

## Saint John Bosco and the Terrible Punishment

By Peter Lappin

Saint John Bosco was once invited to preach a mission in the town of Viarigi. Viarigi was a trouble-spot, for not only had the people fallen away from the Church but, led by a handful of malcontents, they were actually waging war against their pastor.

When the ringleaders heard of his coming, fearing that he might win the people over, they set out to destroy any effect the mission might have. Their attack took the form of dances and entertainments held during the hours of the church services. Their campaign was so successful that on the first night, Don Bosco found himself preaching to a mere handful of women and children.

"My dear people," he told them, "it is our duty to hear the word of God whenever it is offered to us. Whoever takes it on himself to prevent the word of God from being heard is committing a serious offense — one that could be punished even by sudden death."

This warning had some effect. On the following evening there were about a hundred people present, although the church was still not nearly filled.

"I see that if the others are not going to attend the mission of their own free will," he warned, "I shall have to force them. Please tell those who stayed away what I have just told you. They are to take it as a warning. And now let us say a prayer for the one

in Viarigi who will be the first to die!"

Next evening, in spite of the warning, one of the ringleaders held an open house and brazenly invited people in as they passed by on their way to the mission.

The mission began; so did the dance; and since the dance was on the same street as the church, the sound of the music and the shouts of the dancers were heard all during the sermon. It looked as if the mission was going to fail.



St. John Bosco was also known as a friend of youths.

Late that night, when the church had long been closed, the dancers had left, and all Viarigi was in darkness, someone knocked at the door of the rectory. The pastor dressed, went downstairs and in the dim light of the hall he saw the shadowy figure of a man.

"What's up?"  
 "A neighbor down the street is dying."  
 "Where?"  
 "In number 29."  
 "Number 29? But isn't that where ... ?"  
 "... we held the dance tonight."

Although the pastor hurried down he might have spared himself the trouble, for the man was dead when he arrived. News of the death caused a stir.

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# Our Lady of Fatima and Pope Benedict XV's Prayer for Peace

By Mark Fellows

**Note:** The following is from the book "Sister Lucia: Apostle of Mary's Immaculate Heart." We are here at the description of the last words spoken by Our Lady during Her first visitation at Fatima on May 13, 1917.

Presently the Lady spoke again. "Pray the Rosary every day, in order to obtain peace for the world, and the end of the war."

"Then," Lucia recounted, "She began to rise serenely, going up towards the east, until She disappeared in the immensity of space. The light that surrounded Her seemed to open up a path before Her in the firmament, and for this reason we sometimes said that we saw Heaven opening."

This last admonition of Our Lady — to "Pray the Rosary every day, in order to obtain peace for the world, and the end of the war" — occurred eight days after Pope Benedict XV, decrying the First World War as "the suicide of Europe", urged everyone to pray to "the great Mother of God" for peace. In a letter to Cardinal Pietro Gasparri dated May 5, 1917, Benedict declared:

"To Mary, then, who is the Mother of Mercy and omnipotent by grace, let loving and de-

vout appeal go up from every corner of the earth ... Let it bear to Her the anguished cry of mothers and wives, the wailing of innocent little ones, the sighs of every generous heart: that Her most tender and benign solicitude may be moved and the peace we ask for be obtained for our agitated world."



Pope Benedict XV

Benedict XV concluded his letter with "our ardent desire that all have recourse to the Heart of Jesus, throne of graces, and that they have recourse by the mediation of Mary. To this end we order that, beginning with the first day of June, there be permanently added to the Litany of Loreto the invocation: 'Queen of Peace, pray for us.'" Is it not evident that Mary's words on May 13 were a swift response to the papal plea?

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## Mary, the Mother of Christ

from US Bishops' Pastoral, 1919



What grace can accomplish in His creatures, God has shown in the person of Her whom He chose to be His Mother, preserving Her from all stain and endowing Her with such pureness of heart that She is truly "full of grace" and "blessed among women."

