



Sovereign Order of Saint John of Jerusalem ©
** Knights of Malta **

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Chancellor's Update

Lourdes - A Hundred and Fifty Years Later

In the following text Cardinal Ivan Dias describes the last battle between God and Satan and the role Mary, the Blessed Virgin, plays in Satan's final defeat. On December 8, 2007 Cardinal Dias, the papal legate, to the 150th jubilee anniversary of the apparitions at Lourdes, France said:

"As pilgrims assembled in the love of Christ, we wish to remember with gratitude and affection the apparitions which took place here in Lourdes in 1858. Together, we try to feel the palpitations of the maternal heart of our dear celestial Mom, to recall her words and to listen to the message which she presents to us still today...

THE MESSAGE OF THE VIRGIN TODAY

"It may be asked: What significance may the message of Our Lady of Lourdes have for us today?..

"After her apparitions at Lourdes, the Holy Virgin has not ceased to manifest her great maternal concern for the fate of mankind in her several apparitions worldwide.

"She has asked everywhere for prayers and penance for the conversion of sinners, for she predicted the spiritual ruin of certain nations, the sufferings that the Holy Father would face, the general weakening of the Christian faith, the difficulties of the Church, the rise' of the Antichrist and of his attempts to replace God in the life of men - attempts which, despite their initial success, would nevertheless be destined to fail.

"Here, at Lourdes, as everywhere in the world, the Virgin Mary is weaving an enormous web of her spiritual sons and daughters in the whole world in order to launch a strong offensive against the forces of the Evil One, to lock him up and thus prepare the final victory of her divine Son, Jesus Christ.

"The Virgin Mary invites us once again today to be a part of her combat legion against the forces of evil.

"As a sign of our participation at her offensive, she demands, among other things, conversion of heart, a great devotion to the Holy Eucharist, the daily recitation of the rosary, unceasing prayer without hypocrisy, and the acceptance of sufferings for the salvation of the world.

"These could seem to be small things, but they are powerful in the hands of God, to whom nothing is impossible.

"As the young David who, with a small stone and a sling, brought down the giant Goliath who came to meet him armed with a sword, a spear, and a shield (cf. 1 Sam 17:4-51), we will also, with the small beads of our rosary, be able to heroically face the assaults of our awesome adversary and defeat him.

“The struggle between God and his enemy still takes place, even more so today than at the time of Bernadette, 150 years ago.

“This is so because today the world finds itself stuck in the swamp of a secularism that wishes to create a world without God; of a relativism that stifles the permanent and unchangeable values of the Gospel; and of a religious indifference that remains undisturbed regarding the higher good of the matters of God and the Church.

“This battle takes innumerable victims within our families and among our young people.

“Some months before becoming Pope John Paul II, Cardinal Karol Wojtyla said (November 9, 1976): “We are today before the greatest combat that mankind has ever seen. I do not believe that the Christian community has completely understood it. We are today before the final struggle between the Church and the Anti- Church, between the Gospel and the Anti-Gospel.”

“One thing remains certain: the final victory belongs to God and that will happen thanks to Mary, the Woman of Genesis and of the Apocalypse, who will fight at the head of the army of her sons and daughters against the enemy forces of Satan and will crush the head of the serpent.”

So, during this 150th anniversary of Lourdes, we quote from our February 2004 Update. We join in the hope of Pope Pius IX in his Apostolic Constitution, *Ineffabilis Deus*, and thank Jesus, our Lord, for this great gift of His Mother. “All our hope do we repose in the...immaculate one who has crushed the poisonous head of the most cruel serpent and brought salvation to the world...in her...is the safest refuge and the most trustworthy helper of all who are in danger; in her who, with her only-begotten Son, is the most powerful Mediatrix and Conciliatrix in the whole world...in her who has destroyed all heresies and snatched the faithful people and nations from all kinds of direst calamities; in her do we hope who has delivered us from so many threatening dangers... The most Blessed Virgin will ensure by her most powerful patronage that all difficulties be removed and all errors dissipated... We are firm in our confidence that she will obtain pardon for the sinner, health for the sick, strength of heart for the weak, consolation for the afflicted, help for those in danger; that she will remove spiritual blindness from all who are in error, so that they may return to the path of truth and justice, and that here may be one flock and one shepherd...”

“Nothing is to be feared; nothing is hopeless...She is solicitous about the whole human race. And since she has been appointed by God to be the Queen of heaven and earth, and is exalted above all the choirs of angels and saints, and even stands at the right hand of her only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ Our Lord, she presents our petitions in a most efficacious manner. What she asks, she obtains. Her pleas can never be unheard.”

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