

The world Apostolate of Fatima

SCOTLAND



POPE FRANCIS

17TH December 1936 – 21ST April 2025

Given the precarious state of his health, it did not come as a major surprise for us to hear the announcement from the Vatican that "At 7:35 am on Easter Monday, The Bishop of Rome, Francis, returned to the Father's house. His entire life was dedicated to the service of the Lord and His church. "He taught us to live the values of the Gospel with faithfulness, courage, and universal love, especially for the poorest and most marginalize"

Especially during this Easter Week, the scripture readings at Mass have focused on the witnesses to the resurrection of Christ. We are conscious that each and every one of us is called to give witness to Christ by the testimony of our lives. As members of the World Apostolate of Fatima, we have committed ourselves to become faithful members of the Catholic faith in our own families, in the work place, in the parishes and communities, participating in this way in what is called 'The New Evangelisation. Guided by this, it is, I think important we reflect in this issue of our Newsletter on the witness of our beloved, Pope Francis and, by our prayers, hasten his journey to the Father's House.



Elected Pope on March 13th, 2013, his connection to Our Lady of Fatima, as Supreme Pontiff, began officially two months later when the Portuguese bishops, at his request, dedicated his pontificate to Our Lady, during the celebrations of May 13th, in Fatima.

At different intervals during his Papacy, Pope Francis continued to express publicly his devotion to Our Lady of Fatima. At his explicit request, the statue of Our

Lady of Fatima, venerated in the Chapel of the Apparitions was brought from Fatima to Rome for the Marian Day organized by the Pontifical Council for Promoting New Evangelization in the context of the Year of Faith. On other occasions he referred to the content of the Apparitions and sought to promote devotion to Our Lady of Fatima. In this he was very much following in the footsteps of Pope Benedict XVI who, at the time of the publication of the Third Secret of Fatima, affirmed that the message of Fatima, centred on the Immaculate Heart of Mary and her triumph needed to be more fully understood.

Writing in 2010, he emphasized the continued relevance of Fatima's message as a call to repentance, prayer, and the pursuit of God's will.

He specifically stated that Fatima's prophetic mission is not complete, and that the 2017 centenary of the apparitions may hasten the triumph of the Immaculate Heart

We know that Pope Francis' devotion to Our Blessed Lady was wide ranging: Our Lady of Aparecida, Our Lady of Guadeloupe, Our Lady of Lourdes, Our Lady Untier of Knots but clearly Our Lady of Fatima and her plan for peace was central to his thought and spiritual leadership of the Church. His deep desire was to bring healing and peace not only amongst all peoples and religions but to bring healing to the planet itself. The desire for peace was at the very core of his mission.

THE DEPTH OF HIS PERSONAL DEVOTION

His devotion was not, however, only at a level of teaching and of faith but was also deeply personal and the depth of his personal devotion to Mary is beautifully expressed in his final testament which reads:

"In the name of the most Holy Trinity. Amen.

As I sense the approaching twilight of my earthly life, and with firm hope in eternal life, I wish to set out my final wishes solely regarding the place of my burial.

"Throughout my life, and during my ministry as a priest and bishop, I have always entrusted myself to the Mother of Our Lord, the Blessed Virgin Mary.

"For this reason, I ask that my mortal remains rest - awaiting the day of the resurrection- in the Papal Basilica of Saint Mary Major.

"I wish my final earthly journey to end precisely in this ancient Marian sanctuary, where I would always stop to pray at the beginning and end of every apostolic journey, confidently entrusting my intentions to the Immaculate Mother, and giving thanks for her gentle and maternal care."

"May the Lord grant a fitting reward to all those who have loved me and continue to pray for me. The suffering that has marked the final part of my life, I offer to the Lord for peace in the world and for fraternity amongst peoples."

Franciscus

PILGRIMS OF HOPE

Providentially, the theme which Pope Francis chose for this year of Jubilee was that of "Pilgrims of Hope". As we reflect on his final testament, he is sharing with us the depth of his faith in the mercy of God and in the life which is to come.



The strong faith which was the foundation of his hope grew out of a heart which was consecrated to Jesus and Mary. It is clear that, throughout his life, Our Blessed Lady has been the star of faith guiding him to the Heart of Christ.

TWO HEARTS WHICH BEAT AS ONE

His final encyclical letter, published only a few months ago, is a very beautiful reflection on devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. The Society of Jesus, better known as the Jesuits, to which he belonged, is rooted in devotion to the Sacred Heart. As we reflect on his life and legacy, we have a deep sense that, with all his human weaknesses, he truly reflected, as a Priest as a Bishop and as the Supreme Pastor of the Church, the merciful heart of Christ. Like any true devotee of Our Lady of Fatima, at every Penitential Service in St. Peter's he led the queue into the confessionals.

