today and indicates that it is the responsibility of each bishop, in his own diocese, to evaluate these events. His Holiness said (as we quoted in our introduction):

The spiritual lives of the faithful come under the active pastoral responsibility of each bishop in his own diocese. It is particularly opportune to recall this in the presence of these ferments of renewal which arouse so many hopes.

Even in the best experiences of renewal weeds may be found among the good seed, so a work of discernment is indispensable.

It devolves upon those who are in charge of the Church "to whose special competence it belongs, not indeed to stifle the Spirit, but to test all things and hold fast to that which is good" (cf. 1 Th. 5:12 and 19-21) (*Lumen Gentium*, 12) (1).

As the authors of *Segno Dei Tempa* (*Sign of Our Time*) point out, many bishops seem reluctant to take a positive stand on many of these phenomena.

Consider for example the number of religious images from which tears of water and blood are reported to have flowed in the sixties and especially in the seventies. So far as we know, only the miracle in Syracuse (Sicily) was studied in detail and accepted by the Church as truly mirac-

ulous.<sup>3</sup> But there are dozens of cases behind the Iron Curtain and in the West.

Since 1972, as journalist Alexander Pernitzky puts it: "It is like a flood of tears and blood [from religious images] over the world."

In 1972 a statue of the Blessed Virgin in Madrid known as "Queen of Victim Souls and Mother of Priests" bled from the eyes and the heart eleven times. A statue of Our Lady Queen of the World, near Rome, bled from the eyes seven times. (This writer saw that particular phenomenon and checked it with local ecclesiastical authorities who said: "We believe it is to be taken seriously.") There were other flowings of tears and blood in Florence, Maropati, etc., and the Pilgrim Virgin of Our Lady of Fatima was witnessed and photographed as it shed tears in New Orleans, Louisiana, in this same year (1972).

It might be thought that some of these phenomena were fakes. But whenever the tears were analyzed they were always found to be "human." And the blood in every instance, according to Professor Pernitzky, was found to be Type A human blood with one of the nine elements missing in every instance, thus offering positive proof that the blood could not have been pumped from some ordinary person through the image. There is also the testimony of those who actually stood before the images as this writer has done and saw the phenomenon actually take place. In the case of the statue in Porto San Stefano, Italy, the statue is sealed in a glass case and blood has flowed down from the eyes and coagulated repeatedly on the face and dripped down onto the image.

But these are not the only phenomena.

Extraordinary lights have been seen. One (which we will describe later in this book) appeared in 1972 over Mount Zion in Israel. Another, witnessed by millions, was seen over all of northern Spain on June 12, 1974. On January 25, 1938 over millions saw the light predicted at Fatima as a warning of World War II in several countries, especially Europe. Our Lady had said: "When you see a night illuminated by an unknown light, know that this is THE GREAT SIGN that God is giving you that He is going to punish the world by means of war, famine, and persecution of the Church and the Holy Father"<sup>4</sup>



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Dr. Mueller-Markus, professor of physics from Switzerland, happened to be in Spain at the time and he described it in these words:

"It is difficult for me to speak of what I saw with my own eyes. Never had I seen anything like it in my entire life." He remarks that there were no clouds in the sky and that it was about an hour after sunset when the light appeared in the north like a huge bolt of lightning suspended between heaven and earth—but not moving. It was a "somewhat frightening color of red, something like blood, and I had the impression that the other world was breaking into this world to tell us something," Dr. Markus said. He added that it was clear that "*it could not possibly have been a purely natural phenomenon.*"

After this jagged red bolt of light remained about twenty miles high for one hour, it began to change and to form a kind of writing in the sky, something like the lines of an electrocardiogram, or the lines drawn on a Richter scale measuring an earthquake. Then over this writing there appeared a great cloud of light of amazing brilliance in the shape of an "M" from which spread horizontal wings of blue.

Newspapers the next day reported it to have been seen all over northern Spain and even as far as Majorca. It was observed literally by millions. Traffic jams occurred in Barcelona as people stopped cars and stared into the sky. On radio, television, and even at football stadiums announcements were made. It was indeed widely viewed.

Subsequently, suggestions were made that a satellite had been shot down from Narbonne, in southern France, resulting in a cloud of gas in the sky.<sup>5</sup> But aviators estimated the height of the light to have been between eighteen and twenty-five miles, and at that height condensation of gases would have been impossible.

Many people seeing this light in the sky recalled that before World War II they saw a sign similar to this, at least in color. However, the previous light seemed to be close to the earth, giving the impression that the whole earth was afire just over the horizon. That light was seen in January of 1938, three months before Hitler marched into Austria to begin World War II. *This had been prophesied at Fatima on July 13, 1917, in these words:*

"If they do not stop offending God, another and worse

war will break out in the reign of Pius XI. When you see the night illumined by an unknown light, you will know that it is the sign that God gives you . . ."

That "warning" light of 1938 caused many who saw it to think that it was the end of the world. The light of June 12, 1974, does not seem to have struck such a deep fear in those who saw it, although they did take it as some kind of warning, some kind of a reminder from God perhaps of the punishment due for sin, but at the same time of the special protection from Mary Who would take us beneath the wings of Her blue mantle if we would turn to Her and ask Her to help us return to God.

It is remarkable that the world press failed to report that light over the southwestern peninsula of Europe on June 12, 1974. *Diario de Barcelona* said: "This was a brilliant light of vast dimensions which, to the ordinary observer was over three hundred feet wide. The lower part was reddish and seemed to be of an explosion or fire of great magnitude produced in the atmosphere. It might have been a U.F.O. but if so it would be the first time such would have been so long a time." In passing, we can comment that this silence of the press in 1974 helps us to understand how it could happen that the miracle of the sun in Portugal in 1917 was ignored. Even the long-continuing apparitions in Cairo, witnessed by thousands, have been scarcely reported in the secular press. A reporter of the *National Enquirer* (a million-plus circulation paper which features such phenomena) said in June, 1975, that he had never even heard of it six years after the first miraculous appearance.

While the light over Spain may have a natural explanation, and we can therefore somewhat understand that it did not receive a "good press," the extraordinary events in Cairo were formally approved as miraculous in the following proclamation of the Patriarch of Cairo:

Ever since the evening of Tuesday, April 2, 1968 (Baramhat 24, 1684), the Virgin Mary, the Mother of Light, has been appearing in the Coptic Orthodox Church named after Her in Shareh Tomanbey, Zeitoun, Cairo.

The vision, which is still appearing, has been seen on various nights and in different forms. Sometimes the Virgin is seen in full form, but on other occasions

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only the upper half appears, surrounded by a glorious halo of shining light.

The vision is sometimes seen through the openings of the dome of the church and sometimes outside the dome. The vision moves and walks across the dome and bows before the cross on the dome, which becomes clothed in a glorious light. She turns to the on-lookers and blesses them with Her hand and with the movement of Her holy head.

The vision has often appeared in the form of a bright nimbus, or in the form of a light preceded by forms of heavenly objects such as quick-moving doves.

The vision has remained for long periods, occasionally as long as two and a quarter hours, as at dawn on Tuesday, April 30, 1968 (Baramuda 22, 1684), when the vision appeared in full shining form from 2:45 A.M. till 5 A.M.

The vision has been seen by many thousands of people of different religions and sects. Some foreigners, some priests and men of learning, or from professions and from many other groups. They have affirmed with full awareness that they have seen Her and have agreed unanimously in their descriptions of each vision and the time of its occurrence, so much so that the unanimity has rendered the appearance in this place of the Virgin Mary, the Mother of Light, a vision unique in its nature and needs no statement or affirmation.

Two important factors have accompanied the apparition. The first has been the arrival of faith in God, in the other world, in the saints, and in the dawning of the knowledge among many who have strayed away, and many have repented and changed their lives.

Secondly the vision has lead to many miraculous healings evidenced scientifically and by unanimous affirmation.<sup>8</sup>

In the balance of the statement the patriarch stated that the vision "has lead to many miraculous healings, evidenced scientifically and by unanimous affirmation," and that the information had been gathered from individuals and committees of priests who investigated the truth and saw the visions themselves. The Catholic Cardinal

(Stephanos I) said: "It is no doubt a real appearance . . . this unique miracle embodies a benevolent message which will make of the Zeitoun church a place of worldwide pilgrimage." Also Mohammedans and Protestant leaders stated their belief in the authenticity of these visions which have been seen by so many people and were accompanied by so many wonders. For example, a man named Sayed Hassan had an infected finger which was to be amputated. When the man raised his hand to greet the Blessed Virgin as She appeared over the church, his finger was instantly healed.

Nadiha Mohammed Said, twenty years of age, who was blind and mute, saw the vision and cried out, "the Virgin!" and not only was her voice restored, but she was instantly cured of blindness.

There is a whole litany of similar cures with detailed medical evidence.

Films have been made of most of these phenomena. But have we ever seen such extraordinary happenings on our TV screens? Does it not seem that God is indeed speaking to the world, but with no voice among men themselves to make known His message?

One would think that the apparitions in Cairo would have special meaning because of the Middle East crisis, especially in view of the fact that the apparitions have resulted in persons of all faiths believing and praying together. Jerome Palmer, O.S.B., in his book on the Cairo phenomena, says:

"It would be safe to suppose that the apparitions are meant to heal the divisions that exist between the Orthodox and Uniate Christians, and between the Moslems and Christians of Egypt."

Father Palmer recalls that Vatican II indicated devotion to Mary as the greatest link between the Eastern and Western Churches in its Decree on Ecumenism, and remarks the beautiful passage in the Koran exalting the Virgin Mary above all women. He concludes:

"It is well known that when the Pilgrim Virgin statue of Our Lady of Fatima was taken through Mohammedan countries that Moslems turned out in great numbers beside their Christian neighbors to pay their respects to Our Lady's image . . . recognized by them as the image of God's highest "ambassador," His most intimate member of the human race. Mohammed had written in the Koran that She has the highest place of any woman in Heaven.

"Hence it is not wholly surprising that the Mother of God should in these troubled times appear also to Her children of other persuasions and attempt to draw the human family together under Her mantle."

But also these apparitions in Cairo preceded the terrible suffering of Egypt in two wars with Israel and there is a prophecy in the Koran which might relate to this apparition like a "visible smoke." The Mohammedans' Holy Book says:

"Watch thou for the day when the sky will bring forth a visible smoke that will envelop the people. This will be a terrible ? Then the people will cry 'Lord, remove from us this torment; truly we are believers . . .'

"We shall remove the torment for a little while, but you will certainly revert to your evil courses. On the day when We shall seize you with a great seizure, then certainly We shall exact retribution." (Koran 44:11-13, 16-17)

All over the world the message seems to be the same: men must cease offending God or take the consequences. But God has not abandoned the world. On the contrary, there is going to be a great era of peace. In the prophecy of Fatima it is said explicitly:

"Russia (certainly meaning Russia in historical sense, i.e. dialectical materialism in the present age) will be converted, and an era of peace will be granted to all mankind." And the promise is made even more exact after announcing that if people do not mend their ways that the "errors of atheistic Russia will spread throughout the entire world, fomenting further wars, etc." It says:

"But in the end, My Immaculate Heart [Immaculate Heart of the Virgin Mother] will triumph. Russia will be converted and an era of peace will be granted to mankind."

Could not Fatima become a charismatic rallying point of unity?

In the charismatic experience of John James, Mary's apparition launched one of the greatest Pentecosts in history. That one charismatic experience, begun with an illiterate Indian and then shared with a bishop-designate and his assistant, resulted in a decade which saw millions come forth from paganism to make the commitment to Christ. This daily Pentecost for eight years, and the miracles which occurred in the wake of that great decade of faith, stagger the imagination.

And America is far more involved in this era than most

of us have admitted. We are involved not only because of that Indian's charisma, but because of the split of Christianity, deepened almost irreparably by the struggle for America's wealth.

Now America has an opportunity to help the world come back not only to the Christian unity of the early centuries, but to a pure Christianity which the world at large has never really known. Television, regardless of the harm which its materialism and violence may have done, has opened up a new understanding among different religions. Christians see that Jews believe in the same God. We all see that differences among Christian religions are not as great as our prejudices would have led us to believe.

And now, instead of talking together, many Christians are beginning to pray together. They are experiencing God together.

Is not this the beginning of the triumph of the heart which Our Lady promised at Fatima . . . the triumph of the heart from which the Holy Spirit formed the Heart of Christ? When She promised an era of peace to mankind and performed a miracle at a predicted time and place "so that all may believe?"

## NOTES

1. *Segno Dei Tempi* (Cittadella d'Assisi, 1973)
2. *Ibid.*, p. 130.
3. H. Jongen, S.M.M., *Look—The Madonna is Weeping* (Montfort Publications, 1959), p 38

The analysis of the tears was performed on September 2nd in the micrography department of the Laboratory of Hygiene and Prophylactic Medicine by another scientific commission appointed by the archdiocesan curia. It was composed of the following membership: Dr. Michael Cassola, supervisor of the micrography department of the Laboratory of Hygiene and Prophylactic Medicine in Syracuse; Dr. Francesco Cotzia, assistant in the same department;

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Dr. Mario Marletta, physician, surgeon, and celebrated chemist attached to the above-mentioned laboratory; finally, Father Giuseppe, pastor of the Pantheon in Syracuse. Upon completion of the analysis, conducted with the aid of micro-rays (the quantity of tears available being only a cubic centimeter in volume), we established the absence of those chemical elements found in the Madonnina. The physiological elements that enter into the composition of human tears were all accounted for—namely, a water solution of chlorine of nitrogen with evident traces of protein and quaternary substances.

Experiments involving analysis and comparison, utilizing tears both of an adult and of a three-year-old-child, yielded, with respect to composition, identical results—which warrants release of the following report to the press: "The liquid taken from the eyes of the Madonnina is of a composition identical with that of human tears."

In confirmation of the above, I affix my signature to this statement with a sincere conscience, at Syracuse, on this 17th day of October, 1953." (Signed) Dr. Prof. Leopoldo La Rosa.

4. This appears in all accounts of the July 13th Fatima apparition but is principally explained in Lucia's Third Memoir.

5. Spectacular color photographs of this phenomenon were published in *Gaceta Ilustrada*, No. 925, June 30, 1974. This magazine claimed positively that it was a French projectile launched for weather observations and that the Army Air Force from Zaragoza confirmed that a rocket had indeed been fired that night from France. However, natural explanations were also offered by the Press for the light of January 25, 1938, but were inadequate.

6. Jerome Palmer, O.S.B., *Our Lady Returns to Egypt*

7. *Ibid.*, p. 51-54, p. 62.

(\_\_\_\_\_: Culligan Book Company, 1969), p. 41.

## CHAPTER IV

### *The Miracle of Fire*

It was so much like the sun that if you speak (as this writer has done)<sup>1</sup> to a hundred different persons who witnessed it, all will say: "The sun whirled in the sky and then came down."

It occurred at the exact time foretold by three children who said that God was going to perform "a public miracle so that all may believe."

The fire whirled by like a giant Catherine wheel for twelve minutes. Then it came toward the earth with such heat that puddles of water instantly vanished. Not one of the more than a hundred thousand witnesses was harmed.

*Everyone who saw it within a radius of thirty-two miles, without exception, thought it was the end of the world.*

This miracle was described in the secular press with such accuracy and detail that when the Church declared it to be miraculous thirteen years later the canonical statement referred to "The solar phenomenon on the thirteenth of October 1917, as described in the press of the time." And for good reason.

Seven years before the miracle revolutionary leaders of Portugal, under the symbol of a Red Star, had declared Lisbon the atheist capital of the world. At the time of the miracle they described it as "the most atheist city in the world."<sup>2</sup>

The two most prominent newspapers of this "most atheist city in the world" were the *Daily News* (*Diario de Noticias*) and *The Century* (*O Seculo*), and both had been voices of militant atheism. This factual report (in contrast to that of 1975 successors) instead of ridiculing the miracle describes it factually and objectively and with rather an attitude of awe than of disbelief.

They had expected to report a crowd dispersed and put to flight by soldiers, or a crowd repudiating the children because a miracle predicted had not materialized.

But this — verbatim — is what they saw . . . as they



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wrote it and as it appeared in print in the *Daily News*:

*The rains kept falling. Drops trickled down the women's skirts of coarse wool or striped cotton, making them as heavy as lead. Water dripped from the caps and broad-brimmed hats onto Sunday finery. Bare feet of women and hobnailed boots of men sloshed in the wide pools of muddy roads. They did not seem to notice the rain but went up hills without stopping, illuminated by faith, anxious for sight of the miracle promised by the lady to take place at noon.*

*A murmur drifting down from the hills reached us. It was a murmur like the faraway voice of the sea. It was the religious songs, now becoming clear, intoned by thousands of voices. On the plateau, over a hill, filling the valley, there was a vast and a moving mass of thousands upon thousands of people in prayer.*

*O Seculo* adds that, entering Fatima, some of those who had become atheists during the seven years of the atheist regime were joking. "Aren't you going to see the saint?" one asked. "Not unless she comes to see me!" and the newspaper continues:

*They laughed heartily but the devout went on, indifferent to anything which was not part of their pilgrimage. All night long through the dark and rain, the most varied vehicles moved into the town square (of Ourem) carrying the faithful and the curious, and also old ladies, somberly dressed and weighted by the years.*

*At dawn the sun was rising grayly through the rain but dark clouds loomed over Fatima. Yet nothing could stop the crowd converging from every road toward that now holy place.*

*Though some came in luxurious automobiles, continually sounding their horns, oxcarts dragged slowly alongside them. There were carriages of all types, victoria chaises, landaus, and wagons fitted out for the occasion with seats and crowded to the limit.*

After a further description of the vehicles and the people, *O Seculo* continues:

*About ten o'clock in the morning the skies were alto-*

*gether black and sheets of rain, driven by a chilly northeast wind, whipped the faces of the pilgrims, drenched the roads, and chilled the people to the bone. Some sought shelter under the trees, against the walls, or in scattered houses. Parked along the road near Fatima were carriages of every type and thousands of pilgrims that had come from many miles around and from the provinces, gathered about the small oak tree which, in the words of the children, their lady had chosen as a pedestal. This small, shredded tree was the center of a great circle around which the devout and other spectators ranged themselves.*

Then, in the Cova da Iria, *Diario de Noticias* reports:

*At one o'clock the rain stopped. The sky had a certain gray clarity but seemed to suddenly be getting darker. The sun seemed veiled in gauze. We could look at it without strain. The gray tint of mother-of-pearl began changing as if into a silver disc that was growing and growing . . . until it broke the clouds! Then the silvery sun, still shrouded in that grayish light, began to rotate and wander within the circle of the receded clouds!*

*The people cried out with one voice. Thousands, transported by ecstasy, fell to their knees upon the muddy ground. Then, as if it were shining through the stained glass windows of a great cathedral, the light became a rare blue, spreading its rays upon the nave . . . Slowly the blue faded away and now the light seemed to be filtered through yellow. Yellow spots were falling now upon the white kerchiefs and dark shirts of coarse wool. They were spots which repeated themselves indefinitely over the landscape. All the people were weeping and praying bareheaded, weighted down by the greatness of the miracle. These were seconds, moments, that seemed hours . . .*

*O Seculo*, the other heretofore skeptical newspaper adds:

*From beside the parked carriages and where many thousands stood, afraid to descend into the muddy soil of the Cova da Iria, we saw the immense crowd turn toward the sun at its highest, free of all clouds. The sun seemed to us like a plate of dull silver. It could be seen without the least effort. It did not blind or burn. It seemed as though*

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*an eclipse were taking place. All of a sudden a tremendous shout burst forth, 'Miracle, miracle!'*

*Before the astonished eyes of the people, whose attitude carried us back to Biblical times, and who, white with terror, heads uncovered, gazed at the sun which trembled and made brusque and unheard of movement beyond all cosmic laws, the sun seemed literally to dance in the sky.*

*Immediately afterward the people asked each other if they saw anything and what they had seen. The greatest number avowed that they saw the sun trembling and dancing; others declared they saw the smiling face of the Blessed Virgin herself. They swore that the sun turned around on itself as if it were a wheel of fireworks and had fallen almost to the point of burning the earth with its rays. Some said they saw it change colors successively.*

The reporter from *The Century* was Avelino de Almeida, who went to school with the president of the Municipal Council of Santarem, Antonio de Bastos. Mr. de Bastos was among the many unbelievers who had gone to Fatima. He decided to write Almeida, after reading the report in *The Century*, to ask Almeida's *secret and personal opinion* of the phenomenon.

At the request of Bastos, Almeida wrote a much more sincere and detailed account than he had dared to give in the pages of *The Century*. It reads in part:

*Breaking a silence of more than twenty years, you write to ask me for details of what I saw and heard on the mountain at Fatima.*

*Some are convinced that promises from Heaven were fulfilled; others find themselves far from believing in the unquestioned reality of a miracle. You were a believer in your youth and later ceased to be a believer. Family reasons brought you to Fatima in the great wave of people who gathered there on October thirteenth. Your rationalism suffered a formidable blow, and wishing to establish a definite opinion, you make use of unprejudiced evidence, such as mine, since I was there only in fulfillment of a very difficult mission, that of reporting impartially for *The Century* facts which might develop before me.*

*It may not satisfy you, but certainly what your eyes saw and what you heard was no different from what I saw and heard, and there were few who were insensible to the*

*grandeur of this spectacle, unique and worthy of thought and study from every viewpoint.*

And then Dr. Almeida goes on to tell, not so much from the reports of others (as he does in the reporting in *O Seculo*) but from his own background and observations, exactly what happened.

This testimony is extremely lengthy and we need not repeat it. However, Dr. Almeida explains that phenomena reported before October at Fatima, and historical conditions in Portugal, were responsible for this tremendous wave of people that went to the mountain top that celebrated Saturday.

*He concludes: Was it a miracle, as the people shouted? Was it a natural phenomenon as the learned say? I now don't care to know. But I only tell you what I saw. The rest is with science and the Church.\**

One of the puzzles of our time is that this great miracle of fire at Fatima (witnessed at the predicted time and place over an area of thirty-two miles) had so little effect. It was ignored not only outside the Church but even within.

Perhaps there are two major reasons why this great event was so ignored: 1) Few, other than the actual witnesses, could accept in 1917 that a miracle might be performed by God "so that all may believe." Although United Press carried the story, few newspapers picked it up because it referred to the sun (rather than a ball of fire like the sun) and no astronomical observatories had confirmed it; 2) those outside the Church, especially those not believing that the Mother of Jesus really became our Mother at the foot of the Cross, would be inclined not even to consider it because it happened through Her intercession.

But the miracle of Fatima was not an isolated miracle. It was and is a concomitant with a Pentecostal outpouring of the Holy Spirit over the world. All over the world, especially in the areas where the persecutions foretold at Fatima began to take place, men and women were filled with the joyful hope and the spirit of prayer and sacrifice which Fatima requested.

For example, Father Maximilian Kolbe was inspired to

\*This letter appeared in *Ilustracao Portuguesa*, Number 610, October 29, 1917.

found a crusade to make the "Message of the Immaculate" better known at the very time of the Fatima miracle. He gave his life in a Nazi concentration camp to save the life of another prisoner.

And one of the finest examples of response on the part of a person who possibly had never even heard of the Fatima miracle was made by Betsy Ten Boom in another Nazi concentration camp where she, too, ultimately died a martyr's death.

There were seven hundred women in a cell block intended for two hundred. Fighting broke out among a few and began to spread. In the hatred and oppression of that crowded room the outbreak was fraught with ugly danger. Betsy and her sister, both sincere Christians imprisoned for having helped Jews, felt a diabolic presence. Betsy said:

"O, let us pray!"

With her sister Corrie following, Betsy began to pray as only saints can pray. The strife leveled. Then it began to subside. When Betsy finally whispered the word "Amen," the room was quiet.<sup>3</sup>

We are all in an increasingly crowded room on this planet. A diabolic influence is present that incites hatreds between colors in some countries, religion in others. Racism and nationalism erupt in irrational violence in the very land where two thousand years ago angels sang of "peace on earth to men of good will."

What is the solution?

Our Lady said to three saintly children at Fatima: "Pray and make sacrifices. So many souls are lost because there is no one to pray for them."<sup>4</sup>

Simultaneously the Holy Spirit began to form saints, teaching them to pray, often where the Church had failed to do so. And with every prayer, holiness began to gather like a great wave which will ultimately wash evil from the earth.

What is really new and different about the miracle of Fatima is only *the promise that this wave will now grow and that it will now cleanse the world*. After prophesying fifty years in advance the evils of the atheist revolution which would spread from Russia throughout the entire world, the vision requested prayer and sacrifice and said: "In the end My Immaculate Heart will triumph. Russia will be converted and an era of peace will be granted to mankind."

This is an absolute assurance that, following the change

in Russia which many believe has already begun,<sup>6</sup> hatreds throughout the entire world will begin to subside.

Before this happens, many will have suffered persecution as was foretold at Fatima.<sup>6</sup> There will even be annihilation of "several nations" if the wave of prayer does not build up in time.

In 1974, Ave Maria Press published *Healing*<sup>7</sup> which is a thrilling testament of faith and, as Father Gelpi, S.J., said, "of important pastoral significance." But, rejoicing in God's great mercies, the book asks if we should not all ask God to heal us, and if we should not all expect our request to be granted. The author writes: "Either Jesus meant something very definite when He said 'Ask and you shall receive' or the Gospel has to be reinterpreted in such a way that ordinary people find it hard to understand in terms of their everyday lives." And the author develops this, based on Matthew 12:16, that Jesus "cured them all" and he asks, "why, today, have the followers of Jesus encouraged their sick to accept their sicknesses as His Will?"

But the traditional interpretation of "ask and you shall receive" does not mean that we shall receive in kind. Otherwise, none of us (or certainly very few)! would ever die. We must still pray as Jesus did in the Garden of Olives—and we may receive the consoling visit of an angel rather than removal of the Chalice.

But we must also pray with the kind of faith described in *Healing*.

This writer knew an unusually holy nun who was dying of cancer and who prayed earnestly for a cure. "If I go to Lourdes I know I shall be cured," she said. And we wondered if faith like hers could possibly fail to be rewarded by a miracle. But what if God were calling her to Heaven?

The result was interesting.

She was instantly cured at Lourdes. The large tumor vanished in a moment. She returned to the States but a few months later the tumor began to come back. And about a year later, with great faith and resignation, she died a holy and joyous death.

A very similar story was published in the January 1975 issue of *Soul Magazine*. Two miracles were recounted side by side in that issue: One, of the child who died despite a sincere storming of heaven, and of another child who lived because of the storming of heaven. Both articles were written by the parents of the children, and what was interesting

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is that the greatest grace (one of an almost stunning and world-encompassing faith) was given to the parents of the child who died, and in that instance, too, the child seemed to have undergone a complete cure just two weeks before the death.

This particular distinction (that visible charisms such as glossolalia, prophecy, healing, are not necessary to receive the most important gifts of the Holy Spirit) is most important. But the other side of the distinction is equally important: We cannot belittle miracles.

How could any miracle be considered a little thing, or not worthy of attention?

Perhaps only the person experiencing "speaking in tongues" can know certainly whether this is something extraordinary, and perhaps can even know from the spiritual effects whether it is caused by the Holy Spirit. And even to someone else to whom it may seem like gibberish, or to be attributed to demons, it cannot be treated lightly. And if the person who experiences this suddenly bursts out in praise of God, and of the name of Jesus, should we not be filled with respect and wonder. St. Paul says: "But now you are meeting people who claim to speak messages from the spirit of God. How can you know whether they are really inspired by God or whether they are fakes? Here is the test: No one speaking by the power of the spirit of God can curse Jesus, and no one can say, Jesus is Lord, and really mean it, unless the Holy Spirit is helping him." (1 Cor. 12:3).

What is thrilling and wonderful at the present time is to see so many people who have never learned to pray, who had even forgotten to pray, now discovering the transforming and joyous experience of a sincere encounter with God.

Was this not the purpose of the miracle of Fatima? Is it not the purpose of any miracles? And should we not thank and praise God for every miracle, big or small, which opens the hearts of men to prayer?

We do not tire of repeating in these pages (which are not about the Charismatic Movement so much as an acknowledgment of it in the context of a Divine triumph in the world) that we are beginning to witness what was promised at Fatima and was solemnly and explicitly confirmed there by a miracle "so that everyone may believe."

1. John M. Haffert, *Meet The Witnesses*, AMI Press, Oct. 13, 1961, 160 pp.
2. Costa Brochado, *Fatima In The Light Of History*, (Bruce, 1955), pg. 230; cf. *Meet The Witnesses*, pg. 48.
3. Millions in the U.S. heard this true story told on television by Carrie Ten Boom of Orange, CA., in whose arms Betsy gave up her life in the Nazi concentration camp.
4. *Memoirs Of Lucy*, AMI abridged edition (*Lucia Speaks*) page 35.
5. *Soul* magazine, Nov., Dec., Jan., Feb., 1974-'75. "Has the conversion of Russia begun?" by the Most Reverend John Venancio, former Bishop of Fatima.
6. *Lucia Speaks*, p. 31. "If my requests are not heard, error will spread from an atheist Russia throughout the entire world fomenting further wars, the good will be persecuted, the Holy Father will suffer much, and several entire nations will be annihilated.
7. Francis MacNutt, O.P., *Healing*, Ave Maria Press, 1974. 333pp. In his own agony, Jesus demonstrated that absolute faith is possible even while saying "Thy Will be done." We understand Father MacNutt's dilemma between the assumption of the healer's need for absolute faith in every cure and the need (admitted on page 250) for suffering and death. His book is most worth reading and we apologize for finding in it an example of possible exaggeration in our current "explosion of the supernatural."
8. *I bid.*



## CHAPTER V

### *They Believe in Miracles*

A secondary purpose of the miracle of Fatima was to warn the world that it must stop offending God (or suffer the consequences). The major purpose was to save the world by raising up a charismatic army of generous souls who—like the children of Fatima—would recognize that “so many souls are lost because there is no one to pray and to make sacrifices for them.”

One of the most poignant events in the history of Fatima was the imprisonment of the three children in August of 1917 by civil authorities who were real, honest-to-goodness, dyed-in-the-wool militant atheists.

Those atheists did not believe in miracles. They did not believe that what was happening on the mountain at Fatima was from God. To them it was nothing but a trick to confuse and hinder the advance of the militant atheist regime which, seven years before, had proclaimed Lisbon the atheist capital of the world. And they thought that by imprisoning the children just before the time of the regular heavenly visitation at Fatima (at noon on the thirteenth of the month), nothing would happen.

But something did.

The mountain shook. There were flashes of light. Colors appeared all over the landscape and over the more than fifteen thousand witnesses. A globe of light came across the sky and came down to the spot where at the same time in previous months one of the children had talked “into the air.”

Now the atheists could not let the children free. Now they had to get some kind of denial from them—a repudiation of the miracle—a confession. And for two days—while tension in the entire country was mounting in the wake of what had happened—they tried to break the children. After forty-eight hours they gave orders to prepare boiling vats of oil in which the children would die if they did not repudiate their “vision.”

Each of those children went forth to die heroically attesting to their charism. This writer asked the eldest, who at the time was ten, how she felt when she was the last of the three to be taken out to die. She said: "I felt certain Francis and Jacinta were dead and that, having perhaps misunderstood Our Lady when She said that I was to remain on earth, I, too, was about to die."

Later the children were freed and Our Lady appeared to them.

Did She reach down and take little seven-year-old Jacinta into Her arms and thank her for being willing to die in boiling oil? Did She put her arm around little Francis, aged nine, or Lucia, aged ten? Did She smile and congratulate them?

Oh, mystery of the crisis of our times! She remained serious and said:

*"Because of what they did to you the miracle in October will not be as great. Continue to pray and to make sacrifices . . . so many souls are lost because there is no one to pray and to make sacrifices for them."*

Jonah could say to the people of Nineveh that unless they mended their ways they would be destroyed, and Nineveh listened. But who listened to the message of Fatima? What change was there that Our Lady's warning of the Second World War and the spread of atheistic communism through all the world would be heeded?

Who, in our day, believed in miracles?

There are some. They are usually little people, like those little children of Fatima. And in increasing numbers they are heroic. And through them the charisms granted to us by God are continuing and developing and will ultimately change the world as Our Lady of Fatima Herself foretold.

Miracles are an important factor in the changing of the world promised to us at Fatima, and when we speak of the Charismatic Movement we at once imply two things: Prayer that is living and meaningful, and visible evidence of God's response to that prayer.

Not everyone needs visible evidence of God's response to our prayer, as we stressed before, but who of us has not experienced some visible evidence of that response? If we look back over our lives, must we not acknowledge some definite moment of God's special protection and intervention? We say how "lucky" we were that we came out of that accident without a scratch, or how "lucky" that so-and-

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so just knocked on the door at that moment, or that something we had lost just happened to be where we least expected.

Even if we take stock of our present state in life, even of the very fact that we are reading this book, how often God must have intervened, even with miracles when necessary, as in the case of the girl at the dance (of which we will speak later) who would never have known of the great intervention in her life if she had not met the Curé of Ars. We shall give a similar example in the next chapter, and perhaps the reader can again consider whether or not there wasn't some experience—some special moment of awareness of God's intimate and loving protection—recalling the words of Our Lord that even the hairs of our head are numbered, and not even a little sparrow falls from the steeple without the knowing and loving participation of our Father in heaven.

The great problem of our time is a lack of faith. The crisis in the Church is a crisis of faith, as Cardinal Joseph Höffner, of Köln, stated at the conclusion of the conferences of priests held at the Roman center as reported in *l'Osservatore Romano* of January 6, 1974. Cardinal Höffner blamed this crisis of faith primarily on modern theologians who freely express their views without regard to the Magisterium of the Church. But there could not be a crisis of faith if there was not first a crisis of prayer. And now, our loving Father in heaven is showering graces through the clouds of confusion. He is working many visible miracles not only before thousands at Fatima but before small groups and for individuals—often not so much as an answer to prayer as an aid to a world that seems to have forgotten to pray.

A few years ago the average layman would have been deeply shocked to have read a statement like that delivered by Cardinal Höffner in Rome. But we are almost becoming accustomed to learning of priests who today show little faith and seem to regard anything "extraordinary" as suspect and often judge them *a priori* to be hysteria or invention rather than possibly caused by God.

And when we lose faith in miracles, have we not lost faith in God?

Some theologians today even rationalize miracles of the Gospel. And is it any wonder that laity of faith become confused, shocked, and even rebellious?

The greatest pity is that the vast majority of priests, dedicated men who are faithful to their daily Mass and their parochial obligations, seem to be forgotten. And the minority (there was one Judas out of twelve) cast their shadow upon the entire Church.

Having been a close observer of all of this, and even having spent all the years of the council in Rome, this present writer has observed that most priests who have opposed evident miracles like Fatima soon wear secular clothes and usually end up leaving the Church.

But they are leaving behind a great danger of distrust among the laity. The attitude of many good Catholics on Necedah and similarly condemned visions or alleged miracles is adequate evidence.

This is a matter of great concern to us all. The danger is not that the Church will fail because some priests have, but that many of the laity will fail. Many are beginning to forget the authority that Jesus invested in the Church and the solemn promise He made that "the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." They are asking: "How can someone who does not believe in visions tell us which ones are authentic? And where will we find prayer and faith?"

Out of the confusion of the moment the charismatic developments within the Church offer relief. The drastic problems of a crisis in the Church disappear in the presence of authentic holiness. The Holy Spirit unites, He dissipates confusion, and if necessary He works miracles to teach the individuals, so long neglected, the glorious experience of faith.

## CHAPTER VI

### *Personal Miracles*

We offer the following example of an authentic personal miracle which had no purpose whatever than to confirm the recipient in faith. And we choose this example for two others reasons: 1) This writer is certain that every detail in this account is true, exactly as told; 2) it exemplifies the natural reaction to a miracle. "This could not possibly be happening to me."

A man was entering the Sanctuary of Lourdes on a cold day in November for morning Mass at the grotto at eight o'clock. It began to rain. He had lost his topcoat on the train from Paris the night before and had no protection whatever over a light summer suit. He ignored both rain and cold, but remembers thinking: "Boy! this suit is certainly going to be a mess when I get back on the train tonight!" (He didn't think he would catch cold because, after all, "this was Lourdes)."

He had assisted almost through the entire Mass when he began to wonder that he did not feel cold. About a half hour later he curiously put his hand under his jacket. He was more than mildly surprised to find that the shirt under his jacket was dry, even though the water was pouring down from head and shoulders. He thought: "This suit must be waterproof." But why wasn't the water running down around his collar?

Then a little later he thought: "This is a funny kind of rain."

A short time later he was walking across the esplanade. The water was coursing as though a river was overflowing it. Suddenly his foot went into a hole with water well over the shoe. As he drew it out, he thought: "Now I'll be miserably wet!" And he began to take off the shoe to dump out the water.

His foot was dry!

Now he realized that he had been in the pouring rain for something like two hours. He had put his foot into a deep

puddle that should have filled the shoe. The water had been flowing off his garments and he was not wet. And it could not be that he had waterproof garments. And it could not be that this rain was not really rain.

It was somewhat frightening.

As we read in *The World's Greatest Secret* concerning miracles: "You feel like a person who goes wading in the ocean, enjoying walking on the firm sand while at the same time enjoying the water. Suddenly you step off with nothing under your feet. You suddenly have to swim in the sea of the supernatural."

At this moment his first instinct was to cry out: "I believe! Now please let me get wet!" (Let me get back on solid ground!)

But he did not get wet, and he *had to continue to experience the reality of the supernatural*. And little by little he stopped wondering why this was happening and began just to rejoice in the fact of God's intimacy.

This is the kind of thing one does not talk about. The man who walked in the rain that morning for four hours (the last two of which were deliberate) was afraid even to mention it to the group with him. He only went so far as to say to one pilgrim who was lamenting that the baths of Lourdes were closed that day: "Why not take off your raincoat, the baths are all around you?" And she looked at him with a very odd expression.

It was over a decade later that an inner voice told this man what this experience meant. And only then (ten years later) did it become important. All during the previous years it had been nothing but a memory, difficult to realize and to cling to. It seemed such a waste that a miracle should have been performed for what seemed like nothing more than his comfort. Thousands of men have died in storms. He remembered D-day when the Allies landed in Normandy.

Why this miracle for no apparently important reason?

He found the answer during a day of recollection at the shrine in Aylesford, England, when an inner voice said: "You have been exposed to a rain of temptations. You have even placed yourself in the occasion of sin. But because of your consecration to Mary through the wearing of Her Scapular,<sup>1</sup> She has protected you."

It is needless to say that his heart was immediately filled with love and gratitude.

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He felt also that he was being warned never again to place himself in the occasion of sin. He suddenly realized that *he had indeed experienced thousands of temptations, like pouring rain!* He had even put himself into the very occasion of sin, like his foot into the puddle. As he looked back over all those experiences, it was evident that **nothing** short of a miracle could have saved him from being inundated by evil. Yet by God's special protection he had rarely been denied the privilege of Communion every day of **his** life. And now he knew why!

The great miracle was not his walk between the rain-drops at Lourdes but his lifelong walk through temptations.

It is little wonder that Our Lady held the Scapular out off the sky at the climax of the great miracle of Fatima. **And** what a pity that all the world does not know the tremendous strength to be obtained through the simple devotion to the Mother of Jesus, Who gave Her to us as He died on the Cross to be our own loving Mother. But this is the kind of story the world never hears. Perhaps many people have similar events in their lives too private to talk about. **But** even the great wonders like those witnessed in the life of Padre Pio, in our own day, are completely unknown by most of the world.

When any major television program in the United States views "miracles" it is usually with crossed fingers. When the Pilgrim Virgin was visiting parishes in New York City in 1973 the local promoters sought an announcement on a program called "Midday Live" and were told "OK, provided you bring to the studio the statue that shed tears."

Reluctantly the promoters agreed because the Blue Army, which was the custodian of both the statue which had been alleged to shed tears and the statue known as the "National Pilgrim Virgin," was deliberately avoiding any mention of the phenomenon of tears.

In advance the TV station had prepared pointed questions to ridicule the possibility of the statue having shed tears and almost all of the brief interview was controversial.

