



Oblates of St. Benedict

Oblate Program at Belmont Abbey, NC

October, 2017

OUR LADY OF FATIMA: 100 YEARS



October 13 is the anniversary of the apparition of Our Lady to three shepherd children in the small village of Fatima in Portugal in 1917. She appeared six times to Lucia, 9, and her cousins Francisco, 8, and his sister Jacinta, 6, between May 13, 1917 and October 13, 1917.

The story of Fatima begins in 1916, when, against the backdrop of the First World War which had introduced Europe to the most horrific and powerful forms of warfare yet seen, and a year before the Communist revolution would plunge Russia and later Eastern Europe into six decades of oppression under militant atheistic governments, a resplendent figure appeared to the three children who were in the field tending the family sheep. "I am the Angel of Peace," said the figure, who appeared to them two more times that year exhorting them to accept the sufferings that the Lord allowed them to undergo as an act of reparation for the sins which offend Him, and to pray constantly for the conversion of sinners.

Then, on the 13th day of the month of Our Lady, May 1917, an apparition of 'a woman all in white, more brilliant than the sun' presented itself to the three children saying "Please don't be afraid of me, I'm not going to harm you." Lucia asked her where she came from and she responded, "I come from Heaven." The woman wore a white mantle edged with gold and held a rosary in her hand. The woman asked them to pray and devote themselves to the Holy Trinity and to "say the Rosary every day, to bring peace to the world and an end to the war."

She also revealed that the children would suffer, especially from the unbelief of their friends and families, and

that the two younger children, Francisco and Jacinta would be taken to Heaven very soon but Lucia would live longer in order to spread her message and devotion to the Immaculate Heart.

In the last apparition the woman revealed her name in response to Lucia's question: "I am the Lady of the Rosary."

That same day, 70,000 people had turned out to witness the apparition, following a promise by the woman that she would show the people that the apparitions were true. They saw the sun make three circles and move around the sky in an incredible zigzag movement in a manner which left no doubt in their minds about the veracity of the apparitions. By 1930 the Bishop had approved of the apparitions and they have been approved by the Church as authentic.

The messages Our Lady imparted during the apparitions to the children concerned the violent trials that would afflict the world by means of war, starvation, and the persecution of the Church and the Holy Father in the twentieth century if the world did not make reparation for sins. She exhorted the Church to pray and offer sacrifices to God in order that peace may come upon the world, and that the trials may be averted.

Our Lady of Fatima revealed three prophetic "secrets," the first two of which were revealed earlier and refer to the vision of hell and the souls languishing there, the request for an ardent devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, the prediction of the Second World War, and finally the prediction of the immense damage that Russia would do to humanity by abandoning the Christian

The next Oblate meeting will be October 15, 2017 at 2:30 PM in the Gallagher Room on the first floor of Stowe Hall.



70,000 people witnessed the "Miracle of the Sun." As stunning as it was Our Lady said it was not as great because of the arrest of the children in August that kept them from coming to the cova.

faith and embracing Communist totalitarianism. The third "secret" was not revealed until the year 2000, and referred to the persecutions that humanity would undergo in the last century: "The good will be martyred; the Holy Father will have much to suffer; various nations will be annihilated". The suffering of the popes of the 20th century has been interpreted to include the assassination attempt on Pope John Paul II in 1981, which took place on May 13, the 64th anniversary of the apparitions. The Holy Father attributed his escape from certain death to the intervention of Our Lady: "... it was a mother's hand that guided the bullet's path and in his throes the Pope halted at the threshold of death."

What is the central meaning of the message of Fatima? Nothing different from what the Church has always taught: it is, as Cardinal Ratzinger, now Pope Benedict the XVI, has put it, "the exhortation to prayer as the path of "salvation for souls" and, likewise, the summons to penance and conversion."

Perhaps the most well known utterance of the apparition of Our Lady at Fatima was her confident declaration that "My Immaculate Heart will triumph". Cardinal Ratzinger has interpreted this utterance as follows: "The Heart open to God, purified by contemplation of God, is stronger than guns and weapons of every kind. The fiat of Mary, the word of her heart, has changed the history of the world, because it brought the Saviour into the world—because, thanks to her Yes, God could become man in our world and remains so for all time. The Evil One has power in this world, as we see and experience continually; he has power because our freedom continually lets itself be led away from God. But since God himself took a human heart and has thus steered human freedom towards what is good, the freedom to choose evil no longer has the last word. From that time forth, the word that prevails is this: "In the world you will have tribulation, but take heart; I have overcome the world" (Jn 16:33). The message of Fatima invites us to trust in this promise.

