

HOLINESS

Knowledge of God

Knowledge of Self

The following is a sermon given by Father Rodriguez during Holy Mass at our *Our Lady's Army of Advocates* conference held in St. Louis, Missouri.

by Father Michael Rodriguez

On May 13, 1917, toward the end of Her first apparition at Fatima, the Most Holy Mother of God opened Her hands and shed upon the three shepherd children, a highly intense light.

Lucia reported, “This light penetrated us to the heart and allowed us to see ourselves in God, Who was that light, more clearly than we see ourselves in a mirror.”

At Fatima, the three young children – Lucia, Francisco, and Jacinta – had an intense experience of God Himself, and in the light that is God, they understood more clearly, their own unworthiness and absolute need of God. This knowledge of God and consequent knowledge of self, was granted them by God through the Maternal Mediation of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Father Jean Nicolas Grou, an 18th century French Jesuit priest

and mystic, wrote the following:

“All Christian sanctity is contained in two things: the knowledge of God, and the knowledge of self. St. Augustine cried, ‘Lord, that I may know Thee, and that I may know myself.’ The knowledge of God elevates the soul; knowledge of self keeps it humble.

“The knowledge of God raises the soul to contemplate something of the depths of the divine perfections, while knowledge of self lowers the soul to the abyss of its own nothingness and sin. The amazing thing is that the very knowledge of God which raises man up, at the same time humbles him by the comparison of himself with God.”

Knowledge of God and knowledge of self lead to

sanctity. This is precisely what took place at Fatima 100 years ago, and it occurred so that all men of our time may convert by coming to know the true God – through Mary – as well as their own nothingness and need for repentance.

Repent and Cease Offending God

This is the path to holiness and it is also the path to Heaven! Our Lady came to Fatima to urge us to repent of our sins (knowledge of self) and cease offending God – God Who is infinitely holy, good, faithful and true (knowledge of God).

We are living in desperate times, probably more so than at any other period in human history! Only a tiny percentage of Catholics today are maintaining the true Faith – whole and pure – in worship, doctrine, and morals.

Times are desperate because man has turned away from God and His Holy Law. And what does God do? God, in His infinite mercy, sends His Mother to Fatima to remind souls of the marvelous truth about God (knowledge of God), which in turn, brings man to his knees in adoration, love, and repentance, as he acknowledges how unfaithful and treacherous he has been (knowledge of self).

The 20th and 21st centuries are characterized, not by the knowledge of God, but by the rejection of God! The errors of Russia are errors about God and the true nature of man. Our times are characterized, tragically, by ignorance of God and an inflated sense of man.

Knowledge of God does not mean that each individual may choose to believe in God as he or she pleases or sees fit, or according to personal interpretations of Sacred Scripture. It is God, Who reveals the truth about Himself and God has done this through the Catholic Church.

The Catholic Church The True Religion

The Catholic religion is the only true religion and all other religions are false because they convey false beliefs about God. Father Grou explains:

“The knowledge we must have is what God Himself has revealed concerning the Blessed Trinity.”

At Fatima, the Most Holy Mother of God brings light – true knowledge of God – to our dark world, e.g. the third appearance of the Angel of Portugal: “Most Holy Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, I adore Thee

profoundly ...” and Sister Lucia’s vision of the Blessed Trinity at Tuy, Spain, on June 13, 1929.

True Knowledge of God Corresponds With Fatima

It is remarkable to compare how Father Grou explains true knowledge of God with the various corresponding aspects of the Message of Fatima. Father Grou writes:

“We must know the scope of His power, His providence, His holiness, His justice and His love. We must know the extent and multitude of His mercies, the marvelous economy of His grace, the magnificence of His promises and rewards, the terror of His warnings and the rigor of His chastisements, the worship He requires, and the precepts He imposes. In a word, we must know what He is to us, and what He wills that we should be to Him.”

The Miracle of the Sun (October 13, 1917) manifests God’s immense power, and the lives of Lucia, Francisco, and Jacinta are a brilliant testimony to God’s providence and love.

The Guardian Angel of Portugal transmits a profound sense of God’s holiness, and Our Lady’s repeated pleas to pray,

sacrifice and make reparation, manifest the incredible extent of God’s mercy and the marvelous economy of His grace.

The magnificent promises and rewards of God are at the heart of the Message of Fatima, e.g. the conversion of Russia and peace granted to the world through the Pope’s Consecration of Russia to the Immaculate Heart of Mary and the promise of salvation granted to those who carry out the Five First Saturdays Devotion (which includes the Sacraments). So, too, are His terrible warnings and rigorous chastisements, e.g. the vision of hell “where the souls of poor sinners go,” wars, persecutions of the Church, much suffering for the Pope, and the annihilation of nations.

In sum, the Message of Fatima teaches us “who and what God is to us and what He wills that we should be to Him.” The Mother of God, All Holy, came to Fatima to bring us true knowledge of God and true knowledge of ourselves.

We are, indeed, poor sinners who must stop offending God. Repent and make due reparation to God’s infinite majesty.

By the light of Fatima, Our Lady came to make us holy and guide us to Heaven. Amen. 