



Meditation July 2017

Consecration to Mary in the little shepherds and Father Kolbe.

According to the testimony of Sister Lucia, in the appearance of June 13, 1917, the Madonna said, "Jesus wants to use you to make me known and loved. He wants to establish devotion to my immaculate heart in the world." [\[1\]](#)

Consecration to Mary in the experience of the little shepherds of Fatima.

The events that Jacinta and Francisco Marto and Lucía dos Santos played as protagonists, as we learn from the "Memories of Sister Lucia," concern the theme of consecration to Mary in two directions: the Mother of God, in fact, asked them both to offer themselves to the Lord and for a collective consecration of Russia.

Offering Oneself to the Lord

Sister Lucia attests in the Second Memory, written in November 1937, and in the Fourth Memory, written between October and December 1941, that it is in the "angelic" experiences that precede the cycle of the apparitions of 1917 and in the first appearance of May 13 In 1917, that the Virgin invited her and her little cousins to offer their life to the Lord.

Already in the summer of 1916, during some supernatural manifestations, the one who turned out to be the angel of Portugal asked the shepherds to offer sacrifices to God. This is the description of Sister Lucia: "Suddenly, we saw near us the same figure or angel, as it seemed to me. He said: " *What are you doing? Pray, pray a lot. **The Most Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary have designs of mercy for you. Constantly offer prayers and sacrifices to the Most High.***"

"How are we to sacrifice?" I asked. " *Of all that you can, offer a sacrifice to God, in the act of reparation for the sins from which He is offended, and as a supplication for the conversion of sinners. **So you will attract peace to your homeland.** I am its Guardian Angel, the Angel of Portugal. Above all, accept and bear with submissiveness the sufferings that the Lord will send you.*"

In the apparition of the Virgin of May 13, 1917, the first that occurred in Cova da Iria, the request to offer oneself in sacrifice is proposed with more details:

"The words the Blessed Virgin told us that day, and that we decided not to reveal, were: 'Do you want to offer to the Lord to endure all the sufferings that He will send to you, in remembrance of the sins with which he is offended and in supplication for the conversion of sinners?' " Yes, we want it- was our answer. "Then you will have much to suffer, but the grace of God will be your comfort."

In both cases, the children are asked to "offer themselves to the Lord, to offer prayers and sacrifices, to endure suffering " for two purposes, which form the offering as an act of atonement ("reparation for the sins with which he is offended ") and as an act of intercession (" upplication for the conversion of sinners") .

The life of the three children attests that it is an attachment briskly supported by the ingenuous and provocative enthusiasm caused by the unusual experience, but it translates into a lifestyle that Jacinta, Francesco and Lucia will adopt throughout their short or long existence.

Characteristic features of the act of offering and consecration in the events at Fatima.

Memories from Irma Lúcia show an interesting vocabulary note about the two forms of "consecration" to Mary. To express the gift of self of the children through the acceptance of the sacrifices, the verb "to offer" has been used, and the corresponding noun is "offering." In reference to Russia's consecration, however, the verb "to consecrate" is used "Consecration," and in some cases, also "to entrust" or "entrustment." This is a very significant clarification that reveals a linguistic fluidity that needs to be taken into account when it comes to consecration to Mary [2]. Consecration to her Heart induces us not to simplify it as a mere devotional act of entrustment to Mary.

The consecration to Mary in St. Maximilian Kolbe

Also in the Marian spirituality of St. Maximilian Kolbe, consecration to the Virgin appears among the central elements. Since the founding of the Militia of the Immaculate, St. Maximilian outlined as one of the conditions for belonging to be the *"total offering of oneself to the Immaculate BVM, placing oneself as an instrument in her hands"* (KW21).

The late Montfortian mariologist, Stefano De Fiores **saw an evolution in three moments in the experience of consecration in the Kolbean spirituality** : from the beginning consecration is characterized by the *"total, unlimited and irrevocable"* belonging to the Virgin (KW 389, 137,972); Later, around 1932, Kolbe points to the goal of consecration to Mary as identification with her, in *"becoming, in a way, Mary herself, living, speaking, working in this world"* (KW 1219, 1160, 1210 , 508); The final phase, from 1935 until his death, is marked by the discovery of the role of the Spirit and the Trinity in the life of the Immaculate Conception, whereby *" consecration is seen as an opening to the Trinitarian experience and the supreme gift to the brethren "* (KW 643, 556, 326).

Meaning of terms: consecration and entrustment

Cristoforo Zambelli [3] urges us to keep in mind the terminology that Father Maximilian uses in his writings to designate self-consecration to the Immaculate Conception. The term *" konsekracja "* (corresponding to the Italian "consecration", usually used to designate God's consecration of man and things and the action that the Church does in the sacraments) is never used by Father Maximilian speaking of consecration to the Immaculate; Rather, the founder of the Militia uses the term *poświęcenie* (which can be translated with *"to be exclusive, to make sacrifice of self, absolute dedication"*, and more frequently uses the term *oddanie* (*"Offer, donation, abandonment to someone"*).

The variety of terms used by Kolbe to designate his devotion to the Virgin and the absence of the term *"consecration"* suggests that we can substitute the word "consecration" for another more appropriate word where language and/or culture dictate. This is all the more possible because the same father, Kolbe, has repeatedly stated that *"we can offer the Immaculate with any expression"* (KW 1220)

"Even with a simple and silent act of will" (KW 1331).

In any case, beyond the terms he uses, his basic concept expresses: gift, total gift (KW 991) of oneself to the Immaculate in order to achieve a more perfect union with Christ.

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[1] The Feast of Immaculate Heart of Mary was extended to the whole Church by Pope Pius XII in 1944 and falls the day after the feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

[2] Alfonso Langella, Mariologist of the Pontifical Faculty of Southern Italy in Naples.

[3] Cristoforo Zambelli, OFM. Conv, Translator of Maximilian Kolbe's Writings into Italian.