The unique privilege of Mary as cooperating in the Incarnation, entitles Her to reverence and honor; but in the Catholic mind it is love that prompts veneration for the Mother of Christ. It is indeed beyond comprehension that any who sincerely love Jesus, should be cold or indifferent in regard to His Mother. No honor that we may pay Her can ever equal that which God Himself has

conferred, and much less can it detract from the honor that is due to Him.

In keeping with Her singular dignity is the power of Mary's intercession. If the prayers of holy men avail to obtain the divine assistance, the petitions of Mary in our behalf must be far more efficacious. With good reason, then, does the Church encourage the faithful to cultivate a tender devotion for the Blessed Virgin.

But if all generations should call Her blessed, and if the peoples of earth should glory in Her protection, we have a particular duty to honor Mary Immaculate as the heavenly Patroness of the United States. Let Her blessed influence preserve our Catholic homes from all contagion of evil, and keep our children in pureness of heart. Let us also pay Her the tribute of public honor in a way that will lead all our people to a fuller appreciation of Mary, the perfect woman and the surpassing model of motherhood. †

## Fatima Peace Conference: Why India?

You have now probably heard of the magnificent Peace Conference we held in India from January 30 to February 5 this year at which hundreds of priests and bishops attended.

It was fitting for the Fatima Center to hold its Peace Conference in India for a number of reasons. First, the Fatima Center has had a presence in India for many years. Our Pilgrim Virgin Statue first toured India in 1985 and was enthusiastically received.

In 1991 the Fatima Center established its first international office in India. Since then, the India office has mailed hundreds of thousands of pieces of literature throughout India and other English-speaking countries.

In 1993, the Fatima Center responded to a need in the Diocese of Hyderabad, helping to establish a means of getting fresh drinking water from its source to one Catholic village.

The same year, the Center established the Immaculate Heart Orphanage in Hyderabad. The orphanage later expanded, and a medical center was also established which provides care for the orphanage and for people from three surrounding villages. An order of Sisters came to take care of the orphanage and medical center.

All of this was made possible by the Fatima Center thanks to the generosity of its supporters.



Tamil literature is given out to children and adults at the Shrine in Pondicherry after the Rosary procession.

In 2001 the Fatima Center set up a Scapular-making factory in the Diocese of Hyderabad that not only provides employment for people of the area, but also produces about 40,000 scapulars a month that are sent around the world.

Along with the Fatima Center's 23-year presence in India, there is a second reason it was fitting that the Peace Conference be held in that nation: the bloody persecution against Christians that struck in late 2007.

Fierce anti-Christian violence broke out in Orissa, in the northwest of India, from December 24-27. The bishops of India condemned these anti-Catholic attacks at Christmas time, calling what Christians were suffering in Orissa an "authentic Calvary".

An official memorandum signed by various bishops of India reported the following regarding the Christmas

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### OUR LADY OF FATIMA AND POPE BENEDICT XV'S PRAYER FOR PEACE *continued from page 2*

... Like the angelic apparitions the previous year, the apparition of the beautiful Lady "plunged us once more into the atmosphere of the supernatural," said Lucia, "but this time more gently ... it left us filled with peace and expansive joy, which did not prevent us from speaking afterwards of what had happened. However, with regard to the light communicated to us when Our Lady opened Her hands, and everything connected with this light, we experienced a kind of interior impulse that compelled us to keep silent."

Elsewhere Lucia described the difference between her encounters with the Angel and the beautiful Lady like this:

"We felt the same intimate joy, the same peace and happiness, but instead of physical exhaustion, an expansive ease of movement; instead of this annihilation in the Divine Presence, a joyful exultation; instead of the difficulty in speaking, we felt a certain communicative enthusiasm."



