



Bishop's Monthly Reflection

March 2022

My Dear People of God,

In 1917, Our Lady of Fatima asked the faithful to pray the Rosary for peace in the world as humanity was experiencing the horrors of WWI. She warned that if prayer and penance were not embraced, there would be a more terrible and destructive future war, and it came to pass - WWII. All of this could have been avoided if people would have followed Our Blessed Mother's *peace plan*, but it was ignored. The rest is history.

Our Lady asked that acts of reparation be offered for the conversion of sinners. She requested that Russia be consecrated to her Immaculate Heart. If this failed to happen, Russia, the future Soviet Union, would spread its error (atheism, communism, totalitarianism) throughout the world, including its ruthless persecution of the Church. The rest is history.

Because of the Lord's mercy, and the intercession of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, along with the powerful devotion of praying the Rosary, the Soviet Union collapsed. It is interesting, as part of re-branding the fallen nation, the leadership of the country renamed it: **Russia**. And in doing so, it is curious Our Lady of Fatima never mentioned that there was an appointed time when we would be told to **stop** praying for the conversion of Russia; nor ignore the Lord's desire for Russia to be consecrated to the maternal care of Our Lady. So then, over these many years, as humanity has turned toward itself and away from God, we now find ourselves in a desperate and precarious situation and in need of God's intervention as we witness the geo-political aggression waged by Russia against Ukraine.

It has been noted that Our Lady of the Rosary of Fátima said: "War is a punishment due to sin." War is a consequence of sin and humanity's lack of love of God and of neighbor. We bring this horror and chaos upon ourselves. We need to realize there is more to war than just the geo-political side to it. More importantly, there is the supernatural side to war. All war is rooted in spiritual darkness and the Enemy will continue to use war in order to bring about our self-destruction.

As Catholics, we know that the antidote to spiritual darkness is found in God's love, in love of neighbor and our willingness to repent. It is found in God's mercy and our willingness to take to heart the message of Fatima and Heaven's *peace plan* for the world. Our Lady's peace plan not only asks for the consecration of Russia, but also asks for the devotion of the First Saturdays of Reparation. She reassures us that: "In the end, my Immaculate Heart will triumph."



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It is obvious: Russia continues to spread her error in our day and age. It is an error rooted in the darkness of sin which has the potential, as was mentioned by Our Lady, to bring about the “annihilation of nations.” Let us never forget what history has taught us through the chastisement of two devastating world wars. Let us pray that we will not experience a third!

This Lent, let us pray for an end to the tragic war between Ukraine and Russia. Let us be attentive: the Message of Fatima continues to speak to us now, more than ever. The story is not over!

Immaculate Heart of Mary, pray for us!

Let us pray:

Merciful Lord,
Today we offer our prayers, fasting, and acts of penance for peace between Russia and the Ukraine. Throughout the season of Lent, may we be faithful to the pleadings of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. We seek your forgiveness for offending you by of our sins. May your grace and mercy enlighten us and bring an end to war and its devastating consequences. Amen.

“For the sake of his sorrowful passion,
have mercy on us and on the whole world.”

Our Lady, Queen of Peace, pray for us!

In the Peace of Christ,

Bishop Myron J. Cotta