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FOR THE NEXT MEETING...

Questions from Br. Edward to think about before we meet.

Chapter 1: The Spirit of Monastic Lectio

1. What significance does The Rule's Chapter on Lent have for St. Benedict in reference to *Lectio Divina*?
2. Why does St. Benedict feel it is so important to choose a book and read it all the way through?
3. Casey describes *Lectio Divina* as one concrete means of opening ourselves to the action of grace and the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Please explain your experience of this as an Oblate.

ORDO

OCTOBER

- 1 26 Sunday in Ordinary Time (Week II)
- 2 Guardian Angels, Patron of Congregation. Feast
- 4 St. Francis of Assisi, Memorial
- 6 Bruno, Memorial
- 7 Our Lady of the Rosary. Memorial
- 8 27th Sunday in Ordinary Time (Week III)
- 15 28th Sunday in Ordinary Time (Week IV)
- 17 Ignatius of Antioch, Memorial
- 18 Luke, Feast
- 22 29th Sunday in Ordinary Time (Week I)
- 28 Simon and Jude, Apostles. Feast
- 29 30th Sunday in Ordinary Time (Week II)

NOVEMBER

- 1 All Saints. Solemnity
- 2 Commemoration of All the Faithful Departed, Memorial
- 4 Charles Borromeo, Bishop. Memorial

4. Describe what Casey means when he says “The major determinant of prayer or *lectio* is our fidelity to seeking God in everyday behavior?”
5. Please explain what Casey means when he says, “Staying with a single book is not only an exercise in personal discipline; it is a condition of approaching *Lectio Divina* with an appropriate attitude.”
6. Please explain your personal experience of a prolonged exposure to a scriptural book.

THE CONTROVERSIAL THIRD SECRET

A century after the Fatima apparitions, controversies remain. The two biggest involve whether or not the full and authentic text of the third secret has been revealed, and whether or not Russia has been adequately consecrated to Mary.

In 1960, the year Sr. Lucia intended the third secret to be published, the Vatican issued a press release stating that it was “most probable the Secret would remain, forever, under absolute seal.” Widespread speculation ensued about what this meant for the content of the secret, ranging from “worldwide nuclear annihilation to deep rifts in the Roman Catholic Church that lead to rival papacies,” according to the New York Times.

St. John XXIII and Bl. Paul VI both reportedly read the secret, but decided not to release it to the public.

During the papacy of St. John Paul II, the questions regarding the third Fatima secret intensified. In an interview with German magazine *Stimme des Glaubens*, published in October 1981, John Paul II was pressed explicitly about the third secret.

He said: “Because of the seriousness of its contents, in order not to encourage the world wide power of Communism to carry out certain coups, my predecessors in the chair of Peter have diplomatically preferred to withhold its publication.”

He added that it would be unhelpful to publish the secret if it led Christians to believe that there were a predicted catastrophe against which they were helpless.

Holding up his rosary, the Pope declared: “Here is the remedy against this evil. Pray, pray and ask for nothing else. Put everything in the hands of the Mother of God.”

On May 2, 1981, an Australian named Laurence James Downey, who claimed to be a defrocked French Trappist monk, hijacked an airplane and demanded that St. John Paul II reveal the Third Secret of Fatima. The man was believed to be armed with a bomb, but the incident was resolved without any injuries to passengers onboard.

In 1984, then-Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, said that “if [the Third Secret] is not published ... it is to avoid confusing religious prophecy with sensationalism. But the things contained in the Third Secret correspond to what has been announced in Scripture and are confirmed by many other Marian apparitions.”

Widespread speculation and concern led to the secret’s publishing in 2000 by the Vatican. The late release angered many who read the secret and didn’t understand what was so controversial about it that delayed publication by decades.

Conspirators questioned whether the authentic secret, or the secret in full, had actually been revealed. The Vatican version, which is claimed to be a photocopy of the original handwritten note from Sr. Lucia, took up four pages, while some allege that Sr. Lucia had actually written the third secret on just one page.

Some skeptics are also suspicious about the third secret because it does not contain any words directly from Mary, unlike the other secrets.

