

## Our Lady of Fatima (1917)

In the year of 1916, the three children Lucia dos Santos and her cousins Francisco and Jacinta Marto, who later witnessed the vision of The Blessed Virgin Mary, were visited by an Angel three times whilst out tending their sheep.

The first time the Angel appeared they were sheltering from the rain on a hillside called the Cabeço. When the rain had passed and the sun had returned, the little shepherds spent the day at this spot, eating lunch, saying the Rosary and playing games. Lucia was then only nine years old, Francisco was eight, and Jacinta was six.

As they were playing, a strong wind suddenly blew, shaking the trees, and the children saw a figure approaching above the olive trees. Lucia described the figure as having “the appearance of a young man of fourteen or fifteen, whiter than snow, which the sun rendered transparent as if it were of crystal, and of great beauty. We were surprised and half absorbed. We did not say a word.

While coming closer to us, the Angel said: ‘Do not fear! I am the Angel of Peace. Pray with me.’ And kneeling on the earth, he bent his forehead to the ground. Prompted by a supernatural movement, we imitated him and repeated the words which we heard him pronounce: ‘My God, I believe in Thee, I adore Thee, I hope in Thee and I love Thee. I ask pardon for all those who do not believe in Thee, do not adore Thee, do not hope in Thee and do not love Thee.

“Having repeated that prayer three times, he got up again and said to us: ‘Pray in this way. The Hearts of Jesus and Mary are attentive to the voice of your supplications.’ And he disappeared.”



The Angel of Peace had come to speak to the children, to infuse them with this extraordinary grace through which they were penetrated with the Divine Presence, and to demonstrate to them the attitude, posture and fervor with which to pray to God. Interestingly, during the apparition Francisco could not hear the words of the Angel, and had to be told what was said afterward; this would be the case for all of the other apparitions as well. After some time the three little shepherds recovered their physical strength and playfulness.

The second apparition of the Angel took place during the summer of 1916. While the children were playing around their favorite well, the Angel suddenly appeared. “What are you doing?” he asked. “Pray, pray a great deal! The Holy Hearts of Jesus and Mary have designs of mercy on you. Offer unceasingly prayers and sacrifice yourselves to the Most High.”

Lucia asked the Angel how they were to make sacrifices.

The Angel replied, “Make of everything you can a sacrifice and offer it to God as an act of reparation for the sins by which He is offended, and in supplication for the conversion of sinners. In this way, you will draw peace upon your country. I am its Guardian Angel, the Angel of Portugal. Above all, accept and bear with submission the sufferings which the Lord will send you.”

Lucia comments, “Those words of the Angel engraved themselves in our spirit, as a light which made us understand Who God is, how much He loves us and wants to be loved by us, the value of sacrifice and how pleasing it is to Him, and that out of respect for it, God converts sinners.” The dominant theme in this second apparition of the Angel was the importance of making offerings to God through every possible action and sacrifice, even the smallest, and of making the offerings with special intentions, especially for the conversion of sinners.



Later that year in the autumn, the third and last vision occurred when the children took their sheep to the same place where the first apparition took place. There in the blessed place of the Cabeço, they were reciting the prayer the Angel had taught them when above them an unknown light appeared. Lucia relates, “We got up again to see what was happening, and we saw the Angel again, who had in his left hand a Chalice over which was suspended a Host, from which some drops of Blood fell into the Chalice.”

Leaving the Chalice and the Host suspended in the air, he prostrated himself down to the earth near the children and repeated a prayer three times. Then, getting up, the Angel took the Chalice and Host. He gave Lucia the Sacred Host on the tongue. Then while giving the Precious Blood from the Chalice to Francisco and Jacinta, he said:

“Eat and drink the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, horribly outraged by ungrateful men. Make reparation for their crimes and console your God.” Then, prostrating himself on the ground he repeated with the children three times the same prayer: Most Holy Trinity, etc., and disappeared.

