

The First Saturdays of Reparation

On July 13, 1917, Our Lady appeared for the third time to the children of Fatima - Jacinta, Francisco, and Lucia. She showed them a frightening vision of Hell and said:
You have seen Hell where the souls of poor sinners go. In order to save them, God wishes to establish in the world devotion to my Immaculate Heart ... I shall come to ask for the Communion of reparation on the first Saturdays.

On December 10, 1925, she appeared with the child Jesus to Lucia, who was then a Dorothean postulant in Pontevedra, Spain. She said to Lucia:

My daughter, look at my Heart surrounded with the thorns with which ungrateful men pierce it at every moment by their blasphemies and ingratitude. You at least, try to console me, and announce that I promise to assist at the hour of death with all the graces necessary for salvation all those who, on the First Saturday of five consecutive months, go to Confession, receive Holy Communion, recite five decades of the Rosary, and keep me company for 15 minutes while meditating on the mysteries of the Rosary, with the intention of making reparation to me.

The Infant Jesus appeared to Lucia again in 1926 and, at her request, He agreed that "the practice of this devotion will be equally accepted on the Sunday following the First Saturday when, for just motives, many priests will allow it."

He also told her that the Confession would be valid within eight days of the devotion, provided that the person is in the state of grace



At the Vatican, Pope John Paul II personally leads the recitation of the Rosary on First Saturdays

when receiving Him, and has the intention of offering reparation to the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

In a further apparition of Our Lord in 1930, Lucia asked Him why He wanted five Saturdays to be observed, instead of nine or seven in honor of the Sorrows of Our Lady. "My daughter," He answered, "the motive is simple." He told her that there are five kinds of offenses and blasphemies uttered against the Immaculate Heart of Mary:

1. Blasphemies against the Immaculate Conception.
2. Blasphemies against her perpetual virginity.
3. Blasphemies against the Divine Maternity and refusal to accept Mary as the Mother of all mankind.
4. Blasphemies of those who try to publicly implant indifference, contempt, and hatred of the Immaculate Mother in the hearts of children.
5. Blasphemies of those who insult her directly in her sacred images.

Sister Lucia, in a letter to her mother, stressed the importance of the First Saturday devotion as a means of consoling Mary.

She wrote: "I hope that you will answer me saying you are practicing it and doing your best so that all the people coming to your house may embrace it too. You could never give me a greater consolation than this ... Console Our Heavenly Mother this way and try so that others will also console her, and in so doing you will make me very happy."

When we fulfill the simple conditions of the First Saturdays in a spirit of reparation, we help to ease the pain caused by the offenses against Mary's Immaculate Heart. We take advantage of God's remedy for sin, and we begin to follow His pathway to peace.

Currently, a worldwide effort is being made to respond to the request of Jesus and Mary for the Five First Saturdays of Reparation. In the United States, people are working in every diocese to initiate First Saturdays in every parish, and many parishes in this country are observing this devotion.

In fact, many people see the positive changes occurring in Eastern Europe and other parts of the world as a result of the increasing observance of Mary's Fatima requests. Participation in the First Saturday observance can be either public or private. When the devotion is observed publicly, the Rosary can be recited before or after Saturday morning Mass or Saturday night vigil Mass. The meditation can be done privately.