Another example was NBC's network program in February, 1975, monitored by Barbara Walters for an entire week on the question of "Psychic Healing." Olga Worrall, daughter of a Russian Orthodox father and a Catholic mother, was the primary witness on a panel of four. Mrs. Worrall was doing faith healing in Methodist churches, and

the other three members of the panel were doctors of medicine or psychiatry.

Through the whole week the word "miracle" was studiously avoided. Some connection with faith was affirmed, but the general implication was that "psychic" cures are the result of natural healing power in all of us which is just not properly used or developed.

It is interesting that during this week-long program, Barbara Walters had a cold and she asked repeatedly whether Mrs. Worral or one of the other panel members could cure her. If they did she promised to announce it. But nothing happened. The program without the word "miracle" had no miracle.

Many readers may feel we use this word "miracle" too much. They may feel that many phenomena which we seem to take as supernatural may one day be explained as caused by natural powers most men simply have not adequately developed.

On the other hand, is it not more likely that most of us have breathed the "scientific" atmosphere so long that we have become somewhat insensitive to the supernatural?

In lectures the present writer asked many audiences: "Has anyone here ever seen a miracle?"

The reaction is surprising (at least to us). Usually no one thinks he or she ever has seen a miracle. One audience, in a seminary, thought the question was a joke. Many laughed.

Have we lost faith in miracles altogether? Is that perhaps one of the reasons why Our Lady performed a miracle at Fatima, witnessed by tens of thousands at the time and place predicted, "so that everyone may believe"?

Recently a lecturer asked: "Has anyone here ever experienced a miracle?" Few dared to raise their hands. Then he asked: "Has anyone ever prayed to St. Anthony for something that was lost and immediately found it?" And immediately there was a reaction in the majority of the audience.

Of course not all answers to prayer are miracles in the strict sense of the word. But often they are. And it is difficult to imagine that any person of faith and prayer has not had some such personal experience but has not acknowledged it, like the man described above who thought in sequence: "The suit is waterproof . . . it is a funny kind of ruin . . ." anything but a miracle.



We always want to keep our feet on the ground of reason. We wade into the sea of the supernatural and if we suspect that we are getting in deep, so that we have to leave reason altogether and accept the supernatural *entirely*, we hastily put our feet back again!

We have no trouble accepting the experience of God as long as our feet are on the bottom, as long as the experience is logical and explicable. But the moment we no longer "touch bottom," the moment we have to swim on our own in absolute faith, we tend to retreat hastily.

A good example is the reaction of Dr. Alexis Carrel to the miracle he saw at Lourdes. Speaking of himself in the third person he wrote after he saw the miracle:<sup>2</sup>

When a scientist tried to apply his intellectual techniques and convictions to metaphysics, he was lost. He could no longer use his reasoning, since reason did not go beyond the establishing of facts and their relations to each other. In the search for causes, there was nothing absolute, there were no signposts along the way, there was no proof of right or wrong. All things in this mysterious realm were therefore possible. Intellectual systems no longer seemed to count. In the face of life and death, the mere theories were void. It was not science that nourished the inner life of man; it was the faith of the soul. He had to reach a conclusion. He was certain of his diagnosis. It was incontestable that a miracle had taken place. But was it by the hand of God? Some day he would know. Meanwhile, it was safe to say it was a cure; that much he could guarantee. Yet deep within himself, he felt that was not all . . .

He climbed the steps of the church in the glitter of lights while the organ boomed and a thousand voices chanted. He sat down on a chair at the back near an old peasant. For a long time he sat there motionless, his hands over his face, listening to the hymns. Then he found himself praying. ". . . I believe in Thee. Thou didst answer my prayers by a blazing miracle. I am still blind to it. I still doubt. But the greatest desire of my life is to believe, to believe passionately, implicitly, and never more to analyze and doubt . . . Beneath the deep, harsh warnings of my intellectual pride a smothered dream persists. Alas, it is still only a

dream but the most enchanting of them all. It is the dream of believing in Thee and of loving Thee with the shining spirit of men of God."

It is unfortunate that Dr. Carrel, the great scientist who wrote *Man the Unknown*, did not live to see this present charismatic period in the world when he would have found many with whom he could have discussed the miracle he witnessed and his own reaction to it. It is unfortunate that he, a Nobel prize-winner, lived in a world of agnosticism and could not speak to the scientists around him about this greatest experience of his life because they would have thought him to be a fool.

To avoid controversy is always advisable. But to fear ridicule is no excuse for hiding the lamp under a bushel.

The Blue Army of Our Lady of Fatima is a well defined apostolate of prayer pretty well above controversy' and it found (by long experience) that by concentrating on holiness, and not being distracted to talk about other subjects, it made great progress.<sup>4</sup> And this policy is consistent with the message of Fatima itself, which is a positive message to turn back militant atheism and bring peace to mankind if certain specific conditions are fulfilled. The Fatima message deplores the many evils of our time, but constantly hammers away at the positive program with its solemn promise from Heaven that we shall overcome those evils.

But sometimes just standing up for that positive program required that we take a definite position in the midst of controversy.

We have reason to be greatly concerned that many overlook the importance of the role of Mary in the very triumph She has Herself promised at Fatima. And expecting an outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the world, what voice could be raised to recall the great miracle of Fatima, but above all its great promise, and the sound basic conditions which must be fulfilled? What voice could be raised to tell those who are seeing the miracles that the reason behind them is the same as the one for which She performed the miracles before the children of Fatima: "*So many souls are lost because there is no one to pray and to make sacrifice for them.*" *Continue to pray and make sacrifices.*" "*Russia will be converted if my requests are heard.*"

Of course this writer could not take a stand as a member

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of the Blue Army of Our Lady of Fatima, but he felt impelled to do so as a journalist witnessing the present scene. He felt impelled to cry out: "A miracle is taking place."

With some twenty-five million praying throughout the world for the miracle of conversion and peace among all men, is it not necessary to say to all those who are beginning to receive an intimate and personal experience with God:

1. You are not a FANATIC. That first experience you had with God was real. Every saint in history has experienced this! The difference is that the saints persevered after the prime experience of God which is usually followed by a period of darkness and doubt—a period of God's test as to whether we really know Him and really love Him for Himself or because of the miracle of the moment.

2. Miracles are "natural" to God. But don't expect them all the time. How can He ask you to prove that you really believe and love if you are not tested?

3. If the primary pentecostal experience has since cooled, do not be afraid to talk about it and to remember it. Remember the miracle of Fatima as well as your own special signs of the coming triumph which has been promised to us.

4. There is a new and more vital role in the Church for laymen and God does not work miracles to vitalize you just so that you can crawl into a corner of private prayer and forget the crisis of faith in the world around you.

## NOTES

1. Aylesford, where this occurred, is a monastery in England where Simon Stock joined the hermits of Mount Carmel who had been brought here by a knight from the Crusades. These hermits are thought to have been the Essenes of the Old Testament dwelling on Mount Carmel, which is a short distance from Nazareth. Tradition says that Mary and Jesus visited them before Jesus started his public life. And they were given the custody of the Holy House of

Nazareth in early Christian times. The Crusaders were deeply impressed by their holiness and for this reason a few of them were brought back from the Crusade to England. Simon Stock was one of the first to join them there. A short time later, through Simon Stock Our Lady extended the Scapular of the Hermits of Carmel to the entire Church as a sign of Her special maternal love and protection. The Scapular has come to be known as "Mary's Sacrament." See *Sign of Her Heart*, Chapter V.

2. *The World's Greatest Secret*, p. 310.

## CHAPTER VII

### *The First Pentecost*

In previous chapters we have mentioned a "new Pentecost" that begins in 1531 and again in 1917.

We dare to call each of these particular moments of history—one for a local area in the Americas, and the second for the whole world—a "new Pentecost." This is because they have a great resemblance to the first Pentecost, which is described as follows in the Acts of Apostles:

As the believers met that day, suddenly there was a sound like the roaring of a mighty windstorm, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them parted tongues as of fire, which settled upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in foreign tongues, even as the Holy Spirit prompted them to speak.

Now there were staying at Jerusalem devout Jews from every nation under heaven. And when this sound was heard, the multitude gathered and were bewildered in mind, because each heard them speaking in his own language. But they were all amazed and marveled, saying "Behold, are not all these that are speaking Galileans? And how have we heard each his own language in which he was born? Parthians and Medes and Elamites, and inhabitants of Mesopotamia, Judea, and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, Jews also and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians, we have heard them speaking in our own languages of the wonderful works of God."

And all were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "What does this mean?" But others said in mockery, "They are full of new wine."

But Peter, standing up with the Eleven, lifted up his

voice and spoke out to them: "Men of Judea and all you who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and give ear to my words. These men are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only the third hour of the day. But this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel: 'And it shall come to pass in the last days, says the Lord, that I will pour forth of my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams.'

It is interesting to note how Our Lord prepared His disciples before the Pentecost. We read it in **Luke 24:49**: "And now I will send the Holy Spirit upon you, just as my father promised. Do not begin telling the others yet. Stay here in the city until the Holy Spirit comes and fills you with the power from Heaven." And then He said His final goodbye and disappeared. He had been appearing to them for forty days after His Crucifixion.

"John baptized you with water," He reminded them. "But you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit in just a few days." (**Acts 1:5**). And following His instructions they gathered together in common prayer in the very room where He had instituted the Sacrament of Unity, the Blessed Sacrament. They were praying together for nine days (hence the practice of the novena of prayers) when they received the extraordinary fulfillment of Our Lord's promise.

We have been given a promise in our day. Jesus sent His Mother at Fatima to tell us that Russia will be converted, wars will cease, even hunger and fear (explicitly mentioned) will disappear and we are about to come into "an era of peace to all mankind." With this promise came a great fire in the sky. An Apostolate of Holiness leaped forth in all corners of the world that is now growing in momentum.

Some may wonder that this great promise that has now come to the world should have been made through a vision of the Mother of Jesus rather than a vision of Jesus. Perhaps there are several reasons for this. Verse 16 of the Acts enumerates those who were present in that upper room when the Holy Spirit came the first time, adding: "Including the Mother of Jesus."

He ascended into Heaven but left His Mother behind!

We can imagine how His followers must have gathered around Her with whom He had spent thirty of His thirty-three years on earth, with whom He had shared the fullness of His mystery, and through whom He had come into the world.

It is only by knowing more about the first Pentecost that we could be in a better position to evaluate the Charismatic Renewal which Pope Paul VI said he warmly welcomed in the words: "We rejoice with you, dear friends, at the renewal of spiritual life manifested in the Church today . . ."

Through a time-tested, and ecclesiastically approved private revelation, we have a detailed description of that first Pentecost which fills out many details not included in the Acts. The language is somewhat formal. If the reader hesitates to accept such a "private revelation" it might be useful to read it just as a meditation on what Scripture has already told us of this event.

We are using this particular private revelation because it has been thoroughly examined over and over again during a period of some three hundred years, and has had so many seals of approval, but in particular because it speaks in detail about the position of the Blessed Virgin Who appeared at Fatima, in the first Pentecost.

We reprint here the revealed details of the first Pentecost from the *City of God*.<sup>1</sup>

In the company of the Mother of Jesus, and encouraged by Her, the twelve Apostles and the rest of the disciples and faithful joyfully waited for the fulfillment of the promise of the Savior, that He would send them the Holy Ghost, the Consoler, who should instruct them and administer unto them all that they had heard in the teaching of their Lord (**John 14, 26**). They were so unanimous and united in charity, that during all these days none of them had any thought, affection or inclination contrary to those of the rest. They were of one heart and soul in thought and action.

Although the election of Saint Matthias had occurred, not the least movement or sign of discord arose among all those first-born children of the Church. Yet this was a matter which might otherwise have aroused differences of opinion in the most excellently disposed, since each one is apt to follow his own

insight and does not easily yield to the opinion of others.

But into this holy congregation no discord found entrance because they were united in prayer, fasting, and in the expectation of the Holy Ghost, Who does not seek repose in discordant and unyielding hearts.

So powerful was this union in charity, not only for disposing them toward the reception of the Holy Ghost but also for overcoming and dispersing the evil spirits, that the demons, who since the death of the Savior had lain prostrate in hell, felt in themselves a new kind of oppression and terror resulting from the virtues of those assembled in the Cenacle. Although the demons could not explain it to themselves, they perceived a new terrifying force emanating from that place. Perceiving the effects of the doctrine and example of Christ in the behavior of the disciples they now feared the ruin of their dominion.

On Pentecost morning the blessed Virgin Mary exhorted the Apostles, the disciples and the pious women, numbering about one hundred and twenty, to pray more fervently. She told them to renew their hopes since the hour was at hand in which they were to be visited by the divine Spirit from on high.

At the third hour [nine o'clock], when all of them were gathered around their heavenly Mistress and engaged in fervent prayer, the air resounded with a tremendous thunder and the blowing of a violent wind mixed with the brightness of fire or lightning. This all centered upon the house of the Cenacle which became enveloped in light and the divine fire was poured out over all of that holy gathering (Acts 2,2). Over the head of each of the hundred and twenty persons appeared a tongue of that same fire, in which the Holy Ghost had come. Each one was filled with divine influences and heavenly gifts. Simultaneously the most diverse and even contrary effects resulted in the Cenacle and in the whole of Jerusalem, according to the diversity of the persons affected.

In the most holy Mary these effects were altogether divine and most wonderful in the sight of all the heavenly courtiers. As near as we are capable of understanding and explaining them, the purest Lady was transformed and exalted in God. She saw the Holy



Ghost intuitively and clearly. For a short time She enjoyed the beatific vision of the Divinity. Of His gifts and divine influences She by Herself received more than all the rest of the saints. Her glory for that space of time exceeded that of the angels and of the blessed. She alone gave to the Lord more glory, praise and thanksgiving than all the universe for the benefit of the descent of His Holy Spirit upon His Church and for his having pledged Himself so many times to send Him and through Him to govern it to the end of the world.

The Blessed Trinity was so pleased with the conduct of Mary on this occasion, that It considered Itself fully repaid and compensated for having created the world, and not only compensated, but God acted as if He were under a certain obligation for possessing such a peerless Creature, whom the Father could look upon as His Daughter, the Son as His Mother, and the Holy Ghost as His Spouse; and whom (according to our way of thinking) He was now obliged to visit and enrich after having conferred upon Her such high dignity.

In this exalted and blessed Spouse were renewed all the gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit, creating new effects and operations altogether beyond our capacity to understand.

The Apostles, as Saint Luke says (Acts 2,2) were also replenished and filled with the Holy Ghost. They received a wonderful increase of justifying grace of a most exalted degree.

The twelve Apostles were confirmed in this sanctifying grace and were never to lose it. In all of them, according to each one's condition, were infused the habits of the seven gifts: Wisdom, Understanding, Science, Piety, Counsel, Fortitude and Fear. In this magnificent blessing, as new as it was admirable in the world, the twelve Apostles were created fit ministers of the new Testament and founders of the evangelical Church for the whole world. This new grace and blessing communicated to them a divine strength. This strength was at once efficacious and sweet and inclined them to practice the most heroic virtue and the highest sanctity.

Thus strengthened, they prayed, they labored willingly, they accomplished the most difficult and arduous tasks, engaging in their labors not with sorrow or from necessity, but with the greatest joy and alacrity.

In all the rest of the disciples and the faithful who received the Holy Ghost in the Cenacle, the Most High wrought proportionally and respectively the same effects, except that they were not confirmed in grace like the Apostles. According to the disposition of each the gifts of grace were communicated in greater or lesser abundance in view of the ministry they were to hold in the holy Church. The same proportion was maintained in regard to the Apostles; yet Saint Peter and Saint John were more singularly favored on account of the high offices assigned to them: the one to govern the Church as its head, and the other to attend upon and serve the Queen and Mistress of heaven and of earth, most Holy Mary. The sacred text of Saint Luke says that the Holy Ghost filled the whole house in which this happy congregation was gathered (Acts 2:7) not only because all of them were filled with the Holy Ghost and his admirable gifts, but because the house itself was filled with wonderful light and splendor. This plenitude of wonders and prodigies overflowed and communicated itself also to others outside of the Cenacle; for it caused diverse and various effects of the Holy Spirit among the inhabitants of Jerusalem and its vicinity. All those, who with some piety had compassionated our Savior Jesus in His Passion and Death, deprecating His most bitter torments and reverencing His sacred Person, were interiorly visited with new light and grace, which disposed them afterwards to accept the doctrine of the Apostles.

Those that were converted by the first sermon of Saint Peter, were to a great extent of the number of those who, by their compassion and sorrow at the death of the Lord, had merited for themselves such a great blessing. Others of the just who were in Jerusalem outside of the Cenacle, also felt great interior consolations, by which they were moved and predisposed by new effects of grace wrought in each one proportionately by the Holy Ghost.

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Not less wonderful, although more hidden, were some contrary effects produced on that day by the Holy Ghost in Jerusalem. By the dreadful thunders and violent commotion of the atmosphere and the lightnings accompanying His advent, He disturbed and terrified the enemies of the Lord in that city, each one according to his own malice and perfidy. The chastisement and terror extended also to the depths of hell, where the demons felt themselves seized with new confusion and oppression for three days.

From the above description of the first Pentecost we note a union in charity, joy, visible effects, an overflowing plenitude of wonders and prodigies, a strong, joy giving confirmation in God.

Paul, who witnessed the effects of the first Pentecost and who himself was filled with the Holy Spirit, wrote about the charisms or special abilities given by the Holy Spirit in these words in his first letter to the Corinthians (12:7).

"Now the manifestations of the Spirit is given to everyone for profit. To one through the Spirit is given the utterance of wisdom; and to another the utterance of knowledge, according to the same Spirit; to another faith, in the same Spirit; to another the gift of healing, in the one Spirit; to another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another the distinguishing of spirits; to another various kinds of tongues; to another interpretation of tongues. But all these things are the work of one and the same Spirit, who allots to everyone according as He will."

And then St. Paul goes on to describe that we are all parts of the body of Christ, and some parts of the body are prophets, who preach God's word, teachers, those who do miracles, those who have the gift of healing, those who can help others, those who can get others to work together, those who speak in a language they have never learned (12:28). And he exhorts us all to "try your best to have the most important of these gifts." But then he gives us this very important distinction:

"And I point out to you a yet more excellent way. If I should speak with tongues of men and of angels, but do not have charity, I have become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. And if I have prophecy and know all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith so as to remove mountains, yet do not have charity, I am nothing. And if I

distribute all my goods to feed the poor, and if I deliver my body to be burned, yet do not have charity, it profits me nothing." (1 Cor. 13:1-3.)

## NOTES

1. *City of God* is the inspired work of Sister Mary of Agreda, who died in 1666. It was the first published in 1713, and was later translated from the original Spanish into many languages. The English translation by Reverend George J. Blatter was not completed until 1902, when it was published in four volumes containing 2,676 pages. Out of print for a time, publishing rights were acquired in 1971 by AMI Press, Washington, N.J. 07882.

## CHAPTER VIII

### *That They May Be One*

The Most Reverend Dominic Athaide, archbishop of Agra (India) was one of many friends who helped evaluate this book. Just before its publication in 1975, the archbishop wrote: "During the great Hindu festival of great rejoicing called *Dussera*, during the last days of October of 1974, Christians, Moslems, Hindus, Sikhs, came together at the famous Moslem university of Aligarh for 'praying together' and 'living together.' We did not choose the days of *Dussera* because of the feast but because these are holidays in the whole of India. But they celebrate the novena made by Rama, at the end of which he killed the demon god, Ravana. And we prayed that Our Lady of Fatima, the real terror of demons, may help us in our humble endeavour of pulling down fences and barriers which separate, and of building bridges which unite. *It is truly a great wonder. Even a few years ago such a coming together in prayer of faiths so long opposed would have seemed impossible.*"

If such a coming together in prayer is possible for Mohammedans, Hindus, Sikhs, and Christians, how could it not be possible among Christians who have been so long separated, to the scandal of the non-Christians?

Perhaps many of us would like to participate in inter-faith but hesitate because of fear that in praying with persons not of our faith we may compromise our faith.

Could this indicate that we ourselves are not sufficiently filled with the gifts of the Holy Spirit? Could it be that we do not sufficiently possess His gifts of knowledge and of understanding, and also of confidence that He will supply the necessary fortitude, perseverance, prudence, and fear of the Lord necessary to safeguard our own faith while praying in His Spirit with others?

To meet together in prayer is the first and most important challenge of our age. And since that is what most people understand by Pentecostalism or the Charismatic Movement, how can we permit any prejudice against these

terms, or against persons of other faiths not agreeing with us on all points, to prevent our coming together in prayer?

Since Pentecostalism and the Charismatic Movement tend to achieve this, how can we permit any prejudice against these movements, or against persons of other faiths not agreeing with us on all points, to paralyze us?

In the summer of 1974 a group of Catholics passing through Geneva made a stop at the headquarters of the World Council of Churches. They entered with mixed feelings. Some were reluctant. A few even stayed in the coach. "After all," they said, "isn't this a council of Protestant churches?"

When the majority of the group entered the main chapel of the council their emotions obviously changed to surprise. To the right of the entrance was a beautiful mosaic of the baptism of Christ which had been given by Archbishop Athenagoras, the world-beloved patriarch of Constantinople who had journeyed to Jerusalem for a meeting with Pope Paul.

The patriarch of Constantinople, *as a result of a personal charismatic experience*, had first proposed the very idea of the World Council of Churches just three years after the miracle of Fatima. Valid Masses are celebrated in this world council by the Orthodox in the presence of hundreds of divergent members of splintered Christianity. Was it not somewhat staggering to think that right here in Geneva, which had been called "the New Rome" of the Reformation, all came to prayer together in the Eucharistic liturgy, the Sacrament of Unity because of that great Eastern patriarch.

On the wall opposite the mosaic of the baptism of Jesus were inscribed, in great letters, the words of His prayer the night before He died:

*"That they may be one."*

Gazing at that plaque this writer recalled his meeting with Patriarch Athenagoras, together with the bishop of Fatima in Istanbul three months before the patriarch's death in 1972. The patriarch said:

"I was with Pope Paul at Fatima" (referring to the historic journey of Pope Paul VI to Fatima on May 13, 1967).

There was a moment of awkward silence. We knew the patriarch had not been there. Then His Holiness added deliberately.

*"I was there in spirit."*

Like John XXIII and Pope Paul, Patriarch Athenagoras recognized Mary as the Spouse of the Holy Spirit and he recognized—as the “Pope of the East”—the overwhelming importance of the charismatic message of Fatima which God deigned to confirm by a public miracle “so that all may believe.” For Her, Jesus had performed His first miracle before His time. For Her—in the wake of Her miracle at Fatima and of the flood of Her tears around the world from LaSalette until now—He has promised to the world a new miracle of triumph over evil. Pope John called this promise of Fatima the world’s greatest hope. She said: “My Immaculate Heart will triumph. Russia [militant atheism] will be converted, and an era of peace granted to all mankind.”

As the group came out of the council building, Reverend Balthasar Koczan, a seventy-four-year-old priest<sup>1</sup> who had been jailed in Hungary with Cardinal Mindszenty, said: “I used to rejoice that I am now old because I would not live to see further crises in the Church. Now I am sorry that I will not live to see the fulfillment of this.” And his arms swept as though to embrace the council building.

It is interesting to remark that Father Koczan had been leading the Rosary throughout the pilgrimage for priests. Several times he told the group of the heroic suffering of priests behind the Iron Curtain. A bishop in his camp lived three days after being shot in the stomach. When fellow prisoners tried to assuage the bishop’s pain he begged them:

“In the time that I have left, let me suffer for my priests and for the Church.”

For this writer, the most memorable moment of that visit to the World Council of Churches was in the main conference hall in a moment when everyone had fallen to silence. One of the priests, his voice echoing in the large hall, said:

“And this is where, in the presence of so many divided Christians, Pope Paul stood and said: ‘I am Peter.’ And he was applauded.”

It is to be expected that this book may be something like that bus in front of the World Council of Churches. Its covers may be opened reluctantly by some, perhaps not at all by others, but for most we hope it may be a step through the door toward fulfillment of that ultimate prayer of Divine Love: “That they may be one.”

Prejudice is not Catholic or Protestant, Sikh or Hindu or Mohammedan or Buddhist. Prejudice is something peculiar to almost all religious groups. It has always been, after nationalism, the main battle cry of war.

Some of us are sometimes surprised to think that anybody of a different faith could be in authentic communication with God. When a priest in Boston declared that there was no salvation outside his Church, he not only refused to acknowledge his error but founded a whole group of "apostles" to defend his erroneous belief. With great charity and prudence Richard Cardinal Cushing, the saintly archbishop of Boston at that time, handled this delicate matter by skillfully explaining the true doctrine of the soul of the Church: *All men of good faith*, who are living according to their conscience, are our brethren. God is not exclusive in His love.

But by going beyond the theological question of salvation, how could any of us despise others just because their approach to Him might be different from ours? And how can we hesitate to recognize the outpouring of the Holy Spirit to fellow human beings of our same baptism although of different degrees of belief? What folly could prevent us from offering the hand of common prayer to all men?

Those who seem sometimes surprised to hear of miracles and even deliverance from evil spirits performed by persons "outside" perhaps forget the words that Our Lord spoke to His disciples when they tried to forbid a man from using His name to cast out demons:

*"No one doing miracles in my name will quickly turn against me. Anyone who is not against us is for us."* (Mark 9:39-40).

And Saint Paul says in his second letter to the Corinthians (3:6) that he does not demand of the "others" that they must obey every law of God or die "but we tell them that there is life for them in the Holy Spirit." And the great apostle adds:

"The old way, trying to be saved by obeying the Ten Commandments, ends in death; in the new way, the Holy Spirit gives them life."

Saint Paul then holds up for us a great promise. He reminds us that the way of the commandments eventually became negative and ritualistic even though it began in such



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glory that the face of Moses “shone out with the very glory of God” (3:7). And he concludes:

“Shall we not expect far greater glory in these days when the Holy Spirit is giving life?”

**NOTES**

1. Reverend Balthasar Koczan was born in Hungary on May 1, 1901.

## CHAPTER IX

### *What Is This Explosion?*

What is this thunderous coming of the Spirit of God, this explosion of the supernatural today that lifts us above the meanness of walking the line of the commandments between good and evil?

It is an explosion of joy. From Heaven it is an explosion of miracles and gifts. And in our hearts it is an explosion which drives out jealousy and the wanting of material things for their own never-satisfying sake. It is an explosion that tears down barriers between people and persons and crumbles the walls of prejudice.

Many of us like, Francis Thompson<sup>1</sup> have fled away from the constant pursuit of God's love almost from childhood. We were afraid it would demand too much of us. We have the impression that if we allowed ourselves to be "caught" by God, we would have to give up the world He created for us.

So millions of us created instead our own world without Him . . . and wondered why we were never really happy.

Now once again there is a coming of the Holy Spirit. The whole world suddenly shines with a new radiance. Eyes glow with a light that was never there before. The Christian paradox suddenly becomes clear. "He that shall lose his life shall find it" . . . "My yoke is sweet" . . . "Seek first the kingdom of heaven and all things shall be added to you."

What is this "explosion" of the supernatural? What is this coming of the Holy Spirit in a wind of miracles across the earth? And whatever form it takes, is it to be left to develop by chance?

It is not happening by chance. It is happening because millions of generous souls have prayed to make it happen. Millions have heard that pitiful and terrible complaint of the Heavenly Mother at Fatima in 1917 when She horrified three little children with an actual vision of hell into which the majority of men were now falling. As the children cried

out in terror She begged them to pray for sinners. They did.

And millions imitated them by joining the Blue Army.

In this one movement alone over twenty million<sup>2</sup> have followed the Fatima exhortation to daily sacrifices, daily praying of the Rosary, daily living the message of the Immaculate Heart through which the Holy Spirit wrought Incarnation. They have heard the pitiful complaints and pleas of the Holy Mother who stood beneath the Cross and then came in our day at Fatima to say: "*So many souls are lost because there is no one to pray and make sacrifices for them.*"

The explosion begun by the "great miracle" of October 13, 1917, is beginning to echo in so many hearts that soon the whole world must resound to it.

Hamish Fraser, a former British Communist who organized dock workers in England and became a Red Commissar in the war in Spain, spoke at a Blue Army rally in the great Exposition Hall in Paris. A dove flying over the audience of more than ten thousand people landed on his head. He had just finished saying:

"I know that prayer can convert Communists. I was a Communist and prayer converted me." And in the ensuing quarter of a century he worked with even more courage and dedication for social justice under God than he had previously labored in the cause of atheism (even to risking his life). He remained an extremist in zeal but became a glowing example of orthodoxy.

Such a "conversion" is the supreme fruit of an army of prayer . . . any army bringing spiritual gifts to the world.

On April 22, 1967, when the forty-three-year-old daughter of Stalin arrived in the United States, she said:

"It was impossible to live without God . . ." and she added: "From the moment of belief in God, the main dogmas of Communism lost their significance for me. . . . There were no longer capitalists or communists . . . only people, the same everywhere in their hopes and ideals." (Cf. *The World's Greatest Secret*, p. 171).

In 1950, Jimmy Conniff, a fine writer with the Newark *Star Ledger*, wrote an almost prophetic piece about the Blue Army.<sup>4</sup> He said: "Joe Stalin thought it was a joke when he made his famous crack, 'The Pope? How many divisions has the Pope got?' But he reckoned without the Blue Army."

That army of prayer has been marching its silent way on its knees, with ever increasing ranks, for a quarter of a century.

And victory begets victory. Before we know it the promise of Fatima will be fulfilled: The triumph of the Immaculate Heart of the Mother of Mercy . . . and an era of peace to mankind!

Until now we have been marching in the gloom and din of battle, fighting discouragement, wondering if we were too few at prayer to win the victory. Now we begin to ask what the victory will be like. *What will be the spirit of the world when suddenly the enemy in the hearts of men has been defeated and a miracle of peace among the people becomes a reality?*

The coming of the Holy Spirit, as we know by logic and by prophecy, is the breath of this victory.

Many evangelists and mystics today speak of impending world chastisement. Their judgements are probably just as true as were the prophecies which caused the king and people of Nineveh to turn back to God. Indeed we have reason to believe that already a nuclear war has been marvelously averted at least once because of the number of faithful praying.<sup>9</sup> Can this not continue until the world is changed instead of destroyed?

Some—indeed perhaps many—have never even heard of the Blue Army even though it has so many millions of members who have promised to follow a daily program of prayer and reparation. And how about the many millions who have also responded instinctively against the current of militant atheism and evil? God alone knows how many there are. But as we see the coming of the Holy Spirit we see the effects of all of this prayer and we begin to know that soon there will be a spiritual triumph which will probably be like the sun blazing forth after days of rain we thought would never end.

Father Pio was not only the greatest mystic of our time. (Some even say he was the greatest of the entire Christian era, with perhaps more extraordinary gifts than those recorded in the life of any other man.) This writer personally heard Father Pio say: "Russia will be converted when there is a Blue Army member for every Communist."<sup>10</sup>

Can that be far off?

The conversion of Russia must necessarily be, both in

reality and symbolism, a turning of the tide. Militant atheism was organized in Russia to take over the world.

But now religion is emerging in Russia with such force that the Iron Curtain has become no more than an iron fence through which the voice of believers sound, and through the fence emerges the daughter of the atheist man of steel saying: "I believe in God."

Hamish Fraser was one of the atheists. He said he knows someone prayed for him. He felt it. He was grateful but even more he himself became a powerhouse of prayer and an apostle to persuade thousands of others to turn to prayer.

Thus the tide turns.

Was the dove that flew to the head of Hamish Fraser in the Paris Gaumont Theatre acting by a Divine power? Hamish thought so. Five thousand observers seemed to think so. That same year doves had flown from the sky to the foot of the statue of Our Lady of Fatima, refusing food and drink and refusing to be chased away for hours on end.'

The secular press doesn't usually carry such stories. (This is most harmful to the new Pentecost and we will speak of it again later). Such "miracles" could be said to have a natural explanation and can only be considered miracles in an extra-ecclesiastical judgment.

*But put everything together and you realize that visible phenomena of the coming of the Holy Spirit are beginning to attract attention.* And these are only the symptoms of the explosion.

There is a new outpouring of knowledge. And despite the silence of the general press, there is a groundswell of communication of the good news.

There is a long way to go . . . so long that many despair. But the Spirit also floods the heart of men with a sense of piety, a sense of man's proper relationship to God with a holy fear of all that could cause us to offend the Infinite Majesty. And this quiet piety of a movement like the world-wide Blue Army can sweep the world sooner than we think. This piety is not often—indeed perhaps rarely—accompanied by the visible effects which we have come to expect in a charismatic movement. Father Christopher Rengers, O.F.M. Cap., spiritual advisor to the Blue Army in St. Louis, reminds us that "without the devices and visi-

ble effects, we have already achieved the basic and essential effects in millions through the Blue Army." He continues:

Sincere Blue Army members already possess the charismatic renewal through their present programs of prayer and study and promoting the carrying out of the Fatima message, the request of Our Lady, Spouse of the Holy Spirit. These programs open the way to receiving His fulness of grace at every moment. The good effects of the charismatics can be reached in these programs, properly led. Turning points in life or conversions or "baptisms of the Holy Spirit" may come in many ways as they have to the saints. They develop from the circumstances of life and the acts of Providence at crucial points.

The words of Our Lord to St. Catherine of Siena were that all good comes to a soul through the neighbor, i.e., through another person or persons. There is endless need for forgiveness, for getting rid of self-pity, or reassessing situations, for not withdrawing. The needs of others, too, spur us to prayer and sacrifice, again it is our gain through a person. I believe that by the disposition we have to make by this adaptation, we prepare for the gifts of grace. Some crisis or the peak of a drawn-out series of troubles will bring about the "baptism of the Holy Spirit" which seems to me to be a new psychological peak or victory accompanied by grace, or perhaps inviting grace. The charismatic services may do this same "inviting" of grace by the cumulative effects of group psychology and the openness or forgiving demanded by the personal praying and singing formulas. However, as said above, the working out of life situations may do the same without the dangers of overformalizing and deception, and perhaps compulsiveness. I think open family praying "the trimmings on the rosary" kind . . . and the more frequent introducing into various social situations a period of prayer and singing God's praises are good (also the introducing of "faith phrases" in daily conversation, such as the brief prayers taught to us at Fatima and other such as "May he rest in peace," "God's Will be done," "God be with you," "For the holy souls," and so on.

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The words, "Thank God" especially should be called forth in so many of the events of daily living . . . where the Holy Spirit acts at every moment in those who live their morning offering.

And to think that about twenty-five million around the world are involved at this very moment in this program of prayer!

And what is of even greater comfort: All this is not a passing phenomenon. It is not another worldly fad. The Holy Spirit brings, together with the gift of piety, the gifts of prudence and constancy, of understanding, knowledge, and wisdom. This explosion of the twentieth century is bound to have a proportionate effect to the explosion in the cenacle two thousand years ago, and to the lesser explosions which have echoed since then . . . such as the one which took place on this continent only a few years after the last voyage of Columbus.

The charismatic renewal is like the returning of prodigal children, the suddenness of which causes elder sons to hesitate.

After some twenty-five million have been offering daily prayer and sacrifices for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit, (a triumph of the Immaculate Heart of His Spouse) what guidelines do they have to recognize the quality and nature of the triumph they are expecting?

## NOTES

1. Francis Thompson wrote the epic poem "*Hound of Heaven*" in which he speaks of God's pursuit of the soul no matter how it tries to escape or to hide.
2. This was the official figure given by the International Council of the Blue Army at Fatima in 1967 based on signed pledges received at Fatima and/or recorded in national centers around the world. Although no new figures have been released by the Council since 1967 the 1975 membership is estimated at over 25,000,000.
3. Story and photograph in *Soul*.

4. "He gave Her an Army in Exchange for His Life" by James C. G. Conniff, 6-page pamphlet. AMI Press, Washington, N.J. 07882
5. *Soul*, AS 1974, Prophecy of St. John Bosco. "1975 Could be the Year" p. 13
6. *A Heart For All*
7. *Russia Will Be Converted*, AMI Press, 1950, p. 195. Washington, N.J. 07882
8. "O My Jesus, it is for love of you and in reparation for the offenses committed against the Immaculate Heart of Mary" (to be said whenever we make a sacrifice). And: "O My God I believe, I adore, I trust and I love You! I beg pardon for those who do not believe, do not adore, do not trust, and do not love You!"



## CHAPTER X

### *What Stand Shall We Take?*

It must be obvious that Pope Paul VI would never have spoken to the leaders of the Charismatic Movement in the first place, in that special audience given to them in October of 1973, and he would never have given them an encouraging message in the second place if His Holiness had not approved at least in essence the statement which the eleven bishops presented to the Holy Father about the Charismatic Movement at the opening of the audience:

The contemporary community has limited expectations as to how the Spirit comes to visibility . . .

The charismatic renewal wishes to widen the expectations of the Church universal so that the full spectrum of gifts become real possibilities for the total life of the Church . . . The Spirit comes to visibility through the gifts for the upbuilding of the Church and the service of the world. They are not ends in themselves. But they contribute to that fullness of life in Christ and the Holy Spirit to which the Church is called.

We are also aware that the Pope saw the need to speak guardedly on the subject in 1973. Even a casual study of the subject reveals that it is too complex to be treated categorically in a brief message.

It is likewise understandable therefore that most bishops take the same position of caution, perhaps not merely because they follow the Pope, but because they also realize the complexity of the question and that many distinctions have to be made—a trail of mind-opening has to be blazed—before any more explicit pontifical encouragement can be expected.

The extent to which American bishops alone began to study this question became evident in the U.S. Conference of Bishops in Washington, D.C. in November of 1974. The

bishops issued a statement of guarded approval. Many have set up specialists in their own dioceses to treat of this, and some bishops are taking an active, personal leadership, always acting according to the advice of the Holy Father: "Not to stifle the spirit." The Pope himself invited the International Charismatic Renewal Congress in May 1975 to his Mass in St. Peter's on Pentecost Sunday.

Oddly enough this creates a partial silence in which laymen's voices can, and perhaps must be, heard. If a layman makes a mistake it is not the Church which makes it. And where the Church must be certain before it can lead, laymen have a new and special responsibility.

The Holy Father told the leaders of the Charismatic Movement:

"The spiritual lives of the faithful come under the active pastoral responsibility of each bishop in each diocese. It is particularly opportune to recall this in the presence of these ferments of renewal which arouse so many hopes.

"Even the best experiences of renewal, weeds may be found among the good seed. So a work of discernment is indispensable . . ."

But no discernment is possible on the part of the bishops if there is no response to these "ferments of renewal which arouse so many hopes" in their dioceses. So from whence will come the leadership? What voices will be raised in testimony to an outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the world "in different forms and in various places" as the Holy Father affirms? Should we be surprised that it is coming primarily from the laity?

And should we be even further surprised that it comes from sincere and convinced Christians not only within the body of the Church but from its soul?

Mr. David Duplessis has an "inspiration" to go to the World Council of Churches to explain pentecostalism. He kept putting it out of his mind because he thought: "I'd never get past the secretaries."

The voice inside him kept getting stronger. He heard the words: "Trust and obey." Finally he made up his mind to go to New York and simply walk into the Council of Churches and see what would happen. He was deciding to go on a Monday and immediately the inner voice spoke: "No, not on Monday. Ask for reservations on Thursday to be in the offices of the World Council on Friday."

When he followed this conviction and showed up in the offices of the World Council, he began to ask for one church leader after the other by name. The secretary said in each instance that the person requested was not available.

Just what he expected! He would not get past the secretary!

And while he was just thinking this, the secretary added: "They are all in conference just now, but they should be through pretty soon and then I imagine you can see whom-ever you like." And she looked at the calendar on her desk and laughed. "This is the first day all week that anyone has been here. I have been turning people away in droves but they all came back in for the meeting this morning so you are in luck."

And the result of that meeting of David Duplessis with the World Council of Churches is history.

He subsequently spoke to heads of churches, divinity schools, and seminaries across the country. And at the headquarters of the Episcopal Church he was asked a most difficult question:

"Mr. Duplessis, are you telling us that you pentecostals have the truth and we other churches do not?"

His answer, which came to him at the moment, is classic:

"We both have the truth," he said. "When my wife and I moved to America we bought a marvelous device called a deep freeze and there we keep some rather fine Texas beef. Now my wife can take one of those steaks out and lay it frozen solid on the table. It's steak all right; there is no question of that. You and I can sit around and analyze it. We can discuss its lineage, its age, what part of the steer it comes from. We can weigh and list its nutritive values.