This final apparition of the Angel was clearly the summit of the three, as the children were graced to see the Precious Blood of Our Lord fall from the Sacred Host into the Chalice, and then receive Holy Communion from the hands of the Angel.

The appearance of the Angel of Peace to the three children was a preparation for the signal grace that was about to be bestowed upon them: the appearance of the Queen of Heaven, the Blessed Virgin Mary. The apparitions of the Angel prepared them for seeing the Mother of God, through the transforming Divine graces the Angel showered on them, and his instructions about prayer, sacrifice and offerings. Through his apparitions to Lucia, Francisco and Jacinta, the Angel of Peace came to ready them for the decisive roles they were each to play in the most important event of the Twentieth Century, the appearance of Our Lady at Fatima.

## **The Apparitions of The Blessed Virgin Mary**

On May 13, 1917 the three children – **Lucia, Jacinta** and **Francisco** took their flock of sheep to a natural hollow in the ground known as the **Cova da Iria** to graze, just outside the town of Fatima in Portugal. While the sheep were grazing and the children were playing there was a sudden flash of lightening. The children looked up, bewildered into the sky. They started to gather the sheep thinking a storm was brewing in the distance although the day was pleasant and there was no other sign of bad weather, when there was a second flash that caused alarm.

A few meters away stood a Lady of dazzling light. Their eyes were unable to comprehend the lady's brilliance and beauty .

The children smelled roses.

“Where are you from?” Lucia managed to ask.

“I am from Heaven” the lady replied.

“What do you want of us?” asked Lucia.

“I came to ask you to come here on the thirteenth day of each month for six months at the same time, and then I will return here a seventh time.”

After several other messages the lady asked finally for them to resite the Rosary daily before she rose in a cloud of light and glided away into the eastern sky. Lucia warned her cousins to say nothing of what they had seen out of fear of disbelief, but Jacinta was too excited. Predictably Jacinta told her parents about the Apparition and there was a general reaction of disbelief. Lucia`s mother was convinced that her child was lying and punished her continually when she refused to deny her story. Other children laughed at them and even spat at them.

But the visions of Mary and her series of prophecies remained apparent to the three children.

At first, Lucia, Francisco and Jacinta had great difficulty trying to share what they had seen, because the government of Portugal was heavily opposed to religion at that time.

A short time later another vision appeared.

Witnesses reported –

“I looked at the sun and saw it spinning like a disc, rolling on itself. I saw people changing color. They were stained with the colors of the rainbow. The sun seemed to fall down from the sky . . . The people said that the world was going to end . . . They were afraid and screaming.” Antonio de Oliveiro, Farmer.

“Suddenly the rain stopped and a great splendor appeared and the children cried: ‘Look at the sun!’ I saw the sun coming down, feeling that it was falling to the ground. At that moment, I collapsed.” Maria Candida da Silva.

“I looked and saw that the people were in various colours – yellow, white, blue. At the same time, I beheld the sun spinning at great speed and very near me. I at once thought: I am going to die.” Rev. Joao Menitra.

“Before the astonished eyes of the crowd, whose aspect was biblical as they stood bareheaded, pale with fright, eagerly searching the sky, the sun trembled, made sudden incredible movements outside all cosmic laws – the sun ‘danced’ according to the typical expression of the people. Standing at the step of the Torres Novas bus was an old man, whose appearance in face and figure reminded one of Paul Deroulede. With his face turned towards the sun he recited the Creed in a loud voice . . . Afterwards, I saw him going up to those around him who still had their hats on, and vehemently imploring them to uncover their heads before such an extraordinary demonstration of the existence of God. Identical scenes were repeated elsewhere, and in one place, a woman cried out in a gasp of surprise: ‘How dreadful that there are some men who do not even bare their heads before such a stupendous miracle!’ People then began to ask each other what they had seen. The great majority admitted to having seen the trembling and the dancing of the sun. Others affirmed that they saw the face of the Blessed Virgin, while others swore that the sun whirled on itself to the earth as if to burn it with its rays. Some said they saw it change colours successively.”

