



BLESSED FRANCISCO AND JACINTA MARTO

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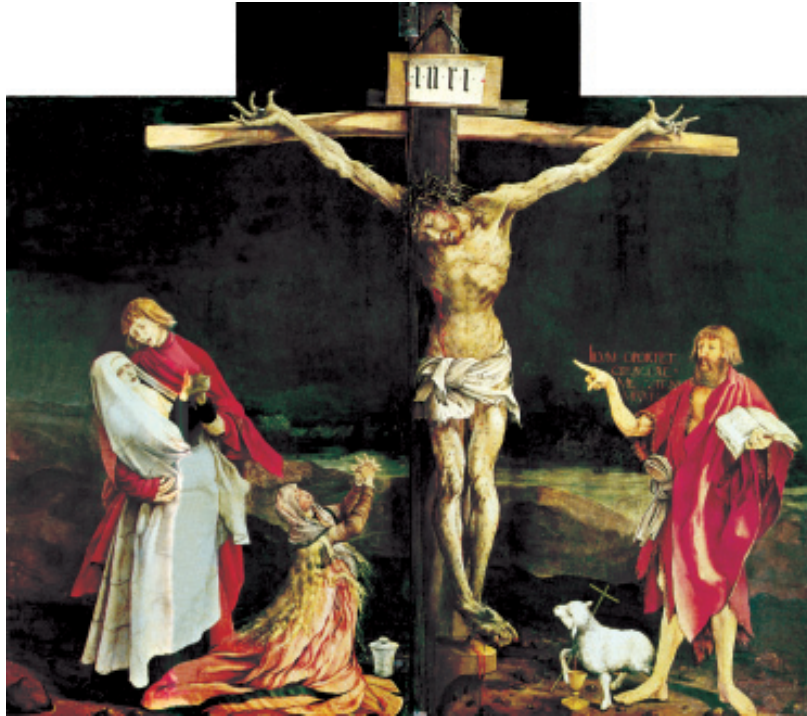
THE LITTLE SHEPHERDS' JOURNEY (5)

III. Reparation in the Christo-centric Order of the World and of Salvation

Biblical Meaning of "Reparation": the Reparatory Sacrifice of Adoration

1. The sacrifice of adoration and that of reparation are essentially identical

In Fatima, Mary asks all men and women that, in their spiritual adoration, they dedicate themselves to God, and this offering of oneself must find its expression in the whole of the human personality



This interior offering constitutes the 'spiritual sacrifice acceptable to God' which makes each one a sharer in the redeeming passion of Christ.

In Fatima, Mary calls on all to entrust themselves to God in spiritual adoration, and this offering must be expressed in the whole of the human personality. The 'spiritual sacrifice acceptable to God' consists in this interior offering, making each person a sharer in the redeeming Passion of Christ.

Sin is a turning away from God. For this reason, since it is a sort of perversion of man in whom the Name of God has been engraved even before being a violation of a moral law or committed against a creature, sin is always and primarily a fundamental blasphemy against the Name of God. Hence, reparation, or wiping out the sin, prior to being some form of reparatory action in the created order, is primarily and fundamentally the sanctification and glorification of the Name of God. Reparation as the sanctification of the Name of God must necessarily be performed by the implementation of the content of this Name, 'image and likeness of God in Christ', which God accomplishes and transmits in sanctifying the interior of

man. The Name of God signifies his Holiness; hence God who, by his superiority, strength and power, is above all creatures, by naming each one takes possession of each one who thus becomes wholly the property of God, known by his gaze and taken possession of to the innermost part of his being.

