

On May 13, 1917, Our Lady began appearing to three shepherd children in Fatima, Portugal. Her message was simple yet profound: repent of your sins and pray for the conversion of sinners. To impress this truth on their hearts, she gave them a vision on July 13 that forever changed their lives. The children saw Hell. Lucia, the oldest, described it to her bishop: a sea of fire, with souls tossed like sparks in the flames, smoke suffocating the air, and hideous demons appearing as blackened beasts. Worst of all were the screams of agony and despair. The sight was so horrifying that Jacinta later said they would have died of fright had Our Lady not promised them heaven beforehand. When the vision ended, Mary told them to spread the message: Hell is real. Pray and make sacrifices so sinners might repent and be saved. The youngest, Jacinta, took this deeply to heart. Though only six years old, she embraced sacrifice for the salvation of souls. Once, seeing a poor family, she suggested giving them her lunch and going hungry that day so sinners might avoid eternal punishment. With childlike

.faith, she never missed an opportunity to pray and sacrifice for others. Over a century has passed since Fatima, but the message has not lost its urgency. Hell is real. Those who die unrepentant go there, just as Jesus teaches in today's Gospel with the rich man and Lazarus. We must be clear: God does not want anyone to go to Hell. Saint Paul, in last week's reading, wrote: "God our Savior desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth." God sent His Son to open heaven for us. Jesus' cross reveals love without limits. Yet God also respects our freedom. Every sin is a refusal of that love. Each time we choose selfishness, our hearts grow harder. And without love, heaven becomes impossible, for heaven is communion with Love Himself

We are tempted to think that only the worst sinners—murderers, abusers, the truly wicked—go to Hell. But today's readings challenge that assumption. The prophet Amos condemns those who lived in comfort while ignoring the suffering around them. They feasted while the poor starved. They lounged on their couches while the vulnerable cried out. Their sin was indifference. The same is true in the Gospel. The rich man probably never killed anyone. He likely fulfilled his religious obligations. Yet, at his very doorstep lay Lazarus, covered in sores, longing for scraps, and the rich man did nothing. His sin was not active cruelty but passive neglect. His life was centered so much on himself that he failed to recognize the dignity of the poor man beside him. By refusing to love Lazarus, he refused to love God. And when he died, heaven was closed to him.

This should be a wake-up call for us. Are our lives so comfortable, so self-absorbed, that we no longer notice the suffering around us? Are we so busy meeting our own needs that we cannot lift a finger to help another? If so, we must change—before it is too late. The Fatima children give us an example. They prayed the Rosary daily for sinners. They offered sacrifices both small and great. They lived with urgency because they had seen what was at stake. Like them, we are called to prayer, penance, and love. How can we live this out? Take up the Rosary, not only for yourself but for the conversion of sinners. Skip a meal, fast from something you enjoy, and offer it for souls who may be far from God. Volunteer in ministries like Queen of Peace that put us face-to-face with the poor. Serving the hungry, clothing the naked, visiting the sick—these are not optional. They are works of mercy that keep our hearts alive in love. Even small gestures matter. When you see someone begging at a street corner, do not turn away. Maybe you cannot give money, but you can acknowledge their dignity with

a smile, a greeting, or a kind word. You could keep a bag of toiletries or a gift card in your car to offer. Ignoring the poor is dangerous for our souls. Jesus warns that He will remember every time we passed by and failed to love.

Hell is real, my friends. But fear of hell alone is not enough. If it wakes us from complacency, good. Yet God wants more. He wants us to love. When Jacinta saw the vision of Hell, it did not lead her to despair—it led her to love with urgency. She prayed more, she sacrificed more, because she loved more. That is the response we are called to today. Knowledge of Hell should not paralyze us but energize us to grow in love—for God, for the poor, and for the conversion of sinners.

In the end, our destiny is shaped by how we love. The rich man's tragedy was that he closed his heart to the poor man at his door. We must not make the same mistake. So let us pray with Our Lady of Fatima. Let us sacrifice with the zeal of little Jacinta. Let us live the Gospel with the courage of Amos and the clarity of Jesus' parable. And when we see a Lazarus lying at our own doorstep—in the poor, the lonely, the hungry—let us not turn away. For in loving them, we love Christ Himself. And in doing so, we open the gates of heaven not only for ourselves but for others as well. Hell is real. But even more real is the love of God poured out on the cross. And you all see that we have the Jubilee cross with us. My friends do come to