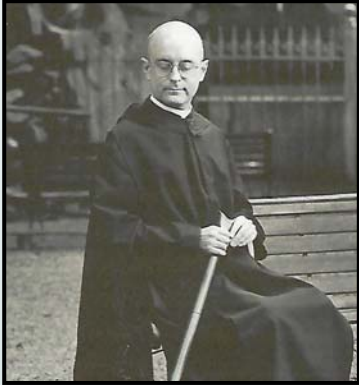
NECROLOGY



OCTOBER

- 1 Br. Obl. Timothy Guidera (1951)
- 4 Fr. Paschal Baumstein (2007)
- 9 Br. William Murray (1926)
- 10 Fr. John Oetgen (2009)
- 12 Br. Boniface Schreiber (1928)
- 14 Fr. Charles Rettger (1916)
- 20 Fr. Augustine Ecker (1934)
- 24 Fr. Alcuin Baudermann (1975)
- 26 Fr. Lawrence Willis (2003)
- 27 Fr. Patrick Donahue (1994)
- 29 Fr. John Smith (1942)
- 31 Fr. Walter O'Brien (1932)
- 31 Fr. Stanislaus Bethel (1941)

OUR ABBEY HERITAGE



Fr. Paschal (Sidney) Baumstein, OSB was born in Tullahoma, Tennessee, on September 16, 1950. He received training in archival science at the Modern Archives Institute of the National Archives in Washington D. C. . He was the first Benedictine to be admitted to the Academy of Certified Archivists. On April 20, 2007, Father Paschal was awarded the degree of Doctor of Humane Letters by Belmont Abbey College in recognition of his scholarly work and service to Belmont Abbey.

Father Paschal entered the novitiate at Belmont Abbey in 1974, and made his first profession of vows on June 5, 1975. He was ordained to the priesthood on June 2, 1979. With his mordant humor and quick mind, he became a noted presence on the Belmont scene. From the beginning, he developed a deep love for his abbey

and her history. His many contributions to Belmont Abbey will bless our community for years to come. He single-handedly established the monastery and college archives, and from them drew a treasure of knowledge. He is perhaps best remembered for *My Lord of Belmont*, his biography of Belmont's first abbot, Bishop Leo Haid. He also co-authored *Blessing the Years to Come*, a pictorial history of Belmont Abbey, and published numerous articles and booklets. He was instrumental in having the Abbey Basilica placed on the National Register of Historic Places, and having the central part of the abbey designated as a historic district. He served as secretary to the Council of Seniors and the Chapter for many years, and also served on the Board of Trustees of Belmont Abbey College.

He is perhaps best remembered at Belmont Abbey College for his rich knowledge and deep love of theater. He was an avid supporter of the Abbey Players and played the title role in *Hadrian VII*. Generations of Abbey students were helped by his gentle presence and blessed by the many notes of encouragement and congratulations he unfailingly sent to students and friends. He was beloved as a treasured confessor and spiritual father .

Father Paschal died on Thursday evening, October 4, 2007. He was buried in the Abbey Cemetery

(continued from page 3) Some also question the content of the secret, because it does not directly speak of the apocalypse, as was expected from interviews of Sr. Lucia.

Others are also suspicious of Sr. Lucia's transfer from the Dorothean Sisters, where she initially entered, to a cloistered Carmelite convent, the order she transferred to with permission in 1948. The move to the Carmelite order, which has strict rules about communication with the outside world, is seen by some as part of a larger conspiracy effort to censor her visions and the third secret.

On the other hand, Sr. Lucia herself confirmed several times that the third secret as published by the Vatican is in full and correct. Specifically in a November 17, 2001 statement to the secretary of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Archbishop Tarcisio Bertone, she confirmed that the Fatima secret has been totally revealed by the Vatican, and Russia has already been consecrated as Mary requested.

Those who affirm that the secret has been fully revealed say that to question the secret's authenticity is to question the original visionary's credibility.

The authenticity of the third secret has also been confirmed by the Popes and other Vatican officials.

When the secret was published, then-Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger said that "The events to which the third part of the 'secret' of Fatima refers now seem part of the past. [...] Those who expected exciting apocalyptic revelations about the end of the world or the future course of history are bound to be disappointed."

In 2016, an article on Catholic blog One Peter Five included an interview with a German priest who claimed to recall a conversation in which Pope Benedict XVI told him that the third secret had not been fully revealed. In a response on May 21, 2016, the Vatican released a statement from Pope Benedict XVI declaring that any claims that the third secret had not been fully revealed were "pure inventions, absolutely untrue." (Used with permission, *Catholic News Agency*)

