

Good afternoon and welcome to the First Saturday devotions sponsored by the World Apostolate of Fatima, and held here in the most beautiful church in all of mid-Michigan, Holy Family.

The purpose of the First Saturday devotions is to offer reparation to God the Father in union with Jesus Christ, through the action of the Holy Spirit for the blasphemies and neglects caused by sin in the world.

The elements of this devotion are: (1) Sacramental Confession - by confessing our own sins we make reparation for ourselves; (2) Holy Communion - by receiving our Lord, Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity - we seek to unite our wills and our hearts to God's Will; (3) recitation of the Holy Rosary - our prayers are a response to God's grace acting in our lives; (4) meditation on the mysteries of the Rosary - calling to mind the life of Jesus and His Blessed Mother as portrayed in Scripture and Tradition; and (5) doing all of these things in a spirit of reparation.

Today is also July 4, Independence Day ... the day when our founding fathers signed the Declaration of Independence to the British King ... asserting their rights against the Crown ... and declaring their separation from English rule.

More recently than that event 239 years ago, in Portugal, Our Lady presented three secrets to the shepherd children of Fatima.

The first was the vision of Hell. The third, which is the subject of much debate, was a vision of God's mercy for those who repent - through the Sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the Cross. Sort of a problem and solution.

The second secret, however, receives much less coverage.

I would like to discuss this briefly for your reflection today.

The second secret speaks of a second war. In 1917, the world was in the grip of the First World War. Nobody was thinking about a second one.

Also, Our Lady told the children that "Russia will spread her errors." Oddly, the children had no idea who Russia was, and assumed it was a lady's name.

The two revolutions that rocked Russia happened two months before the apparitions began and two months after the apparitions ended. I'll let you determine if that is a coincidence or not.

For years, people assumed that the “errors of Russia” was simply Communism, or Socialism.

Yet that is perhaps too simple.

Certain authors have broken down specifically what these errors are, and I would like to present a brief summary.

1. Materialism - that is, where the things of this world are more important than the things of eternity.
2. Moral relativism - that is, where what is right or wrong gets to be ‘made up’ as we go along.
3. Legal positivism - that is, that laws can be ignored when we disagree with them.
4. Atheism - that is, getting rid of God in our public and private lives.
5. Humanism - that is, putting humanity – ourselves, our ideas, and our passions – in the place of God.
6. Change - that is, while some change is part of life, a constant shifting of everything becomes commonplace.

That is about half of the list, and I'm not sure if my brief explanations have given them due justice. But if you think about it these errors are so much a part of the contemporary mindset, that certain errors of Russia are already incorporated into our society.

As we approach this altar to receive the Sacred Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ, let us pray for the clarity of thought and vision – so that we might truly embrace our Christian Faith, and heed the call of Our Lady of Fatima to repair the spiritual damage already being done in our world.

God bless America.

Our Lady of Fatima, pray for us.