



Our Holy Patrons-Saints Jacinta and Francisco Marto

Join me as I celebrate 3pm Mass on Sunday, February 20th, at Our Lady of Fatima Shrine in honor of the heavenly patrons of the Blue Army, Saints Jacinta, and Francisco Marto. What are the particular lessons that these Saints teach us as the first non-martyred children to be raised to the altars of the Church? First and foremost, Jacinta leads us to penance and mortification in reparation for the sins committed against the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

Saint Jacinta was profoundly affected by the sorrowful countenance of Our Lady. Why? Because of our many sins as Mary's children. Especially the sins of immodesty and impurity. She fasted and performed corporal penances to console the Immaculate Heart of Mary, surrounding and pierced by the thorns of our sins. What afflicted our Lady afflicted Saint Jacinta, who spent hours in reparative prayer and penance.

Secondly, Jacinta teaches us to have a burning zeal for the conversion of sinners and the salvation of souls. The vision of Hell on July 13, 1917, changed Saint Jacinta's life forever. She was never the same after seeing Hell. For all eternity, the loss of so many souls. The thought filled her with sorrow and desolation. There was no sacrifice too great to offer for the conversion of sinners and to save souls from Hell. Jacinta offered even her painful death, far from her parents and family and alone in a Lisbon hospital, to convert poor sinners.

The third lesson Jacinta teaches us is to pray much for the Holy Father. When Saint Jacinta was ill and alone, she had two visions of the Holy Father. She saw him in a large house kneeling by a small table during the first vision, crying with his hands covering his face. Outside, a crowd was shouting, insulting him, and throwing stones. Saint Jacinta would say to Lucia, "O poor Holy Father!" How much we must pray for the Pope!" This vision moved her to pray more and more for the pope. In the second vision, Saint Jacinta saw the Holy Father in a world full of famine and suffering, praying with many others in a church before the Immaculate Heart of Mary. Lucia recalled that she saw her cousin after one of the visions. "One day, I went to Jacinta's house to spend a little time with her. I found her sitting on her bed, deep in thought. "Jacinta, what are you thinking about?" "About the war that is coming. So many people will die, and almost all of them are going to Hell! Many homes will be destroyed, and many priests will be killed. Don't be afraid! In heaven, I'll be praying hard for you, the Holy Father, for Portugal so that the war will not come here and for all the priests."

As a member of the Blue Army, we must imitate the virtues of Saint Jacinta. Her steadfast devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, her spirit of reparation for the sins that afflict our Most Holy Mother. Jacinta's love for poor sinners and her zeal for their eternal salvation. Her love for the Holy Father, together with the daily prayer for the pope and the Church.

Saint Francisco also teaches many of the same lessons as his little sister Jacinta. He offered all his suffering and death for the conversion of sinners without complaining. But there is one single lesson he teaches us above all else: An ardent and persevering devotion to the "hidden Jesus in the tabernacle."

Saint Francisco was a contemplative soul. He loved to get away from people and spend time before Jesus in the Most Blessed Sacrament of the Altar. He even skipped school to go to the Church to console Our Lord in the tabernacle.

If the vision of Hell focused the mind of Saint Jacinta, the Eucharistic experiences with the "Angel of Peace," especially the reparatory nature of these experiences, affected Saint Francisco. When the angel bade Francisco drink the Precious Blood from the Chalice, the words of the angel seared his mind and heart. "Take and drink the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, horribly outraged by ungrateful men. Repair their crimes and console your God."

Saint Francisco would receive his second "First Communion" on his death bed in his family home in Aljustrel on April 4, 1919. Saint Francisco spent most of his time in Eucharistic Adoration reparation in the months preceding his death. He chose to console Jesus so outraged in the Blessed Sacrament by the sacrilegious Communions received by many people. This young man teaches us the inestimable value of interior silence and contemplation before the Eucharistic Lord truly present in all the tabernacles of the world. He teaches us to make Eucharistic reparation and spend time each day in Adoration. Saint Francisco is the "Saint of the Holy Hour."

All Blue Army members are called to Eucharistic Adoration and Reparation. Bishop John Venancio of Fatima summarized the message of Fatima "Eucharistic reparation. Eucharistic reparation. Eucharistic reparation."

Time is short! Saints Jacinta and Francisco only had a short time to live after the "Miracle of the Sun." Francisco lived for 11 months, and Jacinta lived for 28 months. In those few precious months, they passed their time in prayer and penance to console Jesus and Mary and save souls from Hell.

Our mission in the Blue Army is to be men and women who are Eucharistic and Marian and "victims" for the salvation of souls.

Blessed Feast Day to all the Blue Army Members!

Father John