

## **“Our Lady’s Ambassador” by Inside the Vatican Staff**

*The Honorable Howard Q. Dee is the former Vatican Ambassador from the Philippines. Nicknamed by Pope John Paul II as “Our Lady’s Ambassador” due to his consistent discussions with His Holiness on Our Lady, Ambassador Dee delivered the following presentation at the Internaional Vox Populi Mariae Mediatrici Conference in Rome, May, 1998.*

My Marian journey began in 1960 when the Catholic world was waiting for Pope John XXIII to reveal the Third Secret of Fatima. Now, as we approach the third millennium, there is again an eager anticipation among God's people of an imminent theophany when God will manifest His presence to save His people. The present Holy Father, in his book, *Crossing the Threshold of Hope*, expressed this sentiment when he said that, as we end this century, Our Lady’s words to the children of Fatima seem close to their fulfillment. The victory, he said, when it comes, shall be brought by Mary. His elaborate preparation for the Great Jubilee Year that he called the hermeneutical key and the defining point of his pontificate is without a doubt in anticipation of this victory.

### ***FATIMA: Its Prophetic Force into the Third Millennium***

In 1981 while I was researching the Fatima message, I came across a commemorative message broadcast over Radio Vatican. In part, it said: “Neither Pope John XXIII, nor Pope Paul VI, considered it advisable to reveal to the world the third part of the Secret of Fatima. However, there is a certainty that the third part of the Secret contains a particular gravity, confirmed by the tragic reality that the entire world is living today. Have we reached the fullness of times? Are we living the beginning of the Apocalypse prophesied by St. John? The time has come when words are not enough anymore. It is now necessary to act immediately if we wish that humanity, that each of us, may be able to see, besides the fire, the light.”

I sensed the Holy See was issuing a wake-up call. This reference to fire and apocalyptic times from the authoritative and conservative Vatican Radio must have special meaning. All doubt disappeared when the news was flashed on television that Pope John Paul II had been shot by an assassin. It was May 13, the anniversary of the first Fatima apparition. I knew in my heart that this was not a coincidence and that we are to see the Fatima message fulfilled in the pontificate of Pope John Paul II. How I wished then that I could meet him face to face and talk to him about the Triumph of the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

Two years later, Philippine Senator Benigno Aquino Jr., a freedom fighter, was assassinated as he came home from exile. The nation mourned his death; some 2 million Filipinos marched in his funeral. The country was in turmoil and the Philippine bishops turned to Mary for help as they declared a Marian Year to commemorate her anniversary in 1985. Five million Filipinos pledged to pray her Rosary daily, praying for liberation and salvation. Elections were held, but the Catholic bishops’ conference, unprecedented in the history of the universal Church, declared the proceedings fraudulent. Amidst

dramatic events led by the people and the power of prayer, the dictator fled and Maria Corazon Aquino took her oath as the seventh President of the Third Philippine Republic. It was February 25, 1986, Feast of Our Lady of Victory. On May 13, 1986, the anniversary of Fatima, the new President called me and asked if I could be her Ambassador to the Holy See. I knew then that I was on a mission for Our Lady but I did not know what that mission was.

I presented my credentials to the Holy Father on the eve of Our Lady's birthday, and after the ceremonial exchange of formal messages, His Holiness invited me to his study for a private conversation that lasted 45 minutes. My desire to interview the Holy Father, born five years before, was granted by Our Lady in a manner beyond my dreams. I related to the Holy Father how our democracy was restored with Our Lady's intercession at the end of the Philippine Marian Year. His Holiness listened attentively, nodded and repeated the words "Marian Year." He then explained to me how Our Lady of Fatima had saved his life in 1981. He said that, by an act of divine providence, the bullet that struck him missed his vital organs and he had sent this bullet to Fatima to be imbedded in the crown of Our Lady.

Imagine my amazement when, during the Pontifical Mass a few weeks later on New Year's Day at St. Peter's Cathedral, the Holy Father announced a Marian Year for the universal Church. The next day, *L'Osservatore Romano* reported that the Holy Father was inspired by the events of the Philippines during the Marian Year. Our Lady had accomplished my mission, which had been kept secret from me.

In his Apostolic Letter, *Tertio Millennio Adveniente*, announcing the celebration of the Advent of the Third Millennium, the Holy Father attributed the miraculous events in Eastern Europe following the Marian Year to our Blessed Mother. Those events, he said, "remain surprising for their vastness and for the speed with which they occurred. One could discern the invisible hand of Providence at work with maternal care."