"But if my wife puts that steak on the fire, something different begins to happen. My little boy smells it from away out in the yard and comes out shouting, 'Gee, Mom, that smells good. I want some.' That is the difference between our ways of handling the same truths. You have yours on ice and we have ours on fire."

Such a fire is needed before any of us can begin to think of Christian unity. We can argue and argue and argue. We can see the same truths from many different points of view and never agree. We may not even recognize that we are talking about the same truths!

Fire is the key word of the new Pentecost. And under proper guidance persons filled with the Holy Spirit can fling the torch of their own charisms into the dry prairie where it will explode into a raging, consuming flame. The problem for churchmen in taking a stand on this was clearly expressed by the Reverend Albert J. Nevins, editor of the half-million circulation *Our Sunday Visitor* on October 14, 1973, which he did not modify a year later after reading this book and which we quote with his permission.

### Pentecostals, Yes or No?

We have been asked by our readers to comment on the Pentecostal phenomenon which has seen such a rapid growth in the Church in the past several years. We have followed this movement since its beginning at Notre Dame University where it had spread from Duquesne University. We have discussed the movement with some of its leaders and have known people intimately involved in its activities. We are also aware of criticism of the movement, which seems largely to be based on what might happen rather on what is happening.

The sudden growth of Pentecostalism or the Charismatic Movement, as those involved prefer to call it, seems to us to be a reaction to the Neomodernism and Existentialism which affected large segments of the Church following Vatican II.

Having encountered numerous "good Christians" who have been active in the Charismatic Movement, we have found them to be people of good will and sincere spirituality. A very strong effort has been made by leaders not to separate the movement from the Church. No one can deny the presence and activity of the Holy Spirit either at work in the souls of Christians or in influencing the course of the world. For too long, the Holy Spirit was the forgotten member of the Trinity, despite the fact that His power in the development of the Church and in inspiring conversions has been so very real and necessary to those who were active in the apostolate.

But always there have been gnawing questions. Why

the emphasis on the re-baptism, the baptism of the Holy Spirit? When I was baptized as an infant, I was exorcised and made a child of the Holy Spirit. As an adolescent I was confirmed in that Spirit voluntarily. Perhaps I was not aware of the fullness of the gifts I received and the share of divine life that was mine but I never felt another baptism necessary.

The other problem is the so-called gift of tongues. I am aware that the New Testament refers to this gift and Saint Paul sort of takes it for granted. But to me the "tongues" of the New Testament were not gibberish and had a purpose as they did on the First Pentecost when the hearers heard the Apostles speak, each in his own language. There was a reason for this. Philosophically, God only acts with a purpose and it is difficult for me to see a purpose in a person speaking a language which no one understands. I can't buy this meaningless explanation of "pre-conceptual prayer." I am also aware of the possibility of self deception, having witnessed, with some fright, both voodoo and macumba; and even the remote possibility of Satan using a person for his own ends.

But these difficulties become even more perplexing when I see the good that has been wrought in the lives of so many Catholic Pentecostals. There is a greater Christian awareness, a deeper spirituality, and a more fervent and regular use of the Sacraments of Penance and the Eucharist. The 1973 outpouring at Notre Dame, 20,000 persons, including several Bishops and one Cardinal made stress of loyalty to the hierarchy and the Holy See.

Then also what puzzles me is the condemnations and warnings that have come from so many whom I respect. Father Louis Bouyer, an international theologian of high repute, in his theological dictionary refers to Catholic Pentecostalism as "most bizarre." Archbishop Robert J. Dwyer wrote that "Pentecostalism is playing with one of the oldest heresies and still one of the most insidious, gnosticism."

The Holy Father, Pope Paul VI, as early as 1969 cautioned against "the illusion of a free and charismatic Christianity." He added: "This does not build. It demolishes." Later that same year, he pointedly de-

clared: "Many who talk about the Church today say they are inspired by a prophetic spirit as if the Divine Paraclete were at their disposal at all times. May God grant that this presumption of elevating personal experience into a criterion of religious doctrine may not cause havoc. May He not allow the treating of these private opinions as charismatic gifts to lead astray so many good and well-meaning people."

The other thing that bothers me is the ecumenical danger inherent in the new Pentecostalism. I feel very much like Archbishop Garner of South Africa when he wrote: "So far, around the world, the ecumenical movement has been dogged by muddleheadedness, bursting with goodwill, but confused to an exasperating degree."

Despite the understandable reticence of voices of authority within the Church, more and more clear statements are being made not only from Rome but even to the farthest fringes of the Church. As we stated in our introduction, several hundred advance copies of this book were sent to critics including all the United States bishops. Many bishops who answered—including three of the American cardinals—favored its publication. One of the bishops who was taking active leadership in the Charismatic Renewal is Auxiliary Bishop Joseph McKinney of Grand Rapids, Michigan. Of special interest is the advice he gave for getting priests involved. It was published in the *New Covenant*, a magazine of the Charismatic Renewal, in its issue of September 1973:

Jesus Christ is the Lord. As we strive to center our lives on Him, we are faced with the reality that He founded the Church and He builds the Church. His approach to us is through men whom He has chosen. While Jesus did not write the Scriptures, He did hand His mission over to the Apostles and promised to be with them all days. As the Apostles and their successors followed His mandate, the New Testament developed and came to play a central role in the building of the Kingdom of God.

Paragraph 12 of the Constitution on the Church (*Lumen Gentium*) gives an explanation of how the

"Holy People of God also share in Christ's prophetic office." As one studies that paragraph, he learns how the Holy Spirit guides the body of the faithful. It is a beautiful expression of what we see happening in the charismatic renewal.

Jesus builds the Kingdom by enlightening people. He will provide the light if we are willing to reflect it. Thus, it is important that we inform priests about what we are doing. We can express our need for guidance when we tell them what we are doing and what our needs are. We should not make priests feel they must come, but we let them know that they are needed and welcome.

Jesus gave us the measuring stick for judging whatever we came in contact with—"By their fruits you will know them." When a priest sees people in prayer communities coming to Mass, making better confessions, attending the sacraments, becoming more cooperative members of the parish, and responding to resentment or jealousy with love, he begins to say, "This prayer group is bearing fruit." This is the greatest attractive force of the charismatic renewal. We should not hide the fruits that ripen in the Lord.

There is no doubt in my mind that, when balanced priests are involved over a year or two with a prayer community, that prayer community is a deeper expression of the Church. We need shepherds, and priests are our most reliable source. They can help us in our efforts to make Jesus the Lord of our lives in prayer and the Lord of the Church in practice.

Bishop McKinney's statement recognizes that this movement is springing up primarily among the laity, and he recognizes the tremendous need for priests to direct them and to pray with them. It seems that one person tells another of the tremendous change in life through the marvel of an encounter with God when they prayed together with others who had experienced the same marvel. And thus the fact of the new Pentecost is in evidence with greater and greater intensity all around us. Indeed, without such a new Pentecost how could we have the renewal which is the promise of our time? How could we have Christian unity? How could we have "the era of peace to all mankind"?

But what the Holy Father and the bishops are saying is that certain distinctions must be made.

Interpretation of many parts of Scripture can vary not only where Christianity has already fragmented into over four hundred sects, but even in the Church itself. While we might remain divided on interpretations, we necessarily unite when we experience Christ together. And as Jesus came to the world through the action of the Holy Spirit ("and the Holy Spirit overshadowed Her") so He comes again as foretold by St. Louis Marie de Montfort. Analogous to the fiat of Mary in Nazareth, thousands upon thousands of souls are willing to say "Let it be done to me according to Thy word." And they are being overshadowed by the Holy Spirit.

Of course we have many questions. Five of them are:

1. Is the Charismatic Renewal necessary? Are not the ordinary programs of prayer sufficient?
2. How will the Church lead the Charismatic Renewal?
3. If we have the Charismatic Renewal, will we eliminate the traditional need for a conscious effort to know God, and thus come to love Him even when He does not give us the experience?
4. How do charismatic experiences outside the Church relate to those within?
5. What is the role of the laity in all this? Are we to be leaders or experimenters? What do we do if we cannot get a priest interested?

The problem for religious leaders in taking a position, as expressed by Father Nevins, can be recognized not so much as one of lack of knowledge or conviction but of responsibility. Religious leaders bear the ultimate responsibility to souls and to their superiors—right up to the wearer of the fisherman's ring on St. Peter's Square in Rome. And the Charismatic Movement is somewhat frightening in its extraordinary manifestations, its interdenominationalism, and its suddenness.

As we mentioned in the introduction, we hesitated before writing this book because of the fear of confusing those who may read it superficially or think that we were giving a blanket endorsement of the Charismatic Movement with none of the important distinctions which it would seem necessary at the present moment for a layman to voice.



## 92      *EXPLOSION OF THE SUPERNATURAL*

This writer vividly recalls that his first book, in 1940, was hailed by the *Lutheran Theological Quarterly* as ultimate proof of Catholic idolatry of the Mother of Christ. As a layman I took the risk of writing that book without reservation in the secure knowledge that every Catholic reader would know that we do not adore Mary as though she were divine, but from the point of view of one who might think the attitude of the *Lutheran Theological Quarterly* made sense. This is undoubtedly why no Church leader before treated this subject with similar abandon. And what happened? The book sold over one hundred thousand copies and helped to resurrect that devotion which had almost become extinct in the United States.<sup>2</sup> Twenty-four years later Pope Paul singled it out as being the most important, after the Rosary, among the devotions specified by Vatican Council II in paragraph 67 of *Lumen Gentium*.<sup>3</sup> One day, when everyone knows that Catholics do not adore Mary, the book will not be misunderstood by the Lutherans or anyone else.

However, any writer always faces the problem of being misunderstood or quoted out of context. And while this is not disastrous to the ordinary writer, it must necessarily be a constant preoccupation of one in a position of authority.

In November of 1973 there was a seminar in Rome at which speakers were important churchmen and theologians. The first day a cardinal and a professor of the Gregorian University were the speakers. A bishop and some prominent theologian spoke on each succeeding day. On the last day, when the Pope's personal theologian spoke, the other speaker was a layman. The assembly applauded loudly when he finished and the presiding bishop remarked:

"Only a layman could have said it."

From the applause the writer concluded that most of those present would like to have spoken with similar emphasis, but were restrained by their responsibility and the danger of being misunderstood.

Our current "explosion of the supernatural" may be even more important to our age than the crossing of the Red Sea was in the age of Moses. After all, we are talking about the miracle of modern man's deliverance from a slavery of the soul to materialism.

Is this not of far greater consequence than deliverance from bodily slavery to a Pharaoh?

Yet, both deliverances require God's help, like the mi-

raculous opening of the Red Sea. And in both man experiences not merely acts of Divine interference but a veritable explosion of God's power in our midst as stirring and impressive as the parting of the sea.

#### NOTES

1. *L' Osservatore Romano*, Oct. 11, 1973 (French edition).
2. John M. Haffert, *Sign of Her Heart* (formerly *Mary in Her Scapular Promise*) (Washington, N.J.: AMI Press, 1971).
3. Message of Pope Paul to the XXI International Marian Congress c.f.

## CHAPTER XI

### *Questions of the New Pentecost*

When Pope John XXIII convened the Second Vatican Council he indicated that he did so "not without inspiration of the Holy Spirit." In this modest way he indicated that it was the Holy Spirit directing him to call together all the bishops of the world to face squarely the problems of our time, and especially the scandal of a divided Christianity.

We would like to note something forgotten. At the very time that His Holiness announced that there would be a Council, he also said that he would go to Loreto<sup>1</sup> to invoke the Nazarene Mother for its success.

While the council raised great expectations for Christian unity, dark clouds began to rise over the entire Christian world after the council was over. It was like a repetition of what happened to the Church after the first Pentecost. It seems that legions upon legions of devils were unleashed upon the world to destroy the effects of the Holy Spirit. Pope Paul VI, ten years after the council, spoke of *an unprecedented wave of diabolic power* through which the effects of the council had been largely destroyed and the efforts to ecumenism had been frustrated.<sup>2</sup>

But little by little in the post-conciliar world we have been witnessing a spontaneous manifestation of the Holy Spirit in individual communities, even small individual groups. Often persons praying together suddenly have found one or more in their midst who began to pray in a tone of genuine prayer and adoration but with words that were not formulated by the person and which no one else in the room could even understand.

This phenomenon was one of the effects of the first Pentecost.

But more important than the signs were the effects of unity, strength, faith, joy. And as some began to join such groups out of curiosity because of the signs, those "outside" the new cenacle asked:

*"Although this might have been necessary in the early*

**Church, why have we heard nothing about it for so many centuries? And is this not a phenomenon which the devil can imitate? Why aren't such things recorded in the lives of the saints?"**

In the early seventies, Constantine-Paul Belisarius, S.J., then teaching at Regis High School in New York, wrote to the director of the Blue Army suggesting involvement of that apostolate in Pentecostalism.

The Blue Army sent a copy of the letter to some of its most active leaders and asked their opinion. At first the majority were negative. They had never come in contact with Pentecostalism. With few exceptions most were deeply concerned because of negative things they had heard about it and the Charismatic Renewal. Then, as time passed, many of the same leaders began to differentiate between "Pentecostalism" as a religion and "Pentecostalism" as a vivid prayer experience. They came to know people who had an authentic encounter with God through the power of the Holy Spirit in communal prayer, with a resulting transformation of life and of vitality in the apostolate of prayer. They began to recognize signs of authenticity, especially in the love of which Paul spoke. This prayer seemed to put an end to hatreds, to prejudices, to barriers which separate one Christian group from another.

Instead of asking what might be wrong, these persons who before had been so narrow in their view were now asking what might be right in the charismatic faith of their neighbors. Some of these leaders began to write to headquarters and to express the opinion that it is up to all in the heart of the Church, as any Marian movement must necessarily be, to bring their own authentic experience of the Church as a source of truth and of the Sacraments into the Charismatic Movement.

"We must manifest our own deep conviction in the Eucharistic reality," they said, "and our own deep conviction that our guidance in the discernment of spirits comes in a personal way through the Sacraments, through the Church. We must show an absolute certitude and confidence in the voice of the Church as the authentic voice of Christ Himself. We must combat with all our strength and with all our prayer and faith the tendency to disobedience, to a questioning of religious authority. We must safeguard the experience of authentic prayer. We must follow the supreme example quoted in Scripture itself that when the High Priest

condemned Jesus to death, nevertheless 'he spoke that day as the High Priest.' "

It remained a general opinion that the nomenclature of Pentecostalism and Charismatics has been somewhat spoiled by abuses already seen in these movements for lack of definition and direction. There was confusion of the gift of prophecy, for example, with the tremendous number of seers, prophets, and astrologers whose predictions are being quoted so extensively as to be heard by millions upon millions of people, with charlatans sometimes getting more attention than saints.

*If there are authentic prophets, who are they?*

We know that prophecy is one of the marks of the Holy Spirit. And while we are waiting for the Church to tell us which prophets are authentic and which are not, what should be our attitude now? Are we supposed to wait until the prophet is dead and canonized before we know whether or not a prophecy is authentic?

These latter questions, even among the devout, are a source of real difficulty. They admit a danger of too much credibility. But at the same time they ask if there is not a danger in ignoring prophets who tell us that unless we mend our ways now we are certainly in for a terrible chastisement. They point out that the prophecies of Fatima were approved too late for us to avoid the Second World War and the worldwide diffusion of militant atheism.

In the confusion that Satan has sowed in the world in the wake of Vatican II we hear some voices within the Church saying that no longer are our priests to be followed, and even that bishops are no longer to be trusted, and therefore this or that "apparition" should be the center of attention.

This writer believes that this particular type of confusion is the greatest threat to renewal and reconciliation. Our hope is in those who believe, and some are now beginning to ignore the encyclicals, and the Sacrament of Confession as their tribunal for moral decisions. They set forth alone, under the sole guidance of their own conscience, on uncharted oceans. They set out to navigate between Scylla and Charybdis by themselves. Unfortunately many of them founder and the bark of the Church is tossed wildly on waves on doubt.

Perhaps the major concern is: *Are we not falling into a diabolical trap with all these "changes"?*

In the sixties there was confusion concerning the changes

in the liturgy. Most came through this crisis successfully, but many good and devout persons began to reject the authority of the Church over this issue and insisted on the traditional forms which the council had modified. Some claimed that earlier statements of the Popes on the liturgy were in conflict with what was being done at the present time as though one Pope of a previous time were contradicting the Pope of today rather than recognizing that non-essentials valid at one time might not be useful at another. On the one hand some thought that anything could change, and that they could even replace the liturgy itself with forms of "pentecostalism." They began to take it upon themselves to differentiate between the essential and the non-essential, between what can change and what cannot change.

And it is therefore little wonder that some conservatives list: If we speak in favor of any part of pentecostalism or of the Charismatic Movement, are we not adding to the confusion? Can we really believe that what Pope John XXIII envisioned is really coming about?

It is certainly time to remember the solemn words of Our Lord just before the Ascension. He would send the Paraclete to teach them all things. But He empowered them as the Church to go forth saying: "And be sure of this that I am with you always, even to the end of the world" (Matt. 28:18).

Jesus established the Church and sent the Holy Spirit to confirm and enlighten it, so that He might fulfill His promise to the world to be with us always, which is accomplished physically in the Eucharist, and also so that we would have an authentic guide against which "the gates of hell shall not prevail" (Matt. 16:18).

It is most important that the role of the Church be safeguarded and developed in this age of the Holy Spirit. Otherwise, the triumph promised to us in the great miracle of Fatima will be hindered and delayed, as is already the case.

As more and more persons become convinced of the reality of Christ through the Holy Spirit, they will be sincerely asking about those mysterious words of Christ: "You must eat My flesh and drink My blood." They will know that of themselves they cannot take bread and turn it into His body and take wine and turn it into His blood. They will wonder that Scripture is so explicit and clear about the central doctrine of Our Lord, for which He permitted a na-

tion that wanted to make Him King to turn away because they could not accept such a "hard saying" (John 7:61).

They will then seek the Church. But meanwhile they need answers.

## NOTES

1. Loreto is considered by some to be the most important Marian shrine in the world because it contains the Holy House of Nazareth. The decision of Pope John to travel there, all the way across Italy, was doubly significant: a). It was the first time that a Pope had traveled outside of the Vatican in one hundred years; b). the Pope announced this pilgrimage because he placed the success of the Ecumenical Council in the hands of Our Lady and he wanted to inspire others to pray to Her for this intention. Owing to the pressure of the work in preparing the council, the Pope was not able to fulfill his vow until just two weeks before the council opened and it received almost as much news coverage in Italy as the opening of the council itself.

2. *L'Osservatore Romano*, July 20, 1972.

## CHAPTER XII

### *Some Answers*

It would require many books to examine all such evidence of the "explosion of the supernatural" as Fatima, La Salette, Lourdes, Pontmain, Beauraing, Banneux, Father Pio, Alexandrina, Therese Neuman, the gifts in prayer meetings, the extraordinary healing, etc. And we could ask this first question:

Why are all these signs and wonders happening now?

Archbishop Ettore Baranzini gave an explanation when he knelt in Syracuse, Sicily, before the plaster image which had shed human tears. In the presence of thousands he said:

"I recall having read that there was a belief prevalent in Russia (it may presently hold true) that Jesus came to the world at a time when mankind began to reject the Father in Heaven."

And His Excellency said that today . . . after the "Light came into the world" . . . *we are rejecting the Light again* and to save us now "God places Mary in the foreground that *She might obtain Light* . . . although darkness still persists because the tragedy of sin extends everywhere."

The next question is: How do we know when these signs are authentic?

It seems that when these signs and wonders appear, people are not indifferent. They are either strongly in favor of them, or they violently reject them. One example of a sign that has generated much emotion for and against it is the physical sign of "speaking in tongues" in the charismatic movement. But who could not help being impressed by the fruits in the life of the young "speaker in tongues" in London mentioned in our previous chapter?

That lad had a truly amazing degree of God's revelation, the kind that does not come through reading Scriptures alone but from an *encounter with God*. He had a clear concept of the Trinity and the beginning of a basic personal



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relationship not only with the Triune God but also with each of the Three Persons. And his excitement about this encounter arose from the personal experience of hearing words come from his lips which were not in his mind, which he understood only as a prayer since the individual syllables made no sense to him.

It was on a similar experience in 1933 that this writer based an entire book titled *The Brother and I*.<sup>1</sup>

"Suddenly, as though I were hypnotized, I heard distinct words coming from my mouth that were not in my mind. It seemed unbelievable . . ."

It made a profound impression on me. Though it was essentially personal and almost ineffable, it has affected my apostolate in the forty years since. Subsequent reading has thrown light on the experience, which I will share with you below. But at the time, forty years ago, I wanted to know: *Was it from God?*

The ultimate test was described to us by Our Lord: "By their fruits you shall know them." (Matt. 12:33).

But who of us wants to wait one decade, let alone four, to be certain that an extraordinary personal experience is from God or the Devil, or just simply from some undefined, natural cause? Fortunately, we have specific instructions passed on to us from two thousand years of authentic Christian experience.

The greatest authorities in these matters are the mystical doctors of the Church, notably St. Teresa of Avila and St. John of the Cross. And their directions are simple and clear.

**DISTRUST** any extraordinary experience. **SEEK SPIRITUAL DIRECTION**, preferably, of course, in the Sacrament of Penance. And if they are authentic, **DO NOT ATTRIBUTE THEM TO ANY MERIT OF YOUR OWN** but rather as an extraordinary effort on God's part to save you and to draw you to more intimate union with Him. **BE PREPARED FOR THE DARKNESS WHICH WILL FOLLOW**, in which God will test your motives and give you the opportunity to merit greater intimacy with Him.

With spiritual direction—or without the extraordinary help of others who follow him in the first fervor—the charismatic neophyte could have great difficulty when the period of trial begins. He might expect God to continue the revelation, forgetting the commandment of Jesus: to know

God, to love and serve Him with our whole hearts, our whole souls, and our whole minds.

Fortunately, the Holy Spirit is impelling those to whom He comes to take up the Scriptures. Those who fail to obey will be in a worse state than before. We recall the highest praise chosen by Jesus for His Mother in Luke, 11:27-28: "Blessed are they who hear the word of God and keep it." But those who do obey must not think that they are immediately going to be united with God in a permanent and profound manner. The Mystical Doctors tell us that an intimate personal relationship with Jesus (by which we most quickly and easily come to an intimate and personal relationship with the Triune God) can be obtained only by persevering to study and prayer . . . and by penance of accepting whatever God sends us in His love, no matter to what degree of darkness or to what degree of humiliation and contradiction.

If we decide really that we want to be united to Him, the saints tell us that we ask Him to diagnose all our diseases of self-love and sin, not only as a loving Father, but also as a Divine Surgeon.

A few books are especially useful, but some are more harmful than useful. St. Therese indicates that it does not pay for us to analyze our own spiritual life and try to determine in what stage of union with God we are. This "little" saint of Lisieux, who attained the very highest degree of union with Jesus in a few years, said that if she had it to do over again she would skip all those ascetical books and read only Scripture, the *Imitation Lives of the Saints*, and follow the Liturgical Year.

One book that more or less includes all of these recommendations of St. Therese in a systematic fashion is Msgr. Bellord's *Encounter With God*.<sup>2</sup> One of the holiest men this writer ever knew used to read only two books at the end of his life: *City of God* (a detailed private revelation of the life of Mary) and Msgr. Bellord's book. This holy man was eighty-six years old when he died and there were few spiritual books of any importance that he had not read in his long life, (twenty-seven years of which were as a Carmelite master of novices).

The Scriptures are fundamental but not always clear to us. The saints who have read and lived the Scripture lessons can speed us along the scriptural path. They reflect

two thousand years of profound application of the Biblical message. Their experience is tremendously important to the charismatic.

While the public revelation of God ceased with the Scriptures, this does not mean that God ceased to reveal Himself. Indeed He has never ceased to give an ever greater understanding of what He revealed in Scripture. This is most evident in the revelation of the Immaculate Heart at Fatima (called by the Popes a "reaffirmation of the gospels") and two and a half centuries earlier the revelation of the Sacred Heart at Parayle-Monial.

Reverend James T. Meehan, S.J., wrote a book called *Christ Almighty* out of a lifetime of daily Scripture reading. Father Meehan recalled that as a young man he told an old teacher that he was reading the Scriptures every day meditatively, a few lines at a time. And the old man said:

"Then one day you will certainly write a book about Jesus."

But many, like Father Meehan himself, say that while they "discover" the human-divine person of Jesus in Scripture, there is always the struggle to see Him clearly—to identify with that Person at once human and divine. For many this Person came into focus only after 1674 when Jesus appeared in Parayle Monial, France, to St. Margaret Mary Alacoque. He came forth from the Sacrament of Love which He instituted the night before He died—showing His heart aflame with love. His face was obscured by the dazzling light streaming in every direction from His heart as He said:

*"Behold the heart that has so loved men . . ."*

If we concentrate on Jesus in His Palestinian life we have difficulty, as did Philip and most of the other apostles, in realizing that when we see Him we also see the Father. And if we concentrate on Him in His eucharistic life, the life of the greatest of miracles, we tend to lose sight of His humanity. But if we think of His heart, in which His divine power and love are humanized *for me*, it suddenly becomes much easier to identify with this all-lovable Person Who is at once human and divine. And all hearts . . . in Africa, Asia, everywhere . . . are the same color. The color of love.

The revelation of the heart of Jesus in our day is not an addition to Scripture. It is an unfolding of the life of Scripture. It is a development of the Christian experience which begins with the Scriptures.

This Christian experience of two thousand years, which charismatics cannot ignore, shows a gradual transformation of the human race from the time of Christ to the present time. Many of the effects of paganism diminished only gradually, and from time to time they flare forth—as in the Nazis of Germany—like the last belches of a dying volcano. And now we are coming into the age of the Holy Spirit which will culminate in the triumph of God's love in the hearts of men. To paraphrase it from the very words of the prophecy of Fatima: The Immaculate Heart will triumph . . . other hearts united to the heart of Mary will attract the Holy Spirit and Jesus will enter. And there will be an "era of peace for mankind."

Some today would like to deny altogether this explosion of the supernatural. Some would deny that a great public miracle took place at Fatima in 1917 even after seeing pictures and reading credible evidence. Some would deny that people are speaking in tongues and would call it manufactured gibberish or diabolical interference. They claim there is a tendency to emphasize these extraordinary manifestations of God's power all out of proportion and to fall away from the Church and to say: "I don't need to read the Scriptures, I don't need to pray by myself, and I don't need the Church and the sacraments—I will be united with God solely through pentecostal experience." But does this usually happen?

Cardinal John Dearden, archbishop of Detroit, in his sermon of Pentecost in 1974 said: "One of the very significant experiences of the Church in our time has surely been the Charismatic Movement . . . It has been an extraordinary phenomenon . . . But what is important is that those who see it recognize that it is grounded strongly in faith in the Lord Jesus."<sup>3</sup>

Does it not seem reasonable to presume that the vast majority are sensibly on that solid ground?

There are false charisms and even revelations similar to Fatima which are false. There must also be "pentecostal manifestations" which are mere hysteria.

And not only is it important to recognize the true from the false, but it is also always necessary to keep in mind that we do not need any of these extraordinary experiences. We could all come to a knowledge of God and to union with Him without them. Millions of people do.

When these extraordinary aids of God are given to us

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they are special gifts to draw us more quickly to Him . . . or to explode away an accumulated mountain of material debris which hides His face from us. They are like the ten commandments given so dramatically to Moses on Mount Sinai—commandments which God had already revealed over and over again in the Scriptures, but which in His mercy He came to underline once again to the Chosen People because their minds had become darkened by the paganism of Egypt in which they had lived so long.

Many minds have been darkened today since the revolt of reason led by Voltaire at the dawn of America's history. Many of our forefathers fled these conflicts in Europe but the wave of militant atheism swelled forth and followed them through the whole world. And in an atmosphere of godlessness the world lost its sense of sin. Most men were losing their souls.<sup>4</sup>

At Fatima, in 1917, after Lisbon had been declared seven years before to be the "atheist capital of the world" by Voltaire's children, God performed for the first time in history a miracle at a predicted time and place "*so that everyone may believe.*"

Paul Claudel called that miracle the "explosion of the supernatural," but almost simultaneously the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in many parts of the world was also, and rightfully, being called an "explosion of the supernatural." At Fatima was the announcement of the proof. In human hearts throughout the world the Holy Spirit began the victory Fatima foretold. The enemy fights back with a plethora of confusing questions.

Why do some deny the explosion? Why do a few separate from the Church established by Christ and attribute it to a pentecostal experience? And what is going to happen to those individuals who claim to speak in tongues, or suddenly feel on fire, when there follows a long silence with no feeling?

All these questions have answers, and only the humble will find them.

Some deny the explosion because they are too proud to admit that charisms could be given to others, to outsiders, to newcomers, and not to them. Some deny the explosion because, like the brother of the prodigal son, they do not want to enter the house of rejoicing after they have plodded so many years along the path of the cross without such a party ever being given for them.

And some separate from the Church because they attribute these experiences to themselves. They are too proud to submit to the discernment of the Spirit. And they are almost certain to "fall away" in the silence which follows the thunder of the coming of the Holy Spirit. They are like the Pharisees who had so many signs, but who demanded another and another.

Miracles, even that of Fatima, should humble us. How far have we strayed that God has to work a miracle to get our hearts' attention?

Once the pastor of a little church in France found that he had overstepped his abilities when he took in more orphans than he could feed.

The day came when there was not even enough flour to bake one loaf of bread. During the night, the closed granary of the orphanage was filled. Everyone marveled and flocked to kiss the hands of the pastor as a saint. He was indeed a saint (St. John Vianney) but he did not see the miracle as an answer to his prayers but as a reproach: "To think," he exclaimed, "that the great and good God had to do this because I did not provide for the orphans." And if this was a saint's reaction to such a wonder as this, what should be our reaction to speaking in tongues?

Blessed are those who no longer need charismatic phenomena, even though they are pleased to accept them. Blessed are those who have not seen, and who have believed! Why should anyone already leading a Eucharistic life, already in a deepening union with Jesus, pine for the experience of the first fervor? Why would anyone long to go backward on the path to God. Do we not know that the Promised Land is at the other end of the desert?

On the other hand, let us not disdain or be envious of those whom God now almost miraculously sweeps into His heart in this age of the Holy Spirit, this age of the triumph of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. If they should seem to race ahead of us on the path to Divine Union, should we refuse to rejoice with them? If we did, we would be like the older son who was envious when the fatted calf was killed for his prodigal brother. His father had to remind him: *But you have been with me always, and all that I have is yours . . .*

These are some of the questions and answers that come to mind after the experience of the young "tongues speaker" in London and this writer's own experience in

1933. Why does God permit this gift suddenly to explode and spread to peoples of many denominations? And why is there such a violent reaction to the gift in some quarters?

Larry Christenson in *Speaking in Tongues and its Significance for the Church*, points out that the gift is primarily intended to open up a new dimension of communication with God! And though it is intended mostly for private prayer, it does benefit the whole Church. We read in his book about the purpose of tongues:

When we look at the second definition (of language) we find a highly accurate definition of speaking in tongues. It defines language in terms of the speaker. *Language is an expression of meaning in terms of feeling or thought.* If speaking in tongues expresses the meaning of the speaker, then it is a language, according to this accepted definition.

A semanticist told a friend of mine, "No sound is without meaning." A sigh has meaning. A grunt has meaning. The la-la ditty which a child sings at play has meaning. The basic question we must ask is this: "Does speaking in tongues express meaning for the speakers?"

In *The Healing Gifts of the Spirit*, Agnes Sanford takes it a step further. She quotes a psychiatrist who said: "It can be a spiritual power entering into a person with such force that it reaches and touches something in the deep unconscious; whereupon a person speaks a language which the conscious mind does not know." Paul Tournier suggests much the same in his book, *The Meaning of Persons*: "Glossolalia, or speaking in tongues, which played such an important part then, and which is still found in some modern communities, appears to answer the need to *express the inexpressible*, to carry the dialogue with God beyond the narrow limits of clearly intelligible language."

The Bible says that speaking in tongues is addressed to God (1 Cor. 14:2). Therefore the question of whether *people* understand it is actually irrelevant. The question is: Does it express meaning for the speakers, and does God understand it?

Purely intellectual utterances are only one band of the spectrum of meaning, as we have suggested. It is altogether reasonable that something as deep and

intimate as our relationship with God should find expression in supra-rational utterance—utterance which would express shades of feeling and thought beyond the capability of ordinary speech. Yet to God, who can discern our inmost thoughts, these utterances would be perfectly understandable.

Christenson cites examples of how the gift was a spiritual breakthrough for some people he knew, and helped them in praying for the needs of others. Then he continues:

*Speaking in tongues brings to one's private devotions the special blessing of 'praying in the spirit' as distinct from praying with the understanding. This comes out in 1 Corinthians 14:2, 14 and 28: "One who speaks in a tongue speaks not to men but to God. . . . If I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays but my mind is unfruitful. . . . If there is no one to interpret, let each of them keep silence in church and speak to himself and to God." These verses tell us two things about speaking in tongues. First, the direction is 'upward,' a speaking unto God; it is prayer. And secondly, the mind is 'unfruitful'; the prayer is not shaped by the intellect, but by the spirit.*

One immediately wonders. "What possible value can speaking in tongues have, if I have no idea what I am saying?" According to the Bible, even though you do not understand what you are saying, your spirit is in a state of prayer (1 Cor. 14:14). But it is a praying with the spirit rather than the mind. It is neither an emotional nor intellectual act (although both emotion and intellect may be affected), but *an act of spiritual worship*.

This explanation of tongues as a new capacity for prayer makes it less forbidding, and even as a gift to be sought. But doesn't St. Paul downplay the use of the gifts and say that it is much better to have charity? Are not the gifts for neophytes and love for those who have progressed in the spiritual life? Again, Larry Christensen throws much light on this question:

You frequently hear it said that "love is the greatest of the gifts." The implication seems to be that we



should spend our greatest effort toward acquiring and manifesting this gift, and that if we have love, the other gifts become more or less optional or incidental. In a broad sense this may be said. But in this particular context it tends to be misleading. Strictly speaking, love is not a *gift* of the Spirit, but a *fruit* of the Spirit. (Gal. 5:22). The word *charisma* is never used to denote love, as it is used to denote healing, miracles, tongues, and so forth. If we lump love together with these other gifts and ministries which Paul is speaking about, we miss the distinctive position which love holds in the entire discussion: We make it an *alternative* to the other spiritual gifts, whereas the Apostle clearly sets it above all of the gifts—not as an alternative, but as a *controlling principle*.

The gifts are not a (lower) alternative to love. They are the very means which the Spirit has given us to express Christ's love in an effective and concrete way. Desiring the spiritual gifts is not a sign of spiritual immaturity, acceptable only in someone who has not yet learned the more excellent way of love. Rather, desire for the spiritual gifts is a sign that one *does* love—but knows that in himself he has nothing to give. He is like the 'friend at midnight' (Luke 11:5ff). He goes to God and says, "This friend of mine has come, and I have nothing to give him. I pray you, supply me with what he needs, that I may give it to him." He doesn't sit in his rocker, piously saying, "If the Lord wants to give me any gifts, He will do it." No, he *goes*. He *asks*—until he receives. He *seeks*—until he finds. He *knocks*—until the door is opened. This is the wedding of love and desire which the Apostle urges upon us in these chapters of First Corinthians.

In the first draft of this book, this writer asked whether neophytes might mistake the charismatic gifts for intimacy with God, and that the first fervor thrill which often accompanies them might not last when periods of trials follow, as happens in the lives of many whom God has called to holiness. We did not mean to imply by this questioning that charismatic gifts are only a consolatory, emotional impetus given by a condescending God to those who are still spiritual infants and that one graduates from these

sweet pettings of Our Lord into an adult, non-Pentecostal spirituality. Father Louis Pfaller, O.S.B., sent us this comment:<sup>5</sup>

Search the Scriptures and you do not get this impression. Christ Himself needed the Holy Spirit from Conception to Resurrection! He forbade His disciples to go out to preach after the Resurrection until they were likewise filled with the Holy Spirit—and this was not just for a first fervor of Pentecost day. Decades later, they still demanded this as an experience of their converts (Acts 19). And St. Paul writing many years later to the Corinthians told them to use these gifts properly, and that he himself spoke in tongues more than any of them. (1 Cor. 14:18) (The curé of Ars was no spiritual baby yet he spoke in tongues, and exercised other charismatic gifts as well; cf. Msgr. Troncker, *Miser of Souls*, p. 201.)

I think that a basic misunderstanding is to confuse the emotional lift some people experience when they go through a conversion experience with the Pentecostal experience. These could be concomitant, but they need not be, especially in the case of a person who has always been a good person, and has never been distant from God. Such persons may experience no great emotional upsurge at all, but just a gentle deepening of the sense of the presence of God. Pentecost is not limited to sinners who can experience a "first fervor" but is also for the advanced, with the same Holy Spirit giving the person quite a different experience of Pentecost. Let us not stereotype the manner of operation of the Holy Spirit.

Another great misunderstanding is what the gifts of the Holy Spirit are for. They are not a badge of merit for good work done, nor are they a sure sign that one has attained a certain degree of holiness, and that they disappear when one evolves into a higher stratum of the spiritual life! They are not primarily for the individual, but for the community. They are God's gift to the community to build it up, and since the task of building up the Body of Christ is on-going and never completed, there will always be need in the Church for these gifts—and not just for the spiritual babies, but for all. If we were to become so self-satisfied that

we do not personally need the gifts, we should accept them in order to minister them to "our weaker brethren"!

To ask for the gifts of the Spirit does not show a lack of faith, but rather a lively faith, a real, childlike trusting in God as a loving Father, as Christ advised us in **Luke 11:9-13**. We show forth our faith in a loving God when we ask for gifts, and when we really trust that Our Loving Father is going to act in our situation right now.

When the spiritual writers speak of the stages of the spiritual life—purgative, illuminative, unitive—these are not air-tight compartments, so that we pass from one to the other and are beyond the previous stage. These are merely mental categories to help us understand a bit about progression in union with God. A person in the unitive stage may still need purgation, and one in the purgative stage may have snatches of the other two stages from time to time. Likewise, we do not graduate from a need for the gifts of the Holy Spirit. They are a constitutive element of the Church at all times. And the gifts work with and for us in all of our stages of spiritual growth. Nor is there a graduation from the charismatic to the sacramental, for the Holy Spirit works with His gifts in and through the sacraments, such that we experience the gift of healing through Penance, Anointing, the Eucharist, and we get words of wisdom and spiritual discernment through the Liturgy of the Word in Mass and in other Sacraments. The gifts are meant to permeate the Sacraments—we just have to be open to them. Many in the charismatic movement are experiencing tremendous effects of the gifts in the reception of the sacraments today, as many priests can testify.

Many are afraid to ask for the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Some are afraid that any external manifestations like those witnessed at charismatic meetings could be a diabolical trap.

Pope John prayed: "Renew Thy wonders in this our day as by a new Pentecost." And dare we pray for less?

## NOTES

1. John M. Haffert, *The Brother and I* (Washington, N.J.: AMI Press) p. 21.
2. Msgr. Bellord, *Encounter With God* (Washington, N.J.: AMI Press ).
3. *New Covenant*, November 1974, p. 25.
4. *Lucia's Memoirs* abbreviated edition, AMI Press, Washington, N.J. 07882, p. 35: Many souls go to hell because they have no one to pray and make sacrifices for them. In an interview with Lucia concerning this Father Lombardi, S.J., questioned the word "many" asking if "most" souls were not saved. Lucia answered that today *most* souls are lost, that it was her understanding from the vision of hell which the children saw on July 13, 1917, and from the words of Our Lady in the August vision that today *most* souls are being lost.
5. Father Louis Pfaller is a recognized expert on the charismatic movement and he wrote this statement in a review of this present book at the request of the Most Reverend H. B. Hacker, Bishop of Bismarck, N.D.

## CHAPTER XIII

### *Important Distinctions*

We now come to perhaps the most important part of this book, although a recommendation in later chapters for a united "big voice" for the supernatural explosion is also of great importance.