Unlike the lie that is sin — which is nothing other than the independence of the human personality before God and his separation from him — purification from sin is reparation, a genuine acknowledgement of God, the living implementation of the truth that man belongs totally and unconditionally to God. It is, too, the total commitment of man to God in the spontaneity of whole-hearted interior adoration. Only thus will sin be abolished and wiped out. And it will be God himself who makes the reparation and makes holy, drawing the person to Himself, communicating to him his own name and taking care of him. While God is purifying and sanctifying man, man allows himself to be possessed by God and glorifies him by dedicating

to God his entire personality, his body and his soul, so that God may take hold of him, take possession of him, and make him holy. For this unique and mystical reality between God and the human person, Sacred Scripture uses the Greek words for 'to purify', 'to make whole', 'to bless', 'to sanctify', 'to glorify', because in this way God sanctifies himself in the human person. In purifying, making whole and sanctifying the human person, God reveals himself as the Holy One, and at the same time He glorifies his own Name in the human person. This dedication of oneself to God in adoration, in the sanctification of his Name, is the primary and most basic act. It can never be achieved through creatures, for, to achieve it, a person must learn how to make many personal and meritorious acts of adoration. Without this basis of adoration, other human activities — such as the practice of virtue and various devotions, of good works, sacrifices, prayers, acts of consecration, etc. — are of no use and can never purify and make reparation for sin, because at root is the fundamental falsehood of creaturely autonomy. Hence adoration, dedication directly to God by going out of one's self, and reparation, are essentially identical.

In Fatima, before all other created things, Mary's primary and decisive request was for this total dedication of the human person to the transcendent God.

True sanctification, which, in the total dedication of adoration, means that a person belongs entirely to God, is necessarily the annihilation of the world of the lie, the cancellation, elimination of the autonomy created by the lie of the person's ego before God. Total dedication of the human person to God in adoration is precisely the abolition of any personal human autonomy. Only thus and in no other way can sin be blotted out and reparation made. Reparation is adoration, and adoration can only take place in the context of a personal and direct relationship between the human person and the transcendent God, and not in any mutual relationship created by the human person. The total dedication of a human being in adoration of God is in fact reparation, thanks to this essential element of the person's renunciation of self which it must necessarily contain. If the autonomy of the person who lies is not eliminated and totally excluded, the person can in no way adore the transcendent God because his inner self, his heart, remains overshadowed by the barriers of sin.

God calls fallen man and draws him to Himself. Man must seek recovery in the power of God, must allow himself to be put back together and sanctify himself by the sacrifice which is the total renunciation of himself and the total dedication of his personality to God. This reparatory adoration through self-dedication in sacrifice is the true fulfilment of man, for he thus belongs entirely in his being and in his life to God. At the same time it is also man's justification. God does not require 'satisfaction' from man but 'justice', and justice means that man belongs directly and exclusively to God. By committing oneself to the sacrifice of adoration, one brings about the living realization of justice. This 'justice' of man's does not consist in the different just acts that a man may perform, but rather in the interior attitude of the human heart; this is accomplished wholeheartedly and is manifested in the whole of one's life by faithful correspondence in hearing and obeying the word of God, by the fact that the Law, the Spirit, the Name of God dwell in the heart of man, so that man is thereby made just, holy, is sanctified. The biblical concept of 'justice' is therefore the same as 'holiness', because man's justice is

his holiness. 'Justice' means that man, in his entire being and his entire life, belongs wholly to God. Justice is the living and true realization, completion and perfection of his relationship with God in the mystery of Christ; it is the realisation of this truth in himself. This truth, and therefore also this demand for unconditional justice, is absolute, and its basis is to be found, from the beginning, in the essential structure of the destiny of man. A man's just life is a life that corresponds to his true and original name, the realisation and accomplishment of his vocation.

