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May 13: Our Lady of Fatima

Gospel for May 13th, feast of Our Lady of Fatima, and commentary.

Gospel (*Lk 11:27-28*)

As Jesus said this, a woman in the crowd raised her voice and said to him, “Blessed is the womb that bore you, and the breasts at which you nursed!” But he said, “Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and keep it!”

Commentary

Today we celebrate the feast of Our Lady of Fatima. The liturgy of the Church wants us to meditate on the wonderful praise that Jesus addressed to his mother.

The context of these words is the end of a long conversation between Jesus and the crowd. The disciples had asked Jesus to teach them how to pray, to which the Master responded with the Lord's Prayer. He continued with some examples that highlight the need to pray trustingly to our Father God. Throughout the conversation he encountered the disbelief of some of those listening to Him.

Some of the people stubbornly refuse to believe in Him but others are enthusiastic. One of the women in the crowd cries out fervently: "Blessed is the womb that bore you and the breasts at which you

nursed!” This woman has sensed something extraordinary in our Lord, and is overcome with joy at what she has heard and seen.

Our Lord replies by asking for greater supernatural outlook: “Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and keep it.” This response from Jesus is actually high praise for his mother.

Jesus knows very well that many begin with great enthusiasm but fail to persevere. That is why our Lord invites her to build on sure ground, to lay the foundation on solid rock (cf. *Lk 6:47-49*). He wants that woman not only to express her affection with words but also to put into practice his teachings.

Our Lord points to the example of Mary’s life. She was always faithful to God’s plans, and showed her love with deeds. That is why Jesus wanted to leave us Mary as our mother – a

mother who intercedes constantly for her children. And her intercession continues to this day, as we see in the message of Fatima.

On May 13, 1917, three young children – Lucia, Francisco and Jacinta, aged 10, 9 and 7 respectively – were looking after a small flock in Cova da Iria. Around noon, after praying the rosary, a “Lady brighter than the sun” appeared to them with a white rosary in her hands. And a loving conversation began between the Virgin Mary and Lucia: “Where are you from, Lady?” – “I am from Heaven.” Between May and October our Lady appeared to them six times. She asked them to pray the Rosary every day, and to do penance. In the last apparition on October 13, nearly 70,000 people witnessed the miracle of the movement of the sun. And our Lady told the children that she was the “Lady of the Rosary” and that a

Chapel should be built there in her honor.

Saint Josemaría echoed Mary's message and wanted to transmit it to all of his sons and daughters in Opus Dei. He went to Fatima on many occasions, and always spent time in the “capelinha” kneeling at the feet of the image of our Lady and imploring her intercession.

The Virgin Mary asked us to pray the Rosary for peace and to make reparation for sin. Let us respond generously to Mary's call, and ask her to teach us to listen attentively to and live in accord with God's words.

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(03/15/2026)