Forces of evil against the people of the new Pentecost have created a counterfeit Pentecost of crystal balls and demonic manifestations.

Because of such counterfeits many of us may decide on a procrastinating or even negative attitude toward the "explosion of the supernatural." And is this not in itself a diabolical trap?

Many Church leaders took a stand against evolution because the man who discovered it was a non-believer who confused the physical origin of the world with the origin of the soul of man. By the time good reason prevailed and proper distinctions were made, many religious leaders had been tricked into a conflict with the world of science. Even today a contributing reason for agnosticism and atheism in our colleges is that the professors of today were the students of yesterday disillusioned by an unnecessary conflict between science and religion. They still work with Galileo and Darwin. They say that the Church cannot know the truth it claims about God because it does not know the truth it experiences through science.

Many bishops have already begun to issue directives concerning the Charismatic Renewal for their own dioceses. A typical example is that issued in February, 1975 (Vol. 24, No. 40, of the diocesan newspaper) by Most Reverend George H. Guilfoyle of the Diocese of Camden, N.J., which says in part:

Such gifts or charisms have always been given to the Church. The Church is a living, growing reality. The Church's life is intimately connected with and dependent upon the Holy Spirit.

The "Charismatic Renewal" focusses on the Lordship of Jesus. It has been a source of great spiritual help to many among us and merits support. Parishes are encouraged to integrate existing charismatic groups into their structures. Not only is effective communication necessary but association with priestly leadership is vital to healthy development of the renewal. To that end priests are strongly urged to interest themselves in the movement. In our diocese Bishop Schad serves as Coordinator for the Charismatic Movement. He should be kept informed and his advice and guidance sought.

There are dangers in this type of spiritual program. It can be too emotional for some, too elitist, too given to a form of biblical fundamentalism which does not bear witness to all that Jesus taught. Knowledgeable priests should become involved in the area of guidance with leaders so that there might be a healthy development of the renewal.

There are at least five major distinctions which must be made concerning this "new Pentecost" based on statements by Pope Paul VI and by the bishops. First and foremost to discern between the abused and the abusive charism; second, to distinguish between the essentials and the non-essentials; third, to distinguish what "pentecostalism" may be and what it is in reality; fourth, as the report of the bishops specifies, to distinguish between "religious experience" and "religious doctrine"; and finally, we must distinguish between exterior signs and inner charisms.

Before taking a closer look at these distinctions, let us first put them in the perspective of the major expectations from the new Pentecost, especially those for Christian unity.

We have been praying, and expecting, that the Holy Spirit will thunder into the world to burn away the walls of separation (often even of hatred) some day. And on that day we can expect the powers of Hell and hatred to be desperately active to confuse us. They must necessarily react furiously to a "force" which breaks down barriers among religions all over the world.

When that new day of an authentic Pentecost dawns it will necessarily light the way to unity in the Church and the Sacraments. Therefore is it not logical to expect that

the major thrust of the enemy be concentrated against the Church and the Sacraments?

We know from the miracle and message of Fatima that this is a time for great holiness. It is a time for patient prayer to understand and to discover God's Will in all that is happening.

Arguments rage from the right about the validity of speaking in tongues when the speech seems to be unintelligible gibberish, and about the "baptism of the spirit" being in conflict with the Sacraments. And the more the arguments rage, the more the presence of Satan is evident. On the left, as emotional outpourings with a pentecostal label are substituted for the Sacraments, confusion reigns supreme. This is why Pope Paul has insisted on "local direction" and that "discernment is indispensable."

So the first distinction we must make is *between use and abuse*.

In its statement of November 4, 1969, the committee on doctrine (of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops) asks us to make a distinction between a new Pentecost and pentecostalism as a new form of religion. "Admittedly there have been abuses," the bishops' committee states, "but the cure is not a denial of their existence (i.e., charismatic gifts) but their proper use . . ."

The second distinction is *between essentials and non-essentials*.

In a booklet opposing Catholic pentecostals, one writer gives specific instances of Catholics substituting the imposition of hands for confession. She refers to two pentecostals of her acquaintance who had the gift of tongues but could not receive the Sacraments because of living in sin. And here the distinction is a delicate one.

This writer recalls a woman who had read one of his books many years ago and traveled a couple of hundred miles to pour out her tortured story of an invalid marriage, of "living in sin" and not knowing how to get back to God. But was she not already on the path to being saved by her very torture of spirit and by her very effort? She was denied the Sacraments but she clung to the sacramentals of Scapular and Rosary. A few years later her marriage problem was solved and she was joyously reunited, together with her family, to the Eucharistic Christ.

Can we discount that the new Pentecost within the

Church may be for many a way back to the Sacraments rather than an intended substitute?

A third distinction is what we think pentecostalism may be and what it should be.

This same critic says, "Speak to these Catholics about Mary's intervention in the salvation of the world today, the salutary effects of the devout recitation of the Rosary and the pious use of the Scapular, and they will tell you there was 'no devotion to Mary in the early Church' . . . as though Our Lady wasn't there for the first Pentecost."

On the other hand, the official report on pentecostalism within the Church (issued by the committee on doctrine of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops on November 14, 1969) declared:

"Perhaps our most prudent way to judge the validity of claims of the Pentecostal movement is to observe the effects on those who participate in the prayer meetings. There are many indications that this participation leads to a better understanding of the role the Christian plays in the Church. Many have experienced progress in their spiritual life. They are attracted to the reading of the Scriptures and a deeper understanding of their Faith. They seem to grow in their attachment to certain established devotional patterns such as devotion to the Real Presence and the Rosary."

A fourth distinction to be made is "between religious experience and religious doctrine," as the report of the bishops specifies. We have to distinguish between what is of God and what is not of God, *what is authentic and what is counterfeit*.

The first and foremost way to make this distinction is by obedience to the Church to which Christ made the promise: "The gates of Hell shall not prevail against it." Our own confessors and our bishops will not mislead us. It is frightening to learn that this is now being doubted.

In the past, Satan's great victory was a victory of silence. No one believed in him and therefore no one feared him. But now his great victory lies in drawing even some of the elite into the proud decision that they had best form their own consciences "because new breed theologians have taken over the Church." They do not hear the thunderous applause of almost three thousand bishops when Pope Paul VI proclaimed Mary the "Mother of the Church." They hear only the crashing fall of a plaster statue in a local church.

If there is a new Pentecost, then it is also a time of test-



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ing. Who are the real persons of faith? Who have been leading a life so distracted by external symbols that they were never really in solid, essential contact with the Mystical Body of Christ?

And this time of change and "testing" has made many of us overly sensitive. We tend to confuse surface changes with the wave of evil in the world. This is Satan's victory of confusion.

Any individual is foolhardy indeed who would set himself up as a judge on preternatural phenomena. Satan is the Master Deceiver and Jesus warns us in no uncertain terms about cries from all sides that "the Spirit is here," even accompanied by the extraordinary signs and wonders. Our Lord says: "BUT DO NOT GO OUT."

If we believe that the Church of our affiliation is the true Church founded by Jesus to guide us (and assured by His own promise that He will be in that Church to guide us and preserve us from error) WE MUST NOT GO OUT.

Who of us would presume to tell the Church what stance to take on "preternatural phenomena" either in general or in particular? Yet would we dare make such decisions for ourselves?

We can, and should, deplore negativism and abstention of churchmen who have the obligation to conclude canonical inquiries and fail to do so.

But at the same time can we expect the Church to make a decision on something as serious as Lourdes and Fatima with less seriousness than it does with regard to a canonization? And one of the criteria depends on us, perhaps particularly on those of us who are journalists. We so easily pass on the responsibility to "those in authority" without realizing our own obligations as reporters with the power to influence cult, which is one of the three essential criteria for the Church to evaluate and one of the more difficult.

The fifth distinction to be made is *between physical charisms and inner charisms*.

The latter are essential to holiness. The former are not. Saint Paul said that even if he had all the physical gifts in their plenitude, and did not have charity, they would all be of no avail. And if we have the fullness of charity, which is union with God, then what need have we of visible charisms?

Some saints rarely if ever showed evidence of the visible phenomena now appearing often in group prayer. St.

Therese of Lisieux, one of the persons of our century who reached the highest summits of Divine love, never spoke in tongues, never healed, and as far as we know prophesied only once and then in pages written only in obedience. She believed and rose to the heights in an emotional desert.

There is a danger of over-emphasizing physical charisms and even of being deceived by simulations.

Those within the Church are especially fortunate. They have a reliable guide. And if this guidance does not seem to be spelled out in sufficient detail from the Bishops, it is always spelled out in detail for the individual in the Sacrament of Penance.

One of our favorite examples of this power of the sacrament relates to a personal miracle about the Scapular somewhat similar to another which we shall relate further on. It concerns a young woman who went to the Curé of Ars in the sacrament to obtain direction in her vocation. To her surprise, she had hardly begun when the Curé of Ars asked her:

"My daughter do you remember a dance which you attended some time ago during which there was a particularly attractive young man who asked the others to dance, but did not ask you and how disappointed you felt?" Of course the girl remembered vividly and was amazed to hear this priest, hidden in the darkness beyond the wall of the confessional, recalling to her something only she herself could have known.

"That man was in the state of mortal sin," the saintly old priest told her. "And everyone with whom he danced fell into sin. He did not ask you because you were wearing the Scapular of Our Lady which you did well to consider your safeguard."

The saint then advised her that she had a religious vocation. She became a Carmelite nun and after her death the story, which she had recorded at the direction of her superior, was published in the chronicles of Carmel.<sup>4</sup>

For those who do not believe in the Sacrament of Penance or do not have access to it, common sense and sincere prayer are pretty good guides. A very sensible attitude toward supernatural phenomena would seem to be whether I *need* to experience them because I have lost contact with God.

This leads us to a sixth and final distinction concerning *personal need*.

If I have not lost contact with God and am leading a Eucharistic life, I have no need of preternatural phenomena. Doctors of the Church whose lives sometimes seemed filled with such phenomena tells us always to doubt them,<sup>9</sup> never to seek them, and to follow them only if sanctioned by authority of superior or confessor.

So the question of NEED is very important. A world away from God needs a new Pentecost, perhaps even with all the charisms and phenomena of the first Pentecost. Can we remain indifferent to this any more than we can afford to be careless? And who of us does not need deeper faith?

If God wants us to become involved He will lead us . . . and we will know that it is He if it results in hatred of sin, a desire to read the Scriptures for knowledge of God, fraternal charity, and in a sharing of His own great Eucharistic prayer: "Father, that they may be one as You and I are one." It will create in us an ardent desire to know Him through the Scriptures and to be His.

Doctors of the Church give the good advice to flee from anything preternatural (including visions, prophecies, extraordinary signs) which lead to discord, exclusivism, doubt, and even the slightest tendency of such preternatural experiences to become a substitute for the sacraments, for authentic prayer, or obedience to the Church.

But once these important distinctions are made, should we not rejoice at what is happening in the world of religion? As we spin towards the end of this twentieth century . . . should we not rejoice in this explosion of the supernatural and do what we can to lessen the risk of dissipating its force? If we are already leading a Eucharistic life, should we not . . . like the elder brother . . . hear Our Father's exhortation to join in the celebration for the prodigal son?

Many of us, disillusioned by the first decade of post-conciliar ecumenism which Pope Paul himself described as a failure, tend to reject *any* change. And with good reason.

Dialogue was frequently substituted for prayer. "Ultra" people emerged in our midst (both conservative and liberal) who often aggravated disunity rather than healing it. And these "ultra" people are still very, very much with us and all too frequently they are assuming leadership in the charismatic renewal.

But all of this considered, we arrive at the basic experience of millions of people seeking God with new earnest-

ness. They seem to be bouncing back as it were from the blows of the post-conciliar period. And despite all the traps of prejudice and heresy, and often despite prejudiced and sometime even heretical leaders, they are coming into authentic contact with Jesus.

Marian apostalates tend to become a refuge of ultra conservatives as the Charismatic Renewal sometimes becomes a refuge of ultra liberals. Exploding from the center of truth, all these extremists seem to claim a place in the explosion of the supernatural either as direct followers of Fatima or as direct recipients of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit. And is it not probable that either they will be saved in this last refuge, or they will become as "ultra" as heresy and as "out" as Berrigan and Kung and Schuckardt and so many others?

Or they will become saints?

It is questionable whether in the interim they do much lasting harm to the sincere majority, even though they may often cause confusion bordering even on anxiety.

It is worth saying again: What is so wonderful and so hopeful today is that on both sides of this street of explosions people are learning to pray. They are looking to God for guidance and finding it. Many are not only hearing but are responding to that plea floating over the chasm of hell at Fatima:

*"So many souls are lost because there is no one to pray and to make sacrifices for them."*

And it is this aspect of the explosion of the supernatural, by whatever name it is called, which is most exciting. And it is finding a response in more and more hearts often despite inadequate leadership.

It may seem in this statement that leaders of particular charismatic renewal groups who introduce rhythmic music, and the ultimate modes of liturgical celebrations, are not good leaders. But sometimes they are. There are probably some persons who need the jarring alternate modes permissible because they have become indifferent to the old and traditional forms.

This may often be a principle source of contention: While some leaders insist on the extreme modes, others may see extreme modes as the edge of the cliff of orthodoxy.

One of our several main hopes in writing this book is that we might help to delineate the edge of the cliff. It is much farther from the limits of the charismatic renewal

than many think. Any view of holiness must take into consideration the whole being while emphasizing the reality of the supernatural for the sanctification of the whole being to its fullest extent. It is time to distinguish such essential goals of religion from the new modes.

One certain sign of orthodoxy is the new emphasis on the Eucharistic liturgy not as some passive experience, but as the most dramatic, the most important, the most exciting, the most thrilling and communal encounter with God possible to man.

Already some parishes realize that there are different capacities for religious experience among their parishioners and not exactly the same type of religious service is equally satisfying, equally stimulating to all. For this reason guitar Masses are scheduled. But discriminating pastors do not force guitar music on everyone at every Mass.

Certain persons, especially among the young, find rhythmic music adequate for spiritual expression as well as for musical enjoyment. But there are others who are positively revolted by such rhythmic music. The present writer was taught piano by a sensitive musician who would never permit him to play "popular music." After prodding one day for permission to play at least a little popular music the teacher asked:

"What is the most distasteful food you have ever eaten?"

After each food mentioned the teacher made a wry face and said:

"But, oh, think of something far more terrible!"

We could mention no taste short of castor oil which was as revolting to the sensitive ears of that music master as "popular" music!

And would anyone think of inviting persons of various tastes to a banquet, insisting that all eat every dish on the table even though some might be most distasteful? Yet, who can avoid listening to whatever music is used at Mass?

Those who are such great advocates of the guitar Mass, and of rhythmic music accompanied by a rapid beat played on the pedal of the organ, should realize that this is not only distracting to many persons, but repulsive.

And this poses obvious problems.

How, in the midst of these adjustments, are we going to have the flowering of the Age of the Holy Spirit? How are we going to reconcile the increasingly reticent conservatives and the often blatant liberals until there is a more

universal understanding of the renewal begun by Vatican II? This is a *spiritual* renewal. This is a renewal in which we seek, we expect, and we obtain extraordinary gifts of God. The most important of these gifts are faith, confidence and love, sometimes aided by some exterior gifts (charisms) which in a visible way betoken these more important interior gifts. And is not the glorious hope of such a renewal enough to enable us to overlook, or at least to compromise disagreements on modes?

We have heard one Charismatic Renewal leader boast of a group which in six years grew to five hundred or six hundred in attendance, and how another group grew from four or five to forty or fifty, as though these were great personal achievements of the charismatic renewal in a particular place, or through a particular leadership. What neophyte nonsense! All-Night Vigil groups grow more rapidly often with no leadership to speak of. The growth is purely and simply an *explosion of grace in sincere hearts at the first opportunity*, even though that opportunity may have worse than inadequate leadership.

Is there not something wrong with a leader who encourages a group to raise arms to the sky and clap after the consecration of the Mass but never suggests that they fall to their knees? Is there not something wrong with a leader who insists on consecrating loaves of bread in a dish and using pitchers of wine on a table (as Father Berrigan did on a New York street after he was released from jail) and do not hesitate to give Communion in the hand even in dioceses where it is forbidden? Is there not something wrong with a leader with a vow of celibacy whose interpretation of "pax" is to kiss the gals on the lips at the altar, or with the female leader who addresses the group in stretch slacks, a mini skirt or the no-bra look? (Unfortunately, we have actually seen this happen.)

Of course there is something wrong with such leaders, and yet the thirst for sincere prayer is so great that a group, experiencing perhaps for the first time in their lives a genuine encounter with God, may not only tolerate such leadership but even accept it with love and prayer. And where there is such sincere love and prayer the end result is bound to be a glorious one. The bad will be converted or will float to the surface and roll off or be skimmed off. And those who are having a sincere encounter with God are bound to grow in holiness.

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As the Charismatic Renewal Congress convened in Rome on Pentecost Sunday, 1975, under the direct auspices of the Pope just a few months after the condemnation of Hans Kung, it was still necessarily permeated by many ultra liberals who had no other place to go—except “out.”

Here is where they are being saved. Little by little a solid, orthodox, humble, and obedient leadership must emerge. When it does, the explosion of faith will make the world jump for joy as never before in history.

One of the signs of the proper new leadership will be its use of the Rosary although in 1975 many Pentecostals would have violently denied such a possibility.

It is a “small” devotion, but its use is as infallible a sign of authenticity as a magnet testing steel.

The post-conciliar leader who has not read Pope John's autobiography and therefore does not know the importance this Pope of the Council placed on the Rosary can be excused, because reading Pope John's personal account is hardly obligatory. But any “leader” who does not know *Lumen Gentium* or John XXIII's encyclical on the Rosary, or Paul VI's *Marialis Cultus* or *Signum Magnum* cannot be excused. His ignorance is not only culpable, it is hypocritical. He claims the council as his authority and he does not follow the council.

Such leaders as this at the eucharistic table of the Charismatic Renewal are like Judas at the Last Supper. And the sincere apostles sharing the Agape with them are praying for them as well as with them, and are not really deceived.

There is an overworked saying that we should not throw out the baby with the bath water, and we must not deny the explosion of the supernatural because of the extremists, whose personal explosions are mingled with that which will bring about the worldwide triumph promised to us at Fatima.

Is it not important for each of us to accept what is best and avoid the extremes. It is important that we know that God is acting in the world in a most extraordinary manner. Getting together and praying, particularly in the combined thought and voice manner of Rosary prayer, can explode us as individuals from ordinary persons into saints. And that is what it's all about.

NOTES

1. See page 8.
2. "But do not go out." (Luke 17:24).
3. *Sign of Her Heart*, p. 128.
4. This doctrine is found in nearly all the writings of authorities on mystics, but most especially St. John of the Cross (Descent on Mount Carmel) and in the works of St. Therese of Avila.
5. *L, Osservatore Romani*



## CHAPTER XIV

### *The Explosion Now*

As we come into the age of the Holy Spirit we meet more and more persons who live in faith. Is this not a cause for rejoicing? Although at first reluctantly, more and more persons begin to share with others the news of their own glorious experience of God's power and love. There is a sudden rupture of a long, unnatural silence so sudden that it is indeed like an explosion.

Until now most of the minority who have lived in this Divine dimension have been silent about experiences of the supernatural as a conditioned reflex to a world of disbelief. We note in the history of the children of Fatima:

In 1915-16 they saw minor apparitions with no message. When they spoke about these experiences with child-like candor they were ridiculed. Therefore when the major apparitions took place they decided to keep them secret. It was only the uncontrollable enthusiasm of little Jacinta, then seven years old, which fortunately breached the silence as she exclaimed to her mother at supper several hours after the first vision of Our Lady:

"Oh, we saw the most beautiful lady in the Coval!"

Probably most miracles experienced by the average person are little more than extraordinary, specific answers to prayer, or signs—like experiencing the fragrance of Father Pio, praying to St. Therese and finding a fresh rose, an unusual light, even an inexplicable inner feeling. They are things we would not talk about because persons not leading a supernatural life would think we were attributing a supernatural cause to something that could have a natural explanation.

In 1954 the Blue Army began to conduct "at cost" pilgrimages to all the major shrines of Europe in order to attract some of its members to Fatima (which was then attracting only a few pilgrims). We wanted more people personally to experience the Fatima reality. In the following twenty years the pilgrimages increased. We went to Russia,

circled Africa, and four times circled the globe. There was not a day, during at least six months of the year, that a Blue Army pilgrimage was not traveling. And in all those twenty years—except at Fatima and Lourdes, the shrines of penance—there was never a day of rain. This writer used to carry a raincoat and umbrella as normal travel gear. It was almost ten years after the constant smile of sunshine before the raincoat and umbrella began to be forgotten. It became almost normal on these pilgrimages to hear on arriving at an airport: "My, you are fortunate in the weather! It was raining until now."

A miracle? Yes—to those who experienced it day in and day out for twenty years—sometimes driving in the sunshine through flooded countries, with water from recent days of rain gushing down the sides of the road.

But we never talked about it. We took it as a sign of God's pleasure in people of faith who had made the great sacrifice of time and money to visit places of faith, to visit places where they could more easily and intimately experience His reality.

Most "miracles" are like that, the kind that enable you to wade in the supernatural without talking your feet off the bottom of normal experience. But for each person of faith there is inevitably the moment when God permits that one feel nothing under foot, that one experiences something for which there is no other explanation but the supernatural.

A professor of science at Notre Dame University told us the following true story during a chance meeting at the Catholic Hospital in Kalamazoo, Michigan, a few years ago.

During his vacation, this priest-professor served as a volunteer chaplain at the hospital. He said:

"I became a priest because I wanted to administer the Sacraments but my superiors, instead, had me teaching. So I take my three weeks of vacation to serve in a hospital where I baptize, administer the Sacrament of the Sick, and rejoice in the exercise of my priestly function."

He went on to say that he made it a practice never to pass up any sick person, regardless of faith. This particular day he entered a room where a woman was dying, attended by her only daughter. There was something about the warmth with which the dying woman greeted him that

made him feel that his ministries were desired. So he lingered, and asked if she was a member of the Church.

She had no particular religion. He quickly asked her if she believed in the Divinity of Christ, the Trinity, Baptism. She did. "Then," he said, "you are fortunate because I am able to do something a minister of some other religions could not do. I am going to give you Christ himself." And in a few words he explained the miracle of the Last Supper, the miracle of the Eucharist.

"I have rarely seen any dying person receive the Eucharist with such joy and faith," he told me. "I was surprised. And when I left the room, her daughter followed me. Reaching into her bag, without even looking, she took what money she had and tried to put it into my hand. I refused, saying that I was merely doing what I should do. And she said: 'But how can I ever thank you for bringing such great joy to my mother?' And I told her:

"Just tell your mother to say a prayer for me when she reaches heaven."

During the following night the priest awoke startled. He knew it was not his normal waking time, but there was a light in his room. He remembered having turned the light off before going to sleep and he looked up at the fixture. It was not on. Then he looked at the window. The light was not coming from there. With a growing feeling of amazement he sat up in the bed. Then suddenly he noticed the very woman to whom he had given the Blessed Sacrament the day before standing beside his bed. Instinctively he pulled up the bed covers and exclaimed:

"What are you doing in my room?"

She replied: "It isn't I"—and with that she gestured with her left arm. Following the gesture, the Notre Dame professor beheld on the wall opposite his bed the source of the light: an apparition of the Blessed Virgin, smiling at him.

"I stared, and stared, and stared," he told me, "until, little by little, after what length of time I do not know, the light gradually faded away and the room was in total darkness.

"To assure myself that I wasn't dreaming, I squeezed myself on the arm. Into the next day I carried the four marks from my finger nails. I switched on the light and looked at my watch. It was four o'clock in the morning.

"Of course I could no longer sleep and immediately after

my morning Mass, I ascertained that the lady had died the night before. I could hardly convince myself that what had happened to me was real. I believed that it must have been some kind of hallucination, although I had never experienced anything like it before.

"It was with some excitement that I went to the dead woman's house. Her daughter met me with some surprise, but also with joy. She must have thought I was crazy when I asked her: 'Did your mother have a polka-dot dress with a high lace collar?'"

"Knowing that I had never met either her or her mother except at the deathbed, she answered in some amazement that 'yes' her mother did have such a dress, and indeed it was hanging up in the closet.

"Wanting to convince myself as much as possible, I wondered whether the dress could actually be the same as the one in which I had seen the woman in my room at four o'clock that morning and I actually asked if I could see it. I knew of course that the death had taken place within the very hour that I had administered the Blessed Sacrament, but I just felt that if there was really a dress like the one in which the dead woman had appeared to me, it would be just a little easier—with this tangible evidence—to believe what had happened. When I explained this to the daughter, she gladly showed me the dress. It gave me joy to console her in her bereavement.

" 'Rejoice! Your mother is in heaven!' "

There were two reasons why this priest shared such an intimate experience with me. One was because of my own faith and another was that we had a mutual friend, the famous Father John Nieuland, who invented synthetic rubber. When Father Nieuland died he had given this priest his special crucifix which the Holy Cross Fathers wear as a distinguishing part of their religious garb. But he confided to me that it was not a story he told around the university.

Two things often occur to me as I recall this.

The first is wonder at the great love God must have for a good priest! The woman whom he had helped through the portals of death had been asked only to remember him in heaven. And what a beautiful, generous response God made! He sent His Mother to smile at him, and to fill his heart with the sense of her presence and Her readiness to

lead him through all difficulties, to the fullness of union with Jesus.

But the other thought is what a wonderful newspaper headline it would make: **UNIVERSITY SCIENTIST SEES WOMAN FROM THE DEAD!**

Is that not just the kind of headline the world needs? And yet who would publish it?

In this era of the new Pentecost, the Divine triumph promised at Fatima is going to need some way of getting headlines like that into print and this need has been the secondary purpose for the writing of this book.

We see this as one of the prime obligations on those who have experienced the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, who themselves have had visible evidence of God's reality.

Will they do nothing to bring the evidence of that Divine reality to others?

For fear of compromising friends we refrain from naming places, but we know of a country which was overrun by Communism and suddenly, when it was too late, the bishops of the country suddenly realized that they had no voice. They had no way of being heard by the majority of people. Desperately at the last moment they tried to create such a voice. But it was too late. The voice of the secular press, the voice of nihilism, had been sounding in the ears of the nation too long.

We hear so much foolish talk about "no one ever coming back from the dead." Television leaves a widespread questioning of life after death, with hundreds dying on the picture screen without ever voicing a prayer.

But that is the condition of the world. It is not what the condition of the world should be.

That is why this new era of the Holy Spirit, this long awaited age of faith, may be expected to explode away the accumulated debris of disbelief and doubt which hides so much of the world from the reality of God.

Elsewhere we have said that it is important for anyone who has experienced the supernatural to remember that experience because it will be of great help during periods of trial and darkness and to remember our obligation to extend the Divine triumph "to all mankind"!

It is so very, very important to move ahead. Our remembering must not be "time out" on the side of the race track, looking back at the speed with which we covered the first ten yards. Often a miracle which happened to us was a gift

from God to start us on the race and our only reason for remembering it is to keep us running for the prize. We read in *Isaiah* (43:16-21) that God recalled to the Chosen People the great miracle of the opening of the Red Sea and then said: "Remember not the events of the past. The things of long ago consider not. See, I am doing something new! Now it springs forth. Do you not perceive it? In the desert I made a way . . ."

The miracle of the Red Sea was spectacular and lifted those who experienced it to the reality of God. But this was what God did. In the desert which followed was the real *encounter* with God.

St. Paul tells us in his letter to the Philippians (3:8-14):

I wish to know Christ and the power flowing from His resurrection; likewise to know how to share in His sufferings by being formed into the pattern of His death. Thus do I hope that I may arrive at resurrection from the dead. It is not that I have reached it yet, or have already finished my course; but I am racing to grasp the prize if possible, since I have been grasped by Christ Jesus. Brothers, I do not think of myself as having reached the finish line. I give no thought to what lies behind but push on to what is ahead. My entire attention is on the finish line as I run toward the prize to which God calls me . . ."

For all Christians, a "first prize" must be that for which Jesus prayed the night before He died:

"Father, that they may be one as You and I are one."

And now, in an explosion of supernatural events, that prize is in sight.

## CHAPTER XV

### *Praying Together*

Dr. Alexis Carrel found words to write *Man the Unknown* but almost stuttered as he fell to his knees to say "I believe."

Years ago, after writing the book *Sign of Her Heart*, in a fervor this writer wanted to write one on the miracles of her sign. His father was responsible for the first book becoming a club selection and best seller but was strongly against the second. "It would be ridiculed," he said. "People don't believe in miracles."

But there is a different attitude in the world now.

My father (now in his eighties) is not reluctant today to have me write about the explosion of the supernatural as the logical and normal effect of faith in God. More and more persons are speaking openly of their faith.<sup>1</sup> One day soon, at the present rate of acceleration, those without faith will appear to be the odd ones. And what is most wonderful about the gifts of the Holy Spirit in the world today is that they are not limited to "outpouring" communication. There are so many other gifts, notably understanding.

Years ago, many would have been more than just repelled by Hindu "worship" of sex organs.

Extremes of this latter kind of worship became most evident to Westerners recently when Nepal was opened to tourists and, like many of our prejudiced ancestors, could we not easily have been led to extremes against such a nation to destroy its "abominations" because we had no understanding?

But now we see that Hindus do not worship the sexual symbol of Krishna. It is to them merely a symbol of the principle of life. And in contrast to the extreme use of this symbol in primitive Nepal, we see a completely purified form in the temple near Agra, in the Ganges Valley where both Hinduism and Buddhism were born. In that new temple, at the place where Lord Krishna is said to have become incarnate, he is represented as a child, and the beauty

and religious symbolism of this new Hindu temple is such that the archbishop of Agra said in admiration: "If this became a Catholic church today, I could say Mass here without changing anything I see."

What a wonderful gift is the gift of understanding! The new Pentecost at its best embraces understanding of our fellow man's reaching out to God according to his own light. It conveys a readiness to talk to him about our own experiences without fear of giving offense, and to listen to his experiences with understanding.

When we thus communicate, we may be surprised to find that we are all talking about the same loving GOD, under Whom we are all brothers.

For some the understanding of God is visual and primitive. But even where individual aspects of God are symbolized and worshipped in some primitive multiple form, the spiritual and moral goods (such as justice and love) found in such religions should be acknowledged, preserved and loved. (That is practically a verbatim quote from Vatican II's document on Non-Christian Religions.)

What is really new in the Pentecost is that another "holy war" would be unthinkable to those who have been touched by this spirit of God's love. The very thought of Jews, Mohammedans, and Christians shedding blood over Jerusalem reeks of a great crime rather than of something holy.

Jews, Mohammedans, and Christians all believe in one, true God. The three religions have much more in common than in divergence. And can children of the one true God kill each other in His name!?

We suddenly realize that such a crime is possible in spite of religion, not because of it. Political and territorial motives have been given religious names because we have never learned, perhaps never even thought, *to pray together for Our Father's solution to our differences.*

We were given a most extraordinary, perhaps even miraculous example of this in what happened in Vietnam in February of 1974.

On the edge of the no-man's land between North and South Vietnam is the ruin of a Catholic shrine where the Virgin Mary is said to have appeared a century ago during religious persecutions in the area. This site was chosen on February 1, 1974, for a united Prayer-for-Peace rally. Despite the threat of a new offensive from the north and prox-



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imity to areas of repeated violations of the cease fire, several thousand gathered at the burned-out ruins for prayers in which leaders of all the major faiths of South Vietnam participated. The occasion for the rally was a visit to South Vietnam of a statue of the Virgin of Fatima which Pope Pius XII had called the "Messenger of the Queen of Peace."

We had been brought to the nearest airport in a military airplane and then forded rivers and weaved through ruins and a devastated countryside for this prayer meeting which had an almost ultimate, desperate air. Hundreds of thousands had been praying throughout the United States through the previous month for a miracle in South Vietnam. I, personally, was hoping it would come in this place, on this day.

It did, but in a way we would never have expected.

Bishop Chi, metropolitan of the northern part of South Vietnam, gave a sermon in Vietnamese which we could not understand. We were praying for a miracle. Suddenly the interpreter broke in upon our thoughts.

*"The bishop says that today we are witnesses of a miracle! Persons of all the major faiths and political divisions of our country are here praying together."*

Then, on his own, the interpreter added fervently,  
"It is indeed a miracle!"

Two days later, in the center of Saigon, hundreds of thousands of South Vietnamese gathered for a service at which the highest dignitary of the more than fourteen million Buddhists of South Vietnam joined with the dignitaries of all the other major faiths, including the nuncio of Pope Paul VI, to pray for peace.

"Such a meeting has never before taken place in our four thousand years of history," said Congressman Do Sinh-Tu, one of the prime organizers of the visit of the Pilgrim Virgin statue to South Vietnam, which was the special occasion for the all-faith meeting.

"They have all put aside their religious and political differences," the congressman exclaimed, "they are here from every faith and every party with the one common purpose of prayer for peace in our nation and in the world."

When President Thieu of South Vietnam and his wife joined in the center of the throng, Mrs. Thieu had tears in her eyes as she fell to her knees with her husband in prayer. The leader of the Buddhists, Caodaists, and Hoas-

Haos offered incense and other gifts. The archbishop of Saigon said:

"There is no solution to our national condition unless She (the Queen of Peace) obtains for us a miracle to wipe out our differences. We believe She has asked Our God to have our prayers answered. We are a very small part of mankind but each of us, for the sake of all, can have our prayers answered. The Queen of Peace knows that our country is in misery, with nothing but ruin and destruction, killing and hate. She is the one Who neutralizes all these. In 1917 at Fatima She appeared six times to three children to remind us to pray daily. And I say to each and every member of our population: 'Do this for our country, regardless of differences of religious and differences of political bias. Look at Her with folded hands, and let us do the same! Let us ask our God to have pity on us as we come before Him together as brothers of the same family.

"The Rosary She holds in Her hands," the archbishop continued, as perfect silence filled the city center despite the crowd of hundreds of thousands, "reminds us to pray daily not only for ourselves, but for our families and for the world."

There are two logical steps to world peace: 1) dialogue; 2) praying together. Archbishop Dominic Athaide of Agra spent most of a lifetime in Arabia (Aden) and India as only a polite neighbor, an apostle of good example. But about the time of Vatican II (concomitantly rather than subsequently) a dialogue began to develop between himself and Hindu and Mohammedan leaders. After the Pilgrim Virgin began to travel in India, the dialogue changed to the new Pentecost.

"Now," says the archbishop, "we pray together spontaneously. We would not think of imposing our formal prayers one upon the other. We pray as the spirit moves us to our common heavenly Father."

Is this a compromise of faith on the part of any one of these sincere men who pray together and seek God's Will together? Certainly not! Rather it is a practical fulfillment of the first commandment to love Our Lord and God with our whole hearts and souls and our neighbors as ourselves.

When we begin to see all religion as man's devotion to God according to his individual lights we are beginning to

experience the new Pentecost. If we see our own religion as more complete, more evolved than another, this is reason neither for pride nor for chauvinist exclusivism but rather for greater understanding, greater tolerance, more tender love.

Evil enters in and does two things: 1) it destroys love; 2) it drives us into exclusivism.

There are evil men in all religions whom we may meet, and whom we may misjudge as representative of their entire religious affiliation. Out of this comes the frightful wall, the hideous defenses, of prejudice.

Since Jews are often exclusivist and the objects of exclusivism we are fortunate to know of an accurate example of the kind of Jew who has brought disrepute on the very name of his race and of the good Jew, whose goodness is so often hidden and therefore little known.

In a Midwestern city a close personal friend of this writer was married to a Jew who proved to be an atheist. At the same time she worked for another Jew, whom she came to know as a close friend, who sincerely practiced his faith. In later years after the death of both, at our request my friend wrote a detailed biography and description of the activities of these two men, outlining the difference between them. What an amazing contrast! The one was a prototype of all that anyone has ever imagined in their most extreme prejudice against Jews. The other was an ideal and wonderful person whom anyone would necessarily love. And we discovered three very important points from this true-to-life experience:

1. Good and religious persons are often in the background, often unnoticed.

2. Evil and irreligious men, those who have fallen away from their faith, can be incredibly evil and so often they come into the foreground, into headlines.

3. The religious man is instinctively ecumenical, and the irreligious man is prejudiced. The religious man is in himself an instrument of peace, and the irreligious man is against peace and sows hatred and confusion.

Perhaps these three conclusions would be found true, on the average, in all religions. They are certainly confirmed in this true-to-life contrast between two Jews, one with faith and one without faith. And yet how often all Jews are

judged by the evil man, while the many good Jews are forgotten?

Is this not true of the good and evil in men of all races and creeds?

From a wide variety of experience and half a century of study and writing, we would dare to draw these general conclusions:

1. A fallen-away Jew, or a fallen-away anybody, is not representative of his faith and we must learn to distinguish.

2. It is foolish to waste time expecting the fallen-away to participate in the new Pentecost.

3. We should be suspect of the anti-Jewish, anti-Protestant, anti-Catholic, anti-Mohammedan, anti-anything.

A pagan philosopher of ancient Rome (whom today we would probably understand was never a pagan in the evil sense of the word) explained why the most evil men in the world are usually fallen-away Jews (like Marx and other founders of "militant atheism") or fallen-away Catholics (like Hitler and Mussolini). He formulated the maxim: **CORRUPTIO OPTIMI PESSIMA.**

But if the corruption of what is best is the worst, those who wallow in such corruption by attributing the corruption of one to all are also corrupt. Those not ready to pray with their neighbors should leave their offering at the altar and first go and make peace with them.

There is no other source of hope for the world.

## NOTES

1. William A. Haffert, Sr., founder of Garden State Publishing Company and a newspaper and magazine editor for over half a century, in his eighties and a man who had always been conservative and had been deeply disturbed by changes in the Church. He became so interested in this book that he offered to edit it personally although he had never offered to do this for the author's previous books. He worked over the manuscript at least a half dozen times and when the author still hesitated to publish it because

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of a policy of avoiding controversy he urged publication without further delay.

“It is needed,” he said.

2. “The Jews in My Life,” (booklet) (Washington, N.J.: AMI Press.

## CHAPTER XVI

### *Miracle in Asia*

In the last chapter we referred to the visit of the world-famous Pilgrim Virgin statue to Vietnam, the statue which Pope Pius XII called the Messenger of the Queen of Peace in an address closing the Holy Year of 1950. The South Vietnamese had asked to have the statue tour their country for a few days as an inspiration to united prayer for peace.

All of the group who accompanied the statue were members of the International Blue Army of Our Lady of Fatima. Their slogan is ORBIS UNUS ORANS—one world praying.

Flying from the United States the delegation first stopped in Japan. Part went to Nikko for prayers at the religious shrine-center of Japan, famous for its Buddhist and Shintoist temples. The other part went with the statue to Hiroshima where the world's first atomic bomb snuffed out three hundred thousand lives.

The archbishop of Hiroshima dedicated that same day the Peace Memorial Auditorium behind the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Cathedral. The first ceremony to be held in this new hall was the reception of the statue of the Queen of Peace, now on its way to Vietnam as part of a massive prayer campaign.

"Thank you for having brought the image of the Queen of Peace to Hiroshima," the archbishop told the U.S. delegation, "where the world received terrible evidence of prophecies made in 1917 at Fatima."

In the center of Hiroshima the pilgrimage group visited the world-famous peace monument erected at "ground zero" of the first atomic bomb. It bears an inscription to the people killed by that one bomb, more powerful versions of which are now sufficient to wipe out all life on earth. The inscription reads: "REST IN PEACE. WE WILL NOT COMMIT THIS SIN AGAIN."

The following day the statue was carried from Hong Kong to the border of Red China where the group again

gation accompanying the statue around the world. When the woman heard this she poured out her heart:

"I am a Buddhist from Phnom Penh, in Cambodia. I flew to Saigon today to honor the Lady of Peace but they told me She had already left for Bangkok so I flew here. Now the crowd is so large that I cannot get near. Would you please place these flowers before her?"

The guide was surprised at her earnestness and there was a question on his face as he accepted the flowers. The lady explained:

"Two months ago I saw Her in a dream with Her hands extended down and rays of light streaming upon us. I am not a Catholic. I am a Buddhist. But what I felt and experienced was so real and so impressive that when I saw a picture of the statue and the news that it was coming to Saigon I knew it was She. I resolved to go there."