This adoration, however, in which man dedicates himself to God and unites himself to Him, is accomplished, in the concrete realisation of the obligatory order of salvation, solely by means of sacrifice and, in this earthly life, is linked with much suffering. This is because, on account of the fall of Adam, the world in which man lives from birth is not an indifferent state, but is an on-going realm of conflicting forces of abandonment and separation from God, with its visible physical consequences. It follows that the 'old man', affected by the evil seductions of this world, must be overcome. Adoration in total commitment to God and in union with God is a sign of man's necessary separation from this unbelieving world. Man cannot unite himself to God except by eliminating the real blasphemy which holds sway in the world owing to the sin of Adam. The 'living' image of sin, from its inner centre outwards, must be totally destroyed. Herein lies the mission of each human being in the mystery of Christ and his real participation in the reparatory sacrifice of Christ, his growth in the Kairos of recapitulation, which is the accomplishment of the sacrifice of the cross, the destruction of the image of the sin of Adam and the reconstruction of the eternal image and likeness of God. Hence it is that Christ says in his priestly prayer that He consecrates himself for the sake of his own that they also may be consecrated. Christ is the consecrated One of the Father. For our sake he became at the same time visible sin. In this form He sanctifies himself visibly for us and, by his death on the Cross, he makes reparation for fallen man. By thus visibly acting out and actively destroying the image of the sin of Adam, which is blasphemy, the theft of the likeness of God and of the royal kingdom, Christ, by the power of his Spirit, destroyed the entire interior and exterior perversion of the sin of fallen man and purified the inner man from the dead works of perversion so that he could adore the living God. He made reparation for, and sanctified, men, in themselves and for themselves, to the degree to which they, by the power of the Divine Spirit, share mystically in Him, and thus, by Him and in Him, allow themselves to be made reparation for and made holy. Christ brought all sins to the wood of the cross and annihilated them in his Body so that now, dead to sin, all can live in justice as Christ himself lived, and make their way through this earthly life as He did. Hence it is that, according to Sacred Scripture, the vocation of the members of Christ is to suffer in this world in his name: in mystical union with Him, to suffer in Him and for Him. God himself with his zealous love brings about these sufferings in the members of Christ so that they can thus have a share in his holiness.

Mary in Fatima asked for nothing beyond the fundamental and central requirement of Sacred Scripture: making holy the Name of God. To be holy as God is holy; to be as holy as God is holy: it is to this that She calls all human beings. Without this holiness no-one can see God. To be holy by sacrifice, to be holy by the total offering of the human personality, body and soul. By achieving this

selfdedication, men become sharers in the passion of Christ; in this consists the acceptable 'spiritual sacrifice' to God, the 'spiritual adoration' of the members of Christ, of the people of God, of the royal priesthood. 'Spiritual' does not denote a purely spiritual act, interiorly invisible and 'intellectual', made once only, without the person him- or herself, or anyone else, experiencing something of its power and efficacy. On the contrary: what is understood by this 'spiritual sacrifice' is the total dedication of the whole person, body and soul, accomplished interiorly, in the power of the Spirit of Christ, by means of his 'Word' operating efficaciously in truth, and hence with an utterly true, sincere and pure heart. This interior offering must find its living and visible expression in the totality of the human personality, as distinct from any apparent similarity to the visible and invisible legalities and forms of the world.

«I appeal to you therefore, brethren, by the mercy of

God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may prove what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.» (Rom 12, 1-2).

It is to this that the Immaculate Heart of Mary in Fatima calls all men and women of our time.

Hence there will be no true consecration or reparation without the true interior and exterior sanctification of the person. 'To consecrate oneself' does not mean 'to seek shelter' or 'to place oneself under the protection of' during this earthly life. No, what it means is to purify oneself and sanctify oneself. Consecration, reparation and sanctification mean one and the same thing, and must be accomplished in the living union and totality of the human person.

