May 13th: Memorial of Our Lady of Fatima

Gospel text (*Mt* 12:46-50): While Jesus was still talking to the people, his mother and his brothers wanted to speak to him and they waited outside. So someone said to him, «Your mother and your brothers are just outside; they want to speak with you». Jesus answered, «Who is my mother? Who are my brothers?». Then He pointed to his disciples and said, «Look! Here are my mother and my brothers. Whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is for me brother, sister, or mother».

«Whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is for me brother, sister, or mother»

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Today we celebrate the feast of our Lady of Fatima, reminding us of the apparition of the Virgin Mary to the three little shepherds Lucia, Jacinta and Francisco. We could say that those manifestations - exemplary in the history of the Church – can be considered as some "overtime" that, in recent times, the Virgin Mary has made.

No wonder! As Pius XII already cautioned, the great sin of modernity is the loss of the sense of sin. But this does not come for free! In fact, this world has recently suffered the worst wars in the history of mankind: never ever so many people had been killed and mistreated as in the 20th century. The description that Joseph Ratzinger – later on, Benedict XVI – made is eloquent: «no previous time has endured such cruel and bloody wars as our time. Things have occurred worse than anything that happened ever before»

But God is merciful, Father of goodness that does not abandon us, even though we may have deviated considerably from His will. Precisely in this century of “horrors and holocausts" (as per Saint John Paul II own expression), God has wanted to comfort mankind in several ways. One of them has been the apparitions of Mary.

At the end of the 19th century Lourdes was highlighted; at the beginning of the 20th, Fatima apparitions stand out. These facts show some providential parallels. On the one hand, the interlocutors of the Virgin Mary have always been very young – of a simple condition, even illiterate -, but willing to abide by the will of the Heavenly Father: these, Jesus recognizes them as "my brother, my sister and my mother" (Mt. 12:50). Secondly, the subject of the Virgin Mary’s appeal was the atonement for men sins, the repentance and the prayer for sinners.

Let us therefore pray, especially today, so that we, men and women of this world, do the will of the

heavenly Father, thus, achieving to be more brothers of Christ, more children of the Father, and more brotherly among ourselves.