When the delegation with the statue heard the story they kept the flowers (thirty-three orchids) at the base of the statue until they arrived in Agra, India, former capital of the Mongol empire. There the lovely flowers, still fresh, were placed on the altar in the Agra cathedral as the Most Reverend Dominic Athaide, Archbishop of Agra, concelebrated Mass with several of his priests for union of world prayer for peace among men. Archbishop Athaide, during almost twenty years as head of the Metropolitan See of Agra, had been an outstanding leader of prayer union among religious leaders of India.

*"There can be no hope of having our prayers for peace answered,"* the archbishop told the Agra community in which many faiths were represented, *"if all who love God not also love one another and even love those who do not know God.* Jesus told us to leave our gift at the altar if we are not at peace with our brothers . . . and then only after making peace with our brothers are we to come and make our offering at the altar. And how can we hope to have our prayers for peace answered if we do not come before God together?"

The archbishop also said that during the quarter of a century that he has worked for dialogue among leaders of various religions of India, it was only in the past year that there has been notable success. "Now" His Excellency said, "leaders of various religions meet together for spontaneous prayer. It is something marvelous which I attribute in a most special way to the coming of the Pilgrim Virgin.

(His Excellency was referring to the national statue, proper only to India). *"The Holy Mother seems to obtain grace for us all to recognize our brotherhood under God . . . the first genuine step toward real world peace."*

The All-Faith Committee which was formed in South Vietnam to proclaim MONTH OF PRAYER FOR PEACE throughout South Vietnam from the day of the arrival of the statue of the Queen of Peace, decided to erect a Peace Tower similar to the Peace Memorial in Hiroshima. It was planned to surround the tower with facilities for services in all religions, for social works, and an auditorium with simultaneous translation equipment for international seminars on peace through religious brotherhood.

The peace tower was proposed in thanksgiving for the spirit of brotherhood which followed the visit of the statue. "We see in this committee for united prayer a sign of hope such as we have never before experienced," said South Vietnamese congressman Do Sinh-Tu, one of the organizers of the joint prayer effort. A motto proposed to be engraved on the tower echoes a similar motto on the peace arch in Hiroshima. It is an unhappy tribute to the fickleness of man, reminiscent of the Israelites in the desert, that the Peace Tower was postponed. The inscription was to read:

"TO THE HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF OUR DEAD: This would not have happened if we had prayed together. We have now begun. REST IN PEACE."



## CHAPTER XVII

### *No Voice*

What happened to all the idealism after the visit of the Pilgrim Virgin was over? That is an important story someone else must write a little farther down the road of history. But there was not enough love. The divisions which healed for a moment on the surface in the aura of the Heavenly Mother were still there, and surfaced again when the Pilgrim Virgin visit was over.

In a reception given to the Blue Army delegation by religious and political leaders of South Vietnam I said: "The three hundred thousand innocent victims of Hiroshima, most of whom were no more deserving of that horrible annihilation than the thousands of farmers killed recently in South Vietnam, have left the world a grim reminder of the absolute need for peace on earth. We stopped in Hiroshima en route to Saigon where we obtained a plaque which we are presenting to the All-Faith Committee in Vietnam with the ardent prayer that as Hiroshima has become a symbol of the bomb which must never be used again, *so may Vietnam become a symbol of the limited war which must never happen again.*"

"We came to Vietnam praying for no less than a miracle. We see the miracle here as we stand, all of different faiths, brothers under God. As the people of Hiroshima turned their devastated city into a world memorial for peace, so may South Vietnam now become a symbol of a fratricide which must never happen again."

We were living witnesses to another phase of the new Pentecost.

Wallace Driver, celebrated press photographer, covered the visit of the statue in Vietnam. Although he did not belong to any of the religious faiths which were united in this effort he was so impressed that he took ten rolls of pictures and released the story as one of the major "breaks" in the Vietnam conflict. "Unfortunately not all my colleagues

share my view of what is an important story," he wrote afterwards.

What an opportune moment in history for God's voice to be heard! It will be perhaps to our everlasting regret that the spiritual offensive, in Asia and elsewhere, is so widely ignored in the media. And it even seemed to die in Vietnam after the Pilgram Virgin left and so did the hope for peace.

We have repeatedly said that a major benefit of the "new spirit" is that many people are no longer afraid to say: "I have experienced God." Many no longer feel "different" or special, as though they were superior persons singled out by God because of a personal miracle. They know that everyone should experience God. Many do.

Is it not a healthy symptom of our age that many are no longer afraid to speak of moral struggles and problems of personal experience?

We are beginning to recognize that we are not alone in our deepest personal problems, moral and spiritual. We are not unique. It is the materialists who are "out of it." Those in the know are now beginning to emerge from that murky era of silence about God and the experience of God in which prejudices are born and mankind seeks peace without finding it.

Until now the materialistic world press has made all the noise, without morality and without God. It has made the experience of God and the joy of a clean heart seem abnormal. Prejudices have been played upon to excuse this diabolical conspiracy of silence.

Past experience has taught us that for a breakthrough in this problem of communication perhaps nothing less than a Pentecost is needed.

In the late fifties we had a television program in New York City at nine o'clock on Saturday night on the message of peace through prayer. Although our biggest competition was Lawrence Welk, the program was successful. For two years it had a star rating in *The New York Times*. So we were encouraged to extend it by making it national and interdenominational. We succeeded in getting together a sponsoring group of very prominent members of the major faiths, Jewish, Orthodox, Protestant, and Catholic. We obtained what was most difficult at that time (before Vatican Council II): the sanction of the National Council of Catholic Bishops.

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But the big problem was getting national television time. One of the most vivid memories this writer has of that period was a meeting in New York and the consternation expressed by Dr. Carson Blake, subsequently president of the World Council of Churches, over the total disinterest of the networks. Subsequently some amazing things happened concerning the powers opposed to any effort to bring our world into intimate contact with God.

Despite all efforts, the public media gradually put up an ever higher wall, instead of a door, between the message of prayer and the world.

In 1972 we chartered a plane to bring a large group of theologians of all faiths from the International Mariological Congress in Yugoslavia to participate in a special seminar about this at Fatima. That congress was the first religious event in a Communist country in which soldiers, wearing the red star, helped to direct the traffic to a religious meeting instead of trying to stop it. It was an event of historical importance.

So far as this writer knows, not one word appeared in the United States secular press or on TV.

Protestants and Catholics, Orthodox and Romans, worshipped together in a Communist nation where suffering under common atheistic persecution had brought them together after hundreds of years of unchristian bitterness. But I do not know of one single line which appeared in any secular newspaper in America concerning the entire event! And that leads us to an extraordinary incident of that particular time which persons of the new Pentecost will easily understand and appreciate.

One of the theologians at the seminar had come all the way from the States, not just because of the seminar, but because he said he wanted this writer's advice on how best to use five million dollars a year.

This writer avoided the meeting not merely because of scarcity of time but because I felt that anyone must necessarily be a little crazy to want to ask his advice on how to spend five million dollars a year!

On the third or fourth day of the seminar an English theologian made a statement in the hall which caused a vibrant reaction. He said:

"I don't think we are going to get anywhere in this seminar until all of the theologians go off together and study the

question in theological terms without the participation of the laymen who are here."

A tall elderly priest in the second row vigorously waved a cane above his head, and was recognized by the chair.

"It is not a question of putting it into theological language," he said, "it is a question of understanding it with our hearts. This was the message given to three children to be given to the world and it is only by becoming like children that we or the world will understand it."

There was absolute silence in the hall. One sensed the emotion that gripped this elderly priest as he continued:

"I was rector of a pontifical seminary and was given a spiritual director of the seminarians who told the students that the Rosary was not important. I called him into my office and told him that if he did not retract what he said that I would make the Rosary obligatory on all of the students (until then it had been a voluntary devotion). He did not retract. But just one year later, this very intellectual priest married and left the priesthood.

"We theologians have to keep the hearts of children."

When the old man sat down, the entire auditorium burst into applause.

After the meeting someone told this writer: "That elderly monsignor is the one who has been wanting to talk to you about the five million dollars a year!"

What followed is, to say the least, unusual.

He was Father Hugh Modotti,<sup>1</sup> cousin of Cardinal Antoniutti who in turn was the head of one of the most important congregations in Rome. And Father Modotti had frequently been sent on special missions by the Holy See. Several years before he had been sent by the Camaldolese congregation to establish a monastery in the United States. He came to this country and made inquiries everywhere but all his efforts were in vain.

He had made his reservations to return to Italy when someone asked him if he had ever sought help from a certain foundation in Milwaukee. Father Modotti said he had never heard of it. "But, Father, that foundation has millions of dollars. If they believe in what you are doing they would take over the whole project."

At first the father thought it was just too late, that it would be just another deadend street. But then he felt the obligation to follow this one last lead so he called the shipping line, cancelled his reservation, and two days later he

arrived unannounced at the house of the foundation's president in Milwaukee.

The door was opened by an attractive blonde who said the moment she saw him: "Oh, you are Father Modotti." It turned out that leaders of the foundation had seen a notice and picture in the paper sometime before about Father Modotti coming to the United States to look for the possibility of establishing a Camaldonese monastery. They had decided: "If we are to help him, God will send him to us." And suddenly there he was, months later, standing at the door.

With no need of any greater sign from God, the foundation bought the entire property for the Big Sur Monastery in California.

Some years passed and the foundation got to know Father Modotti as a priest of exceptional holiness and wisdom and consulted him more and more on various projects. Finally they told him: "Father, rather than dissipate funds at our disposal, we would like you to advise us as to what to do." The amount in question was over five million dollars per year.

Father Modotti at once took this as a tremendous challenge and responsibility.

It had been suggested to him that a major attack be launched on a recently passed abortion bill. This writer had strong feeling about it:

"Money will be spent quickly in advertising, and it might make some dent in the great controversy. Certainly it would highlight the controversy itself. But it would do little or nothing to prevent those wanting abortions from going ahead with them. What we need is the voice of God in the world, so loud and so strong that it will drown out the terrible voice of materialism and indifference to life and to morality. We need a periodical of a multi-million circulation with all the flair of the very best journalism, but with all the prudence of our best religious leaders."

Father Modotti's face underwent a change of tension. "I am going right to Rome to ask the Holy Father."

The Holy Father was so pleased that he reached out, put his hands on Father Modotti's shoulders, and said: "Father, if such a big voice could be realized, you would be accomplishing what is greatly needed!"

If five million dollars could have been invested in this venture for only three or four years (with the proper kind

of editorial direction and adequate orthodoxy behind the scenes) it might have generated its own power and increased its circulation until it became a newsmaker in its own right. Its circulation would have been so great that its very influence on the world would command the respect of the media.

But one day a letter came from the chancery office in Fresno, California. It contained the very last letter that Father Modotti wrote in his life. He had written it apparently before he went to bed and left it on his desk. He was found dead the following morning, his fingers clenched to the beads of the fourth decade of the Rosary. The letter was addressed to this writer:

Dear John:

I really owe you a long apology after this long silence, though I could find lots of excuses. Since I last met you at Milwaukee I have been round the country interviewing for the Foundation and had to fly to Rome again during the Synod. You will be interested to know about the progress made *re* our Voice. As all works of God, we had to pass through many difficulties and opposition, but we are making steady headway. The president of the Foundation is more and more convinced that God wants him to sponsor this important work in defense of the faith in our country. The first difficulty came with the new federal restrictive laws controlling the funds of charitable Foundations. We have two lawyers working on that problem and we hope everything will be O.K. The worst came from some interviews with some publishers. One tried to discourage the Foundation from starting anything exposing the ways of the world and its scandals through any News Magazine carrying a religious image. According to him we would meet with so much opposition after the first few issues that would create more confusion and damage to religion. A meeting with Cardinal Wright, with Father Vincent Miceli and Father Baker of the Homiletic Pastoral Review, in Rome, brought us back to confidence. (See letter of Cardinal Wright). On my return to the USA at the end of November, we had another meeting in New York with officers of the Foundation, Father Lyons and Father Baker. In view of the above difficulties,

Father Baker suggested another way (See the *Memoria*).

A few days later in Milwaukee I had several talks with the president of the Foundation. He is still favoring the first idea of the News Magazine, though he realizes the difficulties involved. However, before coming to the final decision, he intends to call another meeting sometime in January to discuss the pros and cons of both ideas. Next he intends to go to Rome to discuss the whole matter with Cardinal Wright and have a blessing of the Holy Father. I feel that by Easter we should be over the hurdles. I have been pressing for a faster move for fear we may miss the bus. Somehow I strongly feel that after 1972 the world shall have to meet the challenge of God, and we will badly need a strong Voice.

But we do what we can. God knows our limitations. So we must have trust in Him.

By the way, don't "Monsignor" me.

May Our Blessed Mother share with you the mystical joy She experienced traveling from Nazareth to Bethlehem awaiting for the great day.

It was a joy for me to have known you, dear John, and to have you as a dear friend.

In union of prayers,

Yours affectionately,  
H. Modotti

The last three lines seem to indicate that Father Modotti suddenly knew he was writing his last letter. There is such finality in the words: "It was a great joy for me to have known you, dear John, and to have you as a dear friend."

And oh! how little we do to earn the friendship of saints!

Subsequently, the Milwaukee Foundation invited Father Eugene Lyons, S.J., and myself to Milwaukee to discuss the matter. Father Eugene Lyons was in charge of the largest combined circulation of any religious newspaper group in the world. He suggested that the money be used to buy the Mutual radio network which was then for sale. I felt very strongly that still the answer was a "gutsy" newspaper-type presentation of news. Why should the world not have access to news of the slice of Human Heart that was found incorrupt after seven hundred years in a monstrosity in Italy, and recently verified by medical scientists? Or a reli-

gious statue weeping human blood? The vision in Cairo? Or the stone cross in Querétaro, Mexico, "growing" in size ever since a vision of the Cross here in the wake of the vision of Guadalupe's news about the Pentecostal revival? Or words from *authentic* prophets of our day? *Guideposts* Magazine publishes much of this type of material, but, often without knife thrust writing or tabloid sensationalism.

The foundation asked me whether I might edit such a paper and I recoiled in mild horror. Writing this present book was difficult. The very thought of dramatizing "miracles" is alien to my half century of traditional conditioning. I suggested that even a non-believer should be on the board of editors. People with as little traditional church background as possible should do the writing. Supernatural facts should be presented in themselves, objectively, without arguments and with as great a sense of drama and excitement as the most skillful journalist could create. Then, before a line is printed, a board of experts behind the scenes should check for just one thing: orthodoxy. Everything else should thunder at the world—drawing blood here, burning bridges there, screaming if necessary. But always true.

Perhaps one of the major reasons most of the great prophecies and revelations of our time have come through children is because children are not conditioned. They have not yet built up the kind of prejudice that prevented Dr. Carrel from confiding to his fellow scientists that he had seen a cure which was scientifically inexplicable and which had caused him to fall to his knees and say to God: "I believe."

Proof that the world would welcome such journalism is found in the U.S. newspaper the *Enquirer*, which began as a scandal journal but when it was seen that religion had a special attraction, religious news began to be used more and more by its editor. Circulation leaped into the millions. But then this paper began to bog down in superstitious things which solid persons of the new Pentecost would deplore. But even with the journalistic flair it lacked the restraint of orthodoxy. By 1975 it had acquired the largest weekly circulation in the world.

Perhaps the reason truth does not have a big voice in the world today is because this has not yet become the hour of truth. It has been Satan's hour.



We mentioned above that top clergymen of four faiths had finally gotten together to produce a television series. Why did it fall through?

Is it not, as one very perceptive person has said, because: "In this evil hour of Satan's power we just did not have enough prayers behind us."

It is probable that the new Pentecost will bring this big voice into being now.

When the saintly Father Modotti said in his death letter: "I think we will need the big voice by 1972," was he speaking prophetically?

As was remarked in a previous chapter, a miraculous flood of tears from sacred images took place with greater frequency and intensity all around the world in 1972. A film of some of these phenomena was being shown in a big hall in Germany when someone asked: "Why this miracle of tears?"

A Jesuit priest volunteered to answer:

"When I was a boy and father had to spank us, mother seemed to suffer more than we. *Once when I was about to receive deserved punishment I saw that she was crying.*"

He went on to say that perhaps a mother would cry when her child is punished for two reasons: Because the child has done wrong, but also because of the just punishment with which the child is about to be afflicted. When *Time* Magazine reported the incident of the statue which was seen to shed tears in New Orleans, it reported it in such a way as to make it seem questionable, if not ridiculous. And nowhere, with the exception of a few Catholic journals, was there any serious follow-up to this miraculous phenomenon.

In addition to pictures of statues shedding blood in Florence, Rome, Madrid, and elsewhere, tears were shed by an image of St. Nicholas in a Byzantine church in Florida, and in another Byzantine church in New York an image of the heavenly Mother wept.

We cannot expect the Church to act in these matters other than to comment on their possibility, or the trustworthiness of the witnesses. Nor can we reproach the Church for inaction. Garabandal is a good example. Five bishops "condemned" Garabandal as being without sufficient evidence of the supernatural. This was not because the bishops were not concerned. Just the opposite is true.

The Church has to take a long view, and the long view requires time. To the Church a miraculous cure, no matter how spectacular and how well affirmed, is not a miracle until it has been proved to be permanent. And when the Church finally speaks it is with the voice of history rather than of news.

But how can the press ignore certain events that are seen by millions (like the light that was seen over Spain on June 12, 1974), at least in the areas where they are seen? There was wide reporting of the extraordinary light seen over the world in January of 1938, which was the light foretold at Fatima as the sign of the Second World War, but it was dismissed as an aurora and there was no follow-up. There was no serious effort to investigate. Silence followed. It was as though God spoke—but no one knew it.

In the case of the light of 1938, later—but far too much later—the world began to learn little by little that this had been prophesied at Fatima. Then it was not a surprise that the Second World War began a few months after the light appeared.

But still there is silence.

Is this not one of the great events of history? Is it not extraordinary that we were told that war is a punishment for sin, and that actually during the First World War this Second World War was prophesied if people did not turn to God? And is it not even still more extraordinary that we were given such a sign to warn us when there was still time for us to mend our ways?

And yet there has been worldwide silence.

It would not be a surprise if the person reading this book had never even heard of that extraordinary event in Spain on June 12, 1974. That extraordinary light appeared in the sky just six weeks after the Communist coup in Portugal, during the very night that tens of thousands of Portuguese had gone to Fatima to pray on the eve of the anniversary of the apparition of 1917 in which Our Lady had said:

"God wishes to establish in the world devotion to my Immaculate Heart"—the heart of the Mother given to us as Jesus died on the cross, the heart of love and mercy which leads to union with the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

God is intervening in the world today almost violently, but the world is too distracted by materialism (dialectic or just plain fleshly) to know it.

Pornography has a voice. Crime has a voice.

But where is the voice for God?

Since neither the Milwaukee foundation nor any other foundation has seen fit to respond to this need, who will? Even the entire Marian apostolate could hardly obtain adequate, sustained resources for such a venture. A poll in 1974 revealed that less than three percent even know about Fatima!

Adelino Da Palma Carlos, a liberal law professor who became the first premier after the democratic coup in Portugal in April of 1974, said a few months after the Communists took hold that he suddenly realized the Communists had infiltrated almost all of Portugal's daily newspapers before the coup took place. When he, and others who were aiming toward a true democracy, tried to get their message across, typesetters refused to work on copy not approved by the handful of organized Communists who for years had been building up their strength underground to take over the press. In an interview with United Press International writer Peter Uebersax, just six months after the coup, the former premier said that even though the Communists were a very small minority "they left us without a voice" (UPI December 5, 1974).

Is it for lack of a public voice that God is beginning to act directly on individual souls? If God's intervention in the world now is to receive a voice, must it not come through an inspired, collective effort? Someone can say: "Let's do it! Let's give the voice of God volume!" And someone else will say: "Yes, that's what we need! Let's do it!" And writers will volunteer. Ave Maria Institute (Washington, New Jersey), has already volunteered to be a clearing house.

Meanwhile, each one of us has a voice. We can talk to our neighbors. We can write to our government. We can influence radio and television. *We can begin with the existing media*, even though we know we have to establish a special, proper voice which will not be adulterated or muffled.

Until something better comes along we can subscribe to periodicals we trust and above all we can be alert. We can develop an awareness of God's intervention in the world. If we see a light in the sky we can help insure that it is not ignored. If someone is cured at a prayer meeting we can inquire about medical proof and if it is adequate we can do a little local shouting about it to distract people from sin and

to get them thinking once again (or perhaps for the first time!) about God.

How much easier it would be today for a joint effort among major religions: Jewish, Protestant, and Catholic! We have all been horrified by the wave of immorality that has swept across our land, reaching out its dirty fingers to destroy our children, murdering hundreds of thousands of unborn children, making the elderly afraid to walk the streets, and causing untold numbers of families to cringe fearfully in their homes in areas where there have been robberies and murders. The Devil is fighting a desperate struggle. His time is up and he knows it. He heard the same words at Fatima we all heard:

"My Immaculate Heart will triumph. Russia will be converted and an era of peace will be granted to mankind."

We know that here the word "Russia" symbolizes militant atheism and the word "peace" on the lips of the Mother of Christ can only mean that peace of which the angels sang over Bethlehem: Peace on earth to men of good will.

We repeat:

It has been Satan's hour. There seems little hope that the foundation or any one individual will follow through at the present moment.

But is that all we can count upon?

## NOTES

1. In deference to a wish expressed in a letter to us on the day of his death, we do not call him "Monsignor" Modotti, the title under which he was introduced to us.
2. A permanent commission keeps records of this continuing phenomenon at the church of Santa Cruz in Querétaro. The adjoining monastery, where Emperor Maximilian spent his last days, is in the custody of the Franciscans. From here Father Junipero Serra set forth to found the missions of California.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### *Miracle on Red Square*

In our age the world has seen the first militantly atheistic government established on the earth. And this atheistic power today could command destruction of all life on earth.

Shortly after this militant atheistic power was established in Russia, the newly entrenched atheists decided on a national demonstration to prove to the people, once and for all, that God did not exist.

For this purpose they chose an old church on Red Square which enshrined a thirteenth-century icon of the Blessed Virgin with the Child Jesus known as the Protectress of Russia, and which had also been invoked for hundreds of years as Invulnerable Armor of the Confessors, Unmasker of Atheism!

The icon had been lost when the city of Kazan was sacked. It was rediscovered following a vision to a nine-year-old-girl on July 8, 1579. Many miracles, especially restoration of sight to the blind, took place during prayer before this icon. Gradually it became celebrated in all of Russia and came to be carried at the head of troops in all major battles. The Virgin with Child in this image was finally known as Liberatrix and Protectress of Russia.

When Peter the Great decided to move the capital from Moscow to what is now Leningrad (then called Petrograd) he wanted to build a much more magnificent basilica for the icon of Kazan and take it with him, but national protest prevented. So he had a beautiful copy made for the new cathedral in the new capital.

The Communist atheists of the twentieth century chose this specific and miraculous picture for a demonstration that God did not exist.

They turned the beautiful cathedral in Leningrad into an atheistic museum. Printing presses in its crypt printed the official voice of atheism: the magazine *Science and Religion*.

But the basilica in Moscow, which had housed the original miraculous icon itself, was the object of the special demonstration, the official national proof that the Liberatrix could not liberate, the Protectress could not protect.

When the crowd had gathered in Red Square they found the area around the basilica roped off.<sup>1</sup> A large battering ram was in place. At the given signal, announcements were made by radio throughout the country and the battering ram slowly and systematically began to destroy the church. The announcers' voices blared forth:

"You see there is no God! We destroy the basilica of the Liberatrix and Protectress and nothing happens. It is falling down, it is going into nothing, because there was nothing but superstition to hold it up!"

But at the very time that the atheists had taken power in Russia<sup>2</sup> *that same heavenly Mother was appearing to three children on the other side of Europe. She specifically mentioned Russia and foretold that error would spread from that nation throughout the entire world, fomenting further wars if people did not mend their lives and stop offending God. But She promised that no matter how bad things became, in the end people would hear Her requests and: "Russia will be converted . . . and an era of peace will be conceded to mankind."*

Back in Russia, the destruction of the basilica of Kazan in Moscow and the atheistic museum in Leningrad at first seemed to be having the desired effect. The people who stood there in Red Square that day and heard the announcements against the existence of God were like the crowd at the foot of the Cross which heard the taunt: "If you be the Son of God, come down from the cross!"

Just as Jesus did not come down from the cross, so neither did God appear to react to the taunts of the atheists in Moscow.

But in the seventies, visitors to Red Square noticed with surprise that where the basilica of Kazan had once stood, there is a green plot of grass. And it was very difficult to obtain the explanation. It was very difficult to have anyone say publicly in Russia that after the basilica was destroyed, any efforts to build anything else on this spot were frustrated by one incident after another, until now people under their breaths are saying: "The atheists' stones would not stand where the stones of God's house have been destroyed."

But what is even more extraordinary is that the miraculous icon of Kazan disappeared out of Russia in a manner which no one can explain. The Soviets say that some of the clergy stole it and sold it. Others say that some revolutionaries stole it and sold it. But the only thing of great value on the icon itself was the rizza, which was set with over a thousand precious stones valued at half a million dollars. It would be understandable if these had been taken off and sold. *But the entire icon, intact with the rizza, appeared in the Western world inexplicably, a quarter of a century later.*

The Grand Duchess Zenia recognized it on the wall of Farleigh Castle in England. The owner of the castle had purchased it at an art sale without knowing, of course, that it was the original icon of Kazan. Metropolitan Leonty, then in exile in Paris, flew to England, where he fell on his knees as he identified the very icon with which he had once celebrated the sacred liturgy in Moscow. More detailed examination revealed beyond a doubt: the original miraculous icon of Kazan, the Liberatrix and Protectress of Russia, was now decorating the walls of an English castle.

In the perspective of the whole "explosion of the supernatural" that has followed the great 1917 miracle of Fatima which foretold the atheist challenge, some of the stanzas prayed in Russia for hundreds of years in honor of the icon of Kazan have renewed meaning.

In the second stanza Our Lady is praised because of the "newly converted city." And this refers to the fact that Kazan was the capital of the Mongol empire (Mohammedan) until 1552. The first bishop, St. Guri, in nine years persuaded thousands of Moslems in the area to become Christians shortly before the icon was miraculously discovered.

When the icon was found, Czar Ivan (the Terrible) had a cloister built on the spot. The girl to whom Our Lady had revealed the location of the icon, together with her mother, joined this cloistered community. These facts are commemorated in the third section of the hymn with such words of praise as:

Rejoice O Thou Who enlightens all with the rays of miracles.

Rejoice O Glory of Orthodoxy.

Rejoice O Mother of Chastity!

And the usual ending to all the stanzas:

Rejoice O Zealous Protectress of the Christian Brethren.

One of the most interesting aspects of the history of the miraculous image of Our Lady of Kazan is celebrated in the fourth hymn praising Blessed Ermogen' as "the narrator of the miracles of Thy Icon, O Theotokos, trying to cease the storm of troubles and treason started in the Russian land by the enemy." And the hymn continues to bless Our Lady because Blessed Ermogen confided the icon to the Orthodox army as a shield and assurance of victory and remained firm in his faith of this victory until the time that he himself died as a martyr.

One of the great saints of the Russian Church is St. Sergei who built the Holy Trinity Monastery in Zagorsk. He died in 1392, one hundred and fifty years before the icon of Our Lady was discovered. And during the great battle upon which the freedom of Russia depended in 1612, St. Sergei appeared to Bishop Arseni and assured him that through the intercession of Our Lady of Kazan—which at this time had been brought from Kazan to be used at the head of the troops trying to free Moscow—the troops would be victorious. And on November 27, 1612, the Kremlin was liberated. This victory is commemorated with a special celebration to the icon of Our Lady of Kazan on October twenty-second (November fourth in the Gregorian calendar).

The next hymn commemorates the carrying of the icon by Czar Peter in a great victory which made the czar decide to found a new capital called St. Petersburg. Peter then installed the icon of Kazan in the new city. However, in 1811, the original was returned to Moscow by popular acclamation. A copy was installed in the great basilica of St. Petersburg. It was this latter church which the Communists changed into an atheist museum after they took over Russia in 1917. In this church of Our Lady of Kazan (as we said above) the official atheistic magazine *Science and Religion* was set up. And that makes the seventh stanza of the ancient icon prayer perhaps the most significant:

Rejoice, O Protection of the Russian land, O Defense



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and Bulwark of Orthodoxy in Russia; O Invulnerable  
Armor of the Confessors, O Unmasker of Atheism!

And in the eighth hymn:

It is strange and doubtful for unbelievers to hear how the springs of grace and the savor of Thy living Presence come from Thy Icon but we, the faithful, believing the words spoken by Thee, O Sovereign Lady, through the first painted Icon ["With Thee shall be my Grace and Power"] do hope that Thy Grace abides in this Icon also. Piously standing before it, we kiss it, for the veneration of the Icon is transmitted to you its prototype, and Thy Grace works tokens and miracles through this Icon to all those who come with faith and sing to God: Alleluia.

And the exclamations to Our Lady become more and more beautiful.

After 1811, when the icon of Kazan was returned from St. Petersburg to Moscow to be placed in the basilica on Red Square, it remained there until before the revolution. According to the notes in the actual book of the liturgy of the icon, in the year 1900 the value of the adornment of the icon was estimated at about 35,450 rubles.

It is almost unbelievable to us that the Blue Army of Our Lady of Fatima, a prayer movement with no dues among its members and little formal organization in the world, bought the icon from the Farleigh Castle estate after the orthodox Church in America had unsuccessfully tried to raise one million dollars for this purpose.

It was not the fault of the Church. Twice during the years that the money was being raised it was stolen. The orthodox Church had intended to build a church to keep the icon in the United States, and after these two great thefts, they seemed to feel that the miraculous image would somehow return to Russia. And now, through a crusade of prayer among Western Catholics for the Russian people, a crusade without a single paid officer in the entire world, the fabulously valuable icon of the Liberatrix and Protectress of Russia is on its way back to the Russian people.

In 1954 the Blue Army showed faith in the fulfillment of the Fatima promise (of the union of East and West) by building a beautiful Russian (Byzantine) chapel in the Blue

Army's international headquarters at Fatima. It is a Russian church styled after the church of the Assumption in the Kremlin and will accommodate up to five hundred people. It is probably the only Byzantine church in the Western world built by Latins. Its dome and spire are the highest at Fatima after the tower of the basilica. And here, in this beautiful Byzantine chapel at the very spot where Our Lady of Fatima promised the conversion of Russia, the precious icon of Kazan was enshrined to await the day that it will be returned as a free gift to the Russian people.

With it we hope we shall be able to return the fullness of the vacuum left by militant atheism. So far as we know the churches have not provided for this.

Once, in an Iron Curtain capital a twenty-two-year-old atheist gave this writer a list of things to bring back from America. Coca-cola extract and Beatles records, chewing gum and similar American "luxuries" not found behind the Iron Curtain but publicized there as symbols of capitalistic decadence, filled the list. One item was a surprise: A book on philosophy.

When asked "what philosophy?" the reply was, "Any *complete* system of thought. We have studied the history of philosophy in bits and pieces of many but we have no access to one thinker's complete system of thought."

What joy to receive an invitation to convert at least one atheist!

But when the writer went back, he was empty handed. Even though himself a Philosophy major he had not been able to decide on a philosophy book for an atheist. He had thought of course of Scholastic Philosophy but that would have been disdained as "Post-revelation Aristotle." Nowak's *Belief and Unbelief* seemed both inadequate and shaky. He made widespread inquiries among other philosophers and found that none could suggest anything "pure" to offer to an atheist for discovering God as we know Him from the sources of science and pure reason.

Something new has to be written. The new generation of atheists creates a new need, and a new opportunity. Rather than Descartes' "I think, therefore I am," the formula  $E = MC^2$  and the new realities of science may be the starting point of the new philosophy, and it may be one of the new generation of atheists who will write it . . . and lead many of us in the West to conversion.

Some people say that the great resurgence of religion in

Russia today is like air sweeping into a vacuum. And when we realize that indeed it must be the breath of the Holy Spirit, can we not imagine that the charismatic experiences manifested in the Western world must be of particular depth and significance inside Russia at the present moment?

What a great responsibility rests on all who believe! We do not have to be reminded of the Russian arsenal and the guerrilla warfare that raises its ugly head in the whirlwind of dialectical materialism around the world.

Is it possible, because of our materialism in the West, that we shall see the dawn of victory rising in the East? Is it now our turn in the West to pay our share of the price?

#### NOTES

1. No documentation of this could be found. In 1972 the author made extensive inquiries in Moscow and had difficulty finding anyone who would talk about this. The site of the destroyed basilica on Red Square remains a vacant grass plot diagonally across from Lenin's tomb. It is said that any effort of the Communists to build on this site have met with disaster and that secretly the Russian people refer to that plot of grass as the "green miracle on Red Square."

2. The apparitions of Fatima began on May 13, 1917, the same day that a church was attacked in Russia under Lenin's personal leadership. Some children studying catechism at the time were killed. The great miracle of Fatima took place at noon, October 13, 1917. A few weeks later Communists captured the palace in Petrograd and took over Russia. The anniversary of the revolution is celebrated in October.

3. Blessed Ermogen was the patriarch of all Russia. He had been a parish priest in the St. Nicholas Church of Kazan when the icon was discovered there and for this reason he was able to cause all the Russian people to look upon Our Lady of Kazan as their special protectress and patroness. He was captured by the enemy in 1612, and put to death by starvation.

## CHAPTER XIX

### *The Prophecies*

After the "miracle" of the leaders of all faiths coming together and praying together for peace in South Vietnam in February, 1973, there were still eighteen airfields in South Vietnam in the hands of the North Vietnamese. There were still hundreds of thousands of troops from the north stationed in the south with a fine highway to within one hundred miles of Saigon. We asked a French priest who had been in Vietnam since the time when it was "Indo-China" if peace were possible between North and South Vietnam. He exploded with one single word: "Unthinkable." He added: "Hatreds are too deep, and the Communists too intransigent."

We heard exactly the same expression concerning the possibility of a real peace in the Holy Land: "It is humanly impossible."

In 1974 Christians were leaving Israel in such numbers that if the trend were to continue all Christians would have left the Holy Land by 1980.

Even when the Blue Army pilgrimage with the Pilgrim Virgin statue was in Jerusalem in 1974, three Christian institutions in the Holy City were deliberately set on fire. When the thirteen arsonists were captured, a public outcry by the militant Jewish Defense League "commended the arsonists' actions against the scandal of the Christian Mission." (*Jerusalem Post*, February 14, 1974, p. 2, col. 7).

The hatred and the bloodletting of Southeast Asia and of the Middle East are basically religious. And the tragedy of this paradox is compounded in the Middle East where the bloodshed is not between believers and unbelievers, but between people who believe in the same true God!

There was an extraordinary story in the *Jerusalem Post* while the statue was there, which seemed an amazing parallel to what happened in that same city 1,941 years ago on the very day that Christ was killed.

A rabbi (the only ordained rabbi in the Israeli Parlia-

ment) abstained from voting on a question about violation of the Sabbath by workers who had unloaded some critical perishables in an emergency at an Israeli port. He said he regretted deeply that the "only time the question of the Sabbath is brought up in Parliament, it carries implications of restrictions and limitations, while the spiritual side is always ignored."

To drown out the rabbi's opinion, the opposition roared such a storm that the Parliament was totally paralyzed. Newspaper reporter Asher Wallfish overheard one NRP (National Religious Party) member say with satisfaction: "We have given this rabbi the same treatment we give only one other member of Parliament, the Communist!" And he reports: "Another walked around saying in venomous tones: 'We'll show that hypocritical self-righteous impostor Rabbi!' " (*Jerusalem Post*, February 14, 1974, p. 2, col. 2.)

How little has changed!

In view of the spirit of unity engendered by the world Pilgrim Virgin, could we not suspect that the slowness of the effect of the Gospel of love has been at least in part because the world has refused the dying legacy of Jesus: "Behold your Mother"?

On February 20, 1974, we were preparing to take the Pilgrim Virgin statue along the Via Dolorosa in Jerusalem. The sun rose gloriously that morning over the Mount of Olives (from the direction of the house of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus) and turned to gold the walls of the city over which Jesus wept.

Television aerals formed a low maze of aluminum crosses like a mechanical veil from the industrial revolution between the Mount of Olives and the Holy City. As we leafed through St. John our eyes struck the passage:

" 'This fellow Jesus is not from God because he is working on the Sabbath.' " (Jesus had just made mud with spit and dust and had applied it to the eyes of the blind man.) "Others said: 'But how could an ordinary sinner do such miracles?' So there was a deep division among them." (*John* 9:16.)

"And when the man who was cured said, 'If this man is not from God He could not have cured me,' [*John* 9:33] they cursed him, saying: 'Are you trying to teach us?' And they threw him out and agreed to kill Jesus." (*John* 9:34, 11:49).

A high churchman in Jerusalem said later that day that

the greatest hope for the world lies in what the Blue Army is doing: leading individuals to live the message of Fatima, a message of devotion to the Eucharist through the Immaculate Heart of Mary. But, in turn, he spoke with sadness about the prospects for the Holy City. We tried to comfort him by telling him of the wonder we had witnessed in Vietnam, of persons of religious faiths (formerly often violent enemies) now praying together.

When we suggested the Pilgrim Virgin, the response was made with a gesture that conveyed an attitude almost of hopelessness: "But to carry a statue in Israel!"

We urged that Mary has promised a miracle to the world, and part of that miracle would be that people would understand that the statue was only a symbol which cries out about the reality of the Mother of Jesus that the prayer at the Last Supper should finally be heard—that all be one as He and the Father are One. And we recalled that two prophecies seem near fulfillment.

Sister Mary of Agreda (d. 1665):

It was revealed to me that through the intercession of the Mother of God all heresies will disappear. This victory over heresies has been reserved by Christ for His Blessed Mother. In the last times the Lord will especially spread the renown of His Mother. Mary began salvation, and by her intercession it will be concluded. Before the second coming of Christ Mary must, more than ever, shine in Mercy, might and grace in order to bring unbelievers into the Faith. The powers of Mary will extend the reign of Christ over the Non-Christians and Mohammedans and it will be a time of great joy when Mary, as Mistress and Queen of Hearts, is enthroned.

St. Louis de Montfort (d. 1716):

The power of Mary over all devils will be particularly outstanding in the last period of time. She will extend the Kingdom of Christ over the idolators and Moslems, and there will come a glorious era in which Mary will be the ruler and Queen of human hearts.

Sister Marie Lataste (d. 1847):

Peace shall return to the world because the Blessed Virgin Mary will breathe over the storms and quell them. Her name will be praised, blessed and exalted forever. Prisoners or captives shall recover their liberty; exiles shall return to their country, and the unfortunate or unhappy shall be restored to peace and happiness. Between the most august Mary and Her clients there will be a mutual exchange of prayers and graces, of love and affection. From the east to the west, from the north to the south, all shall proclaim the holy name of Mary: Mary conceived without original sin, Mary Queen of heaven and earth. Amen.

We recalled these prophecies to the Church in Jerusalem on our way back from Vietnam, and someone said:

"Yes, and there is also the great prophecy of St. John Bosco."

When St. John Bosco built the great basilica in honor of Our Lady Help of Christians in Turin, he wanted two dates inscribed on the facade: 1571 (the victory of the battle of Lepanto), and the first two numerals of a date, 19——.

There were only 25 years left after this conversation in Jerusalem in 1974. And we wondered whether this could have any connection with an extraordinary light which appeared in 1967 shortly after the six-day war, over Mount Sion.

An arch of light appeared over the sky seeming to divide the world from horizon to horizon, east and west. The edge of the light was sharp on one side. On the other it was diffused outward. This writer was one of those who saw it and at first thought it was caused by spotlights outside the Old City to the south and beyond the New city to the north. This writer was one who wondered what could cause such a light. We discussed every natural possibility. An atheist among us, who taught at the University of Jerusalem, finally said: "There seems no possible explanation." And looking at that great arc of light over Jerusalem we thought of Our Lady: "Russia will be converted . . . an era of peace will be granted to mankind," and wondered:

Would the light of Grace and Unity be first diffused in the East?