2. Reparatory adoration is necessarily and uniquely effective for the salvation of other human beings.

Taking as a starting point the absolute and Christocentric order of the world and of salvation — in which man is to be found as the 'image and likeness of God' in Christ, and which is the basis on which the idea of man's dominion rests — one can understand the saving effectiveness of reparatory adoration for other human beings and its concrete realisation. It is this saving efficacy alone that a person can exercise over another person. Moreover, it is in this continuously active and living dynamic dominion — either of the powers turned towards God or of the spiritual forces in opposition to God — that we find the basis for the possibility of making reparation for others. The active power of the reparatory adoration of men and women for the conversion and salvation of sinners is located in their real and mystical participation in the mystical adoration of the sacrifice of the cross of Christ. This is because reparatory adoration is, in itself, the mystical union of man with Christ in his Holy Spirit which, during his earthly life, while radiating outwards from his interior, is continuously at work in the human personality. In this same living dynamic process, Christ himself is also at work in both the reparation and sanctification of his members, as also in the conversion and salvation, the change of direction and transformation, brought about in other human beings. We are here dealing with the kingdom of the Spirit of Christ in man. This unique saving efficacy will only be possible if individuals no longer belong to themselves but entirely to God in Christ. And this efficacy is all the more powerful and influential, the more the mystery of Christ is present in each person, the more deeply and intensively he or she is rooted solely in God, the more we belong exclusively to God and are penetrated and dominated by the Spirit of Christ. This means that there are no created saving relationships and mediations between human beings, but it is God himself who is directly present among men. The Spirit of Christ operates directly in the members of Christ and through them for the salvation of others. This is why reparatory adoration is so necessary for the salvation of sinners, because this salvation can only be brought about in the divine power of Christ and not through the power of man. The death of this world's sin and the life in justice which, in this life, man accomplishes and brings to completion in a dynamic process, is the very reign of the holiness of Christ in man. It is for this reason that there occurs simultaneously the spread of the Spirit of Christ, the extension of his kingdom to other human beings, in their inner selves, because the divine Spirit of Christ reigns within them, in the hearts of men.

«This is the message we have heard from Jesus and proclaim to you», writes St John in his first Epistle, «that God is light and in him is no darkness at all. If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not live according to the truth; but if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.... He is the expiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.... He who says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked.» (I John 1,5 – 2,6).

When, through sin, Israel, the chosen people of God, became unfaithful to the divine Covenant and was given over to its enemies, and later fell into great tribulation and slavery, it could not be rescued and set free through its liturgical cult of reparation, but only through the mystical reality of an interior and exterior living reparation, a total conversion and change of its wayward and hardened heart, and by physical reparation in its own flesh. This conversion was achieved for the people by the different holy ones chosen by God, who, by their prayer, by their own reparatory adoration, intervened on behalf of the people as a whole, in other words by their total dedication to God, the offering of their entire personality to God. Only thus can the reparation of holy ones be effective as reparation for sinners. In this activity of individuals for the sake of the community, the first and most decisive element is the invoking of the name of God, having recourse to the name of God, which He revealed and communicated to men when establishing his «jealous» and «merciful» (sin-forgiving) Covenant. Later, it included the invocation of the name which God himself communicated to his chosen ones, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, when identifying himself as their God, the God of their fathers (Ex. 3, 15) as well as the appeal to these same fathers, as chosen and beloved of God. It can never be achieved through the merits of their own virtues, but only through the promises which God had made to them and a solemn oath which He swore to them in confirmation of this. It is therefore a calling on the blessing and forgiveness of God, his benevolence and his love, which God offered to them, when he made them his people, his friends, the dwellers in his land. (Ex. 32,13; Heb. 11,16). This is how the reparation of Moses took effect for the whole people who had broken the Covenant (Ex. 32, 7-14; Num. 14, 10-19) when he offered himself in reparatory adoration for the rebellious people. The same was true in

the case of Daniel during the Babylonian Captivity (Dan. 9, 1-27); in that of Eleazar and the seven brothers (2 Macc. 6, 18-7, 42) by the total sacrifice of their lives in bloody martyrdom.

Christ himself teaches this saving efficacy in the mystery of Christ by word and deed, with real spoken parables, principally in his farewell discourse. It is the saving efficacy of the members of Christ, in mystical union with Him, linked exclusively to the living dwelling in him. Hence, for example, the «cleansing» of the vines, which can only bear fruit, and bear even more fruit if they remain connected to the vine; the bearing of fruit by his own for others, through efficacious prayer in his name, for in this consists the fulfilment of the commandment of Christ: to love others as Christ loves them. Prayer in the name of Christ is really the prayer of mystical union with Christ; only in such prayer is to be found the real power of the name of Christ, which makes prayer infallibly effective. If this reality of mystical union were not present, such prayer would remain an empty formula, a vain and useless appeal to the name of Christ. Moreover, there has also to be mutual «purification» by the renunciation of self through humility and humiliation, as Christ taught us in the washing of the Apostles' feet at the last Supper. The salvific efficacy of the members of Christ in making reparation for and securing the salvation of others is thus an effectiveness of Christ himself, and is accomplished by his members in the same way as Christ accomplished it: it is for this reason that the grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies. Christ sanctifies himself for his own, so that they can be made holy; this sanctification of oneself is at the same time a «sanctifying oneself for the sake of others». This is why Paul, too, based the efficacy of his apostolic power on his reparatory suffering; reparatory suffering is that of Christ himself, who through it brings about the salvation of others.

