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The recent meeting between Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev and Pope John Paul II fulfills Our Lady of Fatima's promises, according to Father Robert J. Fox.

## Priest: Fatima's prediction coming true

ALEXANDRIA, S.D. (CNS) — The 1917 promise of Our Lady of Fatima of the conversion of Russia has begun to come true with the meeting of the pope and Mikhail Gorbachev and the thawing of Eastern Europe, said Father Robert J. Fox, head of the Fatima Family Apostolate.

Father Fox, spiritual director of the apostolate and editor of *Fatima Family Magazine*, told Catholic News Service Nov. 30 that "I am not saying that Russia is already converted, but we are seeing great signs of the beginning of the conversion of Russia promised by Our Lady of Fatima."

There may well be "a natural reason" for "all the things that are happening," Father Fox said in a telephone interview from his headquarters in Alexandria, "but I believe there is a supernatural" explanation.

"The dramatic changes are the fruit of the collegial consecration" of Russia to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, as Mary requested in one of six apparitions to three children at Fatima, Portugal, the priest said.

According to accounts of the Fatima apparitions, Mary called for the pope, in union with all the world's bishops, to con-

secrate the world, and especially Russia, to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. Once this was accomplished, Russia would be converted and world peace would ensue.

On March 25, 1984, the world's bishops joined Pope John Paul II, at his request, in a collegial consecration, calling on Mary's intercession for help in combatting a host of contemporary threats to human life ranging from nuclear war to "sins against life from its very beginning."

According to Father Fox, the one surviving child of the three who saw the Fatima apparitions, Lucia dos Santos, now a Carmelite nun, said in a message released last summer from her monastery that "our Lord accepted the collegial consecration of March 25, 1984."

Sister Lucia was 10 at the time of the first Fatima apparition on May 13, 1917.

Father Fox said he learned of her message while in Fatima from Bishop Alberto Cosme do Amaral of Leiria-Fatima and Father Messias Coelho, editor of the Portuguese journal *Mensagem de Fatima*.

He said the message was transcribed by a woman who is a relative and close friend of Sister Lucia.

Father Fox said some observers have disputed that Russia specifically was ever

## Summit

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full exercise of the right of religious freedom."

The pope alluded to the specific problem of legalizing the Ukrainian Catholic Church by saying the new law must include Latin-rite and Eastern-rite Catholics.

Ukrainian Catholics formed an Eastern-rite church which became illegal in 1946 when its members were ordered to join the Russian Orthodox Church. An underground church has continued, and Ukrainian Catholic officials in Rome say it has about 5 million members.

"Many Catholic communities are today eagerly awaiting the opportunity of re-establishing themselves and of being able to rejoice in the leadership of their pastors," the pope said.

The pope also supported perestroika if it helps to "protect and integrate the rights

consecrated to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, as Mary had requested. But the priest said Bishop Amaral told him that he heard the pope add the words "and Russia" after the consecration of the world.

In addition, Father Fox said that Pope John Paul had said he was joined by a "moral totality" of Catholic bishops in the consecration, along with Orthodox bishops and many Protestant leaders, who had also been sent the pope's request.

In a letter released in the United States Feb. 14, 1984, the pope asked all the world's bishops to join him in the March consecration and in renewing an "Act of Entrusting to Our Lady." He had used the prayer May 13, 1982, during his visit to Fatima when he renewed the prayer delivered by Pope Pius XII in 1942 consecrating the world, especially Russia, to the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

The prayer used by Pope John Paul II asked deliverance from evil, famine, war, nuclear war, hatred, the demeaning of "the children of God," every kind of injustice, and "sins against the life of man from its very beginning."

and duties of individuals and peoples, so that peace may be ensured in Europe and the world."

The meeting "will hardly fail to have a powerful impact on world opinion," the pope said.

It will "be interpreted as singularly meaningful: a sign of the times that have slowly matured, a sign that is rich in promise," the pope said.

These promises and pledges took place amid exchanges of gifts, smiles and handshakes. Gorbachev, wearing a blue suit without the various medals his predecessors wore in public, entered the Vatican at 10:50 a.m. and spent slightly over two hours, leaving at 12:57 p.m.

Archbishop Cassidy said the first step now is to establish "a form of official contact" between the Vatican and the Soviet Union, although "not necessarily immediately a full diplomatic mission."

Then, specific church-state problems, including legalization of the Ukrainian church, will be discussed within the framework of the freedom-of-conscience law Soviet legislators are expected to pass in 1990, the archbishop said.

"This law will be very generic," he said. "We don't know the details of the law, nor have they been made known to us."

The specific problem of the Ukrainian church will also have to be worked out in direct Catholic-Orthodox talks. The issues involve the possible return of former Ukrainian church buildings now used by the Orthodox and the situation of people who became Orthodox when the Ukrainian church was made illegal but who now want to switch back, the archbishop said.

The Soviet government "would like to think that the Orthodox Church and the Catholic Church could come to some kind of agreement about this which they would be delighted to approve," he said.

A papal visit to the Soviet Union is tied to improvements in religious freedom, said Archbishop Cassidy.

"Catholic communities in the Ukraine would have to be normalized. There would have to be bishops recognized and established in their sees. Churches opened. A community which is able to worship in normal situations," he said.

## Mother Teresa gets pacemaker implant

CALCUTTA, India (CNS) — Aides reported that Mother Teresa of Calcutta was doing well Dec. 1, following the implantation of a pacemaker in her heart.


Woodlands Nursing Home, where the operation occurred, did not immediately release a statement on her condition.

The 79-year-old founder of the Missionaries of Charity was rushed to the hospital

late Nov. 29 after complaining of severe dizziness.

She had been released from the hospital Oct. 14 after a 40-day stay for heart problems. During that time, she was attached to an external pacemaker.

Mother Teresa, often characterized as a living saint, won the 1979 Nobel Peace Prize for her work among the poor and destitute in the slums of Calcutta.




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