His Holiness said that these historic events were only a prelude to a greater victory that "will find fuller expression in the Year 2000, the Great Jubilee Year." For this year, 1998, dedicated to the Holy Spirit, he specifically asked that we renew "our hope in the definitive coming of the Kingdom of God, preparing for it daily in our hearts...."

The Pope was not speaking of a figurative coming. He says: "The term Jubilee speaks of joy; not just an inner joy but a jubilation which is manifested outwardly, for the coming of God is also an outward, visible, audible and tangible event."

After the Philippine Marian victory, Cardinal Jaime Sin gathered a number of renowned theologians for an international symposium at Fatima, Portugal, on the Alliance of the Hearts of Jesus and Mary. This was to comply with the wish of Our Lord, expressed to Sister Lucia, that "my entire Church acknowledge this victory as coming from My Mother so that the devotion to her Immaculate Heart can be placed alongside the devotion to My Sacred Heart." Cardinal Sin wanted to pay tribute to Our Lady for our Marian victory and he wanted the whole Church to acknowledge the high stature God has given to the Immaculate Heart of Mary so that her Triumph might be realized in the world.

This proposal met with obstacles from the beginning. Some theologians said that there was no theological basis for joining the Two Hearts together. One is the heart of God and the other the heart of a woman, albeit the Mother of God. This objection is

similar to the objection to the Fifth Dogma of Our Lady Coredemptrix, Mediatrix of all Graces, and Advocate that “no creature, not even Mary, can be placed on level with the Word of God in this particular redemptive function.” Cardinal Jaime Sin courageously decided to proceed anyway and he wrote the Holy Father to ask for His Holiness’ blessings, which the Holy Father granted immediately.

A preliminary meeting was held at the Vatican with Cardinal Ciappi, the personal theologian of the Holy Father, presiding. During the discussions, the theologians from the Congregation of the Doctrine of Faith proposed to limit the symposium to the Immaculate Heart alone, and not in conjunction with the Sacred Heart. Not only did Cardinal Ciappi stoutly defend the original inspiration of Cardinal Sin, but all objections disappeared after the Holy Father himself gave a series of Angelus homilies on the Alliance of the Hearts of Jesus and Mary.

The theologians led by Cardinal Sin presented the symposium papers with two vota to the Holy Father. The first votum was for the Holy Father to issue an important document on the Alliance of the Hearts of Jesus and Mary. The second votum was to elevate the celebration of the feast of the Immaculate Heart from an optional to an obligatory memorial.

Ten years later on January 1, 1996, the second votum was granted. The Holy Father authorized a decree issued by the Congregation of Divine Worship elevating the feast of the Immaculate Heart of Mary to an obligatory memorial on the day following the feast of the Sacred Heart. This essentially complies with the request of Our Lord for the Church to honor the Immaculate Heart of His Mother properly. I believe this is a prelude to the coming of the Triumph of the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

### ***The Fifth Dogma and Our Lady's Triumph***

Mary’s rightful place beside Jesus needs to be established to prepare for the fulfillment of a promise made by Our Lady of Fatima, which was the conversion of Russia and a time of world peace. Today, it is the long awaited Triumph of her Immaculate Heart promised at Fatima that will bring peace to all the nations. The entire Catholic world, led by the Holy Father, is anticipating and yearning for this victory.

The conversion of Russia was conditioned on a solemn collegial consecration by the Holy Father to the Immaculate Heart of Mary with the bishops of the world, and this victory had to be acknowledged by the entire Church as coming from the Mother’s Heart.

For Our Lady to bring peace to all nations, the Holy Father should make clear that the universal Church acknowledges Mary’s role in the coming victory. I believe he should do this by solemnly proclaiming the privilege and power the Holy Trinity has bestowed on the Lady and Mother of All Nations: Coredemptrix, Mediatrix of all Graces, and Advocate. The stakes today are greater than ever before.

#### **You would like the Pope to declare this dogma...**

DEE: Yes. The Holy Father seems favorably predisposed to make such a proclamation, as he has spoken several times of Our Lady as Coredemptrix. In *Redemptoris Mater* he refers to Mary as Mediatrix. And as well His Holiness has called her Advocate.