“It was almost three o’clock in the afternoon. The sky was swept clear of clouds and the sun followed its course in its usual splendor, so that no one ventured to gaze at it directly. What about the little shepherds? Lucia, who had spoken to Our Lady, was announcing with expressive gestures, as she was carried along shoulder-high by a man and passed from group to group, that the war would end and that the soldiers would return . . . But news like that,

however, did nothing to increase the jubilation of those who heard it. The heavenly sign was sufficient for them: it was everything.

“Intense curiosity prevailed to see the two little girls in their wreaths of roses, and to kiss the hands of these ‘little saints’, one of whom, Jacinta, seemed nearer to fainting than dancing. They had so longed to see the sign from Heaven: they had seen and were satisfied and radiated burning faith . . . The crowd dispersed rapidly, without any difficulty, without any sign of disorder, without any need for policemen to regulate them. Those who were the first to arrive were also the first to depart, running out on the roadway, travelling on foot with their footwear in a bundle on their heads or strung from their staffs. They went, with hearts overflowing with joy, to bring the good news to their hamlets that had not been wholly depopulated for the time being.

“And what of the priests? Some turned up at the place, mingling more among the curious spectators rather than among the pilgrims avid for heavenly signs and favors. Perhaps neither one nor the other succeeded in concealing their happiness, which so often transpired in triumphant guise . . . It only remains for those competent to do justice to the bewildering dance of the sun which, on this day in Fatima, caused Hosannas to resound from the hearts of all the faithful present, and naturally made a great impression, as people worthy of belief assured me, on the freethinkers and others without any religious conviction who had come to this now famous spot located on the poor pastureland high up on the mountain.” Avelino de Almeida.

“The sun started to roll from one place to another and changed to blue, yellow – all colors. Then we see the sun coming towards the children. Everyone was crying out. Some started to confess their sins because there was no priest around there . . . My mother grabbed me to her and started to cry, saying ‘It is the end of the world!’ And then we see the sun come right into the trees . . .” Dominic Reis, in an American TV interview, 1960.

Investigations into the Fatima event have confirmed that the miracle of October 13, 1917 known as “the dance of the sun” was seen over an area of 32 by 20 miles. An area of over 600 square miles.

Francisco and Jacinta died in an influenza pandemic within three years of the 1917 “dance of the sun.”

Lucia went on to become a nun. She told the church the details of the Fatima prophecies, the first parts of which have been common public knowledge for many years.

## **The Secrets**

But Mary foresaw that a “night illuminated by an unknown light” would precede a “worse war” in which “The good will be martyred” and “The Holy Father will have much to suffer.” On January 25, 1938, a remarkable display of aurora borealis was visible across Europe, the year before World War II began.

The second secret involved the future of Russia. Lucia says Mary revealed that Russia would “spread her errors throughout the world, promoting wars,” and that “Various nations will be annihilated.” Many believe this is a direct prophecy of the spread of communism. “I shall

come to ask for the consecration of Russia to My Immaculate Heart,” continues the account of Mary’s revelation. “If people attend to My requests, Russia will be converted and the world will have peace.” Some interpret Pope John Paul II’s 1984 consecration of Russia as fulfilling the prophecy, and paving the way for the subsequent collapse of the Soviet Union as the “conversion” of Russia.

Lucia wrote down the third secret, sealed it, and entrusted it to Portugal’s Bishop of Leiria, with instructions that it was not to be read until 1960. The Bishop turned the envelope over to the Vatican. Pope John XXIII reportedly opened the envelope when 1960 arrived, but refused to divulge its contents, saying, “This prophecy does not relate to my time.” Pope John Paul II is said to have also read it, and refuses to reveal it on the grounds that its true spiritual message has been obscured by sensationalism.