The power of the reparatory suffering of Christ on the cross is really efficacious in the reparatory life of suffering of his mystical members. Reparation in the achievement of salvation is the content of the priestly sacrifice of Christ and of his members, therefore of the whole mystical Christ, of the entire holy people of God, of the royal priesthood. Reparation is therefore the realisation of Christ himself; without reparation there can be no covenant with God. The covenant with God is essentially the reparatory covenant of sacrifice.

It is precisely this reparation, so absolutely necessary for the salvation of mankind, that Mary so insistently called for in Fatima: absolute dedication to God in a reparatory sacrifice for the salvation of sinners.

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In line with this theological explanation of the sacrifice of reparation, Sister Lucia reminds us, in her book 'Calls from the Message of Fatima' of the second apparition of the Angel: «The three children were sitting on the side of the well in the grounds attached to my parents' house. The heavenly Messenger appeared and said to them: *What are you doing?* Then, without waiting for a reply, he went on: *Pray, pray very much! The Hearts of Jesus and Mary have designs of mercy on you. Offer prayers and*

sacrifices constantly to the Most High. (...) Make of everything you can a sacrifice, and offer it to God as an act of reparation for the sins by which He is offended, and in supplication for the conversion of sinners. You will thus draw down peace upon your country. I am its Angel Guardian, the Angel of Portugal. Above all, accept and bear with submission the suffering which the Lord will send you...

At the time, the children could not begin to imagine that this call to prayer was not only for them, but for the whole of humanity. Today, I look upon this call as a pointer to the way marked out by God for his creatures since the beginning of creation.

All of this shows our great need for prayer, for drawing close to God in prayer... This call to sacrifice, which God now addresses to us, is something which we find in many pages of Sacred Scripture.

In the Old Testament, the priests used to offer sacrifices of animals, which they presented as propitiatory victims for themselves and for the people. But these victims were but fore-runners, images, of the sacrifice of Christ who was to be the one true victim offered to God for the sins of all human beings. This sacrifice of Christ, who came to put an end to the images, was to be perpetuated in place of the sacrifices of the Old Covenant. And we have it renewed on the altar every day in the celebration of the Eucharist, which is an unbloody repetition of the sacrifice of the Cross.

But this is not enough because, as St Paul tells us (Col 1, 24), we must complete in ourselves what is lacking in the Passion of Christ, because we are members of his Mystical Body. Now, when one member of the body is suffering, all the other members suffer with it, and when one member has to be removed, all the other members of the body are affected by this 'sacrifice'; if one member is seriously diseased, even though the disease is restricted to one part of the body, the whole body suffers and dies. The same happens in the spiritual life. We are all ill, we all have many defects and sins; hence we all have a duty to make sacrifices, in union with Christ, the innocent victim, in reparation for our own sins and for those of our brothers and sisters, because we are all members of the one and the same Mystical Body of the Lord.

The Message calls on us to *make of everything you can a sacrifice and offer it to God as an act of reparation for the sins by which He is offended and in supplication for the conversion of sinners.* (Words of the Angel). They may be sacrifices of spiritual, intellectual, moral, physical or material things; depending on the particular moment, we shall have the opportunity of offering first one and then another. What is important is that we should be ready to take advantage of every opportunity that presents itself; in particular, that we should be ready to make sacrifices when this is required of us in order to fulfil our duty to God, to our neighbour and to ourselves. All the more so if such a sacrifice is necessary in order to avoid transgressing one of the commandments of God's Law; in these circumstances, the sacrifice we must impose on ourselves is obligatory, because we have an obligation to offer up whatever is necessary in order to avoid committing sin. Our eternal salvation depends on it... Jesus Christ tells us in the Gospel: *... For what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses or forfeits himself?»*

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