

**Canada has two queens. One is temporal and the other is spiritual—Blessed Virgin Mary. Like Elizabeth II, Mary has many titles. They relate to her nature, the locations of her apparitions, and her roles: the Immaculate Conception, Our Lady of Fatima, Our Lady of Canada, and more.**

Mary also has the title of Mother of God, primarily to emphasize Jesus' divinity. Her *fiat*—her yes—to the Archangel Gabriel's announcement of God's plan was crucial to our salvation. She is the ideal of Christian obedience, regardless of personal cost.

Just as Mary was preserved from sin to be an undefiled ark to carry the Word of God, her body was preserved from the corruption of death by being assumed into heaven. Since then, she has repeatedly intervened in history with apparitions to the lowly. She appeared to St. Bernadette at Lourdes in 1858 to confirm her title of the Immaculate Conception.

One hundred years ago, Mary appeared six times to three young shepherd children in Fatima, Portugal. Elsewhere in Europe, the Great War cost an entire generation. Portugal was in chaos following a revolution in 1910. Government officials, influenced by Freemasonry, were hostile to the Faith. For the people themselves, however, the Faith was the air they breathed.

In the parish of Fatima, Lucia, Francisco, and Jacinta grew up in homes where the catechism was their daily bread. Stories from the Bible were their recreation. The village priest gave spiritual direction.

Lucia de Jesus Santos was ten years old. She had become a catechist only the year before. Lucia would be the constant guide to her younger cousins through the trials that accompanied Our Lady's apparitions.

At Fatima, one fruit of the events and of the fidelity of the three visionaries is that they grew in holiness and became true mystics in the sense of Christian discipline. Their sanctification, more than even the miracle of the sun seen by seventy thousand, authenticates the message of Fatima. The Church has declared Francisco and Jacinta saints and is reviewing Lucia's cause.

One message of Fatima is the singular role of Mary Immaculate in the economy of salvation, a dogmatic fact. God categorically instructed universal devotion to her Immaculate Heart. The second message is the necessity of this devotion to the Christian life and the future of humankind.

To be "devoted" to the Immaculate Heart of Mary is to assert "thy will be done" as the defining centre of our life. Mary said, "my Immaculate Heart will triumph." The Heart open to God, purified by contemplation of God, will vanquish weapons and hatred.

Because God Himself took a human heart and has steered human freedom towards what is good, Satan no longer has the last word. Jesus' word now prevails, "In the world you will have tribulation, but take heart; I have overcome the world" (John 16.33). Fatima reminds us to trust this promise.

Today, the Catholic Church is living in the age of Fatima. Parishes and dioceses around the world are celebrating the centennial of the event that changed history.

Canadian bishops have consecrated their dioceses to Mary's Immaculate Heart as I did on Canada Day. All the bishops re-consecrated Canada last Tuesday.

Next Friday, there will be a diocesan procession with a statue of Our Lady of Fatima from Saint Patrick's Basilica to Notre Dame

Cathedral, then an anniversary Mass that evening. On Saturday, the Legion of Mary will celebrate devotions at St. Maurice Parish. That evening, Our Lady of Fatima Parish will celebrate its 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

We give thanks for Mary's patronage as Queen of Canada. Happy Thanksgiving!

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