If that unity of prayer achieved in Vietnam could hap-

pen in Jerusalem, would we not know that the great era of peace had really, finally begun?

How often this is true in much of the world! Who will have the courage to have Our Lady acclaimed as Queen? Fortunately, many bishops in the United States, indeed most, have readily given permission for their priests to invite the Pilgrim Virgin.<sup>1</sup> The American bishops have no fear that their people will mistake a wooden figure for the reality. They know our peoples' faith is pure and deep and strong enough to distinguish a symbol from reality. And they know that for every jot and tittle of devotion to Mary there is a wealth of understanding that God became Man and dwells among us. They know by experience that Eucharistic devotion is the immediate reward of honoring Mary.

It does not have to be by means of a statue. But why not? It was the statue Pope Pius XII used at Fatima to affirm the Queenship of Mary. It was this very Pilgrim Virgin at Fatima to which the Pope referred in his encyclical *Ad Coeli Reginam* as the Messenger of Her Royalty. It is an effective outward sign by which we proclaim the Queenship of Mary.

Where the Pilgrim Virgin travels, we see the fulfillment of the prophecies of St. Grignon de Montfort—and of St. John Bosco. With each step She takes through the world, the date prophesied by St. John Bosco for Her triumph looms ever larger and brighter: 19——!

It is also extremely interesting to note that almost all of these prophecies which speak of the final triumph of Jesus in the world, and of the accomplishment of this through the Blessed Virgin, say that it will come about through the Holy Spirit.

St. Paul in his second epistle to the Thessalonians prophesies that in the latter days we will have:

1. A widespread revolt against the Cross.
2. The appearance of the Antichrist who opposes and is "lifted up above all that is called God or that is worshipped so that he sitteth in the temple of God showing himself as if he were God." (2 Thess. 2:4)
3. The Lord Jesus shall slay him with the breath of His spirit and destroy him with the brightness of His coming. (2 Thess. 2:8).



As Bob Bergin points out in *This Apocalyptic Age*,<sup>2</sup> St. Grignon de Montfort's prophecy follows a similar sequence:

1. Persecution of the Church (widespread in his own time) would continue and develop until it became general and universal under the Antichrist.

2. At the height of the reign of Antichrist, the "power of Mary" would break out against the devils. By the power of the Holy Spirit, Mary would crush the head of the serpent. This, according to St. Louis, would be the actual fulfillment of the ancient prophecy in the third chapter of Genesis.

3. There will be a mass return to the Church.

4. Christ will reign in the hearts of men by grace in a period of major triumph for the Church. St. Louis emphasizes that, just as Christ came to us personally through Mary, so also will He come by grace through Mary in this period of His triumph on earth.

In particular St. Grignon de Montfort says that as the Immaculate Heart of Mary attracted the Holy Spirit to bring about the Incarnation, so devotion to the Heart of Mary through the world will attract the Holy Spirit to bring about the "second coming."

We can expect these prophecies to be realized within the next two decades if they are related to the great victory foretold by St. John Barer.

Peace may seem humanly impossible, even "unthinkable," as the priest in South Vietnam said. But this is what Our Lady has promised if only enough of us heed Her request. And the Pilgrim Virgin is a reminder both of Her message and of the reality of Her promises.

The great difficulty is being able to "enthroned Our Lady" as St. Grignon de Montfort puts it. The avant garde decries the use of Her statues. They ridicule Her Rosary and Scapular. When the intellectual elite denounce Marian devotion the simple priests and faithful also feel that they are "not with it" if they don't go along.

In Thailand, where Christians have a great devotion to Our Lady and the Buddhists seem ready to accept Her, the National Pilgrim Virgin never traveled outside the archdiocese of Bangkok. Recently, a priest close to the archbishop told us why.

The foreign priests to whom the native clergy often feel inferior have ridiculed the idea of carrying around the statue of the Virgin. "While the archbishop has encouraged the statue to travel to every parish here," he told us, "he does not want to push it because of this."

It was the very day of this conversation that a Buddhist lady had flown from Cambodia to Saigon, and then into Bangkok, with a bouquet of thirty-three orchids to place at the feet of Our Lady because she had seen Her in a dream, over a month before, bringing graces to the East. Also in the throng on that same day in the Bangkok Cathedral was another Buddhist lady who had come to beg the cure of her child. She then sought this same priest to whom we were speaking to tell him, with tears of joy, that before the statue of Our Lady her child had been cured!

Yet because a few priests educated in highly respected seminaries in distant France said that devotion to Mary was simplistic, primitive and passé, the national Pilgrim Virgin of Thailand was left hidden in a small convent and never traveled outside of Bangkok.

What can be done to overcome such opposition within the Church?

## NOTES

1. It must be explained that the *national* Pilgrim Virgin is the statue of Our Lady of Fatima which remains in the country to which it is given by the Blue Army. The *international* Pilgrim Virgin statue is the one that is based in Fatima, and which travels with the Blue Army pilgrimages from country to country.
2. Robert Bergin, *This Apocalyptic Age*, city publisher, *Voice of Fatima*, 1970.

## CHAPTER XX

### *Laymen's Role*

A great number of lay people are coming forth today like the Aztec John James who singlehandedly precipitated a Pentecost upon eight million of his countrymen within a radius of little over three hundred miles in less than a decade.

"If they did not speak the very stones would cry out,"<sup>11</sup> (Luke 19:40) Jesus said when Church authorities told Him to silence the people who were hailing Him as the Messiah.

One of the leading exponents of the new Charismatic Movement within the Church says that similarly today the Holy Spirit is moving lay people to organize prayer groups and to proclaim the message of salvation with moving conviction. He claims that lay "charismatics" are beginning to fill the need because of a lack of priests interested in praying with them.

This cannot imply that to some extent lay people may be called upon to replace (rather than just supplement) the official role of the ordained minister. This might in turn imply a diminution of the importance of the sacramental order. Such an implication is not only deplorable but inadmissible.

On the other hand this may be permitted by God at the present moment so that laymen are drawn out of passivity in the sacramental order. This would open the way for a new vitality in the Church which would be at least in part a fulfillment of the aspirations expressed by Pope John XXIII and Vatican II. Indeed, this development could reverse the trend of post-conciliar disillusionment and religious indifference.

In the United States in 1957, only fourteen percent thought religion was losing its influence, but in 1973 almost half (forty-five percent) of all Americans felt that religion was losing its effect on American life. The Gallup poll of religious attendance showed a steady and relentless decline

for a full sixteen years up to 1973, and the overall decline was almost entirely among Catholics. From 1964, the peak year of Vatican Council II, Catholic attendance at Sunday Mass dropped from seventy-one percent to fifty-five percent in just nine years.

Many factors are necessarily involved, but it is noteworthy that Protestant churchgoing in the same period remained virtually unchanged. Unfortunately we rarely hear of the wonderful priests who have become more vital and more apostolic. We only seem to hear of priests who drop out—often to the scandal of their flocks. Some renegades have written books—almost always painting the priesthood in a bad light, and many have had TV and press coverage. Bill O'Shea, who became a feature writer for Associated Press, did a dandy feature in the spring of 1974 which was carried in millions of copies of newspapers under such headlines as *AN EX-PRIEST TELLS WHY HE QUIT THE CHURCH* and *I FELT HYPOCRITICAL*. He cites one instance of a classmate who is a good priest, but against this one he parades a whole line of dropouts like himself who "felt hypocritical acting as a go-between in Sacraments that I thought had little effect or relevance" and predicts that only one out of five of his classmates will still be priests in 1984.

When the number of dropouts is added to the drop in vocations (plus the drop in respect of the faithful toward their priests) there is obviously additional need for spiritual leadership. Will this be filled by charismatic laymen? If so, how, and within what limits?

Once we admit above all that a layman's role is that of a witness rather than a teacher, only the highest heavens are the limit to his possible contribution to the vitality of the faith. And experience shows that a vital, charismatic flock affects the vitality of the shepherd.

To cite an exceptional example.

When the Pilgrim Virgin statue began to travel in the United States, we did not have a priest who was free to accompany it. We had a layman who was capable but we felt odd about sending a layman to talk in churches. We finally compromised and said: "When a pastor invites you to speak, do so, but your mission is primarily to set up the program and to speak (when invited) in the schools."

As it turned out, most pastors had no objection to having a qualified layman speak in church, even after the Gospel.

We proved to have been much more sensitive about this than the pastors themselves. They were saying in effect: "After all, we are right there. He is not taking our place. He is giving facts about which he has special information and if he were to say anything unorthodox we are there to correct it. And the people know this."

In other words the layman, even talking in the pulpit, was not the teacher. He was a specialist who had spoken on this particular subject many times and had personal experiences to which he could bear witness. And it proved helpful for the pastor to have a specialist bear witness, even in the pulpit. If only for the sheer novelty, people listened with great attention; the message was conveyed more completely because it was the fruit of much experience; and there was even a new, subtle improvement of relationship between the pastor and his parish, as though by using this layman he was himself identifying and recognizing the layman's role as a witness.

This was confirmed by Father Joseph M. Champlin, who wrote a rather amazing testimony for the *Catholic Press* which appeared in April 1974 under the headline: I BECAME A BELIEVER. It is such an unusual testimony, and so relevant not only to this example but to the total context of this book, that we consider it worthy of more than passing attention. Father Champlin was writing, after all, of one of the types of charismatic experiences of which we are speaking. He says the congregation was attracted in greater numbers than for other "well planned, carefully executed, creative and liturgical and paraliturgical functions" in that same parish "including a unique blessing ceremony with two Bishops and fifty priests in attendance!" He continues:

I became a believer in our Blessed Lady several months ago.

That really is too strong a statement and not totally accurate. I have, since teen years, always carried a rosary in my pocket and recited those beads daily. In addition, trips to Marian Shrines at Lourdes, Fatima and the Daughters of Charity motherhouse along Rue de Bac in Paris moved me deeply.

However, within recent years my devotional prayers in honor of God's Mother, for some unknown reasons and in an imperceptible manner, seemed to diminish

both in intensity and frequency. That would also appear to be true of many other priests and religious, perhaps lay persons as well, in the United States.

My "conversion" came during Advent through a visit of the Pilgrim Virgin statue from Fatima to our diocese and parish. It was not the beautiful carved image itself, but the people's remarkable response which touched my heart.

On an icy, rainy, snowy Sunday afternoon, 1,500 persons came to honor Mary at Holy Family Church. They either greeted the statue or stopped for a period of prayer from 3-6:30 or participated in an hour-long rosary-scripture procession-Benediction service concluding the visitation. Some did all three.

Other parishes throughout the diocese experienced similar reactions—capacity, overflowing crowds, many times on harsh wintry days or nights which usually bring cancellation of our meager attendance at religious functions.

This overwhelming response stunned everyone in our diocese, including some who in the beginning, curiously enough, expressed a certain hostility or scepticism about the event.

There have been many explanations for the huge crowds, but those throngs make two points very clear: American Catholics today feel a great hunger for such devotional services, and, our Lady still has the power to draw persons toward God.

I offer these observations:

Mary leads worshipers to Christ, not away from our Lord. A few critics assert that Vatican II directives stress devotion to Jesus and urge a diminution of Marian prayers in view of that emphasis. Our American bishops in their pastoral letter, "Behold Your Mother: Woman of Faith," answered that objection.

In the weeks afterwards I heard of individuals who once again prayed the rosary, later made their way to confession and, finally, returned to our Lord in Holy Communion for the first time in years.

Father Champlin does not even mention that the talk given in explanation of the statue's visit was given by a layman. He probably did not consider this important. Only the result was important.

## 172    *EXPLOSION OF THE SUPERNATURAL*

Lay people bearing living witness to the supernatural life can greatly vitalize all parochial life and this must be true in all the traditional churches. It is interesting to note that in the Jewish religion, where the rabbi has always been the one and only teacher, there has been an increased lay voice in recent years and a concomitant two percent increase in synagogue attendance.

One of the great advantages of the cell movement in parishes is the opportunity for individuals to pray aloud to give voice to the Spirit. This is encouraged by the fact that the cell consists of only a few, and must divide when it has had six members for a minimum of six months. Persons who would be reluctant to give witness to their personal supernatural experiences before a sizeable group are more easily able to express themselves in a group of only two or three. And by division, rather than by accretion, this charismatic dynamism can soon permeate an entire parish. The pastor who learns to capitalize on this dynamism and to use the most charismatic members of his flock for the benefit of all, including himself, has nothing to lose and very much to gain.

Not all pastors will see this.

It is up to the pastor, or the immediate ecclesiastical authority, to decide on the use of the voice of the laity. Thus *it is the teaching authority using that voice*. And as we said above, it would seem that a wise and unselfish pastor would use such voices as often and as effectively as he could. The best opportunity is in the All-Night Vigils, where it is becoming customary for lay voices to be used for intentions and brief meditations during the night while priests give no more than the homilies at the Masses and lead the vigil prayers. Lay persons can equally be encouraged to give the Rosary meditations in preparation for the Eucharistic liturgy as we have said elsewhere. And even in large congregations at least a given number can voice intentions during the prayer of the faithful. On First Saturdays, the necessary quarter-hour of meditations can be given by lay persons, preferably eight different persons assigned in advance for two minute meditations each. Spontaneous meditations on the Way of the Cross, in which different members of the congregation speak at each station, can bring amazing vitality into this rich, highly indulgenced and most valuable extra-liturgical practice.

For the holiness to which Jesus commanded us, daily

Mass is not enough and Sunday Mass is far from enough. Other devotions highly recommended by the Church (and encouraged by rich indulgences) are necessary for the fullness of the Eucharistic life. Public participation by the congregation in such devotions is often of very great value, creating the opportunity for charismatic experience by which the congregation, and the entire parish, can be vitalized. Preparation for the Eucharistic liturgy, and a prolongation of its effects, can be implemented.

In addition to spontaneous Rosary meditations and prayer intentions, why not special prayer meetings in preparation for the Eucharistic liturgy and in thanksgiving afterwards? Also, special prayer meetings for extraordinary needs—such as to defeat a local abortion bill, for the sick, for conversions, for a combination of intentions or even for a churchbuilding campaign?

One of the memorable prayer meetings of this kind recalled by this writer was on Mount Royal in Palermo, Sicily, in one of the most beautiful basilicas in the world. A Norman king had encamped on that mountain. He dreamed of a treasure buried beneath the tree under which he slept and in his dream the Blessed Virgin told him to use it for a church. Immediately the king ordered excavations at the tree. He found the treasure and was convinced that it was indeed the Blessed Virgin Who had come to him in a dream. Although the mountain was then uninhabited, he decorated it with the basilica in which to this day rich mosaics are probably the best of their epoch in the world, rivaling those of Ravenna and Saint Mark's in Venice.

We happened to be visiting there while our own National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C., had been a basement for a quarter of a century after the death of the founding bishop.

Someone suddenly prayed:

"In this rich monument of God which has excited the admiration of the world for centuries and raised the hearts of millions to their Creator, let us ask that Our Lady will reveal the treasure needed to wipe out the American shame of our own unfinished and neglected national shrine."

Another prayer followed almost at once:

"As the king was moved by a dream to discover the treasure for this church and then found the faith and generosity to apply it, so may our American bishops."

The spontaneity of this prayer touched us all so deeply



that out of it grew a prayer crusade. Within one year the United States bishops were raising funds for the Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, now the most impressive Catholic church in the United States (and with a mosaic of Christ in the apse amazingly like the one in the basilica on Mount Royal in Palermo).

Prayer can move mountains and most of us have forgotten how to pray. Indeed we have almost forgotten to try. We need the occasion and motivation.

And what would be better than to pray for the intention which motivates most charismatic groups: that those praying with us, eminently including ourselves, will receive the spirit of God?

Perhaps what frightens most pastors about letting the voices of lay persons be heard is that "some crackpot in the parish will start spouting about visions and dire predictions" or launch into a diatribe against "changes in the Church." Some parishes suffer great harm and divisiveness at the hands of vehement ultra-conservatives and have made some pastors both sensitive and wary.

Contrary to first expectation, a properly conducted "prayer encounter" can deal with these extremists perhaps better than any other action.

In England some years ago the national center of the Blue Army was in a private house in a remote section of London. As a national center it was both inappropriate and inconvenient. When the international council became aware of this situation, it arranged for the national center to be transferred to the historic Corpus Christi church in downtown London (just around the corner from the Hotel Savoy). As a consequence, friction developed between those in favor of the poor house in the poor section of the city. They exclaimed: "After all, Nazareth was poor!" Others favored the center near the Savoy because it was central, and the friction developed to such proportion that the spiritual director resigned, the elected president resigned, and the international delegate received a cablegram saying the Blue Army apostolate in England was in ruins and that someone from the international council should come although it was probably too late anyway!

Instead of holding a meeting the international delegate invited them to pray together. They began with a meditation on the Agony in the Garden—where Jesus had taken three of the twelve aside with Him even as in this sorrowful

extremity a few leaders of the Blue Army had come aside together to pray in England. They progressed from one mystery to the other, *praying together* over the impasse in the apostolate.

The meeting resulted in a peaceful majority decision. (Unfortunately, following meetings did not use the technique of praying together and the subsequent path was not so smooth.)

Any problem can be solved in a true atmosphere of prayer. In parishes divided on any issue, how better to resolve them than in a sincere prayer encounter, one of the easiest and most effective being purposeful Rosary meditations with "on the spot" or "spontaneous" voicing of intentions?

*When we speak of the Charismatic Movement we are speaking of nothing more than vital, meaningful prayer.*

This necessarily involves vital lay participation.

This participation is at the very heart of this "explosion of the supernatural," beginning with the example of three children praying together on a mountain in Fatima, Portugal, after God revealed to them the dire portents as well as the almost unbelievable possibilities now facing twentieth-century man.

## CHAPTER XXI

### *Priorities*

It is too early to tell to what degree experienced lay persons may assume an apostolic role in the Church. There has been an increase in "belated vocations" to the priesthood and there seems some approval in South America even for the ordination of married men over fifty who have been daily communicants for a given number of years, so that areas completely without duly formed priests will not be without the Sacraments. There is also widespread renewal of the diaconate.

But the major problem now in much of the world does not seem to be deprivation of the Sacraments but deprivation of the spiritual experience which the sacramental order requires. We hear more and more that the homily given once a week is not prepared, or may even be a source of confusion. Many priests who drop out do so only after a slow and often agonizing personal crisis in which, unfortunately, the faithful are forced to share. Sometimes this is manifested in a conflict between a younger priest and an older priest in a parish or institution. Such a conflict in the ordained authority often has a devastating effect. It is one of the proofs of the authenticity of the Church that the faithful, through the abiding presence and action of the Holy Spirit, survive these crises.

In our age we have heard repeatedly of the important role of the laity. The council documents assert the "priesthood of the laity" and every Pope of our time, beginning with Leo XIII, has asserted the important need for a lay apostolate. There is even an expression heard from time to time: "The age of the lay apostle" or "the age of the laity."

A positive effort made in Belgium and France was called the Jocists—the Young Catholic Worker Apostles. An auxiliary bishop to the cardinal archbishop of Paris was appointed to encourage and coordinate this colossal (on paper) movement.

But it all came to nothing.

There have been some isolated, effective lay apostles like Frederick Ozanam who died in Marseilles over a hundred years ago after founding the St. Vincent de Paul Society. He was a brilliant man, a lawyer who was given the chair of commercial law at the University of Lyons. His influence on the development of the Christian schools of France and his part in founding the St. Vincent de Paul Society were the fruit of a vital spiritual life which should have won him immortality on earth as it certainly did in heaven. But his memory was obscured in controversy and he was buried in a forgotten corner in the crypt of an old church on the Left Bank of Paris. For many years, his whereabouts and his very memory were recalled only by a few who knew the holiness and the accomplishments of his totally dedicated life. When this writer went to Paris in 1950 and found his grave, it was virtually unmarked and unknown. It was no surprise that the "Catholic action bishop" of Paris sadly confessed that the only effective Catholic action in France in the fifties was the Legion of Mary, then a comparatively new movement that had been founded by a dedicated layman in Ireland, Mr. Frank Duff. The Jocist Movement had been born in a wave—an ocean—of print, and died in it.

In the United States, where the Church has shown great vitality, one of the most promising apostolates of this century was "The Queen's Work" built by Father Daniel Lord, S.J., on the foundation of the old and respected Sodality of the B.V.M. At its peak in the fifties, eighty employees were needed in a special office building in St. Louis to serve this gigantic apostolate. But within ten years of the death of Father Lord, the eighty employees dwindled down to one. The mighty "Queen's Work," without its one charismatic leader, declined. Isolated diocesan groups continued to function, but they were like the last leaves on the outer branches of a tree whose roots were dead. It seemed impossible that such vitality should have been dissipated in such a short time.

The problem of deeper lay involvement in Church life is complex.

The greatest obstacle within the Church is a wall between the clergy and the laity which is for all the world like the wall between the professional and the amateur. Priests feel free in each other's company but often seem to feel "on the spot" in the company of laymen. This is not healthy.

Fortunately, it is a state which charismatic experience immediately overcomes.

If a priest feels more comfortable in the presence of fellow priests it is usually not because he can exchange spiritual experiences or discuss higher forms of mysticism. Since this writer has been flattered by having been occasionally included "in the club" it would not be a betrayal to say that the typical exchange among priests is a normal, healthy, manly camaraderie of a special profession. It is certainly not, as some of the dropouts imply, an unhealthy or even immoral camaraderie. Certainly any objective observer who really knows a good cross section of Catholic priests knows them to be sincere, good men who take their difficult vow of celibacy with seriousness and with respect for the awful dignity with which God and the successors of the Apostles have endowed them. What makes them uncomfortable is the pedestal on which lay people place them. Among themselves they do not have to pretend to be the "supermen" that lay people seem to think they necessarily became simultaneously with the awesome power of administering the Sacraments of God.

What changes this in a charismatic experience? What does the priest who participates in a charismatic prayer encounter suddenly identify so easily with his flock? Does he become more humble as he discovers holiness and even charisms in the laity, or does the laity esteem him more intimately because the Holy Spirit, of whom he is the official minister, gives them this loving and joyful realization?

Personally this writer would be concerned about participating in a charismatic experience led by unauthorized laity. Is not the presence of an ordained minister not only fitting but necessary? And if the ordained minister is not present, is it not necessary at least to have leaders who are approved by him? *It is this latter link of religious authority which has been lacking and which threatens the development of the much-talked-about lay apostolate.*

Complicating this situation are the extraordinary charisms granted to lay persons today which are often belittled or even denied by local clergy without adequate investigation. Of the seven major manifestations examined in *Segno dei Tempi* not one had episcopal sanction. In some instances there is unquestionably an abuse of episcopal authority. "There is often an almost unfeeling denial or prohibition," says Rev. Dr. Andre Richard, of Paris, "without explana-

tion to sincere persons who are experiencing what is evidently miraculous."

Authentic religious authority is necessary.

Jesus did not give the Holy Spirit to the world like rain but like water channeled through those in the cenacle and those whom, by His authority, they ordained. And our greatest problem for a lay apostolate is insufficient communication between laity, who are ready to act, and clergy, who are not.

One reason we cited above: the pedestal.

Another is an intellectual valley, a chasm of knowledge, a desert which the priest has crossed in six or eight years of special study, leaving the laity behind. Words across this vast space of knowledge become like a hollow echo. The same words do not mean the same on both sides. The priest knows what a fellow priest thinks about God and morality because they have the same training and speak the same language, but a priest does not always know what the individual lay person thinks.

There is no ready ground of understanding. He is disturbed by the person who collars him to talk about a vision, a meaningful dream, or to pour out a stream of abuse because the statue she liked was taken out of the church or how awful it is that such dreadful things as this or that are being taught in the schools. In self protection he avoids contact. And the vitality of the Church—the active people of God in whom the ordained minister of God should be a vital factor—suffers almost to death.

It was to help change this that the Blue Army inaugurated the School of Apostolic Formation at Fatima in the sixties. Alfred Williams, the layman traveling with the Pilgrim Virgin statue, whom we mentioned earlier, was a product of this school. Martha Loya, whose lectures on the message of Fatima in schools throughout North America have become famous and much in demand, was another. And now the School of Apostolic Formation is conducted regularly at Blue Army Centers in Detroit and Washington, N.J. with regional courses several times a year in other parts of the United States for weekends and for periods of fourteen consecutive days. Longer ones, once a year, are held at the international center in Fatima or at its apostolic center in Pontevedra, Spain.

The primary purpose of this school for lay apostles is to inculcate a love for the basic documents (especially of Vat-

ican II) an apostle of today should make part of his or her life. A secondary, but almost equally important purpose, is the evaluation of those who attend the school. In most instances lay persons who have been daily communicants over a period of years have an amazing depth of knowledge and understanding. They know almost by instinct what is true and what is false. With a little guidance in ascetical theology and reading habits, they can become invaluable assistants in pastoral leadership. The externals which preoccupied them and gave concern to their pastors can easily be put into proper perspective.

And in the instance of the few unbalanced or slightly hysterical types, the school serves as a determinant. Only those who are sound and useful are given the school's seal of approval and only the best—the really important potential leaders—are invited to the six-week course and, if qualified, given a diploma.

Contrary to what might be expected, this School of Apostolic Formation is not a "salesman" course for some particular apostolate. It is a basic course in holiness. The major subjects are holiness itself, apologetics (based on Vatican II) and the special message of the Holy Spirit to turn back the particular evils of our day.

Of necessity the leaders of the school are religious (the Handmaids of Mary Immaculate) and their existence and professionalism underlines the basic and real difference between the "lay" apostle and the "regular" apostle.

All this talk about the lay apostolate and the "priesthood of the laity" can never be understood as a diminution of the importance and dignity of the totally dedicated apostle who completely renounces the world. Some lay persons like Ozanam may aspire to total dedication and achieve it. But the majority of the lay apostles are expected to aid and supplement the pastoral work of the ordained and totally consecrated apostles.

The more the charismatic experience develops, the more we will stop making distinctions between those who are totally consecrated and those who are merely living up to their Christian apostolic vocation. We are all our brothers' keepers. We are all called to be holy as God Himself is holy.

The dichotomy between clergy and laity has been too long perpetuated.

Did you ever see a statue or a picture of a lay saint?

Have you ever heard a single prayer in church said to a lay person in heaven except martyrs or those who were with Our Lord two thousand years ago? Have you ever heard of a campaign of prayer for the canonization of a lay person other than a martyr? There are a few canonized laymen, but does it not stand to reason that there should be more?

Today the memory of Ozanam is being resurrected. And we hope (thanks primarily to a campaign this writer initiated) Anne Marie Taigi may be canonized even before this book will have served its purpose.

Blessed Anne Marie is an excellent example of the extent of the contribution a lay person can make to the vitality of the Church. She was a woman of miracles, but so humble! A princess (miraculously cured when Anne Marie prayed for her) arranged for a meeting with the Pope. Anne Marie, not knowing the Pope was to be there, would not so much as raise her eyes. Yet with apologies she would leave a cardinal wait in her poor parlor if it was time to serve her husband's dinner. The Church has named her the official patroness of young women and of mothers.

Her life is a wonderful study of the charismatic power of a lay saint, a power which was always exercised solely in conjunction with and subject to ordained authority.

This charismatic power in the laity is too often wasted. Ordained authority faces a tremendous obligation in this regard. Little by little today's needs in the Church, and the outpouring of the Spirit, are forcing us to recognize this obligation in order that the whole Church may lead us into a new era of understanding, the Fatima-promised era of "peace to mankind."

There are some delicate aspects of the role of the laity in the new era. One of these delicate problems is the contrast in work-ethic between the lay apostle and the priest or religious. In this writer's experience the contrast of actual work done by the lay apostle in contrast to the ordained apostle is as much as four to one. There seem to be some ordained apostles who feel that just by being ordained ministers they are fulfilling their role in life. Some seem to feel that they have finished their task with Mass in the morning, whereas the layman feels that he has begun his task when he has shared in his morning Mass.

Likewise there is a much greater possibility today of real



practice of poverty on the part of the layman, with little or no property safeguards in apostolic work.<sup>1</sup>

Hopefully the decline in priestly involvement in the apostolate is now being reversed in the wake of Vatican II. There is no need here to go into a further analysis either of the present situation or its historical causes. It is evident, *prima facie*, that there have been few priests like Father Daniel Lord in the past. But the new Pentecost offers hope, especially wherever the vigils and charismatic groups evolved, that many priests like him will arrive in the future, and are coming on the scene at the present moment.

Meanwhile, we must avoid the trap of drawing conclusions from isolated experience. We cannot judge the priesthood by a few indifferent priests. How could men like Frank Duff and Frederick Ozanam see their great works perpetuated without a concerned group of priests, with their total dedication? The Vincentians have built up and perpetuated the St. Vincent de Paul Society, and the Society of Mary and priests throughout the world promote the Legion of Mary.

There is a vast difference between the dedicated priest, especially the religious priests and sisters and brothers, and the lay apostles who are volunteers. The latter give freely, as they wish. But the former follow a routine, and are bound by an horarium which requires a constant surrendering of their will. And in effect this is the greatest gift and the highest form of prayer. What else do we have to give to God that is really ours except our free will?

What would have happened through the centuries to the great devotions of the Rosary and the Scapular if it were not for Dominicans and Carmelites? What would have happened to many of our other devotions if it were not for the religious communities which protected them, enriched them, and proclaimed them from one generation to the next?

Most important of all, where would we all be without the Church, without the bishops and the priests, who make possible the sacramental order?

This writer experienced the most wonderful personal relationship with a holy priest in the development of the Blue Army apostolate. In 1948, while debating this relationship, he happened to meet Father Daniel Lord and asked his advice. Father Lord answered with one single sentence:

"Such an alliance would result in an explosion for Our Lady."

Whenever there is that proper relationship between a lay apostle and an apostolic priest, we may expect phenomenal results.

Together we are the people of God. Lay apostles are not expected to function independently of the ordained apostles. Indeed the very thought is anachronistic. And the proper relationship is one that cannot be contrived. It is something that comes instinctively from the heart of a religious person. It is based on something so above the human that nothing disturbs it. It never degenerates into a maudlin or sentimental camaraderie. It breathes of mutual respect and piety that is a reflection of Piety itself. So when we begin to speak of priorities in the Charismatic Movement and in the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the modern world, we must speak in terms of the first Pentecost where those selected by Christ were gathered together in the upper room, Apostles and disciples alike. And in thunder and lightning the Church came alive.

## NOTES

1. See *The Brother and I*.

## CHAPTER XXII

### *Judas and Satan*

Unfortunately it seems that we have harsh words for a few priests and theologians, although not quite so harsh as those of Cardinal Hoefner.

One out of twelve apostles was a traitor, and is the percentage any worse today? To the contrary, it is certain that we are entering one of the most glorious eras of the priesthood and of the Church. But we are suffering at the moment from a sort of purging that followed in the wake of Vatican II. It is as though the Ecumenical Council poured a catalyst into the sea of clergy, and little by little the impurities floated to the surface, attracting a great deal of attention there until they were scooped out or ran over the edges. Because we are at the moment, and will be for some time, suffering from the after-effects (as well as from the fact that many are still bubbling around on the surface), we would like to say one final word about this unhappy matter.

One of the so called "great" theologians of our day happened to be a classmate of this writer. We both happened to have the unusual rating of "genius" and we were in the same class for eight consecutive years. It was not a surprise, but nevertheless a disappointment, when he became one of those "famous" theologians with natural explanations for the miracles of the Bible and a disdain for Marian devotion.

Theology is the science of God, and there are brilliant men of this science who never learned to pray.

Recently a three-day meeting which included some famous theologians was held in Milwaukee to study devotion to the Heart of Jesus as a symbol of His love in the Blessed Sacrament.

It was shocking.

Even a man who had obtained a great reputation as a Mariologist, and whom I would have thought a bulwark against the haughty and sophisticated, seemed defenseless. The atmosphere was overwhelming *against* devotion to the

Sacred Heart of Jesus, and only a few voices were raised in its defense.

Bishop Sheen had been asked to attend and he said: "You would do better to hold three days of prayer rather than three days of discussion," and he did not come.

Bishop Sheen was right in one way. But there was a good result:

There were a few men of prayer at this meeting who reacted to what they saw and heard with such vehemence that they formed an International Institute of the Sacred Heart.

One nun, chosen by her community because of her degrees and brilliant mind, said: "Our community for a century has borne the title of the Sacred Heart but I would prefer to drop the name . . ." She was beautifully dressed (in secular clothes). beautifully spoken. Her nylons and lipstick had not shocked me but her shame at the title "Sacred Heart" did. And one could not but wonder if she, good person that she was, had ever had a true, personal supernatural experience?

At the Last Supper, John leaned over and rested his head on Our Lord's chest. What an intimate gesture! John had just received the world's First Communion, the first physical sharing of Jesus in the Sacrament of His love.

Heedless of the opinion of all in the room, John's Eucharistic experience of that moment impelled him to change position so that he could rest his head on the breast of Christ.

This was the first public act of devotion to the Sacred Heart, a devotion which Jesus Himself came forth from the Blessed Sacrament to request in our day as "the final appeal for the love of men."

Not all those at the Last Supper understood. Philip had just challenged Him a short time before: "Show us the Father and we shall believe" (John 14:8).

And Our Lord (now finished with His teaching and about to give Himself in the Sacrament of Love) asked sadly:

"Philip, have I been with you so long and you do not know that when you see Me you see the Father?"

Philip and the others had seen miracles. But only John had already experienced a *personal Pentecost* strong enough to enable him to stand against the shame that was

to follow that night, when fear and human respect would force even Peter to deny Him.

And it would seem today within the Church that there are many who have not yet really experienced Jesus. They are good. They are "called." But they prefer to discuss than to pray. They have developed a weakness to materialism because they have not developed the supernatural antibody of prayer. Some of them catch the materialistic disease and die. Many are just sick.

We made an interesting observation at that meeting in Milwaukee.

Two of the greatest living apostles of the Sacred Heart attended. One was the founder of the "Sacred Heart Radio Hour" and the other was the successor of Father Mateo as apostle of the Enthronement in the Home. And as the discussion progressed, these men suffered. The new, young director of the Sacred Heart radio and TV program was one of the principal speakers. He spoke of hundreds of radio and TV outlets and a million-dollar budget, but had nothing to say about the Sacred Heart until he added:

"If I could, I would inaugurate a new program and drop the title of "Sacred Heart"!"

I looked at the face of the saintly old priest who had founded the Sacred Heart program and saw that it was as though a lance had just been thrust into his own heart.

But most significant to me was that I observed only four out of that entire seminar of "experts" who made regular and frequent visits to the Blessed Sacrament although it was necessary to pass the chapel to get to the conference room from the recreation room where there was an open bar.

The majority of these experts must never have really experienced the Sacred Heart.

What seems different about the post-conciliar period is not this lack of charism among so many professional theologians, but that it is becoming manifest. It is even becoming vogueish. Charismatics, or *ferverinos* (the fervent ones) are labeled odd, even fanatical, when it should be the other way about!

Like Philip at the Last Supper, they have been with Jesus so long, and yet they do not know. Perhaps one reason is that they know so much in an intellectual way that they have not made adequate effort to experience Him.

Pope John prayed for a new Pentecost. And many of us

realize that nothing can change the trend short of such a thunderous, slapping experience of faith.

And it is at hand.

Earlier I mentioned a brilliant classmate who became a prominent theologian but who, during the eight years I lived with him in the same class, never showed signs of a personal prayer experience. This is difficult to say, but I suppose I mean that as far as I know he had never experienced that fervor which appears to be what is now called pentecostalism. He was good. He was called. He has been a credit to his community. But he never showed signs of the first phase of the Divine Experience, the overwhelming encounter which pentecostals today seem to achieve so easily.

Had he had it, but failed to react? Had he had it but did not want to seem odd in the presence of those who had not experienced? Can he have it now?

Experience shows that anyone can experience fervor at any time. But for older persons—especially those who have not reached out for this experience during many years of opportunity—it will certainly be difficult. It will require a tremendous act of humility—sometimes even a repudiation of a whole pattern of life. And for these persons can there be hope except through the intercession of the model of humility, the Spouse of the Holy Spirit, the Mother of the Church?

Satan is real. When he rejected God Who made him, Hell began . . . and he drew a legion of other angelic creatures down with him. And one of the authentic signs of the new Pentecost is that the forces of evil are no longer content with the massive victories of silence in the world. Cases of possession and obsession are now more numerous. And the wave of such disgusting evil has flooded over the whole world that it begins now rather to aid the new Pentecost as a backlash than to hinder it.

There is no need for a panicky fear of the powers of evil around us. There is need for a constant wariness and respect like the sailor must have for the power of the sea.

Every sailor who has lived as long as this writer recalls more than one danger at sea. Shipwreck is an experience difficult to describe. It must be like a deadly automobile collision in very slow motion. The victim has ample time to wonder about loss of property and survival. Yet he contin-

ues to go to sea, not with a panicky fear but with added precaution.

And if we recognize that the moral environment of this world has truly become Satan's sea we will sail it with the greatest precaution.

In the late sixties I was taking a big schooner (one hundred ten tons) up the Atlantic coast. I had only two men with me and one had been sick for four days. We were putting toward the Carolina coast when a gale struck. I was alone at the watch through the night, with mountainous seas whirling out of the dark. The wind whistled through the shrouds. Suddenly I saw what looked like one gigantic wave in front of me, towering, undiminishing. I stared in disbelief! It was getting larger and larger and its crest was perfectly level while the sea around me was thunderous, white foam flecking from the crest of the waves. At the last moment I realized what it was.

I had failed to estimate the tremendous speed the schooner was making before the wind, and the great mass ahead of me and was not a wave but the shoreline and the tops of trees! I had little hope that we could possibly come about in that raging sea when already the ship must be about to touch bottom.

It would certainly seem that all was lost, but previous experience had taught "over" preparedness. The heavy nylon anchorline was an inch in diameter and the great anchor was capable of holding even a larger boat under normal circumstances.

It was a terrifying experience, but the anchor held.

And our common anchor is a loving faith in a loving Father who is deeply concerned about the dangers of the sea on which we are embarked. If enough of us cling to Him, we will take both the terror and the danger out of Satan's greatest violence against us.

I remember in the late forties when I was writing *Russia Will Be Converted*. I was sailing a small schooner alone down the Chesapeake Bay and was caught in a northeast storm. In one instant I was almost swept overboard and certainly would have been lost with no one at the helm. That night, when I finally arrived in the Norfolk harbor, I

\*The Whittaker Chambers/Alger Hiss confrontation of the late forties was perhaps even more important to that generation than Watergate was to the generation a quarter of a century later.

heard on the radio that Whitaker Chambers\* (whose testimony against Alger Hiss had been one of the most important factors in the book I was writing) had suffered a heart attack. Chambers' wife had gone to the airport to meet him in that same storm without knowing, and was not told until she discovered in panic that he was not on the flight. Oddly enough I had been thinking of Whittaker Chambers during my own ordeal. I marveled then, as I often have, at the great forces of evil and good swirling all about us and of the personal involvement of each one of us in the entire human mystery. That recent pentecostal experience in London, revived those deep feelings of the complete unity of spirit, of mind and heart which is an almost untapped source of common human strength today.

That prayer meeting in London—which set me to writing this book—was not the joy of old friends meeting, because I for one had never met anyone there. It was not the fellowship of belonging to the same society, because everyone I met there was of a different religious affiliation.

But while we can so easily say what such an encounter is not, how can we describe it?

Could we say that it is the beginning of the fulfillment of the Spouse of the Holy Spirit? Could we say that it is the beginning of the fulfillment of the promise of which I wrote twenty-five years previously?

When the writer went to Europe in 1946, on the same plane out of New York was a group going to Russia (then our ally in the war which had just ended). Just before take-off a Western Union messenger came aboard and paged Dr. Ralph Sockman. He turned out to be the stocky man with the little mustache sitting right in front of me. The man next to me addressed him as Ralph and I could not help exclaiming "Is that *the* Dr. Ralph Sockman who gives sermons on the radio every Sunday?"

"Yes, that's he," the man next to me confirmed.

I exclaimed in pleased surprise:

"I am a Catholic, but I arrange my time for going to Mass every Sunday so I can listen to him."

