

On February 20 we celebrate the feast day of Saints Jacinta and Francisco Marto. Together with October 13, feast of Our Lady of the Rosary of Fatima, the feast of the Fatima Shepherds is the principal feast of the Blue Army Chapel in Riverview.

On this day the Archbishop of Detroit, Most Reverend Allen Vigneron, has granted a plenary indulgence to the faithful who assist at Holy Mass, receive worthily Holy Communion, and pray for the Holy Father while visiting the chapel. A plenary indulgence is the full pardon and remission of sin and punishment. While it is not necessary to go to confession on that day if you are in the state of grace, Confession should take place within fourteen days of the feast day. After Mass there will be the veneration of the relics of Saints Jacinta and Francisco.

When our Lady came to the shepherds, She proclaimed the same message of her divine Son; "Repent and Believe! The kingdom of God is at hand!" Lucia, Francisco and Jacinta responded immediately. They began to pray with greater fervor the holy Rosary. Fasting and acts of penance and mortification were daily practices. The children made reparation to the Eucharistic Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary. They spread the message of reform and reparation, to others, but kept secret those parts of the message that were to remain undisclosed until the time pre-ordained by God. The Fatima Shepherds can truly be called "martyrs" because they were willing to die for the secrets of Our Lady.

We are now in the times of the unfolding of the third secret: the apostasy within the Church, beginning with Cardinals and Bishops; the terrible persecution of the Church, and the world-wide oppression of Communism; and the third world war. These events are taking place now, and will soon be completed, until the final triumph of the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

Saint John Paul II, the "Fatima Pope", declared a "Year of the Rosary" twenty years ago to draw us more deeply into the daily recitation of the Rosary as Our Lady requested at Fatima. In the meditations of the mysteries we "contemplate the Face of Christ through the eyes of Mary". To draw near to the Face of Christ, is to draw near to the Light Who is Christ. Saint John Paul II gave us the "Mysteries of Light" – the Luminous Mysteries – to show us that our salvation, and the salvation of souls, can be found only in Jesus Christ. There is no other Savior except Jesus Christ, Who is the Second Person of the Most Holy Trinity – "God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God". This is why the holy Patriarch, Saint Joseph, responded immediately to the commands of God through the holy Archangel Gabriel, because he was a man of good will and could never say "no" to the Light of the world. The same can be said of the holy Apostles. As soon as God called them; "Come follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men", they immediately left all behind and followed Him. Jesus Christ is the Light, and all those of good will, will respond quickly, even though imperfectly.

Saints Jacinta and Francisco, with their cousin Lucia, responded immediately to the luminous Lady who shone like the Sun when she called them to follow Jesus, to reform their lives, and proclaim the hold Gospel of repentance and prayer to all the people.

We need to respond like the Shepherds. To pray devoutly the Holy Rosary everyday is to remain in the Light. Even though immense darkness surrounds us today; even though Divine Justice will fall upon our criminal world through divine punishments which we deserve because of our sins, we must remain in the Light by taking refuge in the Sorrowful and Immaculate Heart of Mary through the daily recitation of the holy Rosary.

Each of the Fatima Shepherds had a particular “charism”.

The charism of Saint Jacinta was to console the Immaculate Heart of Mary, so sorrowful over the great loss of souls. Deeply affected by the vision of hell, Saint Jacinta was tireless in praying for the conversion of sinners in order to save souls from hell, and to console the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

The charism of Saint Francisco is reparation to the Eucharistic Heart of Jesus. He would spend hours before the tabernacle in order to console the “hidden Jesus” and to make reparation for all that Jesus suffers in the Most Blessed Sacrament.

Lucia’s charism combines both of her cousins’ in that she spread devotion to the “First Saturdays” by encouraging the “Communion of reparation” in order to console the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

There is no better way to honor Saints Jacinta and Francisco Marto than by imitating their heroic virtues.

Come to the Fatima Chapel on February 20th!

Come to the Light of the World, Jesus Christ, and to the  
Woman, clothed with the Sun!

God love you!

Father John