Jacinta seemed most affected by "communicative enthusiasm." After promising Lucia not to speak to anyone of the beautiful Lady's visit, she ran home to her mother and exclaimed, "Mamma, today I saw the Blessed Virgin at the Cova da Iria!" †

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violence: 6 dead; 70 churches attacked, broken into, and torched; 600 Christian houses broken into and torched; 5 thousand people affected by this attack; 15 vehicles and 25 motorcycles of Christian people either broken or burnt. At least 11 villages were directly affected. Many other villagers were hiding in the forests in conditions of anxiety and tension as well as continued threats from Hindu extremists.

The day before the conference, the Fatima Center in Chennai received a phone call from a priest from Orissa who had hoped to come to the conference but could not. He explained that people were still living in the woods in fear of their lives, and that a number of young children had to be cared for whose parents were killed in the attacks.

These dreadful attacks remind us that the promise of world peace given by Our Lady of Fatima has yet to be fulfilled; obedience to Our Lady of Fatima's Message is more necessary than ever; and the need for the Consecration of Russia to the Immaculate Heart of Mary grows stronger with each passing day.

In order to help spread Our Lady's Message of love and hope in India, the Fatima Center published seven new leaflets in the Tamil language, one of India's main languages. These include leaflets on the Miraculous Medal; the Five First Saturdays; How to Pray the Rosary; the Three Hail Mary's; the Brown Scapular; the Green Scapular; and an overview of the Message of Fatima.

#### SAINT JOHN BOSCO AND THE TERRIBLE PUNISHMENT

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This was the man who, as the leader in the movement against the pastor, had done his best to stop the mission. Now, on the heels of Don Bosco's warning, he had died a sudden death.

Next evening Don Bosco pressed home the point by choosing as the subject of his sermon: Death. He described it with such vividness of detail and used such dramatic gestures that he froze the hearts of his listeners. But that was not all. Before the mission was over several more died, every one of them from among those who had tried to stop the mission. Most terrifying of all was the fact that Don Bosco solemnly foretold each death from the pulpit. "Let us pray," he would say, "for the soul of So-and-so, who will soon present himself before the judgment seat of God!"

Tens of thousands of these pamphlets were given out free to the priests who attended the conference. The priests received them with gratitude and pledged to spread them among their people. A number of priests from other regions and countries also volunteered to help translate these pamphlets into their own languages for future publication.

#### Rosary Crusade 2008:

We are fundraising—for spiritual funds! There is no good or noble cause being waged in the world—against abortion; against pornography; for better laws—that will endure if the Consecration of Russia is not done. Therefore, we are racing against the clock to "raise" 30 million Rosaries prayed in 2008! We earnestly desire these two intentions: the release of the *entire* Third Secret of Fatima (already 48 years overdue!) and the solemn Consecration of Russia, by the Pope in union with all the bishops, to the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

Please pledge a minimum of one Rosary a week for these two intentions of the Fatima Center. But if you can pledge more—two a week, one a day, more—would you do so? Our intentions can be joined to your own, in the Rosaries you already pray and meditate on each day. Just record them in your intention list. But please include us.

And please let us know your pledge. If you overlooked your pledge form when it arrived, would you please call our office (1-800-263-8160) to request however many you need. Complete it, and get others to do so too, and return them to us. †

The mission turned out to be an extraordinary success; the pastor declared that not one of his parishioners had failed to go to Confession and Communion. Moreover, from that day on, Viarigi became an example to the countryside. †

#### **We'd like to hear from YOU!**

To reach us: Call or write us at  
**International Fatima Rosary  
Crusade Newsletter**

**In U.S.A.** - 17000 State Route 30,  
Constable, NY 12926

**In CANADA** - 452 Kraft Road,  
Fort Erie, ON L2A 4M7

Call toll-free: **1-800-263-8160**

Fax: 1-905-871-8680

[www.fatima.org](http://www.fatima.org) • **E-mail:** [info@fatima.org](mailto:info@fatima.org)

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for all things Fatima!