Before we arrived in Newfoundland (which was then a necessary stop on a transatlantic flight) my seat companion told Dr. Sockman that I was one of his fans, and during the hour we were in Gander, Dr. Sockman and I walked alone and talked. In the emptiness of the vast airport which had seen so much activity during the last few years of war, I



told him about the book I was writing on Fatima and he asked me about Catholic doctrine concerning the Blessed Virgin and why I thought the miracle of Fatima had not become widely known. I thought I must have turned him off by my blunt answer: "It's the Devil. A death struggle has begun between Satan and the Woman Who has announced now that She is going to crush his head. His first defense is to hide the news."

Many years passed and I had no further communication with Dr. Sockman, although I continued to listen to him on the radio. I sent him a copy of *Russia Will Be Converted* but did not hear from him.

Finally, in 1972 I published my most important book (certainly the one that took me the longest to write), *The World's Greatest Secret*. It was a book about the Eucharist and I had written it for the understanding of persons of every faith. This time Dr. Sockman wrote to thank me, but I felt still that he probably thought of me as "fanatical" because of my blunt answer to his question about Fatima at the Gander airport in 1946.

When I decided to do a television program on the Eucharist, the one person above all I wanted to interview on the subject was Dr. Sockman. To my pleasant surprise he accepted.

I learned later that many had been trying to get him to appear on many television programs after his retirement from his Park Avenue church, but he had refused them all.

Yet one of the last invitations he accepted in his life was to appear on a television program to discuss the world's greatest secret with a Catholic.<sup>1</sup>

Is there so much that separates us?

Even if there were not an authentic new Penecost, unity is coming. The last great prayer of Christ to His Father on the night of the Crucifixion is to be heard. We are to be one as He and the Father are One.

But how can it come except through praying together? And those within the Church who think that the Pentecost will come only to them, will they turn their backs on it? What if the Pentecost comes simultaneously within and without?

It might seem traitorous to say that the Reformation was Providential and that it was a good thing that the Spanish Armada was destroyed before it could invade England. But where would we be today if we still had the kind of clerical

abuses that existed three hundred years ago? Where would we be if all of the Americas had inherited the Latin traditions which have left in their wake such terrible injustices, such class divisions?

The Church has the truth and it has the Sacraments, but what would be the state of the Church now without the challenge of the Reformation?

In a final chapter of this book, we quote from the *City of God* a description of the Church given in a private revelation at the time of the Reformation. A pitiful picture and that of a Satanic victory is one which historians corroborate.

The difference between the French clergy of today and the French clergy of three hundred years ago (and even of one hundred years ago) is adequate proof. The Papal states are gone and the Pope no longer has armies. And ever since we have had perhaps the greatest succession of holy Popes since early Christian times.

Meanwhile the fragmentation of the Church under Protestantism has made it necessary for individual pastors to develop enough spiritual leadership to attract their flocks, while the Catholic clergy still continue to enjoy the comfort of a captive audience, not there to hear a good sermon but because of the Sacraments and their obligation.

The great advantage of unity for those outside the Church will be the Sacraments. A great advantage for those who have remained within the Church will be an influx of teachers like Dr. Ralph Sockman and so many others who are brimming over with the reality of Christ and know how to communicate His reality with skill.

In 1973 one of the major networks presented a confrontation of two "fallen-away" priests with two priests in good standing. One of the fallen-away priests was a monsignor who had been a chancellor of his diocese. He had left the priesthood but he certainly had not left the Church. He said quite frankly that he had found celibacy too hard and decided to obtain remission of his vow. But he remained a sincere and devout man.

And he said that one of his greatest surprises as a layman was listening to sermons. "They are so awful!" he explained. "I have not yet heard one priest, going from church to church in the effort of hearing a good sermon, who would ever make his living if he had to sell insurance."

Is it because the average priest goes off to the seminary as a youngster, starts preaching after his ordination, and therefore never really hears sermons very much? And whether he is good or not, people usually tell him what a fine sermon he has preached. And so he never really gets to know the truth. And less and less, as the years go on, does he take time to prepare the Sunday sermon. The people will be there anyway.

This cannot be so in the Protestant churches, with as many as six or a dozen pastors of different denominations in any good-sized town. And many Protestant churches allow for a pastor to be removed if the congregation is not satisfied with his ministry.

But at least in the Catholic churches the doctrine is unchanging . . . even in this time of change when even as great an intellectual as Han Kung must toe the mark of truth or get out.

We all have a great deal to gain from Christian unity. And it will come when we begin to pray together. And this is ultimately what Fatima promises.

There would have been no concentration camps in Siberia, no Hitler, no World War II, no Korea, no Vietnam, no fear now—if the message of Fatima had been heard. And these prophecies of Fatima were confirmed by a public miracle, witnessed by tens of thousands.

Once again, let us consider the prophecies of Fatima and their importance to every man, woman, and child on earth today, of whatever faith.

Not only did those prophecies foretell World War II a quarter of a century in advance but also the sign of an "unknown light" so that everyone would know when it was about to begin. Finally, a miracle, witnessed by over one hundred thousand, was performed "so that everyone may believe."

To prevent further wars and annihilation of "several entire nations" Fatima tells us what to do.

While questionable prophecies about motion picture stars and the stock market make headlines, many still do not know of the Fatima prophecies!

Our century is experiencing what Paul Claudel rightfully called an explosion of the supernatural "so that everyone may believe" (words of the vision) but only a few in the world even hear about it.

How long must we wait?

NOTES

1. Shortly afterwards Dr. Sockman died and the program did not materialize.

## CHAPTER XXIII

### *Triumph Over Satan*

Let us presume that the world-wide wave of crime and violence would indicate that Satan is fighting violently for his supremacy in the world, and that . . . in view of the miracle of Fatima and subsequent miracles the Immaculate Mediatrix is fighting with an assurance, confirmed to all the world in the Fatima miracle, for the reign of Jesus.

Would it not seem fitting that the contest should be directly between Mary and Satan rather than between Satan and Jesus?

The latter would satisfy Satan's pride: a fallen angel fighting for dominion of the world against God Who became man to redeem it.

But what a crushing defeat to the pride of Satan, an angelic creature, to be defeated by creature lower than himself on the scale of created excellence. And is it not therefore fitting that God, Who came to redeem the world through Mary, should now overcome Satan by establishing the reign of Christ in the world through Her.

Certainly the Age of Mary was fully upon us by the time of the first Vatican Council. The Immaculate Conception was defined and the world was shaken by a sequence of apparitions and miracles at rue du Bac, LaSalette, Lourdes.

The most important book of the Marian Age is *True Devotion to Mary*.<sup>1</sup> It was written by St. Louis de Montfort, a man whom the charismatics can easily understand because de Montfort was much like the modern pentecostals in manner as well as in deed. He was an authentic prophet. He foretold the development of this age in detail and also predicted that the devil would keep his book on *True Devotion* hidden for a century.

This Age of Mary is an *age*, not the flash of a few years. Its ultimate phase will be the triumph of Christianity—a triumph of the Immaculate Heart through which God became man.

St. Grignion describes it as the age of the spiritual coming, the "second coming" of Christ.

It was indeed a century after Grignion de Montfort died that his manuscript was found. His prophecy was discovered at the same moment that it was fulfilled. It seems incredible that such a manuscript written by the founder of a religious community should have been "misplaced" for a hundred years. It has probably become the most important spiritual book of the Marian Age, having influenced the Legion of Mary, the Blue Army and a new concept of Christian perfection.

The book distinguishes between true devotion to Mary and devotion that is not true. It explains that only Christ-oriented devotion to Mary can be true devotion. Grignion de Montfort would even prefer that we speak of devotion in Mary to Jesus, or devotion by Mary to Jesus, rather than to speak of devotion to Mary Herself. He hastens to explain that Mary is worthy of our devotion since "She is by grace what Jesus is by nature" but he explains that devotion directed to Her without reference to Jesus is not true, in the sense that it is not complete or perfect.

Some false zealots today try to remove all devotion to Mary that is not "true" in the Montfortian sense. They want us to tear down the bridge instead of crossing it.

Pope Paul has suffered greatly because of this. He was deeply wounded in Vatican II when he tried to solemnize the proclamation of Our Lady as Mother of the Church, and again three years later when he decided to go to Fatima. He experienced within himself the deadly conflict between Mary and Satan for the perfection of the reign of Jesus, for the new Pentecost. Two years after his trip to Fatima he spoke openly of the wave of diabolism, of "preternatural intervention" to negate ecumenism and the fruits of Vatican II.<sup>7</sup> Later in *Marialis Cultus* His Holiness set down the principles which inspired this present book.

There is no more certain sign that we are presently in the fullness of the Age of Mary than that Satan is revealing himself in the struggle against it. Are we not also calling this "The age of Satan"?

At the beginnings of the Age of Mary the apparitions always carried the same message of prayer and penance (which means sanctification of daily duty). But aside from LaSalette (1846) the early messages were more or less

comforting. If we go back to the miracle of Guadalupe (which contained something of all the subsequent apparitions up to and including the miracle of the sun at Fatima), we find only consolation. "Fear nothing . . . I am your Mother, am I not here?"

But now the messages are heavy with terrible warnings. At Fatima World War II was predicted with precision if men did not NOW begin to listen. The war would come in the reign of the very next Pope; a strange light would appear in the sky as it was about to begin, so that even at the last moment people might repent. And if the world still remained obdurate, confusion would spread from an "atheist Russia throughout the entire world, fomenting further wars . . . several entire nations will be annihilated."

A storm is upon the world. It came suddenly in a wave of drugs and guerrilla war. From some quarters we hear cries of despair . . . while in the charismatic renewal we sense an almost un hoped-for solution.

There are many types of anchor and line which we can conveniently stow on the decks of our lives. There is one that would even work automatically and jettison itself into the waves. It was the special gift of the dying Christ Who said: "Behold your Mother."

To all who love God and seek Him with constancy, the automatic anchor becomes built into their lives. If they do not know Christ, He knows them; if they do not know Mary, She knows them.

It is those who have encountered God and then turned from Him who are in danger and who will almost certainly perish. This is the other and somewhat terrible side of the age of the Holy Spirit. A charism easily obtained becomes immediately an eternal responsibility. From the encounter with God, there can be no turning away. There can be sin, due to our weakness and lack of progress, but not a habit of sin. There can be lapses and falls, but there cannot be a turning away which, of its very nature, spells eternal loss.

The responsibility consequent to an encounter with God is not merely never again to reject Him. We must also use the normal means at our disposal to KNOW Him so that we can begin, even in this life, that total love which His infinite goodness requires.

The Scriptures are the primary source of the knowledge of God (in addition to, or concomitant with, infused knowledge). As we say elsewhere, a commentary like the

synthesis presented by Msgr. Bellord in *Encounter With God* can be particularly useful. But the most important use of the Scripture is in the liturgy, now particularly rich with a change of Scripture almost every day. And immediately following the Mass and office in importance is the scriptural devotion of the Rosary which is an application of fifteen major mysteries contained in Scripture in a timed sequence of prayers.

The Rosary is too simple a devotion to argue about. The proud disdain it. All the encyclicals of Leo XIII and of every Pope of our time which proclaim the need of this devotion could be quoted stentoriously without affecting them. Even the awesome declaration at Fatima ("They must say the Rosary" to save the world) is lost on the proud. It is probably a waste of time to offer them arguments. That is why these pages endeavor to speak only to those who are sincerely seeking inspiration of the Holy Spirit to find the solution to the moral crisis.

Recently, Doubleday published a book called *Five for Sorrow, Ten for Joy* written by Reverend J. Neville Ward, a member of the Faith and Order Committee of the Methodist Church and a governor at Kingswood School in Bath, England.

The book is a series of meditations on the Rosary and in the preface, the Rev. Mr. Ward offers two main reasons "Why a Methodist comes to be using a Rosary":

"There has to be change and variety in the means one uses for maintaining Christian outlook and aspiration or else the life of faith becomes dull," is the first reason he offers.

Secondly he encourages the Rosary as a method of prayer to offset what he calls the "positively deafening" silence in Methodism about the Mother of Christ. He calls it a "mental hang-up" on the part of Protestants. He continues:

"It must be the case that we love her (even if we do not know this yet) because we love the Savior. But we fear being trapped by certain forms of Marian devotion which we suspect come dangerously near to superstition to suggest processes of psychological compensation which we want to question." He concludes the preface to his book recommending the Rosary:

"I am sure that one of the most hopeful means of realizing Christian unity is for Christians of one tradition to



seek to share another tradition's experience of the riches of Christ."

When Pope John XXIII was eighty years old he made a general examination of conscience and was able to write in his diary that he had "thanks to the Grace of God" never committed any sin against purity in his entire life. He said he had begun as a teenager to offer the first decade of the Rosary for this virtue. He ended up saying the entire fifteen decades a day. And he wrote in his diary, at the end of his life, that in this devotion he found all the inspiration needed not only for his own life but also for the guidance of the Church!<sup>2</sup>

How can you convince anyone of such a devotion by intrinsic argument, when it is nothing but a repetition of three simple prayers against the backdrop of fifteen scriptural messages?

It is interesting to note that Pope John, who dedicated one of the very few encyclicals of his holy pontificate to the Rosary, *demonstrated* the use of the Rosary in the encyclical with examples instead of just pontificating about it. We elaborated on the Holy Pope's method in the book *Sex and the Mysteries*, mysteries which can be applied to almost any subject without being exhausted. The book contains four hundred fifty different thoughts related to sex in applying the fifteen mysteries (in a sequence of one hundred fifty repetitions of the basic prayer) for persons alone, persons together, and for children. And in 1971, when sex books were raining on the world, Paul Hallett, of the *Register*, wrote a favorable review after a first reading and several weeks later came back in his column to say it *was*, in his opinion, the best book on the subject.

It would have been far easier to write a book applying the fifteen mysteries to the Charismatic Movement and the apostolate of Holiness. And nothing would speak more eloquently than these fifteen mysteries as any charismatic can verify by just giving them a try. If we started to give examples—as we do briefly in a previous chapter—this book would never reach its end. We have already written such a book titled *Night of Love*, a charismatic night based on the fifteen mysteries of the Rosary.

If someone were to ask us to single out just one reason why the Rosary and devotion to the Mother of Jesus are important to the Charismatic Movement, that reason would be humility.

In Mary is fulfilled the words of Scripture: "The weak things of the world doth God choose to confound the strong."

When Elizabeth, six months with John the Baptist, held Her as "Blessed among Women," Our Lady answered:

"God has regarded the lowliness of His Handmaid" (Luke 1:46).

St. Alphonsus, doctor of the Church, made an interesting comment about that salutation of Elizabeth. "Why," the saint asked "did Elizabeth say 'Whence is it that the Mother of my Lord should come to me'? After all . . . Jesus was there." Elizabeth was one of the first on earth to know of the Incarnation. She recognized at once that Mary was a walking tabernacle, so why did she salute the tabernacle rather than the God within? And St. Alphonsus answers his own question:

"Because Elizabeth knew that in welcoming the Mother she was also welcoming Jesus, Her Son."

Our Lady not only personifies the virtue of humility but She also occasions it. And She obtains it for Her children. She Who comes to us at Fatima surrounded by the sun but with Her hands folded in prayer teaches us how to pray. She helps us to our knees, or She helps us to come forward to affirm our faith in Jesus. If we enter a prayer meeting like the one in which She was centered at the time of the first Pentecost, She fills us with the joy to see the faith of others. She personifies the fundamental virtue of children of God and She, at whose request Jesus performed His first miracle, obtained for us the signs we need for a lively faith.

Fatima and Lourdes are just two places where heaven still proclaims Her "blessed among women" in the thunder of miracles.

How could any charismatic person treat Her with less devotion and respect than did the mother of St. John the Baptist?

And we have been given a *specific sign* in the prophecies of Fatima to indicate when the conversion of Russia and consequent world peace are at hand.

It will be when the Holy Father and all the bishops of the world, on one given day, unite throughout the world to consecrate Russia to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. And so far this united act has been impeded by the crisis in the Church.

# NOTES

1. St. Louis de Montfort, *True Devotion to Mary* (———; Montfort Publications, 1973).

Our Blessed Mother is the faithful Virgin, who by Her fidelity to God repairs the losses which the faithless Eve has caused by her infidelity. It is She who obtains the graces of fidelity and perseverance for those who attach themselves to Her. It is on this account that a saint compares Her to a firm anchor, which holds them fast, and hinders their making shipwreck in the agitated sea of this world, where so many persons perish simply through not being fastened to that anchor. "We fasten our souls," says he, "to thy hope, as to an abiding anchor." It is to Her that the saints who have saved themselves have been the most attached, and have done their best to attach others, in order to persevere in virtue. Happy, then, a thousand times happy, are the Christians who are now fastened faithfully entirely to Her, as to a firm anchor! The violence of the storms of this world will not make them founder, nor sink their heavenly treasures."

2. *L'Osservatore Romano*, July 20, 1972. Also see message on the Devil in the Pope's audience a few months later: *l'Osservatore Romano*, November 1972.

3. "Takes its place for ecclesiastics after Holy Mass and the Breviary and for lay folk after their participation in the Sacraments." Pope John XXIII encyclical issued September 29, 1961, published in *l'Osservatore Romano*, February 10, 1962.

## CHAPTER XXIV

### *The Church: A Charismatic Volcano*

When we have spoken of "charisms" in these pages we have obviously not intended mere qualities of magnetic personality but manifestations of the Holy Spirit, as St. Paul uses the word in his first letter to the Corinthians (12:11): "Therefore, by the Holy Spirit, who distributes the charisms as He wills for the common good."

There are inner charisms such as that of the founder of a religious community or institution because of the special inspiration of the Holy Spirit given to that person for that work. And there are charismatic persons like Father Pio, who was given special gifts which gained him the confidence of souls and enabled him to fulfill a special mission of reconciliation.

Within the Church the Charismatic Movement has always been dynamic albeit without the label and sometimes even without the form of pentecostalism. An example today would be the "cell meetings" in the Blue Army of Our Lady and the all-night vigils.

The cell meetings are one-hour prayer experiences (sometimes called "holy hours") in which from two to six or eight persons participate. In the beginning, prepared scriptural mysteries are used which then lead to spontaneous prayer. As new members join the group, one or two experienced members, who have been in a cell from six months up to a maximum of one year, must leave it and start a new group. This serves a dual purpose: 1) This dynamic spirituality spreads; 2) The group is never too large. And because of this growth by division the group is called a cell.

There are two characteristics about the cell which make it only slightly different from a pentecostal meeting: 1) It is based on the charismatic experience of Fatima which made three children "instant saints"; 2) It is oriented toward the Blessed Sacrament in that a cell actually meets before the

Blessed Sacrament, or, if this is not possible, orients its prayer toward the nearest Sacramental Presence of Christ.

These cell meetings are weak if they do not rise above the formal prayer of the Rosary which is the basic prayer form of the meeting. But sooner or later the miracle happens—the Spirit enters—and the cell becomes a living, thrilling, transforming unit of holiness. The meditations become spontaneous. The intentions of the prayer group explode throughout the decades.

A lawyer by the name of Dr. Carlos Mendes<sup>7</sup> knew the children of Fatima and witnessed the great miracle of October 13, 1917, because he happened to be visiting in the area when it happened. He subsequently became a stretcher-bearer for the sick at the Fatima Shrine and therefore saw dozens of major miracles in his lifetime. Shortly before he died in 1966 we asked him what he had experienced, in his whole life, which inspired and impressed him most.

We expected him to mention the "great miracle" of October thirteenth, which he not only witnessed, but after which he carried Lucia on his shoulder through the crowd. Or perhaps he would recall one of the more dramatic cures he witnessed in subsequent years as a stretcher-bearer. But he said:

"I was walking with the three children, now almost fifty years ago, and as they said the Rosary *each word pierced my heart in a way that I cannot describe.*"

This Rosary charism, more wonderful to him than having seen one of the most dramatic miracles in the history of the world, was interior.

And this what can happen in the Blue Army cell meetings—as "little people" in their parishes, often with minimal parochial support or even nothing more than tolerance, begin to imitate the children of Fatima.

The Blue Army of Our Lady of Fatima, which promotes these cell meetings, uses techniques which have developed from various sources and prove effective. One successful technique is to have a small statue of Our Lady of Fatima, a "Home Pilgrim Virgin," travel in a parish—with a given time allotted to each home (usually three days)—and on one of these days of the visit, the neighborhood is invited.

The success of these meetings depends largely on the manner in which the scriptural mysteries are used. If the Rosary is recited like a string of prayers as lifeless as the

beads they are counted upon, the result will be minimal (although it always has *some* good effect). The great hope is that one or two charismatic individuals will transform the meetings.

Unfortunately most Catholics have been trained to suspect charisms and they cloak themselves and isolate themselves in a mantle of monotonous formality. They tend to look on the charismatic person as odd, too emotional, too demonstrative.

What is to be hoped now, in this age of the Holy Spirit, is that an explosion of faith will change us. That lawyer's moment of charism, remembered out of a lifetime of other wonders, is possible to us all. Such a moment—in a cell meeting even with three children—can transform our entire lives. But we must be open to it.

A more important manifestation of so-called pentecostalism in the Church is a movement which has grown (again **spontaneously**) out of the cells. It is the All-Night Vigil<sup>3</sup> (Night of Love) usually held from about nine P.M. of the First Friday to 6 A.M. on Saturday. These vigils have spread to many parts of the world with attendance today in the many thousands.

A vigil in St. John's Church in New York was launched by the Blue Army with much publicity in 1969 with about two hundred people. Instead of dwindling after the first novelty, the number in regular monthly attendance gradually doubled. The vigils are an "exploding" phenomenon. Some single vigils in the United States draw as many as a thousand. Over eight hundred were attending a vigil in Paris in 1974 which had begun only five years earlier.

Whether a vigil be large or small (both can be effective) sooner or later during the night there are charisms—*sensible* experiences of the Divine reality. And the more the lay people participate the more effective the vigil may be.

We do not infer that it is better for lay persons to give the meditations than for the priest to do it. It is not a question of whether the charismatic person is a priest<sup>4</sup> or a layman. The Holy Spirit comes according to the disposition of the individual. This might be exactly one of the reasons why the Charismatic Movement began completely outside all formal churches. This is a prayer experience (not sacramental) in which a person like Anne Marie Taigi, who is not a priest, might be more effective than the local pastor. Indeed this mother of seven performed almost as many

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charismatic wonders as Francis of Assisi or Anthony of Padua, always under proper spiritual direction. And there are many lay persons like her.

An important distinction must be made between the teaching authority of the Church and the witnessing to the Holy Spirit which can be given to everyone. We will treat of this distinction in a moment but there is still something important we would like to remark on concerning our actual experience with the All-Night Vigils.

Most who have made the vigils are pleasantly surprised that they are not as tired the next day as they had expected. Some say it is as though they had not lost any sleep at all. The degree of the effectiveness of the vigil, as of the cell, is the degree of charismatic abandon, of informality and openness to the spirit of prayer.

In one vigil, a charismatic person who traveled from a distance participated in leading the program from time to time. After almost fifty vigils, one participant confessed: "I keep going back hoping *he* will be there. I can never forget how I felt when he led the vigil."

A good leader, whether clerical or lay, will see that charismatic persons are brought to the fore. Any vigil is attended by some persons who are charismatic. What a waste it is to fill the night with some stiff and formal voices when it could be vibrating with the fire and reality of the "explosion of the supernatural" which has already taken place in many hearts!

This brings up the important question of the role of the lay person and the distinction between "teacher" and "witness."

When lay persons lead prayer and give meditations, they are witnesses of the Spirit. They do not speak as "teachers"—which is the role of the priest. And their witnessing often sets ritualism, even liturgy itself, afire.

Dale Francis, one of the outstanding Catholic laymen of our day says:

Baptism in the Holy Spirit is an "actualization" when one says "yes" to what was already given at the time of baptism. You can say this "yes" in a "crisis way" like traditional Pentecostals, or in a "growth pattern" as most frequently happens with Catholics. But if we are to be fully Catholic, then somewhere along the way

we must have a transformation in our life, a coming of realization of what it means to be a Catholic.

Whether it comes suddenly like a light, as it did for Paul on the road to Damascus (or as it sometimes comes at Catholic Pentecostal meetings) or through slow realization, it must come.<sup>5</sup>

We can recognize its coming primarily by its fruits. And one of the first fruits of "realization of what it means" is a longing to know Christ, and by knowing Him to love Him more deeply, more sincerely, more vividly. And this leads of course at once to a reading of what Our Lord said, what He did, as put down in the sacred word of the Gospels.

Perhaps one of the major reasons for the Rosary is that, as Pope Leo XIII said, "The fifteen mysteries of the Rosary comprise all the essential mysteries of Christianity." And the particular charismatic development which we see in the apostolate at Fatima is the development of the scriptural meditations by the laity who, more and more, throughout America and the world, are voluntarily coming to church before Mass, or remaining after Mass, to say the Rosary in preparation or in thanksgiving for the Eucharistic liturgy. They meditate upon these mysteries prayerfully in order to enter more deeply into their relationship with Jesus.

Often there is the ardent desire among these groups to enter into the mysteries of Jesus through the prayer of the Rosary. But due to a lack of knowledge of courage, the scriptural meditations may not be emphasized as they should be and the desire of the group is frustrated. They get once again in nothing more than habitual formalism, a string of vocal prayers. Then one day a charismatic person leads with fullness of the spirit overcoming timidity. Special meditations for the Eucharistic liturgy are used, often exploding spontaneously throughout the decades. Then this preparation for the Eucharistic liturgy becomes a transforming fire to make the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass the greatest of all possible experiences. Here are some examples<sup>6</sup> which are eloquent even when stripped of the inflections of faith and love:

1. *The Mystery of the Annunciation.* At the words of an angel, in Mary the Word was made flesh . . . "Lend me Your Immaculate Heart O Mary, to receive Jesus, my Lord and my God as You did as You heard those words of the angel." Hail Mary . . .



2. *The Agony in the Garden.* Out of the twelve Apostles, Christ chose three aside to participate in His Agony even as I am among the few called here now to share His Passion in the Mass as I hear Him say: "Could you not watch one hour with Me?" "Keep Me alert, O Mary! Make me fully aware that I am to be present at the actual passion of Christ." Hail Mary . . .

3. *The Resurrection.* Mary Magdalen thought the Man in the garden was just a man until He spoke Her name . . . "In a few moments I shall receive Our Lord, Mother! Plead with Jesus at this sacred moment that He whisper to me my name . . . that I recognize Him!" Our Father, Hail Mary, etc.

Many of the scriptural mysteries of the Rosary are much more meaningful as preparation for the Eucharistic liturgy than the three above. We chose only the very first of each of the five although several other mysteries (the Crucifixion, the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles, etc.) would seem even more applicable. The total meaningful use of all fifteen scriptural mysteries can transform our participation in the Eucharistic liturgy into a central experience of our lives. Indeed, the Rosary properly said—especially in common and with spontaneous meditation—can effectively bring us to that gradual baptism of the spirit.

And this is something lay people are doing. All pastors are welcoming it more and more because the results are tangible and extraordinary, not only in the spirit of participation in the liturgy itself, but even in the general effect on the entire parish.

Not to be mundane, there is even a noticeable (and understandable) increase in financial support to the parish at the offertory of the Mass.

It requires persons of prayer, charismatic persons, to make these scriptural meditations spontaneously. They can be done effectively if they are prepared, and if they are read sincerely. But they are most effective when inspired by a knowledge of Scripture and appreciation of their application to the sacred mystery of the "present moment." Each person who is participating in the Rosary should take a turn and try. It is not beyond any of us. It is not necessary to make some long meditations between the decades. It is only necessary to make a spontaneous intention for each individual Rosary prayer. Often this method is the most ef-

fective. And who of us does not have enough intentions to relate to those joyful, sorrowful, and glorious mysteries of the life of Jesus?

Finally (although this may be of much less interest to the general reader) we see the rise in the Church of the Houses of Prayer.

When we opened a special convent<sup>7</sup> for such a cenacle at the National Center of the Blue Army in the United States, one of the bishops present remarked to another:

"This is a wonderful sign of the spiritual vitality of the Church . . . that when so many active communities are closing up, a community like this is opening its doors!"

The House of Prayer is a return to primary dedication to the vocation of prayer. The foundress of our particular House of Prayer spent many years studying prayer life in the Church. She actually spent time in various cloistered communities, studying their spirit, their method, and discussing with members of the various communities what they thought ideal.

The result is a community which dedicates eight hours of its day to prayer, not so much in the formalized way of the past, but in a more spontaneous and joyous manner which allows a great deal of freedom to the expression of the spirit of the individual.

The titles "House of Prayer" and "cenacle" are used interchangeably because this house is looked upon as a center to attract the Holy Spirit, to draw Him down not only upon the members of the community even as the Virgin Mary drew the Holy Spirit into the House of Nazareth. The central mystery of their lives is the Incarnation. They hope to bring down the Holy Spirit to such an extent that the entire world about them may experience Jesus.

Our own conviction of the importance, and also the effectiveness of such communities is confirmed in those words of Ezekiel (47:1-9):

"The angel brought me back to the entrance of the temple of the Lord, and I saw water flowing beneath the threshold of the temple toward the east . . . from the south . . . by the north . . ." And the prophet describes how the water kept getting deeper and deeper as he circled the temple and saw it flowing from all sides until finally it formed a great river "that could not be crossed except by swimming." Along the sides of the river he saw trees growing up and living creatures multiplying and living among them.

And then the angel said: "Along both banks of the river fruit trees of every kind shall grow; their leaves shall not fade nor their fruit fail. Every month they shall bear fresh fruit, for they shall be watered by the flow from the sanctuary. Their fruit shall serve for food, and their leaves for medicine."

For our particular House of Prayer we recreated an exact replica of the Holy House of Nazareth where the Incarnation actually took place. We were fortunate to obtain stones from the original house which we pulverized and distributed through all the walls of this Holy House U.S.A. so that we could help those praying within it. Insofar as it was physically possible we wanted to deepen the sense of the community's extraordinary and high vocation to attract the Holy Spirit into their own midst and into the community of man.

In absolute rejection of Jansenism, this fresh approach to prayer is not afraid to use tangible "props" and emotional "aids." It is not afraid or ashamed of the emotion of encountering God.

## NOTES

1. See *Lucia Speaks* and Very Rev. Galamba de Oliveira, *Jacinta* (Washington, N.J.: AMI Press).
2. In his later life Dr. Carlos Mendes built a house at Fatima and retired there. See *Meet the Witnesses*, p. 77.
3. Not all these vigils are marked by charisms in the pentecostal sense. See John M. Halfert, *Night of Love* (Washington, N.J.: AMI Press, 1966).
4. "Charism" is used in the limited sense of spontaneous prayer or inspiration. Bishop Charles Helmsing makes an important distinction:

A thorough study of Section 12 of *Lumen Gentium* of the II Vatican Council should make us wary of the limitation of charismatic in regard to the present day prayer groups. He was concerned by this limitation of the term charism. Every gift given for others is a charism, including as St. Paul says, administration. No

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doubt, most people acquainted with spiritual literature would include ecstasy among charisms. St. Francis de Sales beautifully explains that true ecstasy consists in being knocked out of our selfishness and self-seeking in our surrender to God's Will, and to the duties in our state in life.

(Personal letter to the author, July 31, 1974.)

5. *The Catholic Voice*, July 20, 1972.

6. Complete examples may be obtained free of charge by sending a stamped and self-addressed envelope to the Blue Army, Washington, N.J. 07882.

7. Holy House, U.S.A., Washington, N.J. (in charge of Felician Sisters).

## CHAPTER XXV

### *Crisis in the Church*

Why is it that one of the most evident charisms in the Church at the present time is the Stigmata? Why does heaven call for victim souls such as Alexandrina and Father Pio? Why are there "signs" like the miracle of "weeping" images often with human tears (demonstrated by analysis) and also real tears of blood?

Earlier we mentioned the book *Segno Dei Tempi* published in Italy in 1973 with photographs of no fewer than nine images in Italy alone currently evidencing the phenomenon of tears.

When such a distinguished group of writers as Nasselli, Grasso, Laurentin, and Vittorio de Bernardi collaborated on the book *Segno Dei Tempi*, with details of more than a dozen current apparitions in Italy too recent for approval, they declared that while waiting for the final verdict of the Church there seems adequate evidence of a charismatic explosion. Why?

Perhaps there is a coincidence of two reasons: 1) The moral crisis in the world and the Church; 2) the "hour" for the second coming of Christ.

St. Grignon de Montfort said that the second coming of Christ would be in men's hearts. He said it was not to be confused with the last coming in glory, and says it will take place through the Holy Spirit the second time just as it did the first. Only this time the Holy Spirit will be descending not just upon Mary (to bring about the Incarnation) but the Holy Spirit will come down into many hearts . . . and Jesus will become present in them.

Is this not truly what we are experiencing on a wide scale at the present moment? Is it not urgent—is it not necessary—now to make clear what the prophecy of St. Grignon de Montfort stresses: That this will be through Mary?

It may happen to many souls who may not yet for-

mally know and understand the role of Mary. The saint says (so logically) that Mary will attract the Holy Spirit into souls, even as Her own pure Heart attracted Him to bring about the Incarnation in the first place. The presence of Jesus will follow.

Is it not important that all Christians experiencing charisms open their minds and hearts to this logic? And is it not important that we all pray more sincerely and fervently? Don't we all need the new Pentecost? And don't we all, more than ever, need the guiding authority Jesus gave us in the Church?

It is not without reason that we have spoken before of the danger of some persons being misled by changes in the Church, by a few priests losing their faith or not exercising their pastoral ministry and then deciding that the Church is no longer important and that they should go where they could find a vibrant interest in faith, and in their personal problems of faith.

While it may be the hour of the "second coming" it is also an hour of crisis in the Church, as evidenced by this recent letter received from a friend of the writer:

We've kept in touch for many years. Probably twenty. I've been a Catholic for twenty-five but unhappy with its teachings for the past five or six, since all the changes.

My son and family are Jehovah's Witnesses and for the past seven or eight years I've been observing, reading, listening and attending now and then, and have found it to be the religion that really lives up to the Bible teachings. So a year ago I dedicated my life to Jehovah God and am trying to live and do only what is pleasing to Him. I really tried to stay with the Catholic Church, but I couldn't continue and not believe.

Jehovah God knows our hearts now. I love the study program and have been through the Bible and am most happy.

Thank you again for your thoughtfulness and may Jehovah bless you much during 1974.

Warmest Agape-love, G.B.

We replied:

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I rejoice with you in your discovery of the Scriptures and in a new and deeper relationship with God. But since you did not have any study and prayer program in your parish—and could find this program only outside—why did you not start one?

The crisis in the Church should be a matter of greater concern to us than all of the phenomena, the charisms, the apparitions, and everything else that so easily attract our attention. In the *City of God* is a revelation about the Church and its condition at the time of the Reformation. We would like to quote it extensively rather than resort to mere historical notes because it is the Mother of the Church Who speaks:

Deplore, with inmost groaning and sighing and, if possible, with tears of blood, the difference between the state of the holy Church in our times and that of those primitive times. Its purest gold of holiness has been obscured (*Thren.* 4). The ancient beauty, in which the Apostles have founded it, is lost. It has sought foreign and deceitful powders and paints to cover the horrid and distorted ugliness of vice. . . .

How great and abundant are the gifts and favors which the infinite power communicates to those souls who do not hinder his most liberal bounty! At the beginning of the Church He showed His bounty by such great prodigies and wonders, frequently sending the Holy Ghost in a visible manner, and most of all in the Apostles and disciples. In them there was no hindrance to His eternal and holy Will. They were true instruments and executors of the divine love, imitators and successors of Christ and followers of truth. Hence they were elevated to an ineffable participation in the attributes of God, especially as regards his science, holiness and power, working for themselves and for the souls such great miracles a mortal man cannot ever sufficiently extol . . .

This infinite kindness of God is just as great now as in the first ages of the Church. The inclination of the highest Goodness to enrich souls is not changed, nor can it be. His condescending liberality has not diminished. The love of His Church is always at its height. His mercy is just as much concerned at the miseries of

men, which in our times are become innumerable. The clamor of the sheep of Christ is louder than ever.

The prelates, priests and ministers are more numerous than heretofore. If this is so, to what is to be attributed the loss of so many souls and the ruin of the Christian people? Why is it that the infidels not only do not enter the Church, but subject it to so much affliction and sorrow? Why do not the prelates and ministers shine before the world, exhibiting the splendors of Christ, as in the ages gone by and in the primitive Church?

Shed tears over this loss and ruin! Consider how the stones of the sanctuary are scattered about in streets of the city (**Thren.** 4:1). See how the priests of the Lord have assimilated themselves to the people (**Isa.** 24:2), when, on the contrary, they should raise the people to the holiness, which is due to priesthood. The sacerdotal dignity and the precious vestments of virtue are soiled by contagion with the worldly. The anointed of the Lord, consecrated solely to His worship and intercourse, have lapsed from their noble and godlike station. They have lost their beauty in debasing themselves to vile actions, unworthy of their exalted position among men. They affect vanity. They indulge greed and avarice. They serve their own interest. They love money and place their hopes in treasures of silver and gold. They submit to the flatteries and to the slavery of the worldly and powerful and, to their still lower degradation, they subject themselves to the petty whims of women, and sometimes make themselves participants in the counsels of malice and wickedness.

There is hardly a sheep in the fold of Christ which recognizes in them the voice of its Pastor, or finds from them the nourishment of that redeeming virtue and holiness which they should show forth. The little ones ask for bread, and there is none to distribute (**Thren.** 4:4). And if it is dealt out in self-interest or as a compliment, how can it afford wholesome nourishment to the necessitous and infirm from such leprous hands? How shall the heavenly Physician confide to such administrators the medicine of life? Or how can the guilty ones intercede and mediate mercy for those who are less, or even equally, guilty?

These are the reasons why the prelates and priests



of our times do not perform the miracles of the Apostles and disciples, and of those who in the primitive Church imitated their lives by an ardent zeal for the honor of the Lord and the conversion of souls. On this account the treasures of the blood and death of Christ in the Church do not bear the same fruits, either in his priests and ministers, nor in the other mortals. If they neglect and forget to make them fruitful in themselves, how can they expect them to flow over in the rest of the human family?

On this account the infidels are not converted on learning of the true faith, although they live within sight of the princes of the Church, the ministers and preachers of the Gospels. The Church in our times is richer in temporal goods, rents and possessions; it abounds with learned men, great prelacies, and multiplied dignities. As all these advantages are due to the blood of Christ, they ought all to be used in His honor and service, promoting the conversion of souls, supporting His poor and enhancing the worship and veneration of His holy name.

Let not the chastisement of these vanities and abuses, and of others unknown to the world, astonish you. Be not surprised that divine justice has so much forsaken the prelates, ministers and preachers of his word, or that the Catholic Church, having such an exalted position in its beginnings, should now be brought to such low estate. And if there are some priests and ministers who are not infected with these lamentable vices, the Church owes so much the more to my divine Son in these times, when He is so deeply offended and outraged.

With those that are zealous, He is most liberal. But they are few in number, as is evident from the ruin of the Christian people and from the contempt into which the priests and preachers of the Gospel have fallen. For if the number of the perfect and the zealous workers were great, without a doubt sinners would reform and amend their lives; many infidels would be converted; all would look upon and hear with reverence and fear such preachers, priests and prelates. They would respect them for their dignity and holiness and not for their usurped authority and outward

show, which induces a reverence too much like worldly applause and altogether without fruit.

Do not be afraid or abased for having written this. They themselves know that it is the truth and that you do not write of your own choice, but at my command. Hence bewail such a sad state. Invite heaven and earth to help you in your weeping, for there are few who sorrow on account of it and this is the greatest of all injuries committed against the Lord by the children of the Church.<sup>1</sup>

Although this revelation was given three hundred years ago, in some parts of the world it might seem as though it were written now. Does not the reference to tears of blood give new meaning to the various images of Our Lady which have been seen to shed tears, and even human blood, at this very moment? One of these miracles, in Syracuse, has been certified by the Church and how many think to ask what might be the message of these tears?

But the reason we chose to use this particular quotation from the *City of God* is not so much because of its historical content but because of its theological content. The most striking sentence in the entire statement is:

"Regardless of how some priests may fail as men . . . as far as His [God's] will is concerned . . . the inclination of the highest Goodness to enrich souls is not changed . . ."