As devotees of the message of Fatima we are deeply conscious of the union of the hearts of Jesus and Mary. As Ven Sr. Lucia reflected when Jesus was in the womb of Mary it was her beating heart which physically kept him alive and truly reflected the complete spiritual union between the Mother and the Son. Through the prophet Ezekiel, God promised us a new heart and, through Mary's Immaculate Heart we are drawn into the heart of Jesus himself: 'May our hearts all beat as one!'

A HOPE WHICH DOES NOT DISAPPOINT

In his Bull of Indiction for the Jubilee Year 2025, Pope Francis wrote:

"Hope is born of love and based on the love springing from the pierced heart of Jesus upon the cross: *"For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, much more surely, having been reconciled, will we be saved by his life"* (Rom 5:19). That life becomes manifest in our own life of faith, which begins with Baptism, develops in openness to God's grace and is enlivened by a hope constantly renewed and confirmed by the working of the Holy Spirit".

What, then, will become of us after death? With Jesus, beyond this threshold we will find eternal life, consisting in full communion with God as we forever contemplate and share in his infinite love. All that we now experience in hope, we shall then see in reality.

Through Saint Juan Diego, the visionary of Our Lady of Guadalupe, the Mother of God brought a revolutionary message of hope that she continues to bring to every pilgrim and all the faithful: **"Am I not here, who am your Mother?"**

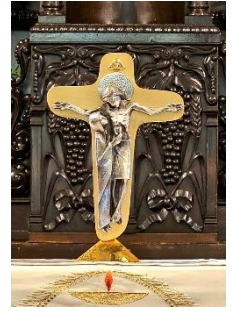
That message continues to touch hearts in the many Marian shrines throughout the world, where countless pilgrims commend to the holy Mother of God their cares, their sorrows and their hopes. During the Jubilee Year, may these shrines be sacred places of welcome and privileged spaces for the rebirth of hope.....in order to venerate the Blessed Mother and to implore her protection.

I am confident that everyone, especially the suffering and those most in need, will come to know the closeness of Mary, the most affectionate of mothers, who never abandons her children and who, for the holy people of God, is "a sign of certain hope and comfort". **Pope Francis**

PILGRIMS OF HOPE

Schoenstatt Jubilee Cross

We are blessed in Scotland with many Marian shrines amongst them, the National Shrine to Our Lady of Lourdes at Carfin, Our Lady of Aberdeen, the Shrine of Our Lady of Fatima at Howwood and I would particularly direct us this year to the shrine of the Mother Trice Admirable, Victress of Schoenstatt which has been granted the grace this year to be a Jubilee Pilgrimage shrine.



The Holy See has granted permission for the Jubilee Cross to carry a plenary indulgence. This is a remission of temporal punishment for sins already forgiven and is gained by the faithful who are truly penitent and driven by charity if they visit the Jubilee Cross throughout the Holy Year with the following conditions.

- A detachment of sin
- Going to confession
- Receiving holy communion
- Praying for the intentions of the Holy Father

The Holy Cross is a destination and a focus for pilgrims. It is a stark reminder of our hope and salvation, Jesus Christ.

We would invite you to join us, WAF Scotland, to the pilgrim day hosted by the Shrine on 18th May 2025. Rosary at 3.00pm followed by Mass at 3.30pm and a procession to the shrine.

CARFIN

This year we will not have a May pilgrimage day at Carfin but would encourage you to participate in the Shrine programme for the 13th of each month from May until October. It begins with the Rosary at 7.30pm followed by Mass and Benediction.

FIVE FIRST SATURDAY DEVOTIONS

In our last Newsletter, we focused on the Apparition of Our Lady to the Ven. Sister Lucia at Pontevedra. As you know, this is the centenary of that Apparition on 10th December 1925 when Our Lady of Fatima once more appeared to Ven Sr. Lucia and said that the time had come for the Church to fulfil her plan to bring peace to the world assuring us that in the end **"My Immaculate Heart will triumph!"** In her Plan for Peace, Our Lady asked first of all for the consecration of Russia which took place on the 25th March 1984 and for the Five First Saturdays Devotion which has the following requirements:- to make reparation to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, confess and receive Holy Communion, recite five decades of the rosary and keep company with Mary for 15 minutes whilst meditating of the mysteries of the rosary.

We hope that you will not only as individuals, as Parish groups, as families or communities embrace this devotion but will do all that you can to spread this Devotion by encouraging others to participate. There are plenty of copies of the *"Wee Blue Book"* available. For those who are able to afford it we usually ask for a donation of £2 and the cost of postage. Please either send a written request to WAF Scotland, 60 Drumchapel Road Glasgow G15 6QA or an email to wafscotland@gmail.com.