There will be some time before the Church reacts fully to the impact of the post Reformation scourge of militant atheism and to the full impact of the miracle of Fatima and of the Apostolate of Prayer now developing. And the words of the Mother of the Church quoted above must be kept in mind lest we be as stupid as the legendary figure who killed the goose that laid a golden egg. God has established the Church as the channel of His grace and, as far as His will is concerned, no matter what the condition of the individual minister *the inclination of Almighty God to dispense His graces through these channels, and to enrich souls through them, is not changed.*

Scripture tells us that when the high priest Caiaphas sentenced Jesus to death saying it was better for one man to die for the people, "he spoke as the high priest"—he spoke as the true minister and voice of God.

No matter what judgment we make of our ecclesiastical authority in a human way, there is a divine certainty that

we cannot err in following that authority. Jesus said to Peter: "Upon this rock I shall build My Church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." And without the Church we cannot have Christian unity.

We come to the end of this book with so many things left unsaid.

We have made a declaration of faith in a new world finding God. We have affirmed that miracles are happening and more and more wonders can be expected in proportion to the increase of faith in the world.

As a consequence it is a moment both of vitality and of discernment. We must consolidate our strength (which is not unopposed!). More than ever we need the Sacraments and the direction of the Church which is a source of charisms flowing over in Fatima and Lourdes, into Therese of Lisieux and Padre Pio, in Maximilian Kolbe, in Maria Goretti, in Don Bosco, and thousands upon thousands of others! Was there ever such a fountain of holiness?

But it lacks a voice, and it lacks adequate involvement of the laity.

This writer has seen many miracles and met many holy persons because he happens to be multilingual and he travels. But he can understand the person whose letter was quoted in the previous chapter, a friend of more than twenty years who was disillusioned in a little parish where the priest did not care, was perhaps sometimes seen "under the influence," and all she got out of her Church was a reminder of her Sunday obligation and of church support. She finally went elsewhere to learn about Jesus, to be given a love of Scripture and of praying together.

But this is not just the priest's fault. Laity lead study and prayer groups in other faiths. Laymen almost single handedly started the wave of pentecostal prayer in the world.

What is the matter with our Catholic laity?

They have a tradition of "being led." They seem to expect the Church to get them to heaven and the Church to save the world. They have forgotten that together with the priests they are the Church. Perhaps, in the final analysis, that is why Pope John XXIII was inspired by the Holy Spirit to convene the Second Vatican Council. The dogmatic constitution on the Church, promulgated by that council, says emphatically that we are all the Church—and even more, speaks of the priesthood of the laity.

It's about time that we started to be the Church in practice. And if Father Hugh Modotti's millionaire has failed to produce the voice we need to proclaim from skyscrapers and mountaintops the message of the Church and of the new Pentecost, will we sit back drowning in voices of atheism and evil? Are we not numerous enough to create a voice to blast the secular silence, drown out the cacophony of evil, fill the world with the reality of miracles and fill the Eastern void left by atheism?

On October 2, 1974, *The New York Times* had two articles facing each other on opposite pages. On the left was the major speech just given at the opening of the synod in Rome by Cardinal Wyszyński who said that the countries behind the Iron Curtain were now "ready for evangelization." On the other page, facing this extraordinary statement at the opening of the Synod of Bishops, was an article stating that the Communists had made a final move toward total power in Portugal, the very country where Our Lady of Fatima had appeared at the dawn of the Soviet revolution.

On the one page Cardinal Wyszyński declared that atheism had failed and that a religious vacuum behind the Iron Curtain was now waiting to be filled. And on the other page we read of a new victory of militant atheism in the Western world, on the continent's closest air gateway to America.

Perhaps the recollection of these two news stories of October 2, 1974, facing each other in *The New York Times*, is the right image to leave as we close this book on the *Explosion of the Supernatural*.

The story on one side offers the hope of the promised victory, and the story on the other is one of failure among the people before whom God performed a miracle to prove His promise.

A prominent priest in Portugal, a professor in a seminary, told us that the reason for failure in Portugal (however limited and temporary it might be) was because "we have not sufficiently responded to the Fatima message, especially we priests."<sup>2</sup>

The denouement is now.

There is one—just one—thing each of us must do. We were told this at Fatima. If we do it the voice will be heard, Russia will be converted, the world will be turned upside down from evil to good.

*It has been promised.*

And the one thing we must do is pray—and get others to pray. The First Saturday program, which is a study and prayer program par excellence, is the first step. Two or three praying together (the cell) can enable any parish to take that First Saturday step successfully. Then there are the vigils, the nights of generosity that make up for the carelessness of millions and thus speed us on the path of triumph.

There will be some surprises in the days that are coming. There is an almost universal voice of chastisement and doom that tries to drown out the hopeful voice of authentic prayer, of an outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

Of one of the more wonderful surprises it is perhaps too early to speak. But it is not too early to welcome its early light:

There is going to be a worldwide perception not only of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of light and of love, but there will be a perception of God-triune through the Eucharist.

Do we forget that there were two secrets of Fatima? The first, better known, was opened in 1960 by Pope John XXIII (who preferred that it should not be made public). The other, given in the last public message at Fatima, was about the Trinity:

Suddenly the whole Chapel was illumined by a supernatural light, and a cross of light appeared above the altar, reaching to the ceiling. In a bright light at the upper part of the cross could be seen the face of a man and his body to the waist (Father) on his breast there was a dove also of light (Holy Spirit) and, nailed to the cross, was the body of another man (Son). Somewhat above the waist, I could see a chalice and a large host suspended in the air, on to which drops of blood were falling from the face of Jesus Crucified and from the wound in His side. These drops ran down on to the host and fell into the chalice. Our Lady was beneath the right arm of the cross ( . . . it was Our Lady of Fatima with Her Immaculate Heart . . . in Her left hand . . . without sword or roses, but with a crown of thorn and flames . . . ). Under the left arm of the cross, large letters, as of crystal clear water which ran down over the altar, formed these words: "Graces and Mercy." I understood that it was

the Mystery of the Most Holy Trinity which was shown to me, and I received lights about this Mystery which I am not permitted to reveal.<sup>3</sup>

Perhaps when that secret is revealed about the Holy Trinity we will already have arrived at the triumph that has been promised.

How reminiscent that final vision of Fatima is to the vision of the "Chalice of Our Lord" to the Holy Patriarch Athenagoras which was made public in an interview with *Life* reporter Peter Dragadze in March 1967. His Holiness said: "I often see a beautiful hand holding the Chalice of Our Lord over a nearby hill, and I hear secret voices that speak of love between humanity and peace among men."<sup>4</sup>

In the very first apparition at Fatima Our Lady asked the children if they would be willing to accept all that God would send them and to offer it up in reparation and for the conversion of sinners. When the children answered that they would, Our Lady performed Her first miracle. She let Her hands fall. Rays of light streamed upon the children causing them to "feel lost in God" as Lucia describes it in her memoirs. And then all three children cried out instinctively: "O most Holy Trinity, I adore Thee! My God, my God, I love Thee in the most Blessed Sacrament."<sup>5</sup>

This is the Sacrament of unity. Jesus instituted it on the night before He died as He prayed: "Father, that they may be one as You and I are One." (John 17:21).

And at that same Last Supper, in which for the first time He gave them His own body as food to be united to theirs, He said: "Many things yet I have to say to you, but you cannot bear them now.

"But when he, the spirit of truth, has come, he will teach you all the truth. For He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He will hear He will speak and the things that are to come He will declare to you. He will glorify Me, because He will receive of what is mine and declare it to you. All things that the Father has are mine. That is why I have said that He will receive of what is mine and declare it to you."

## NOTES

1. From *City of God*.

This revelation was first published on May 6, 1667. All of its contents are verified by history. We might also quote the dialogue of St. Catherine of Siena, and such works as Doellinger on the reasons for the Reformation published in three volumes in Ratisbonne, 1846–1848, or Guiraud, *l'Eglise et ses Origines* (second edition, Paris, 1902), or Pastor's *Lives of the Popes*, especially volumes 4 and 5, but out of that refuse pile of sordid history, how could we select and interpret with any authority?

So once again we would suggest that those who may not accept private revelation might read this as a meditation on history. About half a century after the Baptists were founded and about half a century before the Methodists.

2. *Soul Magazine*, November 1974–February 1975, p. 3.3. *Lucia Speaks*, p. 494. *The World's Greatest Secret*, p. 171.5. *Lucia Speaks*, p. 23.

## CHAPTER XXVI

### *More Than an Atomic Bomb*

The explosion of the supernatural is like a flare going up over a world in darkness. It is God's merciful intervention at a time when most men are losing their souls.<sup>1</sup>

Archbishop Baranzini, commenting on the miracle of Syracuse, could have been referring to the meaning of all these phenomena when he said: "It involves both a solemn warning and a consoling assurance . . . because our twentieth century is a century of gross sensuality and intellectual confusion."

After the miracle of the sun at Fatima the ten-year-old child who had spoken to the vision cried to the crowd: "Men must cease offending God Who is already so much offended!"

At La Salette we were told by a weeping vision that the punishment from God would be because of sins, especially those directly against God, namely, profanation of His Name and of Sunday. And Archbishop Baranzini, addressing the people of Syracuse before the weeping image of the Immaculate Heart said:

"And you, beloved Syracuse, have you no cause to shed tears for your countless children who refuse to sanctify Sunday, who shirk their obligation of attending Sunday Mass, who remain aloof from the Sacraments, who profane their marriage vows, who have no concern for the education of their children, who turn a deaf ear to the voice of Holy Mother Church and let themselves be taken by false prophets arrayed in the clothing of sheep but in reality ravenous wolves?"

It is interesting that within the families where some of the miracles of tears have taken place—as in Porto San Stefano and Syracuse—members of the families involved had not only strayed from the Sacraments but had openly embraced Communism. Archbishop Baranzini continued:

"No, the tears of Mary are not tears of joy. They are the bitter tears of sorrow and they are intended as a warning



for me, for my clergy, for all of you, my dear people, to lead better lives and to return to the narrow path of our personal and social obligations. And I have learned in these last few days [i.e., of the tears and of several miraculous cures which followed] that many have come back to Holy Mother Church and have returned to the Sacraments. It is a great consolation for us. However wonderful the feats performed in the realm of nature, they cannot compare with those performed in the souls of men. Now in progress at Turin is the fourteenth National Eucharistic Congress commemorating the miraculous ascension of the Sacred Host that hovered over the altar and remained in mid-air until the elevation of the chalice when the Bishop spoke these words: 'Abide with us, O Lord' . . .

As Archbishop Baranzini finished with a prayer that the message and effect of the miracle of Syracuse would "abide with us" a cry arose in the crowd:

"A miracle! A miracle!"

An eight-year-old deaf-mute had emitted an incoherent cry. As the crowd responded to the invocation led by the archbishop, "Immaculate Heart of Mary, have pity on us!" the little girl's voice sounded clearly: "Viva Maria! Viva la Madonna!"

And more people believed. More people, from that day on, would know how to pray. Darkness, in which they had been so long engulfed, had been pierced by light from another world. A journalist in the crowd named Carratore later wrote: "As long as we live we will never forget it."

Those who actually experience these events usually believe in them, but there is no way of bringing the reality of this explosion of the supernatural to the rest of the world. Publications which carry this news are usually read only by believers.

Through television such miracles can be brought into the homes of millions instantly. Our immediate hope is in personalized miracles of the Charismatic Renewal enabling individuals all over the world to emit cries of faith as did Carratore in the square of Syracuse, or a young "hippie" in London saying with a wistful passionate assurance: "I spoke in tongues."

From the faith of those who have seen and have believed there is hope that a united voice may arise to announce the good news to an otherwise hopeless world: "It is not too late! You are not lost! The darkness is going to end!" There

is consolation in the old adage that it is "always darkest before the dawn."

Certainly the darkness of immorality in the entire world is as dense now as perhaps ever in recorded history. A CBS survey televised in January of 1975 claimed that promiscuity in high schools (let alone colleges!) is general. The annual use of contraceptive pills is numbered not by the millions, but beyond a billion. Less than half of the men of the United States find religion or any relevance in their lives, according to the same survey, and many of these admit to a "new morality."

In the book *Sex and the Mysteries* it is argued that self-control can be a joy. Perhaps the most important statement in that book, after some three hundred pages of examples, is that just for saying the Rosary properly each day we felt certain that no one would fall into mortal sin and would enjoy the glorious freedom of the clean of heart.<sup>2</sup>

Perhaps, as anyone who has read that book knows, the above statement implies charismatic prayer—real and sincere.

Perhaps the darkness around us is so dense that such prayer is even impossible now unless God comes directly to our aid—there is an "explosion" of God's power in our midst.

But as St. Paul tells us these charisms are given FOR THE GOOD OF ALL (1 Cor. 12:7). They are never merely personal.

Time may be running out for our neighbors, for our very families, more rapidly than we think. The divine flares are soaring over the darkness. While they are exploding above us, we had best do two things: 1) Secure our own position by adopting a personal continuing program of prayer . . . with the right companionship and direction; 2) find the means of bringing **this** to our neighbors.

Our Lord sent twelve men out into the world to announce that the "Light has come into the darkness." What if they had decided to let someone else be His voice? What if they had decided to stay in the cenacle? What if St. Paul had remained in the desert after his charismatic experience on the road to Damascus?

Who will be the twelve, and who will be the Paul, now?

I met one—who looked like a young "hippie"—at a Vesper service in London. I meet them every month at All-Night Vigils. I begin to see them on television.

## 224 *EXPLOSION OF THE SUPERNATURAL*

The light is beginning to pierce the darkness. Many of those seeing this light have had messages of a terrible chastisement to come before the light finally breaks through. What else could be the meaning of the miracles of the miraculous tears, even of blood, especially since 1972? What else could be the meaning of the light seen over northern Spain on June 12, 1974? Or the light over Mount Sion?

But many who see the light see something else. Many prophesy that there will be a signal protection of those who have accepted the light and who are trying to push back the darkness.

After the bloodred light flashed for an hour over a latitude of more than a thousand miles on June 12, 1974, millions saw it "write" in the sky while high in the stratosphere a white "M" that shone over the world, from which spread wings of blue. This was at once reminiscent of an ancient but still popular image of Mary appearing in the clouds with Her blue mantle held far out on each side by angels, while crowds of people gathered beneath it. There is such a picture frescoed in the crypt of the ancient castle of Ourem, the castle of Fatima. Following recent messages to mystics, similar pictures have been reproduced under titles such as *Our Lady of All Nations*, *Queen of the Universe*, and *Mother of Mercy*.

After the first atomic bomb destroyed Hiroshima a devout man—the kind of person one finds today in the prayer cells of the Blue Army of Our Lady or in charismatic prayer meetings—got up and walked away from the death and destruction although he had been within eight blocks of the very center of the explosion.

In a television program in New York we brought this man face-to-face with the co-pilot of the plane from which the bomb was dropped. We still have this program on film and we still marvel as we hear and see the pilot describe the incredible effect of the blast as he saw it from the sky—and then see and hear that devout man who was at the very center of the explosion and walked out of it.

Still in perfect health in 1975, he wrote a booklet for the Blue Army of Our Lady in which he says:

In one frightful second a proud city of half a million souls was wiped out from the face of the earth. Nothing remained but an "atomic desert," and the

word 'Hiroshima' became a symbol of total destruction.

To be a survivor of the first atomic bomb in human history, and to have felt its tremendous concussion within the most deadly one-mile radius, gives me the non-enviable "advantage" of first-hand experience. Experts have told me that I "ought to be dead."

The atom bomb has not only brought total destruction, but it may well bring a continuing threat and terror upon mankind, a spiritually dividing effect worse than the physical destruction. We all, living in this atomic age, have the responsibility to do something about it. We all want to promote a real peace. But is there a remedy?

Do you know anything more moving than a five-year-old laying his little hand into yours and going with you, his eyes shining with confidence in your goodness? We adults have too often forgotten that God is our Creator and Father. We prefer to go our own ways instead of accepting God's guidance. And then, we run into trouble. We then have to solve "the problem of the atom bomb."

How would you feel as a human father if your children would whisper and chatter together and then look into every corner for a "solution" to their difficulties without ever coming to tell you about them?

We all need and desperately want world peace. And what do we do to attain it? International conferences, economic measures, defense production, civil defense training. We do almost everything we can think of, except the most important thing: PRAYER.

Prayer is more powerful than the atom bomb. It promotes and deepens the spirit of human brotherhood. Americans and Japanese. Germans and French, Chinese and British, Buddhists and Christians —they all need to realize that God is our common Creator and Father.

What we need today is a Crusade of Prayer, the spirit of prayer everywhere, a renewal of our deepest trust and confidence in God's providence.

Our blessed Mother promised at Fatima that when we heeded her plea for prayer and Christian action, the world would have peace. We may feel that our humble efforts cannot have such a tremendous effect

upon the world, but let us think for the moment about the power of a river, sweeping everything before it. That river is made up of tiny drops of water, and because numberless tiny drops of rain have fallen into it, the river has become a voice that carries heavy ships and changes deserts into fruitful farms and gardens.

So, too, will the recitation of the rosary for peace by countless persons all over the world become an immense and irresistible spiritual force for peace. In this universe there is nothing else that forms a common ground for the peoples of the world except the love of God, charity, and the spirit of prayer.

In the rest of this booklet, Father Hubert Schiffer,<sup>4</sup> S.J., who had been teaching science in a college in Hiroshima at the time of the atomic explosion, goes on to describe the total absence of sound which he experienced after the explosion—a total silence which made him think that he was dead. Some two hundred experts in the last quarter of a century, studying the effects of the bomb, have incredulously examined him and wondered what it was that preserved him from being destroyed when hundreds of thousands around him had died in an instant. In the booklet he quotes the co-pilot whom he met for the first time on our television program and who said that as they looked down:

"There in front of our eyes was without a doubt the greatest explosion man has ever witnessed; the city was nine-tenths covered with smoke of a boiling nature which seemed to indicate buildings blowing up, and a large column of white cloud in less than three minutes reached thirty thousand, and then went to at least fifty or sixty thousand feet. I am sure the entire crew felt that this experience was more terrifying than any human being had ever thought possible. It just seemed impossible to comprehend. Just how many people had we killed? . . . If I live a hundred years I will never get these few minutes out of my mind."

And then Father Schiffer goes on to say that on the other side of the world, a year after that frightful explosion, "occurred a series of events which on the surface seem to have no connection but which have since proved to be the most powerful single force in preventing a repetition of the horrible experience of Hiroshima and Nagasaki." He went on

to describe the development of the apostolate of Our Lady of Fatima, known as the Blue Army, which has since spread throughout the entire world with the commitment of millions to pray daily that men may be united in faith and in prayer for peace.

Father Hubert Schiffer also wrote about the building of a peace memorial in Hiroshima. It was to be a cathedral in honor of the Assumption of Our Lady as it was on the feast of the Assumption, August fifteen, that the peace treaty was signed in 1945. Behind the cathedral was to be built a memorial auditorium and kindergarten for children.

By coincidence, it was when the Blue Army of Our Lady took the international Pilgrim Virgin of Our Lady of Fatima, the same statue which shed tears in New Orleans, to Vietnam in February of 1973,<sup>5</sup> the statue first passed through Hiroshima. On that very day the archbishop dedicated that memorial auditorium and kindergarten. The first service held in that peace memorial was the reception of the international Pilgrim Virgin of the Queen of Peace, exactly twenty years after Father Schiffer had written his booklet "The Rosary of Hiroshima."

But what was more significant was what happened in Vietnam. There, for the first time in four thousand years of history, persons of all different denominations came together in prayer for peace. Leaders of the various religions unashamedly called it "a miracle" of grace. And the offensive which the Communists had planned to launch at that time was suddenly cancelled, apparently because of a decision made in China.<sup>6</sup> In the enthusiasm of their coming together in prayer the South Vietnamese decided to build a peace tower in honor of Our Lady and of all religions.

But the peace tower was not built. The divisions which had been there before seemed to return after the visit of Our Lady's image.

How difficult it is for us to accept miracles! And how easy it is for us to forget!

Perhaps the most important message of our day can be put in these simple words:

God is our Father. He forgives us no matter how many times we ask to be forgiven. But when the majority go so far astray that they are lost, when most of mankind is choosing evil instead of good and becoming separated from God forever, His very love demands that He call the world back to its senses.

At such time the Mother, Who became the new Eve at the foot of the Cross, weeps. She does everything She can to mitigate the punishment. She tries even to prevent the punishment. She uses every means possible to persuade them to change their ways before it is too late.

The experience in Vietnam of 1973 taught us that the Mother of Mercy, the Spouse of the Holy Spirit, can draw us all together now. She Who is full of grace can bathe us all in the rays of grace in which the children of Fatima found themselves suddenly "lost in God." She Who attracted the Holy Spirit to the world to form the Incarnate Word, the Light of the World, can now unite Her heart to each of our hearts, and make each of us a vessel of the Holy Spirit, an instrument of the Incarnation, a living and brilliant reflection of the Light of the World.

We have Her own solemn assurance if we fulfill three simple conditions which Her Motherly anxiety and love exacts of us:

"Russia will be converted and an era of peace will be granted to mankind."

The explosion of the supernatural will then have blasted away the clouds of darkness and with it (using the very words of the prophecy of Fatima): wars, persecution, hunger.

Yes, that is the promise, confirmed by the only miracle in history at a predicted time and place "so that everyone may believe."

But, like the people of Vietnam, will we wait until the last hour?

## NOTES

1. Cf. footnote 4, Chapter II.
2. Jorgen, *Look, the Madonna Is Weeping*, p. 63.
3. *Sex and the Mysteries*, p. 280. This opinion is also supported by St. Grignon de Montfort.
4. Rev. Hubert F. Schiffer, S.J., "The Rosary of Hiroshima" (Washington, N.J.: AMI Press, 1953).
5. *Soul*, January-February 1973, p. 23.

6. North Vietnam prepared throughout 1973 to launch a major—and expectedly decisive—offense against South Vietnam in February of 1974. By that date it was estimated that North Vietnam had 300,000 soldiers in South Vietnam with 2,000 long-range Soviet artillery pieces and mortars. They had improved roads to within 100 miles of Saigon. About 12,000 tons of military supplies were being moved freely into the South *each month* by the North Vietnamese with at least 18 airfields under construction or repair and surrounded by dozens of SA-2 MIG-21 jets and several hundred helicopters. Red China had just attacked the Parcel Islands of South Vietnam with little if any world reaction. Associated Press had just issued a major feature by John T. Wheeler on the *apparent inevitability of a "Third Vietnamese War."* Appearing January 22, the report said: "Hanoi's biggest battlefield commitment SINCE THE WAR BEGAN is now in the South." However, the offensive did not take place. In the lull which followed, the unity of the South was harshly broken. The very congressman who had promoted the committee for all religions was badly beaten for taking a leading position against corruption in government (especially prostitution). If the Vietnam experience mirrors what may happen in the rest of the world, the forces of evil are not going to be dissipated easily. A single-minded international religious effort will be necessary.



## CONCLUSION

This writer little thought when he emerged from that Pentecostal service in London in July 1973, that sixteen months later he would be speaking at the 14th International Marian Congress in Rome (as the only lay speaker) on "Mary and the Charismatic Movement," and that he would be in the circle around the Papal Altar in St. Peter's Basilica on Pentecost Sunday, 1975, hearing Pope Paul say to leaders of a "Charismatic Renewal" from all the world that in this renewal the Church of Rome beholds with joy *great hope for renewal and reconciliation*.

Is this not the joy Jesus expressed by the parable of the prodigal? Is it not the joy of which Pope Paul spoke on Pentecost Sunday, 1975, to the Charismatic and Marian leaders of the world? Is it not a joy to be shared now with the reluctant "elder sons" . . . those faithful of all religions who have never left their Father's house?

In 1975 (a jubilee, or "holy" year in the Church) one of the principal feasts was May 18th, Pentecost Sunday. This feast is also known as "the birthday of the Church."

On that special day the Pope invited the charismatic leaders of the world, and the Marian leaders of the world, to share the "front seats" at the solemn Mass in St. Peter's Basilica.

There was some fear among conservatives that this invitation to the leaders of the charismatic renewal would seem to put their congress on a par with the long established Marian Congress also scheduled in Rome for the same week.

As though to allay these fears, the Holy Father left the Vatican on the eve of Pentecost to go St. Mary Major's to celebrate a special Mass for the Marian Congress. His Holiness then went to the hall where the Marian Congress was to be held and personally presided at the opening, saying:

*"The action of the Mother of the Church for the benefit of the redeemed, does not substitute nor rival the universal and omnipotent action of the Holy Spirit but prepares and*

*implores for it not only with the prayer of intercession but also with the influence of example."*

The author of this book was the only layman to speak at that Marian Congress. Since his subject was **MARY AND THE CHARISMATICS**, and possibly controversial, he first submitted the address to Bishop John Venancio of Fatima, International President of the Blue Army and a prelate of great learning and prudence.

Bishop Venancio was surprised, and perhaps somewhat concerned. He suggested a conference with Abbé André Richard of Paris, an incisive and modern theologian and leader of the Blue Army in France.

The conference took place in Rome shortly before the congress. The Bishop was so well satisfied with the result that he accompanied the author and sat in the presiding chair at the session during which the talk was given. Moreover on Pentecost Monday, when the Pope gave a special audience for the Charismatics, this Bishop from Fatima was one of the ten prelates who participated in the audience and stood beside the Pope to join in the final apostolic blessing to the Charismatic leaders of the world.

Previously the author had had serious concern because many conservatives are overly sensitive about any "new" developments or changes and remain afraid of the charismatic renewal because of its origin, its suddenness, and the question of discernment of spirits.

Perhaps these suffering conservatives, sometimes on the verge of schism, are the greatest victims of renewal. God must love them very, very much for their loving concern. For this same reason all who love God must revere them and fear to add to their concern.

They are found not only in the Catholic Church but in most of the churches. And even as the 1975 Pentecost celebration in Rome helped to ease many of these "victim souls" into this new era which Pope John XXIII beheld from afar, it is to be hoped that the same may be accomplished to some small degree by the conclusion of this book with a summary of our talk at the 1975 Marian Congress on **MARY AND THE CHARISMATICS**.<sup>1</sup>

The editor of a widely-read Marian magazine in the United States was often asked in the early seventies whether the Pentecostal movement, also known as

Charismatic Renewal Movement, was acceptable or dangerous.

He could not answer because the Church had not at that time given an answer.

On July 15, 1973, after attending a Pentecostal service in London, England, he began a study which resulted in a 200-page manuscript which he sent to all the Ordinaries (Bishops) of the United States for evaluation.

He had come to the conclusion that the Pentecostal Movement, or Charismatic Renewal, is often accompanied by authentic charisms being experienced not only in our own world-wide Apostolate but to a greater or lesser extent in various religions from Russia to China, from England to South Africa.

The response of the Bishops was encouraging. Detailed suggestions came from three Cardinals. Of all the Bishops who answered (about 20%) only two questioned whether such a report should be published. (These two Bishops apparently had not had time to read the manuscript and merely felt that any discussion at the present time was not advisable because it might add to the general confusion.)

I was that editor and the author of that report, now published as a book titled *Explosion of the Supernatural*.

If the response of the Bishops had not been favorable I would have dropped the matter, but next I sent several hundred additional copies out to theologians, leaders of apostolates, writers and teachers, for further evaluation. The list included many known to be most opposed to the charismatic renewal as well as many either indifferent or in favor.

The late John Courtney Murray, S.J., who was the *peritus* of the Council most directly responsible for the Declaration on Religious Freedom, made a prophetic remark when the Council ended:

"As was the experience of Vatican II, so must be the post-conciliar experience: the contemporary Catholic, like the Bishops at the Council, must begin with a good deal of confusion and uncertainty, then pass through a period of anxiety and tension, but can expect to end with a certain measure of light and joy."

This prophetic statement might apply to the Charis-

matic Renewal more than to any other post-conciliar experience.

Within the Catholic Church the Charismatic Renewal seems to have first manifested itself on the campus of Duquesne University, in the United States in 1967 (the same year that Pope Paul VI went to Fatima). *And only eight years later*, the fourteenth International Marian Congress in Rome found itself almost overshadowed by a simultaneous world-wide Charismatic Renewal Congress! Ten thousand charismatics from sixty countries were invited to share the Pontifical Mass for Pentecost Sunday with the Marian Congress.

Only eight years had passed!

Naturally we are concerned. This is a veritable explosion and many of us are not sure of its nature.

But the inescapable fact that "Pentecostalism" is "exploding" all over the world, and not only in the Catholic Church, imposes upon us a grave responsibility to determine what the nature of the Charismatic Renewal may be, and to what extent we should become involved in this same renewal.

Rev. Joseph Pelletier, M.S., S.T.L., says in his book *A NEW PENTECOST*:

"Love of Mary is being kindled by the Holy Spirit through the Charismatic Renewal and this not only in Catholic hearts but also in the hearts of other Christians.

"Mary's sole role in the Father's Plan is to lead us to Jesus and to lead us ever closer to Him. It is for this reason that the Holy Spirit, through the Charismatic Renewal, is leading Christians to Her . . . Part of our identification with Christ is to be born of Mary."

Father Heribert Muehlen, Professor at the University of Paderborn and regarded by many as a leading theologian on the Holy Spirit in the Catholic Church today, says that the Charismatic Renewal *holds great promise for the reuniting of Christians*. In his opinion *1 Corinthians*, 12 has "real light to shed on the ecumenical situation". He adds:

"Each church has its own gift, but often it has been exaggerated and absolutized. Each church has to ask: What is our unique spiritual gift? What can we bring to the coming union of Christians? How do we absolutize or exaggerate this gift? How can we correct this

exaggeration? Each church has to enrich the other churches with their gift and receive the gifts of the other churches. No church, including (in a certain sense) the Catholic Church, has experienced all the gifts fully. Each church has only several gifts and needs the gifts of all the Christian churches to be gathered together to be complete (cf. *Decree on Ecumenism*, Vatican II, article 4)."<sup>4</sup>

Father Pelletier comments:

"Marian Devotion is one of the special gifts of the Catholic Church (and also of the Orthodox churches) which attempts to keep it free from dross. Vatican II stressed the need of protecting this gift from "the falsity of exaggeration on the one hand and the excess of narrow-mindedness on the other."<sup>5</sup>

The Marian Congress which opened in Saint Mary Major's in the presence of the Sovereign Pontiff on May 17, 1975 to study MARY AND THE HOLY SPIRIT, may prove to have been a moment of historic importance to our age.

Cardinal Wright, head of the Secretariat of all the world's Catholic clergy, spoke to the Congress (without explicitly mentioning Pentecostalism) of the danger of emphasis on the *spirit* without perhaps sufficient emphasis on the *whole* man (body and soul) and that therefore the role of Mary as Spouse of the Holy Spirit and Mother of Jesus is necessary. Through Her "*The Word became flesh*."

Speaking after the Cardinal, a prominent American leader of the Charismatic Renewal (Father O'Connor of Notre Dame) reminded us:

"The Charismatic Renewal has brought abundant experience of the way the Holy Spirit uses one person to impact His gifts to another. The mediation of grace attributed to Our Lady is not an old, unparalleled or freakish exception in Salvation History; it is an instance (albeit the most perfect one) of the normal and everyday dynamics of human life blessed by the Spirit of God."

Father O'Connor (who spoke on "The Marian Movement as preparation for the Charismatic Renewal") seemed to give a summary of the central thoughts and arguments in this book *Explosion of the Supernatural*, although he had not even seen it. In particular

he sympathized with the many problems of ignorance at the beginning of this explosion, among them ignorance of the role of Mary as Spouse of the Holy Spirit.

The Dominican Theologian H.M. Manteau-Bonamy dropped a veritable bomb in the Congress by announcing the "discovery" made by Blessed Maximilian Kolbe just six months before he gave his life in a Nazi concentration camp.<sup>6</sup> It is doubtful whether even most of the Catholic world might be ready for *this* explosion as we face the delicate period described by Father O'Connor:

"It is my impression," Father O'Connor said, "that most charismatics are still undecided about how to relate Mary and the Spirit in their personal life of prayer; they are looking for a solution which will correspond fully to the essential nature of the Christian Mystery."

The messages of the Pope to the Marian Congress and to the Charismatic Renewal Congress were summarized in the Pentecost Sunday Mass.

Cardinal Suenens in his new book mentioned above we find this fitting conclusion:

"I do not know when the hour of refound Christian unity will sound. I think that Christians of my generation may be destined like Moses to behold the Promised Land only from afar. But if we are correct in reading the signs of the times, I believe that the hour is approaching. The star which led the Magi to Bethlehem already shines in the sky. The pilgrims of unity are on the way. They are advancing. Occasionally the star is obscured and they must check their itinerary, consult the map. But all indicates that Bethlehem is near.

"And perhaps our pilgrims, like the Magi, will first behold the Mother and then the Child. It is difficult to imagine the return to the home of divided children unless the Mother be at the door to welcome them and to lead them to the Lord."

We have the promise . . . proved at a predicted time and place (noon of October 13, 1917) in a whirling fire in the sky which over a radius of thirty-six miles was thought to mean the end of the world.

Instead it meant the beginning of a new era was

dawning just when many were beginning to think the night of human dissension was endless.

A new Pentecost is upon us.

at which the Marian leaders and charismatic leaders shared the "front seats."

His Holiness spoke to them and to the Church of hope and joy in this concrete evidence of renewal and reconciliation.

"Nothing is more necessary in a world so secularized as it is today," said the Pope, "than the witness of this *spiritual renewal* which we see the Holy Spirit bringing about now in the most diverse regions and circles."

The Holy Father went on to cite elements of the charismatic renewal such as common prayer "in which each one freely expressing himself aids, sustains, and nourishes the prayer of others." Then the Pope asked:

*"How could such a spiritual renewal not be a wondrous opportunity" for the Church and for the world? And in such a case how can we fail to take all means to see it continue?"*

Speaking to the Marian Congress the Pope called for restoring among the People of God the fervor of Marian piety, ". . . the example of this Virgin and Mother, radiating the Holy Spirit, who with Her beauty gathers together and incarnates the authentic values of the Spirit."

Our Lady promised at Fatima to turn the world upside down. She promised to convert Russia and bring *an era of peace to mankind*. She has promised an era of Christian Unity, *the very triumph of Her Immaculate Heart!*

How can such a radical, wrenching, world-changing promise be fulfilled? Will it not require just what appears to be happening before our eyes in the Charismatic Renewal?

## NOTES

1. Address by J. M. Haffert to the XIV International Marian Congress, May 20, 1975.
2. Quoted by his friend Walter J. Burghardt, S.J., in *The Jesuit*, Vol. 49, No. 4, pg. 8.
3. Assumption Publications 1974 page 20.
4. For statement of Professor Muchlen see *New Covenant Magazine*, July, 1974, pg. 5.
5. Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, Chapter VIII, article 67.
6. Pere Bonamy spoke on the content of his new book *La Doctrine Mariale du Pere Kolbe* (Lethielleux, Paris, 1975, 143 pp), which says that Our Lady at Lourdes called Herself *THE Immaculate Conception* because She identified Herself as the Spouse of the Holy Spirit. Who is conceived by the Father and the Son. One must enter into the full meaning of this to realize that it is far from "divinizing" the Blessed Virgin (always a creature) but emphasizes that She is the New Eve, the new Mother of the human race in the order of Grace.
7. *Lo Spirito Santo nostra speranza* (The Holy Spirit our hope), by Cardinal Leon Joseph Suenens, Edizioni Paoline, 1975, pg. 188. Original French version: *Une Nouvelle Pentecote?* The above translation is the author's own from the Italian edition.
8. This part of the Pope's address in the Pentecost Monday audience was in French. His Holiness used the word "chance." See *Osservatore Romano*, May 22, 1975.



## EPILOGUE

Whatever one's Church affiliation, concern for legitimate Church authority is of paramount importance, Episcopal Bishop William Frey of Denver, CO. said:

"The Institutional Church may be in trouble, it may be weak, blind and sinful, but it is still God's Church, it is still the body of Christ."

Roman Catholics reading this book must consequently be interested in opinion on its message voiced by Pope Paul VI on Pentecost Monday, 1975.

That statement of the Pope was somewhat distorted in the press by quotations out of context. Many may have thought the Pope gave an out-and-out endorsement to the Charismatic movement. But it would be more accurate to say his endorsement was like that given by a father to a teenage son receiving a driver's license for the first time.

Sharing in the teenager's joy of the emancipation by "wheels," the father cannot help adding an admonition about the responsibility of driving, about the responsibility to others on the road, about the responsibility for his own life.

The formal address of Pope Paul in the special audience to the International Charismatic Renewal Congress of 1975 was more or less in this vein of congratulations mixed with admonition. But, after the formal address the Pope spoke extemporaneously about the charismatic renewal. And these spontaneous remarks of the Pope were like those of the father, after controlled congratulations and admonitions to the son with a new driver's license, who suddenly reaches out, puts his arm around his son and shares his joy.

In this book we have tried to follow the tone of the Pope's "controlled" address to the charismatics. But in this epilogue we would like to add his spontaneous words of joy:

"It is permissible to add a few words . . . for those here with the Charismatic Pilgrimage and for those present by chance at this great assembly.

"Firstly, for those with the Charismatic Pilgrimage: re-

flect on the two names by which you are designated, 'Spiritual Renewal.' Where the Holy Spirit is concerned we are immediately aroused, immediately happy to welcome His coming. More than that, we invite Him, we pray to Him, we desire nothing more than that Christians, believing people, should experience an awareness, a worship, a greater joy through the Spirit of God among us.

"Have we forgotten the Holy Spirit? Certainly not! We want Him, we honor Him, and we love Him, and we invoke Him. And you, with your devotion and fervor, you wish to live in the Spirit. (applause)

"This, (applause) and this should be where your second name comes in—a renewal. It ought to rejuvenate the world, give it back a spirituality, a soul, and religious thought. It ought to reopen its closed lips to prayer and open its mouth to song, to joy, to hymns, and to witnessing. It will be very fortuitous for your times, for our brothers, that there should be a generation, your generation of young people, who shout out to the world the glory and the greatness of the God of Pentecost. (applause) In the hymn, in the hymn which we read this morning in the breviary, and which dates back as far as St. Ambrose in the third or fourth century, there is this phrase which is hard to translate and should be very simple: *Laeti*, that means "joyfully," *bibamus*, "we drink up," *sobriam*, that means "well-defined and well-moderated," *profusionem spiritus* ("the outpouring of the Spirit"). *Laeti bibamus sobriam profusionem spiritus*. It could be a formula impressed over your movement: a plan and an approval of the movement.

"To those pilgrims present at this great assembly who do not belong to your movement: They should unite themselves with you to celebrate the feast of Pentecost—the spiritual renewal of the world, of our society, and of our souls—so that they too, devout pilgrims to this center of the Catholic faith, might nourish themselves on the enthusiasm and the spiritual energy with which we must live our religion. And we will say only this: today, either one lives one's faith with devotion, depth, energy, and joy or that faith will die out."<sup>2</sup>

NOTES

1. The National Conference at the 4th annual International Presbyterian Conference on the Holy Spirit, held May 12-15, 1975 in Montreat, NC.
2. *New Covenant* July 1975, p. 25

# **WHAT ARE THESE "SIGNS AND WONDERS"**

that have sparked a worldwide explosion of charismatic and pentecostal movements outside Christian orthodoxy? Who are the leaders, what are they saying?

John M. Haffert explores what he calls the **EXPLOSION OF THE SUPERNATURAL** with critical concern. From the first Pentecost to present phenomena, from saints and prophets of the past to the would-be new messiahs, he separates truth from falsehood, hysteria from real happenings, and shows the reader how to do the same.

Here is a clarion call to greater awareness and responsibility among all people everywhere—to create an informed sensitivity that can transform a contemporary social phenomenon into a seminal force in an inspiring and authentic new Christian renaissance.

John Haffert, one of the celebrated lay Catholics of the world, co-founder of an apostolate of 25 million members, by chance attended a Protestant Pentecostal service in London in 1973. Sixteen months later, as the only lay speaker at the 14th International Marian Congress in Rome (opened by Pope Paul), he explained this "Explosion of the Supernatural" which the Pope at the same time endorsed as a sign of great hope and joy.